

The SexEducator

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ADOLESCENT COUPLES AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE: SUBTLE BUT DEVASTATING

BETTER UNDERSTANDING
FOR BETTER INTERVENTION

BY MÉLANIE GUÉNETTE-ROBERT

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Québec 



Josée is 16 and has been in a relationship with Jonathan, 18, for five months. Until two weeks ago, Josée and Jonathan hadn't had sexual relations. Then, Jonathan started insisting. One evening, he tells Josée that he doesn't need a little inexperienced girl like her and that he'll go elsewhere if she doesn't "get with it." She finally gives in to his threats. Result: She experienced no pleasure because she felt ill at ease. Since then, every time Jonathan asks her to have sex, she feels she has to say yes since she gave in once already. She's wondering if all girls have this kind of experience and if she's worrying for nothing. She would like to talk about it with her friends or parents, but she can't do it. She feels both ashamed and afraid.

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Sexual violence within a couple is a delicate subject. People have difficulty identifying violence when it occurs within their own lives (Toscano, 2007; Rondeau et al., 2007). It isn't easy for adolescents to imagine they could be victims of sexual violence in a relationship, even when the boyfriend or girlfriend pressures or forces them to have sexual relations (Rondeau et al., 2007). Adolescents often need to see physical signs such as wounds or bruises before they see themselves as victims of violence (Toscano, 2007). While sexual violence may be difficult to identify for a person who is experiencing it, it is even more so for people close to a victim since they do not really have access to what is occurring in the couple, unless that person confides in them. Teens are discovering love and sexuality, which makes them vulnerable and, for some, increases the risk of becoming victims of dating violence, whether sexual, physical or psychological. They have not yet experienced "true love", where complicity and respect intermingle; when it comes to sexual involvement, they also lack referents. Therefore, an adolescent can come to the conclusion that a violent relationship is normal. So far, few researchers have focused specifically on sexual violence among teenage couples, as compared with physical and psychological violence. Given such a context, therefore, it is important to equip adolescents so they can understand what sexual violence is, recognise it when it occurs, identify the issues and understand an individual's role in exposing it.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: WHAT'S GOING ON, EXACTLY?

Studies show that physical or sexual violence exists in 25% of adolescent couples (Avery-Leaf et al., 1997). More girls than boys are victims of sexual violence within the couple; therefore, the implication is that more boys commit acts of sexual violence towards their partners (Fernet et al., 2003; Lavoie and Vézina, 2002). Moreover, girls tend to underestimate the violence they experience because of their strong tendency to feel responsible for the violent acts committed against them (Coker et al., 2000). Nonetheless, boys can also be victims of sexual violence, although the experience is different for them. It is more difficult for a boy to admit he is being sexually pressured (Lavoie et al., 1994) given existing stereotypes, such as a "real" man always feels like having sex. Moreover, society focuses more on sexual violence inflicted on girls.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENT COUPLES?

To explain what sexual violence in an adolescent couple is, we should first define dating violence. It is any behaviour that harms a partner's development or health by compromising his or her physical, psychological or sexual integrity (Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000). Dating violence includes psychological, physical and sexual violence. Sexual violence is often the last stage of dating violence (Coker, 2007), proceeding from physical violence (Fernet et al., 2003). It is defined as abusive control linked to sexuality (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005a). Table 1 presents various situations indicative of sexual violence in an adolescent couple.

TABLE 1 SITUATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN AN ADOLESCENT COUPLE

1. Pressuring someone to engage in sexual acts by taunting, belittling, making fun of or harassing them (Department of Justice Canada, 2008; Toscano, 2007).
2. Threatening to damage someone's reputation or threatening to break off the relationship if the partner does not agree to engage in a desired sex act (Department of Justice Canada, 2008; Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000; Toscano, 2007).
3. Forcing the partner to have sex against his or her will or to submit to an unwanted sex act (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b; Fernet et al., 2003; Rondeau et al., 2007).
4. Not stopping sexual contact when asked to (Department of Justice Canada, 2008; Lavoie et al., 1994).
5. Controlling a partner's sexuality by refusing to use a condom despite being asked to and/or controlling use of contraceptives such as the pill (Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité, s.d.; Coker, 2007).
6. Using sexual blackmail (Rondeau, 2007).
7. Intentionally hurting a partner physically or psychologically while having sex (Coker et al., 2000).



