

December 11, 2006  
Mr. Gary Angello  
Health Coordinator  
Bellizzi Middle School  
215 South Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Angello,

We are students at Trinity College working on a public policy project for our Child Development course. Throughout this past semester, we have been researching issues related to sex education in Hartford schools. Our investigations have suggested that sexual harassment is a worrisome and prevalent concern for teachers, students, and administrators.

At many Hartford middle schools, sexual harassment is not even included in the sexual education curriculum, and when it is, it is frequently approached merely from a legal standpoint. Similarly, through our research we have found that while Hartford schools provide good definitions and rules regarding sexual harassment and the consequences of violating these rules, these programs do not help students understand the personal consequences of harassment. For example, we believe that it is important for students to understand the emotional implications of sexual harassment, in order to develop empathy for their classmates. By instructing the students in this way, we aim to prevent sexual harassment rather than solely focusing on it after it has already become a problem. One of the most poignant research topics we read was students' own views on sexual harassment, and their descriptions of how they felt when they had been sexually abused or harassed in the past. We feel that students hearing these stories will have similar reactions to ours and respond positively.

At Bellizzi, students reported that sexual harassment was one of the top five problems the student body faces, and from correspondence with Deana Leikin, the school guidance counselor, we learned that issues relating to sexual harassment are frequently brought to her on a case by case basis. Sexual harassment is addressed in your curriculum plan. However, a very concerning issue you brought to our attention is that given the shortage of teachers, time, and resources, only 40% of students are enrolled in a sex education class.

One possible way to deal with this problem is to implement a one-day workshop for all students. Our proposed lesson plan is a short workshop encompassing the most crucial points students should learn and discuss regarding sexual education. Even if there is not enough staff to teach an entire sexual education class to every student, with our lesson plan, students can learn about this pressing issue in just one hour and forty minutes. Our lesson plan is based and expanding on pre-existing handouts and designed to focus on the students' own views and understanding of sexual harassment. The lesson plan is mostly discussion oriented, so that students can share their own viewpoints, learn each others' ideas, think critically about the information they are learning, and better understand the complex issue of sexual harassment.

We recommend including our lesson plan in your sexual education curriculum, as it is a vital issue for students to learn about and discuss. If you have any questions or input regarding our proposal, please contact any of us. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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# Sexual Harassment Lesson Plan

**Total Time: 1 hour, 40 minutes**

## **Part 1: Respect and Relationships** (50 min)

### *Objectives*

- Students will think critically about the nature of healthy/unhealthy and platonic/romantic relationships, as well as learn “media literacy” and how the media affects our view of relationships.
- Students will understand the differences between healthy/unhealthy relationships and what is appropriate/inappropriate for different relationships in our culture

### *Materials*

- Handout: **What Are the Media Teaching Us?** (source: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women) – 1 copy for each student
- TV with VCR

### *Description*

**Activity 1** (time will vary according to selected clip – ideally around 15 minutes):

*Goal:* Students will learn “media literacy,” including how to analyze the way mass media influences our view of relationships, through viewing a popular TV show with an analytical eye

- Show clip of TV show (see resource packet for “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven“ episode recommendations) dealing with relationships.

**Activity 2** (15 minutes):

*Goal:* Students will discuss and think critically about the nature of relationships: platonic and romantic – especially with respect to the episode shown.

- Class discussion: ask about characters in any or all of the following characters (qualities/goals/TV portrayal); record student comments on board.
  - Women’s roles
  - Men’s roles
  - People of various racial and ethnic groups
  - Poor people
  - Gay and lesbian people
  - People with disabilities

### Activity 3 (15 minutes):

*Goal:* Students will analyze the people and relationships in the episode and form a bridge connecting what is represented in the media to their own views of relationships.

- Break the class into five small groups, each group addressing one of the following questions:
  1. Identify the healthy relationships in the show. What makes them healthy?
  2. List the positive qualities of the platonic friendships vs. romantic relationships.
  3. How realistic are the relationships? What makes them unrealistic?
  4. Identify a situation in the show that is scripted in an unhealthy way. Then re-script this situation so that it is played out in a healthy way. *\*We recommend a situation involving sexual harassment to form a bridge for the next lesson.*
  5. How do the media reinforce people's attitudes of appropriate boundaries? *\*We recommend asking children: What are your ideas of appropriate boundaries?*
- Have students come together as a class and each group present their answers and discussion points from their assigned question.

