

Types of Abuse Awareness Activity

Goal:

- To teach youth which behaviours are abusive.

Have Ready:

- Types of abuse cards: emotional, sexual, physical, spiritual and financial.
- Abusive behaviours cards (see below for examples).
- Tape and wall space to post the cards.

Things to Do:

- Post types of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual and financial).
- Pass out behaviour cards and let youth post their card where they think it fits best.

Note to Facilitators:

- For simplicity, verbal, psychological, and mental abuse are combined in “Emotional abuse”.
- We use the types of abuse as general headings to categorize behaviours, knowing that all forms of abuse are connected.
- Emotional or financial abuse are just as damaging as other types of abuse.

Sample Abusive Behaviour Cards

Emotional Abuse

- Guilt tripping
- Isolation (being kept away from other people)
- Insults

- Crazy making
- Controlling
- Threatening suicide

Physical Abuse

- Throwing objects/punching walls/trashing a room
- Threats (to you or your family)
- Restraining (blocking doorways, holding your wrists, etc.)
- Hitting & pinching

Sexual Abuse

- Getting someone drunk/stoned to have sex with them
- Forcing oral, anal, or vaginal sex, or any intimate activity
- Unwanted “sexting”
- Sexual remarks/derogatory language
- Pressuring someone into sexual activity
- Not stopping when a partner want to stop
- Sexual pranks (snapping bra-straps, pulling down pants)
- Sexual harassment

Spiritual Abuse

- Making fun of your beliefs
- Discouraging you from following your beliefs
- Shaming you for going to ceremonies or practicing your spirituality
- Having spiritual beliefs forced on you

Financial Abuse

- Stealing
- Blackmail
- Not letting you have a job or go to school
- Bribery (you or your friends or family)
- Forcing you to work

Debrief:

- Read out, or ask for volunteers to read out the cards.
- For each type of abuse ask the group, “**Are these cards in the right spot, or should any be moved?**”
- Pick and choose which cards to explain in more detail. Depending on the age and experience of the group, you might choose some of the examples from the lists below.

Emotional Abuse

*Emotional abuse is sometimes minimized because it doesn't involve physical harm, however it is often the underpinning of control in an abusive relationship.

- **Guilt-tripping:** Making someone doubt themselves.
- **Isolation (being cut off from other people):** It can make us feel like we have nobody to talk to and it becomes harder to seek help.
- **Insults**
- **Controlling:** Is often caused by jealousy and anger. Explore the difference between feeling jealous or angry and *acting* on the emotions by trying to control their partner or intimidate them and make them feel scared. This does not always happen in person; people use their partner's cell phones, Facebook, email, or other social networking pages to try and control them or to check up on what they are doing/who they are talking to. At Teen Talk we ask youth, “**What is a healthy way to deal with jealousy and anger?**” Being honest with a partner by telling them about how you feel and trying to work it out together without controlling who they see and where they go.
- **Threatening suicide:** This is a powerful form of control and is often used to control a partner. If someone is threatening suicide they need outside help from adults who ideally are trained in suicide prevention.

Physical Abuse

*Causing or threatening to cause bodily harm.

- **Throwing objects/punching walls/trashing the room:** These behaviours may not cause physical pain, but they do create fear and intimidation.
- **Threats (to you or your family):** Threats may or may not cause physical or emotional pain, but they do create fear and intimidation.
- **Restraining (blocking doorways, holding your wrists, etc.):** Even though we get the message sometimes that holding wrists and trying to “passionately” solve our problems is “romantic,” everyone should have the freedom to leave a situation if they want to.
- **Hitting, pinching, etc.**

Sexual Abuse

*Any unwanted sexual contact or attention.

- **Getting someone drunk/stoned to have sex with them:** Legally, consent does not count when under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Alcohol is the most common date rape drug and anyone who feels they have been assaulted while drunk or high can get support. Reinforce key messages: if someone was sexually assaulted when they were sober or drunk it’s never they’re fault.
- **Forcing oral, anal, or vaginal sex**
- **Forcing any kind of intimate activity:** This includes forced prostitution, forced watching or making pornography, forced sexting or stripping, or forced sex with friends.
- **Spreading rumors**
- **Unwanted “sexting”:** Sending or sharing unwanted sexual text messages, Facebook posts, or nude pictures, or being pressured to send them.
- **Sexual pranks or hazing (pantsing, bra-snapping, etc.):** Humiliates the person and makes them feel ashamed.