LET'S LOOK AT EACH OF THESE SITUATIONS IN MORE DETAIL

1. Pressuring someone to engage in sexual acts by taunting, belittling, making fun of or harassing them

A study of 22 American teens aged 15 to 18 conducted in 2007 by Toscano shows that a number of them experienced various degrees of sexual pressures from their partners. Statements such as “Everybody does it”, “You’re such a child”, “You’re not cool”, “You’re stupid if you don’t do it”, “If you loved me, you’d do it”, “No one wants you”, are all things said by a partner who is applying pressure. Toscano notes that adolescent girls tend to date older boys, who are also often more sexually experienced. Therefore, an adolescent girl who is younger than the boy she is dating can experience pressure to be sexually active as well as to respond to all his sexual demands out of fear of being replaced by a girl who is more experienced. Fear of losing the relationship is the main factor involved in succumbing to sexual pressures. Still according to Toscano, once an adolescent girl succumbs to her partner’s sexual desires, she feels she no longer has the right to refuse. Although less frequent, boys can also experience sexual pressures from girls or be targets of offensive comments regarding their sexual performance (e.g. “There’s no point. You can’t even make me come.”).

2. Threatening to damage someone's reputation or threatening to break off the relationship if the partner does not agree to engage in a desired sex act

Toscano (2007) reports that an adolescent is more likely to stay in a negative and abusive relationship if the couple is sexually active. Peer opinion is very important at this age, and adolescents fear, for instance, that their partners may give them a bad reputation regarding sexual performance. Moreover, it appears that adolescents are more likely to tolerate sexually violent relationships when they believe that ending the relationship would compromise their position with their friends (Toscano, 2007).

We also note that many adolescents have romantic and idealistic notions of love. They often give much importance both to being in a relationship and to the length of time it lasts; consequently, they tend to want to continue the relationship even if it is abusive or negative (Toscano, 2007). As a result, an adolescent is more likely to engage in unwanted sexual acts when faced with a threat to break off the relationship. We must remember that for the person who has feelings for a violent partner, this individual is, above all, his or her lover.





3. Forcing the partner to have sex against his or her will or to submit to an unwanted sex act

Forcing someone to perform a specific sexual act or an act seen in a porn film, making him or her engage in humiliating sex acts (Fern et al., 2003), obliging this person to expose himself or herself, and forcing the person to kiss or caress are acts of sexual violence. Another form of sexual violence is making someone look at or watch pornographic material (Rondeau et al, 2007).

4. Not stopping sexual contact when asked to

Someone who consents to having sex is free to withdraw consent at any time (Lavoie et al., 1994). Not stopping a sexual act despite the partner's requests is sexual violence. Sometimes love can lead someone to believe that there is no need to talk to understand one another. Under these circumstances, a partner's intentions can be seriously misinterpreted. For example, just because the partner kisses, holds or caresses someone does not mean that he or she wants a complete sexual relation. Therefore it is important to make sure both people agree to have sexual relations (Lavoie et al., 1994).

5. Controlling a partner's sexuality by refusing to use a condom despite being asked to and/or controlling use of contraceptives such as the pill

Refusing to use protection such as condoms when having sexual relations despite the partner's requests to do so is a form of sexual violence (Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité, s.d.; Coker, 2007). Controlling a girl's sexuality by deciding for her whether or not she will use a contraceptive (e.g. the pill or Depo-provera), and deciding when she will take contraceptives are also types of sexual violence (Coker, 2007).

6. Using sexual blackmail

Some people use blackmail—especially sexual blackmail—to get what they want from their partners. For example, they use arguments such as, “If you don’t lend me your car, I won’t sleep with you tonight”, or “If you don’t come to my parents’ for dinner, I’ll never have sex with you again”. Girls use this type of sexual violence more often than boys (Rondeau, 2007).