~ 5 minute break! ~

### **Part 2: Sexual Harassment – *What you need to know!* (50 min)**

#### *Objectives*

- Students will compare and contrast healthy/unhealthy relationships, discuss when and how words and actions hurt others, learn definitions, implications, and consequences, and what to do if they are sexually harassed.

#### *Materials*

- Handout: **What is Sexual Harassment?** (source: Gary Angello, Bellizzi Middle School) – 1 copy for each student
- Copy of school regulations on sexual harassment for each student

## *Description*

### Activity 1 (25 minutes):

*Goal:* Students will discuss and question common words and actions and how they make others/themselves feel, as well as learn definitions and consequences of sexual harassment.

- Put all students into groups of two to read and discuss the following concepts and questions from the worksheet (teacher should circulate to student groups to help guide discussions as necessary)
  1. What is harassment? (think of examples of each form of harassment)
  2. How do people harass other people?
  3. How do people use language (as opposed to their bodies) to harass others? (Have students think of words that make them feel hurt/words they use to hurt others. Then have them provide their own concept of the actual definition of each word they have come up with.)
  4. How do people physically harass other people? Why might people do this?
  5. What is sexual harassment? What makes it different from other forms of harassment? How might people who are sexually harassed feel as opposed to those who are harassed non-sexually?
  6. Discuss the school's policy on sexual harassment. Discuss the legal consequences for sexual harassment.

### Activity 2 (25 minutes):

*Goal:* Students will bring concepts into a personal context and discuss sexually harassing behavior and what to do if you are sexually harassed.

- Bring all students back together into large group, led by the teacher, to discuss appropriate vs. inappropriate behavior (this could also be worded as “respectful vs. disrespectful behavior” or “what feels good and what does not feel good”)
  1. What is “normal behavior”? (In a relationship – friendship vs. romantic?) (Look to handout for examples.) Ask students to share how they would feel in each situation mentioned.
  2. What is “sexually harassing behavior”? (Again, look to handout for examples.) Ask students to share how they would feel in each situation.

3. Ask students what they would do/have done if ever in a situation when they feel as if someone is exhibiting sexually harassing behaviors towards them. What do students feel they *should* do?
4. Discuss the importance on standing up for oneself. Brainstorm with students about ways students could stand up for themselves if ever in a situation of sexual harassment/people they could approach and tell about it (family/friends/teachers/etc.).

Optional Homework Assignment (connected to Part 1):

- Have students write a skit (short, 2-5 minutes) presenting an example of appropriate/non-sexually harassing behavior, using information they have learned and discussed during the class. The skits will be performed in class the next day.

Optional Homework Assignment (connected to Part 2):

- Interview three friends or family members about the qualities of their relationships. They may be either platonic or romantic relationships. Ask them what makes their relationships healthy.
- *\*You may want to ask the children what kinds of questions they will ask their friends and family, and write on the board the questions you thought were best.*

*\*See Teacher Resource Packet to learn more about sexual harassment*

# What are the Media Teaching Us?

## Objectives

To help students understand how mass media shapes our view of healthy relationships and to encourage "media literacy."

## Preparation

Photocopy the handout *What are the Media Teaching Us?* for the students.

## Introducing the Activity

In small groups discuss the relationships shown in the TV show. Evaluate the show according to the following categories, by asking about their characters, their qualities, and their goals:

- Women's roles
- Men's roles
- People of various racial and ethnic groups
- Poor people
- Gay and lesbian people
- People with disabilities

After you complete the above assignment, answer the following questions:

- 1) Identify the healthy relationships in the show. What makes them healthy?
- 2) List the positive qualities of the platonic friendships.
- 3) List the positive qualities of the romantic relationships.
- 4) How realistic are the relationships shown. What makes them unrealistic?
- 5) Identify a situation in the show that is scripted in an unhealthy way.
- 6) Take the situation from question 5 above, and rescript it in a healthy way.
- 7) Turn the sound off and just watch the clip. Then analyze what you see.
- 8) What are children's roles in the media?
- 9) How do the media reinforce people's attitudes of appropriate boundaries?