- **Sexual remarks/derogatory language** (“slut”, “ho”, etc.): These labels increase someone’s chances of being assaulted and make it harder to go for help.
- **Sexual Coercion:** Coercion is when someone pressures, threatens, or takes advantage of the other person to turn their “no” into a “yes”. It’s not ok to pressure someone into any sexual activity, even if you are in a relationship with that person. Any kind of coercion is assault. This includes pressuring someone to send naked pictures of themselves, or pressure to sext. Coercion also includes getting or waiting for someone to be drunk or high in order to have sex with them. When people are drunk or high, they can make decisions they would not normally make. This also means that getting someone’s consent when they are not sober isn’t legal consent.
- **Not stopping when a partner wants to stop:** Everyone has the right to say no to sex or making-out at any point, right before, or part way through, even if the other person really wants it to continue.
- **Sexual harassment:** This includes any unwanted sexual behaviour, actions, or words. Some examples are sending someone unwanted sexual text messages, Facebook posts, or nude pictures, especially when it is repeated after they’ve been asked to stop. It would also include spreading rumors, sexual remarks or any humiliating or insulting comments related to a person’s gender, sexuality or body parts, such as being called a ho or slut. Harassment also includes sexual hazing or pranks (snapping bra-strings, pulling down pants as humiliation based on one’s sexuality or body).

When talking about sexual abuse, it is important to also talk about consent and sexual assault resources. What is written below is how Teen Talk explains consent:

- When it comes to sexual situations, **“Does anyone know what the word consent means?” Consent is clear permission, which means that only yes means yes. It’s a voluntary agreement, which means it’s not something that one person does to**

another, but rather it's something that people decide to do together.

- **“Consent is about asking, listening and respecting. For example, let's say that you want to kiss someone what would consent sound like? What would you say?”** Can I kiss you? I'd really like to kiss you. (Anything they say that is respectful). You might be thinking this is kind of weird or hard or seems really awkward but the more we do it, the more natural it becomes.
- **Part of asking for consent is listening to the response and respecting what they say/want. It's also important to pay attention to what they're doing non-verbally.**
- **“If you ask if you can touch someone's bum and they say yes, it's bum touching time! If they say maybe later, I'm not sure, or nothing at all, what does that all mean?”** No. **Sometimes hearing a no can feel hard or we might feel kind of rejected. Even though those feelings are normal, it's our responsibility to deal with our feelings and respect the person who is saying no. Consent is also ongoing. This means that you have a right to say no at anytime.** So if in the middle of bum touching, someone wanted it to stop, what would have to happen? Stop. If someone says “stop”, or “wait”, looks uncomfortable or is pulling away, stop and check in with them. This could sound like, “You don't seem really into this.” **If you are unsure, always stop and ask.**
- Asking for consent can be fun and sexy and figuring out ways to talk about consent that feels comfortable for you can help. We know that it can be more complicated than just asking or saying “yes” or “no.” People don't always talk about touching/sex before it happens; sometimes people communicate non-verbally, through eye contact and body language. **Ultimately, consent gives both people a chance to say whether or not they are into something and is part of creating trust and respect in our relationships.**
- **“So, we have talked a lot about what consent is, now we're going to share some things that consent is not. Consent cannot happen when a person is drunk or high, because they are under the influence. It's also not coercive, which means trying to change someone's no into a yes, for example, by**

pressuring or guilting them or getting them drunk or high. Any unwanted sexual attention or contact is sexual assault.”

- **“If you have ever dealt with or are dealing with sexual assault, it is never your fault and you have a right to get support. It can help to talk to someone you trust. You can access support for your or a friend. The Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line is a great resource that people can call if they need to talk. You can also call the line if you’re feeling upset or unsure about a sexual experience. It is open 24/7 and free to call from anywhere in Manitoba. Their phone number is 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631.”**

Spiritual Abuse

- **Making fun of your beliefs**
- **Discouraging you from following your beliefs**
- **Shaming you for going to ceremonies or practicing your spirituality**
- **Having spiritual beliefs forced on you**

Financial Abuse

- **Stealing**
- **Blackmail**
- **Not letting you have a job or go to school:** Debrief that both of these things allow independence/new information/allow you to form other meaningful relationships/increased self-esteem/education/opportunities and by not having access to these, it can isolate you from current and potential friends and peers.
- **Bribery (you or your friends or family)**
- **Forcing you to work**

Additional Activities:

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- Action Planning activity
- Qualities of a Healthy Relationship Brainstorm
- Fun and Single Relay Race