7. Intentionally hurting a partner physically or psychologically while having sex

Some boys and girls take advantage of sexual relationships to put down their partners or hurt them physically. Making offensive comments on the size of a girl's breasts or a boy's penis, laughing at a partner's sexual performance, making comparisons with ex-partners (for example, with regard to sexual performance or genitals) are forms of violence. Another is being rough with the partner during sex, to the point where he or she is hurt or experiences pain (Coker et al, 2000).



TABLE 2 CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE WITHIN AN ADOLESCENT COUPLE

Types of consequences	Possible consequences for a victim of sexual violence	Possible consequences for a perpetrator of sexual violence
Psychological and social consequences	Fear of the other ¹ Sadness ² Guilt ¹ Loss of self-confidence ² Loss of self-esteem ² Dropping out of school ¹ Depression ¹ Suicidal ideation ³	Rejection by the partner ¹ Shame ¹ Loss of self-esteem ¹ Loss of others' esteem ¹
Physical consequences	Insomnia; drug and/or alcohol abuse ^{1,3} Eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia) ^{1,3} STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections) ^{1,4,5}	STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections) ¹
Consequences on sex life	STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections) ^{1,4,5} Absence of sexual desire ² Absence of sexual pleasure ¹ Sexual dysfunction (vaginismus, dyspareunia) ⁵ Perception of having less control over his or her sexuality ²	Non-reciprocated sexual pleasure ¹ Absence of the lover's affection ¹ STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections) ¹
Legal consequences		Community service work ¹ Stay in a youth centre ¹ Obligation to undergo therapeutic treatment ¹

1 Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b

2 Fernet et al., 2003

3 Sylverman et al., 2005

4 Raj et al., 2007

5 Coker, 2007

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE WITHIN ADOLESCENT COUPLES

Possible consequences for a victim of sexual violence

Psychological and social consequences

Someone who is the victim of sexual violence by a lover can become afraid of this partner (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b). Such a person risks feeling afraid, degraded (Fernet et al., 2003), threatened, and controlled by the person she loves. A victim can also feel guilty, blame herself or himself for acts carried out by the partner (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b), and lose confidence in his or her abilities (Fernet et al., 2003). In the long term, the person might quit school, suffer from depression (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b) and even think about suicide (Sylverman et al., 2001).

Physical consequences

Sexual violence can lead to anxiety that may disturb sleep: some experiences can provoke nightmares or insomnia (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b). A victim of sexual violence can also develop drug or alcohol addiction, or eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b, Sylverman et al., 2001).

Consequences on sex life

A recent New England study of 25 adolescent boys who perpetrated acts of sexual violence shows that adolescent boys who commit violent acts were more likely to report engaging in risky sexual practices, including having numerous sex partners and not using condoms (Raj, Reed, Miller et al., 2007). Consequently, adolescent girls who experience sexual violence are at higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Raj, Reed, Miller et al., 2007; Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b). Forced sexual relations usually result in absence of sexual pleasure (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b) and reduced sexual desire for the partner (Coker, 2007). Sexual violence can also contribute to developing sexual dysfunction such as vaginismus (contraction of vaginal muscle that prevents penetration) or dyspareunia (pain during, before or after sexual intercourse) (Coker, 2007). The victim can also perceive that she has less control over her sexuality (no control over use of protection and contraceptive methods, no control over when and how to express herself sexually) (Coker, 2007).

Possible consequences for a perpetrator of sexual violence

There are also consequences for a person who turns to sexual violence. They can be of a psychological, social, legal or sexual nature.

Psychological and social consequences

Perpetrators of sexual violence risk being rejected by their partners. They also risk feeling ashamed of the acts and pressure they inflict on their partners (Lavoie, Pacaud et Roy, 2005b). They might also perceive themselves as an aggressor without thinking any further about it (Fernet et al., 2003), and thus lose their self-esteem. They also risk loss of others' esteem and of friends, if the latter find out about the situation.

Legal consequences

Sexual violence is reprehensible in the eyes of society as well as the law. Adolescents who commit sexual violence can be sentenced to community service work or a stay in a youth centre, with therapy (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b).

