

Questions and Answers from the October 11, 2017 Webinar

The Talk:

How Adults Can Promote Young People’s Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment | Making Caring Common

Webinar Participant Questions	Joe McIntyre from Making Caring Common	Kay Reed from The Dibble Institute
1. Are there other kindness or empathy building curricula that you can recommend for educators?? (ages 9 – 17)	MCC is developing “empathy strategies”, which are intended to be simple, low-burden interventions to be used in classrooms (in middle- and high-schools). We’re currently testing, and may have recommendations next year.	Check-out: The Positivity Project The Responsive Classroom Free Spirit Publishing CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)
2. Are these resources also available in Spanish?	We have translated some of our surveys into Spanish, specifically those intended for parents. However, we have not yet translated our reports.	
3. Did your research focus on youth wanting advice from parents/schools or more on resources and 'guidance'?	They were asking about specific kinds of guidance from teachers and parents.	
4. Do you feel the statistics for how this all affects the LGBTQIA community is still not quite where it should be?	Yes. It is understudied.	
5. How differently would you address "the talk" to a same sex relationship vs a heterosexual one?	A lot of the basics would be very similar: relationships should be based on respect, consent, and care for the other person. I think The Talk could be adapted in a fairly straightforward way.	

<p>6. Do you have any recommendations on how to gain access to students in the schools to educate them on healthy dating behavior? We have come up against barriers.</p>		<p>Research your state’s curricular frameworks for health and Family and Consumer Sciences. In those frameworks, you will see how/if relationship skills will help meet those frameworks. There may be other pathways through violence prevention, pregnancy prevention, social and emotional learning. I’m happy to work with you on figuring this out! Email me at kayreed@dibbleinstitute.org.</p>
<p>7. Have you held workshops for parents to build their confidence in having these conversations with their kids? Also, how do we expect parents to have these conversations when they themselves may be in unhealthy relationships or be unaware of the problematic nature of misogyny?</p>	<p>We’ve done at least a little parent training. It’s challenging for parents to talk to kids about issues that they themselves struggle with, but I think parents can frequently help children to identify unhealthy relationships, even if they don’t know how to recognize/handle their own unhealthy relationship. And I think that even parents who don’t recognize the pervasive influence of misogyny will generally agree that relationships should be based on respect. However, there may be some hard cases who don’t, and I’m not sure how to reach them.</p>	
<p>8. How do I have these conversations with young people who have already adopted an unhealthy relationship model or shown signs of abusive behaviors?</p>	<p>Even if the young person doesn't appear interested, the young person may be internalizing the information and conversations. Persistence, a willingness to listen, and setting a clear example can all help.</p>	<p>Healthy relationships are based on skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Young people, even those with unhealthy behaviors, can often learn how to form and maintain healthy relationships because most want to have long lasting satisfying relationships but may not know how to do that.</p>
<p>9. Any advice on how to use this info to pitch incorporating messages about sexual relationships in high schools? Getting important info to students about sex and sexuality has been very difficult - but many (or most) students are not hearing it from parents.</p>	<p>Framing the issue differently (“This is about forming mature romantic relationships.” instead of “This is about mutually pleasurable sexual relationships.”) might help. Alternately, there may be legal requirements that schools combat sex-/gender-based harassment.</p>	<p>Your state’s curricular frameworks may be your friend here. As in Question 6, you may find a way in through health or Family and Consumer Sciences. As Joe mentions, schools also have mandates about dating violence, bullying and the like. So, that may be another option.</p>

