



Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review

Curriculum Title: Shifting Boundaries

Year Published: 2012

Publisher: Prevent Connect

Website: <http://www.preventconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Shifting-Boundaries-w-Copyright-at-Lib-of-congresst.pdf>

Full or Supplemental: Supplemental

Grade Level:  Middle School (grades 6-7)

Student Population: General

Duration/Number of Lessons: 4 to 6 lessons

Format and Features: PDF, DVD, posters

Evidence-based/informed: Not evident

National Standards Alignment: Not evident

Healthy Youth Act Compliance: With modification (see reviewer comments and scores)

AIDS Omnibus Act Compliance: N/A

Bias Free Materials: With modification (see reviewer comments and scores)

Primary Topical Areas (Check all that apply)

- Abortion
- Abstinence
- Access to Services
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Communication/Decision-making
- Condom Use
- Consent
- Contraception
- Healthy relationships
- HIV Prevention
- Identity/Orientation
- Online Safety
- Pregnancy & Reproduction
- Puberty/Adolescent Development
- Refusal Skills
- STD Prevention
- Other

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer 208

It is age appropriate and I like how they make the students aware of what the law says. However, I feel that there is not enough time spent explaining consent, gender-roles and how these roles may play a role in abusive relationships.

Reviewer 205

The curriculum does not seem to be inclusive of all gender identities, abilities, or sexual orientations. I was surprised at how important it made identifying a student's gender (boy/girl) and the implications that boundaries or other responses will be different based on one's gender identity.

I had to look up the 6th grade video online as the web address provided did not work. I am concerned there is not enough discussion and support around the family violence in the video.

The 7th grade curriculum had better instructor guidance, but overall, I feel there is a lack of support for instructors.

I like the variation in activities and the boundaries discussion overall. It also did a good job at examples of harassment and boundary crossing by male and female students.

Reviewer 202

I appreciated how "Shifting Boundaries" focused on learning the preventive skill of boundaries and school culture change. These are the big pieces as to what changes a school's prevalence of sexual violence. The mapping activity requires the educator to draw a "crude" map of the school, make photocopies, and have the students color-code the areas where they may feel safe or not. This is a brilliant activity and could really make an impact on how a school responds to violence.

One overall issue with the curriculum is that it does not leave room for students who may be outside of the gender binary. In the school mapping activity and the personal safety activity, students are required to proclaim their gender as "boy" or "girl" and these answers are used to analyze responses and results. This could easily be changed to be more inclusive and the activities would be much more effective.

Reviewer 203

Overall, I would recommend the use of the building/ environmental assessment (Mapping "Hot Spots") but would NOT recommend the use of the educational lessons for students. I believe this is consistent with the research on this program, where evaluators found that the student lessons had no effect, but the building level intervention did have a positive effect on reducing sexual harassment.

I reviewed this curriculum for middle school students; however, we were not provided the videos. Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether it includes bias free materials, since these would be the only imagery of young people in the curriculum.

The curriculum lessons for students seem outdated, not only because it was published in 2010 (and duplicates much of the original content that was created in 1994. The graphic design (on the handouts) seems outdated from the 90s. There are references to "writing notes" and "sending e-mails" and using "MySpace" which are not modes of communication that

middle school students use currently. I would adapt to include common forms of social media that are popular among your students (i.e. Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)

As mentioned above, my main concern with this program is the lessons for students. (I think the building assessment of hotspots (red/ yellow/green areas are a major plus- see more below).

Two examples of concerns: In one lesson, students have to measure personal space. For example, they have to have a girl approached by a boy, then a girl approached by a girl, then a boy approached by a girl, etc. Then the student has to indicate when they want the person to stop. The distance is recorded. I think this could lead to a further polarization of boys and girls. I could envision a classroom where it just turns into a rowdy game, or where oversimplified generalizations about gender are exacerbated (i.e. the idea that boys are gross, dangerous, so different from girls, etc.). Even worse, I could see the game making certain students feel very unsafe.

The other major flaw is the “Respecting Boundaries Agreement.” This has a student complete who has been the target of sexual harassment, and separately the aggressor, each fill out a separate form. To the target, the final question is “what are some things you might be able to do to avoid the boundary violations? And “(what can you do to) not accept negative boundary behaviors?” This sends the message to the target (i.e. victim) that THEY HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY to avoid the harassment. Meanwhile the aggressor is asked “What are some steps that you could take to make sure that you and your peers feel comfortable and respected?” Again, why is the message to the victim that they need to change their behavior, but the approach toward the aggressor is to help them create a safer community for everyone? The wording and approach of this entire strategy is problematic.

The highlight of this program (and the only part I would use) is the Mapping “hot” and “cool” spaced at school which is considered the “building-level intervention.” It empowers the students AND the school staff to give input into how to look at environmental factors that either increase or decrease sexual harassment. It gives tips for how to have the students identify the problem areas of the school (using a map of the campus that they color code). Then the program offers guidance for how adults can compile/ assess the results, present the results to key stakeholders, and make a plan to address the concerns. I could see students and staff and administrators all having great ideas how to reduce the issues related to bulling and harassment when given the tools and platform to give their input. This component of the program is a great example of “community level” prevention, and would complement other individual and relationship level prevention strategies you are using (such as another healthy relationship curriculum, abuse prevention program, social emotional learning, consent education, etc.)

In summary, I would not recommend using the lessons for students, but would recommend using the building-level intervention.