Consequences on sex life

Victims of sexual violence often do not feel pleasure during sexual relations. If a sexual act is unwanted, there will not be reciprocal sexual excitement and pleasure. Moreover, it is highly likely that a person who uses sexual violence does not have or no longer has his or her partner's affection. A sexually violent intimate partner is also quite likely to have sexual relations with several partners and thus increase the risk of contracting STBBI (Lavoie, Pacaud and Roy, 2005b).

RESPONSIBILITY OF A PERPETRATOR OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

A question arises: Is there anything that can explain sexual violence? In fact, factors such as alcohol and drug use or family history of violence can foster sexually violent behaviours (Williams and Martinez, 1999). However, these factors are not excuses: no matter the context, someone who commits an act of sexual violence is always responsible for his or her behaviour (Lavoie et al., 1994; Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000). A boy’s claim that he couldn’t stop himself is not an excuse that justifies forcing sexual relations on someone. As is the case for other types of violence, sexual violence is, first and foremost, a way of exercising control over another person, not loss of control.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF A PERSON WHO EXPERIENCES SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Just as people who commit acts of sexual violence in relationships are responsible for their actions, it is also true that no matter what the circumstances are, victims are never responsible for the sexual violence inflicted upon them (Gouvernement du Québec, 1994).

sexual violence, since it is not always easy to admit to being a victim of sexual violence within one’s own couple. A victim may not be aware of the seriousness of the acts committed by his or her partner. You also have to proceed at the person’s pace and avoid rushing them (Rondeau, 2007). If this is the first time the person experiences sexual violence, you can ask whether he or she has discussed it with the partner, expressed unease, or talked about how she or he feels and about the need for respect. If yes, did the partner hear what was said? Perhaps the person has tried to communicate with his or her partner on several occasions. The situation risks escalating over time. The victim should be told about resources that exist, and be presented with the possibility of ending the relationship and reporting the violence to the police. It is also important to make it clear that the victim has your support, should she decide to file such a report.

A perpetrator of sexual violence needs help just as much as a victim does. He or she should be referred to a professional (psychologist, social worker, sexologist or other) or a self-help group.

TABLE 3 RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF A PERSON WHO IS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

<p>A person who experiences sexual violence has the right to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying “No” • Not going all the way, that is, not accepting penetration even if she or he accepts kisses and caresses • Withdrawing consent at any time during the sexual relation • Voicing an opinion regarding the use of protection and contraceptive methods • Asserting preferences about the sexual practices he or she wishes or does not wish to try • Refusing to be insulted or humiliated about his or her sexual body (e.g. offensive comments on the size of the penis or breasts).
<p>Duties include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting sexual violence to the police • Going for help

Source : Lavoie et al., 1994.

REPORTING AND PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone has the responsibility not to turn a blind eye to sexual violence. It is important to be critical about messages conveyed in the media. Media and pornographic films trivialize sexuality and thus can encourage sexual violence. For instance rough sex can be shown as something people want or as being the norm (Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000). However, adolescents, who are just learning about sex and love, can use what they see in the media and in porn films as models. It is important to point out that this type of sexuality does not reflect the reality of all couples, that it is marginal behaviour and that no matter what kind of relationship they have—lovers or just fuckfriends—violence is not acceptable.

In addition, it is essential that teachers and other professionals involved in the education of adolescents should work to prevent sexual violence in adolescent couples by making teens aware of the issue. This is the goal of the activities presented in the following section.

HOW TO HELP A PERSON WHO IS A VICTIM OR A PERPETRATOR OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

When someone tells us about a situation that appears to be sexual violence, we have a duty, as friend, parent or educator, to help this person. We have to take the time to listen and then refer the person to a qualified professional who can provide additional support (nurse, psychologist, social worker, sexologist, or other). Moreover, in some regions there are organisations that provide assistance to victims of sexual violence such as sexual assault or rape crisis centres (CALACS). Help lines such as Tel-jeunes are also available 24 hours a day for young people to talk to counsellors. When someone confides in you, it is important to take what he or she says seriously and not to challenge what has been said (Rondeau, 2007); otherwise you risk losing their trust. It takes courage to confide in someone about such a situation, and false allegations are rare. Firstly, the victim should be helped to understand that what she or he has experienced is



Learning Activities

The activities suggested here are intended especially for teens aged 16 and 17 (Secondary 5) and designed in accordance with the Québec Education Program. It is preferable to have introduced the subject of dating violence in general before conducting these activities. The facilitator can use “La violence dans les relations amoureuses n’a pas d’âge,” an article by Christeen Kaine (in French only) that appeared in 1998 in *Petit Magazine de la formation personnelle et sociale* (see [www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/its] in the section

documentation/professionnel de l’éducation). Someone from complementary educational services or from a community group could also be asked to help prepare or conduct these activities.

