

Brother Martin High School
Prevention of Abuse and Harassment –Student Education Program

Teacher Guide—Target Group; 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Grades (up to 2 class days)

The grade level counselor or a school administrator may be present with you during these classes. Their presence is for support. You should feel free to call on them to assist in answering student questions and clarifying content.

Objectives of Lesson:

1. To inform young people about abuse and harassment issues including sexual abuse
2. To teach young people how to protect themselves against abuse and harassment
3. To present strategies for reporting and getting help with issues of abuse and harassment.

-----Day #1-----

1. ***Begin class with a prayer.***
2. ***Pose the following questions and use student responses to define key points to be brought out in the lesson.*** (Note: You may find it helpful to have students respond confidentially to these questions in their notebooks before asking for verbal responses.):
 - What can adults do to harm you? (lead student responses to include physical and sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, etc.)
 - What can others, including my peers do to make me feel uncomfortable or threatened? (lead student responses to include bullying and other types of peer to peer harassment)
 - How common do you think it is for adults to harm young people?
 - How common is it for young people to harm or harass other young people?
3. “Today we are going to discuss abuse and harassment, and specifically child sexual abuse—what it is, ways to avoid sexual abuse and harassment, and things to do if you or someone you know has been abused or harassed.

“Unfortunately, an alarming number of teens and children are not given a choice about engaging in sexual activity. Sex is forced upon them by someone older and stronger, often someone they know and love. In these situations sex is a degrading act of violence.

It is estimated that one in three girls and one in five boys are sexually abused at least once by the time they are eighteen. In some cases, especially those involving incest, the abuse occurs on a regular basis for many years.

“The average age for sexual abuse is about 10 or 11, but children of all ages, even teenagers, have been molested.” (*Talking About Child Sexual Abuse, second edition.* Cornelia Spelman)

Use the above statistics and student comments about how common abuse and harassment is to demonstrate the importance of this topic.

4. **Explain the objectives of this lesson:** a) to make you more aware of issues of abuse and harassment; b) to equip you to respond effectively should you or any of your friends ever experience this problem.
5. **Continue the discussion by posing the following questions** . (Note: Again, you may find it helpful to have students write these questions confidentially in their notebooks before responding in open discussion.):
 - Do we need/do we have laws protecting minors from all the types of abuse we have discussed?
 - Do you know of any such laws?
 - Do we need/do we have rules about harassment/bullying?
6. **Use the handout Laws and Rules to present the Louisiana Children’s Code, the Archdiocese of New Orleans Policy Concerning Abuse or Neglect of Minors, and the Harassment section from the behavior policy. Read (or have students read) each section and compare previous discussions and key point the students made with what is covered in each of these items.**
7. **Discuss these laws, policies and school rules. Do these need to be changed in any way to more effectively protect young people?**
8. **Homework assignment for end of Day #1 and in preparation for Day #2: Think about any situation you know where you or someone you know has experienced these problems of abuse, neglect or harassment. Without asking you to reveal the identity of people involved, I will ask some volunteers to share with us in class tomorrow some of these situations.**

-----Day #2-----

1. **Begin class with prayer.**
2. **Review by asking students, “What did you learn yesterday about abuse and harassment?”** (Invite individuals to briefly describe situations—in writing in their notebooks first and then with the class group— involving abuse or harassment that they are aware of.)
3. **Pose the following questions and again use student responses to define key points.** (Note: Consider having students write a response in their notebooks to these questions before making open comments.):
 - How would you know or suspect that some sort of abuse was taking place?
 - What would you do if you were aware of or suspected that you or someone else was being abused?
 - What would you do if you felt that you or someone else was being harassed or bullied?
4. **Use the handout Signs of Possible Abuse/Where to go for Help to clarify for students the signs of possible abuse, the ways available to them to tell someone about their knowledge or suspicions about abuse or harassment, and what responsibilities the adults in their lives have to report and deal with these issues.**

5. *Pose the following questions.* (Note: Again, consider having students write before verbally responding.):
- What can you do to protect yourself from the possibility of any type of abuse?
 - What can you do to protect yourself from being harassed?
6. *Use the handout Protecting Yourself to guide students through a discussion of things they can do to protect themselves from the possibility of any type of abuse and from harassment.*
7. *Use the handout on Expectations You Can Have of Adults as a guide to give examples of what your students, as minors, should be able to expect of the adults in their lives. “These are the kinds of things we as faculty members expect of ourselves as we work with you.” Use the two questions at the end of the handout to continue the discussion.*
8. *Explicitly encourage students to speak with a responsible adult who can and will help them or anyone they know who is experiencing problems with abuse or harassment in school, at home, from peers or in any other setting. Emphasize the following points:*
- If someone experiences these problems, something **can and should be done!**
 - Young people cannot handle these issues alone without adult assistance.
 - The responsible and “most loyal” thing to do is to get the information to an adult by sharing honestly your concerns even if you are not absolutely certain that abuse or harassment is taking place.
 - If a friend tells you that they have been physically or sexually abused by an adult and asks you to promise not to tell, don’t be sworn to secrecy. Don’t promise not to tell anyone. Say, **“I can’t promise to keep a secret if your life is in danger or you are being hurt.”** Then, seek the help of a trusted adult or professional who can help you report the situation.
9. *Conclude by asking each student to return the response/evaluation form (additional handout). Students have the option of signing their names or not, but all students must return it at the end of the period. This response/evaluation form includes the following questions:*
- What surprised you about these two lessons on abuse and harassment?
 - What else should be done to educate young people about these issues?
 - Do you know of someone experiencing problems with abuse or harassment? If “Yes,” please give the name of the person about whom you are concerned.
 - Would you like your teacher or guidance counselor to speak privately and confidentially with you about these issues? If so, please sign your name.