## Homework

Interview three friends about the qualities of their relationships. They may be either platonic or romantic relationships. Ask them what makes their relationships healthy.

# Harassment & Sexual Harassment

## Definitions

### **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is any unwelcome discriminatory behavior toward an individual or individuals on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, present or past history of mental disorder, mental retardation, learning disability or physical disability, or abilities unrelated to performance. Forms of harassment are:

- Spoken
- Written
- Symbols
- Caricatures
- Physical contact
- Gestures
- Innuendo
- Display of posters, book covers, T-shirts or other items that contain images or words that can be interpreted as harassing.

**Harassment is usually not considered a single incident. It is ongoing and continual.**

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is any *unwelcome* and *unwanted* sexual comment, contact, or behavior including:

- Jokes that cause discomfort
- Looks, staring, leering
- Notes
- Touching\*, patting, grabbing, tickling, pinching, noises, or obscene gestures

Sexual harassment is a type of sexual abuse. It can happen to boys or girls, male or female. Sexual harassment can involve a male harassing a female, a female to male, male to male, or female to female. It can also include student to student, teacher to student, student to teacher or teacher to teacher.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS ILLEGAL**

### **QUID PRO QUO SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Literally means “this for that.” If a teacher lets a student know that she will perform better on her English exam if she goes out with him, this could be a form of quid pro quo sexual harassment. Oftentimes, this puts the student in an uncomfortable position and can seriously interfere with her ability to concentrate or to enjoy her studies and school experience. In addition, the teacher may retaliate if the student refuses his/her offer, and hurt the student academically, socially and personally. ***This type of harassment occurs when there are two people with different levels of power.***

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT**

A life threatening crime of violence. Non-consenting forced sexual contact ranging from physical contact with genitals, breast, buttocks, to penetration – oral, vaginal, or anal. An attack to an individual either by using sex or sexual methods such as a weapon.

### **RAPE**

Unlawful sexual intercourse by force and against a person’s will.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** Conduct that includes physical touching, threatening or coercive behavior, may be **Criminal Sexual Assault**. Under Connecticut Statutes, Criminal Sexual Assault will result in police involvement and may result in possible criminal prosecution.

## Appropriate/Inappropriate Behavior (Respectful/Disrespectful)

To understand sexual harassment we must look at the effects of the behavior.

Appropriate/Respectful behavior looks like this:

Normal Behavior	Makes You Feel
Look	Happy
Touch	Flattered
Joke	Amused
Tease	Friendly
Flirt	Attractive
Banter	
<b>Here no means no.</b>	

Inappropriate/Disrespectful behavior looks like this:

Sexually Harassing Behavior	Makes You Feel
Leer	Embarrassed
Grope	Dirty
Taunt	Threatened
Harassment	Scared
Targeting	Disgusted
	Helpless
<b>Here no means nothing.</b>	

In normal settings when someone does something toward us that is offensive we say “knock it off” or “don’t do that.” That’s life. It happens. Normally, the person who behaved in a way that offended you says “I’m sorry, I did not know” and that is the end of the matter.

But when someone continues sexually offensive behavior even after you say “stop it,” *this is the beginning of sexual harassment.*

Zach Galkin  
Jessica Piervicenti  
Meg Smith

## Resource Packet

### Website(s):

- (1) Normal Development: Teen Sexuality Resources

<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu/topic/4/85.htm>

*A list of sources relevant to sexual development and sex education. It is provided by Tufts and rates sources on a five star system based on peer reviews.*

- (2) Discovery Schools: Sexual Harassment

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/sexualharassment/>

*Another suggested lesson plan concerning sexual harassment, this presents a fairly comprehensive curriculum and can serve as a strong complimentary resource*

### Book(s):

- (1) Beane, A. L. (1999). *The Bully Free Classroom*. 217 Fifth Avenue North, Suite 200, Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

*The Bully Free Classroom is a very useful workbook and curriculum guide for teaching children and adolescents how to deal with general harassment and abuse. While it is not exclusive to sexual harassment, its subject matter lends itself well to being applied to situations involving this topic.*

- (2) National Guidelines Task Force. (2004). *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education* (3rd ed.) Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US.