The table below indicates how the proposed activities can be integrated into the Québec Education Program and complementary educational services programs.

Possible associations with the Québec Education Program¹

GOALS OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Construction of identity
Construction of world-view
Empowerment

SUBJECT AREAS

Arts Education

In **visual arts** or **visual arts and multimedia** courses, the theme of dating violence can be broached through the creation of visual messages that are designed for specific audiences to inform and encourage them to think about the topic. The competency *Creates media images* is particularly appropriate for these activities.

The theme of dating violence can also be introduced in **drama** courses, where students can be asked to *create dramatic works*, which is appropriate for the competency of the same name.

Ethics and Religious Culture

The theme of dating violence can be introduced as part of ethical consideration of one’s perceptions, ideas and values regarding sexual relationships, in particular in situations where there is violence. More specifically, competencies could be sought related to considering ethical questions and engaging in dialogue.

BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING

Health and well-being:

Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.

Focuses of development:

Self-awareness and awareness of basic personal needs:

Self-affirmation; respect for one’s physical and psychological well-being; need for acceptance and growth; need for recognition and fulfillment, need to express emotions.

Awareness of the impact of personal choices on health and well-being:

Awareness of the basic rules for a balanced sexuality.

Citizenship and Community Life

Enable students to take part in the democratic life of the class or school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity.

Focuses of development:

Contribution to a culture of peace:

Reflection on the concept of power, concern about the application of principles of equal rights, understanding of the negative consequences of stereotypes and other forms of discrimination or exclusion, respect for confidentiality, promises, agreements or contracts.

CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

Exercising critical judgment:

Form an opinion, express personal judgement, explain one’s opinion.

Cooperate with others:

Contribute to teamwork, interact with an open mind, assess individual participation in teamwork.

Communicate:

Become familiar with and use various modes of communication, manage the communication process.

LEARNING CONTEXT

See instructions at the beginning of each activity.

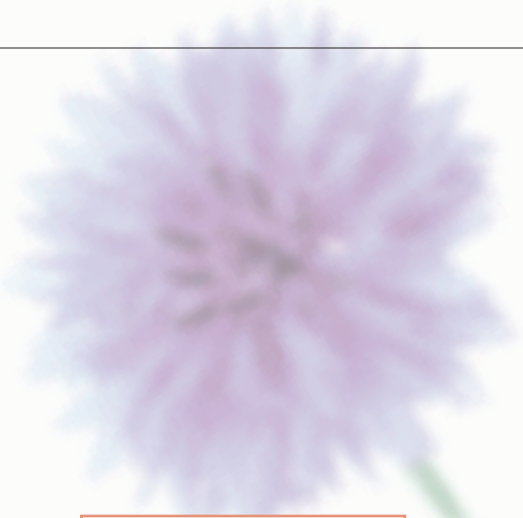
Associations with complementary educational services programs²

PROMOTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES PROGRAM:

Provide students with an environment conducive to the development of healthy lifestyles and skills that are beneficial to their overall health and well-being.

1 Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Programme de formation de l’école québécoise, Enseignement secondaire, deuxième cycle*, Québec, ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007.

2 Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec, *Les services éducatifs complémentaires : essentiels à la réussite*, ministère de l’Éducation du Québec, 2002.



What is sexual violence?

