
EDUCATOR ANSWER KEY—IS IT WRONG?

1. Jokes are a part of popular culture. They often normalize things that are taboo and/or hard to talk about. “Rape jokes” are a part of rape culture and are a form of sexual violence because they normalize and trivialize sexual assault.
2. Choice of clothing does not equal or signal an invitation to be sexual. If someone expresses their femininity in terms of revealing clothing, it does not mean that they want to have sex or even that they like you. All that it means is that they wanted to wear those items of clothing. Gender norms that link certain expressions of femininity to a desire to be sexual and assume consent based on these expressions need to be challenged in order to stop victim blaming.
3. Guys, like all human beings, want to belong, want friendship and respect. When belonging, respect, and friendship are tied to sexual experience, there is a lot of social pressure. In the context of masculinity and gender norms, this pressure can end up rewarding aggression and linking “manhood” to sexual experience at any cost.

For further discussion: What happens if that respect comes at the price of doing something against his beliefs? How does it feel to be under that kind of social pressure?



4. Harassment makes people feel unsafe; street harassment (i.e., “cat-calling”) is no exception, even if you think you are giving a compliment. Street harassment is on the continuum of sexual violence.

For further discussion: When intent (compliments, invitations) is different from impact (feeling unsafe, disrespected), how do we decide what is appropriate in any given moment? Try to put yourself in the shoes of someone being hollered at, does it feel like a compliment or does it feel disrespectful and/or unsafe?

5. Coercion is defined as using intimidation or manipulation to get someone to do something they would otherwise not do. Paying for something on a date because you expect to get something sexual in return is manipulative and coercive. The expectation that you are then owed, comes from the gendered idea that guys are owed sex if they check all the “right” boxes. Usually the right boxes are based on assumptions about what “women” as a homogeneous category want, as opposed to seeing and communicating with the individual in front of them.

For further discussion: Does using guilt count as coercion? What determines if a kiss is wanted or unwanted? Should it be whether they were treated to dinner or should it be whether there is explicit consent, without coercion? Where does this sexual script come from?

6. Sexual violence exists on a continuum. Even if someone is not physically injured, they might be emotionally or mentally injured. Rape culture obscures sexual violence by only recognizing sexual assault that results in injury and/or murder. **For further discussion:** Think about the visual of an iceberg. The majority of an iceberg exists below the water's surface and is invisible; yet, this invisible mass allows the tip of the iceberg (that we can see) to exist above the surface. There is an entire culture supporting the escalation of sexual violence before it gets to the very visible manifestations.
7. Men/boys (including cisgender and transgender men) can be and are survivors of sexual violence. All human beings have the right to bodily autonomy and consent is a huge part of ensuring that this right is fulfilled. Where consent is not respected and bodily autonomy is violated, sexual assault has occurred regardless of assigned sex and gender identity. Men/boys who are sexually assaulted often feel the stigma of being sexually assaulted and the stigma of not being “manly” enough (i.e., too feminine) to stop it from happening. This is a good example of how sexism, rape culture, and restrictive gender norms cause harm to everyone, regardless of assigned sex and/or gender identity.
8. Conflating regrets with sexual assault is one way that victim blaming happens—survivors are painted as faking it to preserve a reputation. Gender norms exacerbate this through narrowly defined versions of femininity and masculinity that reward certain behaviour while punishing others, depending on your gender identity. For instance, cisgender girls/women are often labelled as “sluts” and cisgender boys/men as “studs” (with the associated negative and positive meanings), regardless of what actually occurred sexually and regardless of consent. Because being labelled a “stud” is largely considered positive and being a “slut” negative, it is often cisgender girls/women who need to preserve their reputation and are not believed if they report. Cisgender boys/men who have been sexually assaulted may also be scared to report because of the way their masculinity might be questioned.
9. There could be many reasons you might want to stop or change what you are doing sexually. Some reasons include: not experiencing pleasure, experiencing pain or discomfort, mentally and emotionally distancing yourself from the experience, etc. You always have the right to stop what is happening.
10. Rape culture can make everyone feel unsafe or disempowered to speak up. Rape culture can also distort actual and perceived risk by perpetuating myths about who “perpetrators” and “victims” are. Anyone is a potential perpetrator, a potential victim, and a potential bystander. Challenging rape culture and promoting a culture of consent means that everyone will be better equipped to practise sexual consent and communicate more openly about sexual pleasure, desire, and intimacy.