<p>10. How do we "square" the perceptions of sexuality in social media with a healthy view of sex?</p>	<p>One approach is to talk to kids about the difference between mature sexual relationships (and actual, real sexual relationships) and the way sexuality is depicted in social media and in the media, more generally. Sharing your perspectives on the ways in which various media misrepresent sexuality might be influential on children, and listening to their thoughts and perspectives might be helpful for you.</p>	<p>Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships has a whole lesson on media messages. It presents a framework for analyzing role modeling as presented by pop culture, TV, and movies and explores social messages that influence behavior and relationship expectations.</p>
<p>11. How do we instill these values in young people, especially young men, when sexual harassment, assault, and rape continue to go unpunished on the national scale?</p>	<p>It's a huge challenge, and one thing to do is to make it clear that sexual harassment and assault are not acceptable, even if people who commit sexual assault and rape go unpunished by society. I think a lot of young men are also disturbed to see sexual crimes be forgiven when the offender is powerful enough, and having conversations with important adults in their lives can help.</p>	<p>Take a look at this bit of research on Relationship Smarts PLUS (RQ+): The Effects of Relationship Education on Adolescent Traditional Gender Role Attitudes and Dating Violence Acceptance.</p> <p>It finds that youth in RQ+ became less traditional in their gender role beliefs and this reduction was associated with a reduction in the endorsement of the use of aggression in relationships.</p>
<p>12. How do you deal with the effects of early porn exposure on young people's expectations of sex & relationships?</p>	<p>Similar to the question about social media, talking with young people about how pornography represents sexuality in ways that are unrealistic can be helpful. These conversations might be extremely uncomfortable, and it could help to begin by talking about the ways popular media misrepresent sexuality.</p>	<p>Most people, including young people, want to connect with others in a meaningful way. We often assume that the skills needed to do that come naturally, but they don't necessarily. Using a relationship skills program or activity can help build the behaviors and knowledge to build meaningful relationships including romantic, sexual relationships. We do have preliminary evidence, as yet unpublished, that learning relationship skills can help young men change their hyper-sexualized behaviors.</p>
<p>13. How would you advise me to implement the information provided on young adults with developmental/ mental disabilities?</p>	<p>I don't know enough about the issue to provide helpful suggestions, but would second the Dibble recommendation.</p>	<p>This is such an important question. Look at Mike's Crush on the Dibble website. It's for young people on the autism spectrum or with developmental disabilities.</p>

<p>14. Is it ethical though for a teacher to instill morals and values in the youth they teach? As an important adult in a young person's life I totally agree, just not sure I agree with teachers</p>	<p>Values of honesty, openness, respect, honor, and courage can be taught by teachers. When teachers talk "at" a student it can be a problem. Teachers can listen to young people. Help young people connect their values to their values around sex and relationships.</p>	<p>We believe that young people can learn how to think about their own values and ways to implement them. Many of our programs include a lesson on values because without knowing their own values, it is difficult to make choices about romantic partners. So, a teacher's role is to allow young people to think about their own values and to, as Joe says, teach universal values like honesty, respect, courage, etc.</p>
<p>15. Are there resources for the teens themselves to check out for more information on the few topics I may be able to mention to them?</p>	<p>Listed at the end of The Talk resource sheet are resources for teens and young adults.</p>	<p>Here is the Dibble collection of links on relationship skills for teens.</p>

<p>16. It seems young people are talking more to adults at school than to parents, is this due to schools being more aware of these issues, or parents not wanting to deal with this area as much?</p>	<p>That's really hard to answer, but a great question. I think part of it is that most schools have curricula that talk about sexuality, even if those curricula sometimes fail to cover important issues. In contrast, some parents may feel too uncomfortable to even begin these conversations. Or they may have them in such indirect ways that the kids don't even realize what they've been about.</p>	
<p>17. What is the data about young men being harassed?</p>	<p>They did not ask about young men being harassed. The AAUW has reported adolescent males have reported high incidence of sexual harassment, though less than young women. Similarly, the National Crime Victimization Survey (I think) reports that men experience sexual assault at rates that many people might find surprising, though still far less than women.</p>	
<p>18. In my experience, there is tremendous sexual pressure from girls to boys especially in the middle school age. Comments?</p>	<p>Good observation! Unfortunately, this was not a focus of our research.</p>	

<p>19. Are there activities or videos you would recommend using when talking about sexual harassment with a class?</p>		<p>Check out: Love is Respect That's Not Cool Consent – It's as Simple as Tea</p>
<p>20. When you say "many" men considered street harassment acceptable - what proportion was this?</p>	<p>31% of young men who believed that a woman in a scenario would experience a negative emotion as a result of street harassment (angry, offended, or frightened) also rated the street harassment itself as either acceptable or somewhat acceptable.</p>	
<p>21. At what age is it appropriate to begin talking to adolescents about healthy intimacy and relationships.</p>	<p>I don't think kids are ever too young, it's just a matter of how the conversations should be structured. I emphasize to my three-year-old that I need her permission before I hug, kiss, or tickle her and I talk to my eight-year-old about the importance of respecting the feelings of her classmates, and how the fact that she has a crush on them doesn't mean that they'll always reciprocate. Healthy intimacy and relationships should be built on caring and respect, and kids are never too young to hear about those values.</p>	<p>We see people talking to young people about healthy intimate relationship in middle school – 6th grade or so. But Joe is correct, helping children learn how to have good relationships and friendships is something that can begin very early in life.</p>