ACTIVITY 1

<p>DURATION 20 minutes</p>	<p>THE ACTIVITY CAN BE CONDUCTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In schools: By a teacher of the Ethics and Religious Culture course in collaboration with complementary services staff or a community organisation, a staff member in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement, a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist or a sexologist. • In the community: In a youth centre or community youth organisation. 	<p>PEDAGOGICAL GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define sexual violence • Provide a portrait of sexual violence in adolescent couples. 	<p>CONTENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual violence: What's going on, exactly? (p. 2) • What is sexual violence in adolescent couples? (p. 2-4)
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1

Discussion

The teacher or facilitator asks students to define what, in their opinion, sexual violence is within the couple. He or she points out accurate and false information, and explains that by using a True-False questionnaire, students will be better able to define sexual violence and understand related issues.

2

True-False Questionnaire

The teacher or facilitator reads the questions to the group and asks students to answer "Yes" or "No" aloud. For each question, a student who answers "Yes" and one who answers "No" are asked to explain their answers. All students are then asked if they wish to comment. The right answer and additional information are then given.

Statements	Answer
1. 25% of adolescent couples experience physical or sexual violence within their couple.	True (See article p. 2)
2. Sexual violence is often the last stage of dating violence.	True (See article p. 2)
3. Alcohol and drugs can be the causes of a violence problem.	False (See article p. 6)
4. Sexual violence is loss of control.	False (See article p. 6)
5. Boys can also be victims of sexual violence.	True (See article p. 2-4)

*Note: Boys are the main victims of one form of sexual violence (see p. 4, n°. 6).

Lonely hearts

ACTIVITY 2

<p>DURATION 45 minutes</p>	<p>POSSIBLE CONTEXT FOR THIS ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In school: The activity can take place during the Ethics and Religious Culture course. It can be done in collaboration with complementary services staff or a community organisation, a staff member in spiritual care, guidance and community involvement, a nurse, a social worker, a psychologist or a sexologist. • In the community: In a youth centre or community youth organisation. 	<p>PEDAGOGICAL GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise a situation of sexual violence • Be able to explain why the situation constitutes sexual violence • Be familiar with possible consequences of sexual violence within an adolescent couple 	<p>CONTENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible consequences of sexual violence within adolescent couples (p. 5) • The responsibility of someone who commits sexual violence (p. 6) • The rights and duties of a victim of sexual violence (p. 6) • How to help a person who is a victim or a perpetrator of sexual violence (p. 6)
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1

Team work

The teacher or facilitator divides the group into four teams. Each team is given one of four scenarios and corresponding questions for discussion.

Scenarios:

- A.** When Justin and Raluka have sex, he always makes offensive remarks about her breasts. He tells her he likes big breasts and that this is the first time he goes out with a girl whose breasts are so small. He asks her if she's ever thought about having cosmetic surgery. Also, he often asks her to get into positions where he won't have to see her breasts, which don't excite him at all. He says that luckily, Raluka's ass compensates for her little breasts! Raluka understands that he doesn't think she has nice breasts. Anyway, no one would find them beautiful. They're really way too small.
- B.** Geneviève has sex with her boyfriend Marc for the first time. She wants to use a condom for protection. It's important for her! But Marc thinks that a condom reduces sensations. When Geneviève asks him to wear a condom, Marc categorically refuses. He tells Geneviève that she doesn't trust him. He starts insulting her, calls her a whore, says that she's obviously been with someone else since she's asking him to use a condom. Geneviève is in tears. She apologises and reluctantly agrees to have sex without a condom.
- C.** Julie really wants Alexander to go with her to a friend's place for dinner. She's asked him several times during the day and he's refused every time. Julie is angry and tells herself she'll find a way to convince him. It's all she thinks about and she can't concentrate on her work. Later, when Alexander comes up to her, starts kissing and caressing her, and tells her he feels like making love, Julie snaps at him that he won't get anything if he doesn't come to dinner with her. Alexander is disappointed. It's not the first time Julie acts like this: she always uses sex to blackmail him. He wonders if this is normal and if his friends' girlfriends do the same thing.
- D.** Josée is 16 and has been in a relationship with Jonathan, 18, for five months. Until two weeks ago, Josée and Jonathan had never had sexual relations. Then, Jonathan started insisting. One evening, he tells Josée that he doesn't need a little inexperienced girl like her and that he'll go elsewhere if she doesn't "get with it." She finally gives in to his threats. Result: She experienced no pleasure because she felt ill at ease. Since then, every time Jonathan asks her to have sex, she feels she has to say yes since she gave in once already. She's wondering if all girls have this kind of experience and if she's worrying for nothing. She would like to talk about it with her friends or parents, but she can't do it. She feels both ashamed and afraid.