*A set of national guidelines regarding sex education in the United States, this is a good place to start when considering a curriculum.*

- (3) Montfort, S., & Brick, P. *Unequal partners: Teaching about Power and Consent in Adult-teen and Other Relationships* (2nd ed.)

*Implications of relationships between adolescent females and older males, and frequency and natures of such relationships, it addresses consent, pregnancy, and equality.*

**Resource Location(s):**

(1) Planned Parenthood of Connecticut  
1229 Albany Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06112  
(860) 728-0203

*Planned Parenthood is a health center which offers sexual and reproductive health care, including STD/STI testing, pregnancy testing, gynecological care, abortion services, and will provide consultation regarding any of the above.*

**Media: *Seventh Heaven* Episode Suggestions**

- (1) Episode 16: Brave New World

*Aired: February 17, 1997*

*Summary: "Lucy asks Eric to investigate her new best friend's white lies as to where she and her family really live and their financial situation. Matt intervenes when a bully harasses Mary at school. Simon is jealous of Ruthie's new friend from her pre-k class as she's more fascinated with him now than Simon. Lastly, Ruthie's first day at school brings melancholy feelings for Annie."*

- (2) Episode 31: I Hate You

*Aired: November 17, 1997*

*Summary: "Mary, Lucy, and Ruthie learn that words can hurt people easily. Simon works on a school project and becomes friends with a Holocaust survivor and asks her to share her story because some people don't believe there ever was a Holocaust."*

- (3) Episode 38: It Takes a Village

*Aired: February 23, 1998*

*Summary: "Simon and Nigel are invited to the home of a girl who is famous for her "make-out parties". Keisha asks Lucy to do her a favor and ask for permission to go to a movie with her, so she can secretly meet her boyfriend. Keisha also says her boyfriend will bring along someone for her. However, that becomes a disaster when Annie shows up at the same movie."*

Zach Galkin  
Meg Smith  
Jessica Piervicenti

### **Annotated Bibliography**

Beane, A. L. (1999). *The bully free classroom*. 217 Fifth Avenue North, Suite 200, Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

*A comprehensive source for anti-bullying worksheets for a large age group, it has lesson plans, activities, and questionnaires.*

Brown, B. S. (2006). *A (still) failing grade for Hartford schools.*, 2006, from <http://www.ctfamily.org/editorial1.html>

*Article on the pitfalls, weakness, and issues in funding of the Hartford school system.*

Clarke, D. (2006). Sexual subjects: Young people, sexuality and education. [Sexual Subjects: Young people, sexuality and education] *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 8(2), 191-193.

*Empirical research in New Zealand explored young people's sexual knowledge and practices. Findings led researchers to observe a normalization of heterosexuality and marginalization of sexual identities.*

Conn, K. (2004). *Bullying and harassment [electronic resource] : A legal guide for educators / kathleen conn*. from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/trinity/Doc?id=10065774>

*Guide to the legality of sex education, and what is and is not acceptable and legal.*

Ehrhardt, A. A. (1996). Our view of adolescent sexuality: A focus on risk behavior without the developmental context. *American Journal of Public Health*, 86(11), 1523-1525.

*Sexual education tends to focus solely on risk, danger, and negative consequences. The unintended consequence of this narrow focus may be that it leads to sexual inadequacies, sexual distortions, and interpersonal problems.*

Fenichel, M. (2006). *Sexual harassment.*, 2006, from

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/sexualharassment/>

*An alternative sexual harassment curriculum from the Discovery Channel, it has class activities, teaching goals, and varying approaches.*

Green, R. (1998, Jun 4). School officials compromise on sex education parents to be informed in advance when the subject is a delicate one. *Hartford Courant*, pp. A.3.

