



## Interactive Screening Event Host Discussion Guide

### Step 1: Prepare your welcome and introduction

Using the following statements as guides, welcome your guests and introduce the event. It helps to be a little vulnerable, to model the discomfort others may be feeling.

Sample introductory statements (pick those that resonate the most):

- My first conversation about sexual harassment or violence went like this:\_\_\_\_\_.
- I'm hosting this interactive screening event because \_\_\_\_\_.
- After attending an interactive screening event, I was surprised by \_\_\_\_\_.
- In my conversations since that event, I've learned \_\_\_\_\_.

Conversations about sexual harassment and violence can bring up a range of emotions. Remind people about self-care, and give them the option of stepping out or taking a break. Anyone - whether or not they are a survivor - can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE for support and referrals.

### Step 2: Share the framework.

Before diving into the videos and discussion about them, get grounded in the conversation framework. You can have your group watch the TEDx talk, [An Uncomfortable Conversation Worth Having](#), or simply discuss the insights below:

1. **Tell the truth about sexual violence.** Survivors exist across genders. Perpetrators exist across genders. All of us, regardless of gender can play a role in tackling sexual harassment and violence.
2. **Get uncomfortable.** Being uncomfortable is a skill. The more you do it, the better you get.
3. **Drop the blame game.** Blame makes us focus on the cause of the problem, not our role in the solution.
4. **Be practical.** Answering practical questions about sexual violence is a great place to start, and doesn't preclude deeper discussions about violence, gender, or oppression.

5. **Believe in healing.** Survivors are not defined by the moment of abuse or assault, especially when we stand in solidarity with the men and women who love us. When we believe in healing, we can see all the ways to support survivors in their journey through life.

### **Step 3: Assess your experience and discomfort**

Invite your guests to complete the [pre-screening survey](#), which will help contribute to overarching knowledge base about uncomfortable conversations.

Additionally, you can lead the attendees through a “stand-up, sit-down” exercise around the following statements:

Stand up – and remain standing – if you’ve had:

- At least one conversation your mom or dad (or older family member) about consent, impact of sexual violence or sexual violence prevention or advocacy? More than 5? More than 10?
- A conversation on these topics with your child, younger sibling, niece or nephew, or someone much younger than you? More than 5? More than 10?
- A formal class or training on consent, sexual violence or how to support survivors?
- A conversation with a female-identified survivor? More than 5? More than 10?
- A conversation with a survivor who did not identify as female (i.e., male or transgender)? More than 5? More than 10?
- A conversation where you objectified another human being through your words or behavior? Laughed at a joke you didn’t really think was funny?
- A conversation where you addressed troubling behavior or language among peers? More than 5? More than 10?
- A conversation where you have taken ownership for your own troubling behavior or language?

The purpose of the survey and this exercise is to understand that we all bring different levels of fluency to conversations about sexual harassment and violence. For some, this may be their first conversation. For others, their 1,000th.

### **Step 4: Watch the videos from a playlist from YouTube’s The Uncomfortable Conversation channel**

We’ve set up the following playlists to support conversations among the groups below. Pick the list that best aligns to your group and watch the videos together.

1. [Youth, College Students and Young at Heart](#) (designed for high school students, college students or other groups of peers)
2. [Educators, Youth Workers and Mentors](#) (designed for professionals who work with K-12 and college students): This is a mix of videos incorporating youth voice and conversations between adults and young people.
3. [Colleagues and Co-Workers](#) (designed to support workplace conversations)

### **Step 5: Get talking!**

Use the questions below to guide your conversation. Remember the framework, particularly the themes around practical questions and curiosity.

### **Youth, College Students and Young at Heart**

- Do these videos reflect some of the conversations you have (or wish you could have) with friends and dating partners? Why or why not? What resonated with you? What's missing?
- How have you learned about consent? Which adults have been most influential in helping you understand how to navigate relationships in healthy ways? What are the most helpful and unhelpful ways that older family members or friends respond to conversations about sexual harassment and violence?
- What do you wish you could talk to your friends about more openly when it comes to consent, relationships or experiencing trauma? What prevents you from talking about it?
- Do you laugh at jokes that you don't think are funny? Why?
- How have social movements (#MeToo) or prominent cases of sexual harassment or assault (Cosby, Weinstein, etc) changed the way you and your friends talk about sexual harassment or violence? Have these conversations become easier or more challenging? Are there things you are afraid to say?
- Which of the following myths and misperceptions about sexual harassment and violence are most prevalent in your social group? Are any of these myths a surprise to you? Why or why not? (EXAMPLES – clothing means you are asking for it, drinking means you consent to sex, saying yes to kissing means saying yes to everything)
- If you have any trusted friends or adults who you can talk openly about dating, sex, assault, and trauma with, how does it feel when you talk to that person? What do you feel like after you talk?
- What advice would you give to someone younger than you about how to better understand consent? What kind of advice might make them feel empowered, and not more vulnerable and without power?