Questions for team discussion:

1. In your opinion, is this a situation of sexual violence? Explain.
2. What do you think of the act of sexual violence that one of the characters committed?
3. In your opinion, how did the victim of sexual violence feel?
4. What are the possible consequences of violence and of sexual violence for these boys and girls?

2

Plenary

A spokesperson for each team reads the scenario to the group and another talks about the outcome of the team's discussion. The teacher or facilitator reviews what has been said and adds complementary information if needed.

3

Scenario

The teacher or facilitator asks the teens to go back to their respective teams and then reads out the set-up and instructions for the rest of the activity. Each team treats the scenario assigned as a call for help.

Set-up:

You are a sexologist writing for a popular adolescent magazine called *Between Us* and are in charge of the "Lonely hearts" section. Recently, you received a very touching letter about sexual violence. Today you're answering this letter, offering support and advice to the person.

Instructions:

Write a response to the letter which includes the following elements:

- A sentence that clearly tells the person he or she is a victim of sexual violence;
- Advice and support

Each team names two representatives: one person reads the scenario and the other reads the letter composed by the team in response to the scenario. The teacher or facilitator goes over the letter's key points (identification of the violence, referral to a professional as needed, advice).



ACTIVITÉ 3

Creating artwork

DURATION

Students are given three weeks to create the artwork.

POSSIBLE CONTEXT FOR THIS ACTIVITY

- **In school:** The activity can take place during the visual arts or visual arts and multimedia course or as part of an art contest at school during a violence awareness week.
- **In the community:** In a youth centre or other community organisations.

PEDAGOGICAL GOAL

- Using a work of art to make peers aware of the consequences of sexual violence for a victim and/or perpetrator of such acts.

CONTENT

- Possible consequences of sexual violence within adolescent couples (p. 5)
- How to help a person who is a victim or a perpetrator of sexual violence (p. 6)

1

Informal presentation

NOTE: The teacher or facilitator and the students have defined sexual violence beforehand.

The teacher or facilitator asks adolescents what they think are the consequences of sexual violence for a victim and for a person who commits such acts. The teacher or facilitator supplements the presentation with elements found in Table 2 (p. 5) to make the information as clear and as easy to identify as possible for the youth.

2

The teacher or facilitator tells the young people about a contest to raise awareness about violence and makes a connection with the previous activities on the topic of sexual violence. He or she hands out a flyer that explains the contest criteria, registration deadline, deadline for submitting work, prizes to be won and a table showing the consequences of sexual violence (Table 2).

Contest criteria:

- *The artwork should define sexual violence or depict a situation of sexual violence.*
- *The artwork should present one or several consequences of sexual violence for the adolescent couple.*
- *The artwork should be produced with a goal of fostering awareness of sexual violence and its prevention.*
- *The artwork targets adolescents.*
- *Maximum of four team members.*
- *No vulgar words or images.*
- *No nudity.*
- *No sexist, homophobic or racist remarks.*
- *Musical productions (songs, videos) should be no longer than 4 minutes.*
- *Sketches should be no longer than 10 minutes.*

3

Production of artwork:

Interested teens will produce artwork (painting, drawing, sculpture, advertisement, song, video, sketch, or other) on the theme of prevention of sexual violence. The artwork should depict a situation of sexual violence or define sexual violence; it should also refer to one or several consequences of such violence (for the victim and/or the perpetrator).

4

Presentation of the artwork to a jury:

All contest participants are invited to present their artwork to a jury (at a predetermined date). The jury will select ten works.

5

Evening of unveiling:

The youth present their work during an evening held in their honour and to which professionals, teachers, parents and friends will be invited.

During the evening, a teacher or facilitator will raise the topic of sexual violence, point out the consequences and suggest avenues for intervention. The Web site address for this magazine can be given and a list of resources handed out. Snacks can also be served during the evening.

6

The artworks can be exhibited for about three weeks on the Internet or at a site chosen for this purpose.

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