*State law provides the right to parents to exempt their children from sex education class in any grade level.*

Kartoz, C. R. (2004). New options for teen pregnancy prevention. *The American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing*, 29(1)

*Birth control as it pertains to teen pregnancy, pertains to availability and activity.*

Libby, R. W. (1970). Parental attitudes toward high school sex education programs. [Electronic version]. *The Family Coordinator*, 19(9), 234-237.

*A study investigating parental attitudes toward both general and specific aspects of high school sex education. The subjects of the study were 125 randomly selected parental couples, and the study shows that the great majority of parents approve of integrated sex education programs.*

Meldrum, J., & Pringle, A. (2006). Sex, lives and videotape. *Journal of the Royal Society of Health; Journal of the Royal Society of Health*, 126(4), 172-177.

*This article details a process that was developed in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire in which video interviews with various people were used to form focus groups for teen pregnancy.*

Montfort, S., & Brick, P. *Unequal partners: Teaching about power and consent in adult-teen and other relationships* (2nd ed.)

*Implications of relationships between adolescent females and older males, and frequency and natures of such relationships.*

Nan Stein, Ed.D. (1999). Incidence and Implications of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in K-12 Schools. *Wellesley College Center for Research on Women*.

*This article contains the result of studies done, in several schools and states, on the personal effects and implications of students who have been sexually harassed.*

(2005). How to talk with teens about love, relationships, & S-E-X: A guide for parents. *Adolescence*, 40(160), 868-869.

*There is no right way to talk to teens about sex and relationships. Every teen is different so parents should personalize their home education program to their needs and values.*

Sensible compromise about sex education our Town Somers. (1996, May 17). *Hartford Courant*, pp. A.16.

*Informing elementary school students of basics of sex education is still sometimes an uncomfortable situation in the classroom. Mothers were also worried about what exactly would be covered. The Somers School Board reached a solution in a video that parents could view before allowing their child to participate.*

T. J. Talbot, P. E. Langdon. (2006). A revised sexual knowledge assessment tool for people with intellectual disabilities: Is sexual knowledge related to sexual offending behaviour? *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 50(7), 523-531.

*People with lower sexual knowledge may be more at risk of committing sexual offence.*

Advocates for Youth. (2004). Speaking out. Retrieved October, 2006 from <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/speakingout.pdf>

*This is a Hartford based publication that describes attitudes toward*

*comprehensive and abstinence-only sex education in Connecticut.*

Normal development - teen sexuality. Retrieved October, 2006 from

<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu/topic/4/85.htm>

*This is a list of sources relevant to sexual development and sex education. It is provided by Tufts and rates sources on a five star system based on peer reviews.*

National Guidelines Task Force. (2004). *Guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education* (3rd ed.) Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US.

*Detailed sex education guidelines, including lesson plans, approaches, activities, and standpoints.*

Sex education attitudes and outcomes among north american women.(2006).

*Adolescence, 41(161)*

*A statistical survey and analysis of female attitudes regarding abstinence only education and unplanned pregnancies*

SIECUS Publications. (2004). The truth about adolescent sexuality. Retrieved

October, 2006 from <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/fact/fact0020.html>

*This page has many statistics and facts about adolescent sexuality pulled from many different sources. The statistics are mainly the results of large scale surveys.*

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the many members of the community of Trinity College and of Hartford who assisted us in gathering information and understanding sex education. We wish to thank Professor Jack Dougherty, Laura Lockwood, and Linda Webber, all faculty and staff at Trinity, for their enthusiastic assistance. We also thank Raisa Negron and T.R. Richardson from Planned Parenthood, with special thanks to Ms. Richardson for her dedication to the subject of sexual harassment and for sharing her knowledge with us. We would like to thank Deana Leikin and Gary Angello from Bellizzi Middle School for their many and valuable contributions. We wish to thank Claudia Cruz-Reis and Mark Flaherty from Hartford Magnet Middle School for additional information. We would also like to thank Ruth Goldbaum from the Hartford school system. Lastly, we wish to thank Maggie Rivara and Professor Dina Anselmi for their guidance throughout the semester in developing our project.

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