## **Educators, Youth Workers, and Mentors**

- What are some of the conversations about sexual harassment and violence that have come up for you working with, teaching or mentoring youth? Have you felt equipped to navigate them? Why or why not? How does your organization's culture support (or not support) these conversations?
- Are there conversations you have overheard that reflect some of the peer pressure dynamics represented? Have you found ways to help young people notice culture or pressure that are effective (or NOT effective)?
- How have social movements (#MeToo, etc) and media coverage of prominent cases (Catholic Church, Larry Nassar, Bill Cosby, etc) impacted the kinds of conversations you are having with young people about sexual harassment and violence? Have the public conversations made it easier or harder to address these topics? Who is vocal? Who is silent?
- How does consent show up in your classroom, student activities or relationship with young people? Do you explicitly define consent? How do you navigate physical touching in the context of working with young people?
- Have you witnessed troubling behavior among young people? What did you witness? Were you able to address it? What about addressing more subtle behaviors, like peer pressure, comments about bodies or clothing, or joking about bodies or identities?
- Has a student or young person ever disclosed sexual harassment, abuse or assault to you? Did you feel prepared to handle the disclosure? Why or why not? What resources are available for students who have experienced trauma in your school?
- What kinds of challenges do you face or anticipate facing when having conversations about sexual assault with youth, in which you wish to provide them with resources and sources of empowerment, but want to avoid making them feel disempowered or like potential victims?
- Do you feel comfortable approaching conversations about building consent culture within your school's adult community? Why or why not?

## **Colleagues and Co-Workers**

- How has MeToo changed the way you talk about sexual harassment in the context of your professional role? What conversations are easier? What conversations are harder?

- Has your workplace provided formal training on sexual harassment? What was helpful or unhelpful about the training? What further training would be of interest to you or helpful to your colleagues?
- Does your workplace proactively support survivors of sexual abuse or assault? If so, how?
- Have you ever witnessed behavior or language at work that made you feel uncomfortable in the context of sexual harassment? Did you speak up? Why or why not?
- Has your manager spoken to you about your experiences of safety and respect in the workplace? Have you spoken to colleagues or direct reports about this?
- Have the leaders in your organization spoken publicly about sexual harassment? What were their comments? What would you want to hear them say?

### **Additional Discussion Questions for All Groups**

#### **Supporting Survivors**

Supporting a friend who is a survivor of sexual violence takes courage, honesty and compassion. Oftentimes, friends and allies feel helpless. You can't make it so your friend wasn't raped or assaulted. You can't personally bring the perpetrator to justice. You can't feel their feelings for them. You can't make them stop hurting themselves. These are all things a survivor has to do on their own. By empowering your survivor friend to chart their own healing pathway, you are giving them back control they didn't have as a victim. And part of that is making space for conversations that are healing.

#### *Reflection Questions:*

1. Talk about the first time you encountered a survivor of sexual violence. How old were you? How did they disclose to you?
2. Do you have friends who are survivors? How and when did they tell you? What did you do or say? How did you feel? What do you wish you had known about sexual violence before they shared their experience with you? What did you learn about sexual violence through this friendship?
3. What about male friends specifically? Has a male friend ever disclosed sexual violence to you?
4. Once you know a friend is a survivor, how do you keep the topic alive in your friendship? Has it been difficult to bring it up after the initial disclosure?
5. Are there ways you have shown support to friends on important or meaningful dates (anniversary of assault, abuser's birthday, etc)?
6. How do you know when to listen and when to respond?

7. Have you struggled with the tendency to fight, flight or fix? What strategies have you used to empower friends and support them?

## **Accountability**

Through our words, our actions, our silence and our inaction, we make it possible for perpetrators to get away with sexual violence and allow survivors to feel incredibly alone and ashamed. Being accountable requires courage, and courage requires action in the face of fear. As we become more aware about the role culture plays in sexual violence, we have the opportunity to step into being accountable – a step that starts with acknowledging and repairing our own behavior and attitudes.

### *Reflection Questions*

1. Have you ever witnessed troubling behavior among your male friends? What did you do or say? Were you with other friends? Did you talk about it with others after the fact?
2. Have you ever felt pressured to behave in a way that you thought was disrespectful to others, specifically to survivors of sexual violence? Have you laughed at jokes you thought weren't really all that funny?
3. How do you respond to a culture that makes it okay to objectify others? Are there strategies you use to object to objectification?
4. Reflecting on the issue of harassment and sexual violence today, are there things you have said or done that you regret? What are they? Have you made an attempt to repair or show accountability?

## **Additional Resources**

- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE
- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)
- [Planned Parenthood's videos and curriculum guides on consent education](#)
- [RAINN's National Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors and their Loved Ones](#)
- [Youth Against Sexual Harassment Facebook Group](#)
- [MeTooK12 from Stop Sexual Assault in Schools-](#) resource guides for parents, educators, and students
- [The Theater Offensive-](#) Boston- based theater company with strong resources and programming for youth around gender and sexuality
- [Speak About It-](#) an internationally touring theater performance educating college and high school students about consent