

Types of Abuse Awareness Activity

Recommended Age: 12+

Goal

- To teach youth which behaviours are abusive.

Have Ready

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

Instructions

- Provide a disclaimer, mentioning these issues can be hard to talk about and that it is okay for them to draw, 'zone out,' etc.
- 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 and 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
- Manipulation

- Controlling
- Threatening suicide

Physical Abuse

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

Sexual Abuse

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

Spiritual Abuse

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

Financial Abuse

- Stealing
- Blackmail
- Not letting their partner have a job or go to school
- Bribery (their partner or their friends or family)
- Forcing them 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 them feel like they 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 phones, Facebook, email, or other social media 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?"** Healthy ways of dealing with jealousy are recognizing it is a normal emotion and understanding we are capable of healthy and respectful reactions no matter what the situation.
- **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, ideally ones who 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 their partner or 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 a very common date rape drug. If someone has been assaulted while drunk/ high or sober, it's important to get support. Reinforce key messages: if someone was sexually assaulted when they were sober or drunk/high, it's never their 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 rumours**
- **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 derogatory words/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 okay to pressure someone into any sexual activity. 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.

- **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 during sexual activity, 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 rumours, and 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 straps, 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 it seems really awkward, but the more we do it, the more natural it becomes.**
- **Let's practice asking for consent about something non-sexual.** Look to the person next to you and ask them if they would like to join you in an activity you want to do this weekend. For example, “Do you want to have lunch together, play video games, go swimming, etc. with me?” **Truth is, we are using consent all the time.** “Did any of you hear a yes?” Great. “Did anyone hear a no?” That is going to happen sometimes.

- **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 any time.** 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 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 just talked a lot about what consent is, now we're going to share some things that consent is not. **Consent is not coercive, which means trying to change someone's no into a yes by pressuring, nagging, or using guilt.** It's also not okay to try to change someone's no into a yes through alcohol or drugs, or to wait until someone is drunk or high to ask them for consent. What's the most respectful thing to do if people are drunk or high? Wait until they are sober, bring them water, help them get home, or watch over them, etc. **Ultimately, consent doesn't count when people are drunk or high.** That doesn't mean that every time there is drinking and sex it's a sexual assault, but we do know that it happens. **What's important to know is that any unwanted sexual attention or contact is not okay.**
- **If you have ever experienced sexual assault, it is never your fault.** It doesn't matter where you were, who you were with, what

you were wearing, or if you were drunk or high. If someone chooses to assault another person, it's always the fault of the person who is choosing to use violence.

- **People have a right to be believed and get support. No one has to go through recovering from that experience alone.** It can help to talk to someone you trust. You can access support for you or a friend. If you know someone or have a friend who has experienced a sexual assault, a couple of good things you can say are: "It's not your fault," and "I'm sorry this happened." You can ask them how you can support them and you can also give them information about the Sexual Assault Crisis Program. **It's 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.** If someone needs to go to the hospital after an assault, a counsellor from SACP can be there to support them.

Spiritual Abuse

- **Making fun of their beliefs**
- **Discouraging their partner from following their beliefs**
- **Shaming them for going to ceremonies or their spirituality**
- **Having spiritual beliefs forced on them**

Financial Abuse

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