

MVP PLAYBOOK

FOR

FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By Jackson Katz

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MVP
Strategies
Gender Violence Prevention
Education and Training

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MVP MODEL

The MVP Model is an approach to gender violence and bullying prevention that was first developed in the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program, founded in 1993 at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

Initially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the multi-racial, mixed gender MVP Program was designed to train male and female, college and high school student-athletes and other student leaders to use their status to speak out against rape, dating violence, sexual harassment, bullying, and all forms of violent and abusive behavior. (The playbook structure and sports terminology date from the program's sports culture origins.)

The MVP Model utilizes a creative "bystander" approach to gender violence and bullying prevention. The female version

focuses on young women not as victims or potential targets of abuse, but as empowered bystanders and supportive friends. The heart of the MVP Model is discussion, using real-life scenarios that speak to the experiences of young women in high school and college. The intent of the interactive dialogue is to stimulate discussion about ways to intervene before, during, and after instances of harassing or abusive behavior by either sex.

Since its inception, the MVP Model has been implemented in a variety of academic, community, and other educational settings across the United States, including dozens of universities and colleges, and hundreds of high schools and middle schools. While the MVP model was first developed in the sports culture, the MVP approach is effective in working with varied and diverse populations of students and professionals.

INTRODUCTION

The MVP PLAYBOOK for female high school students highlights the role that empowered young women can play in preventing or interrupting sexist or abusive behavior. Its purpose is to facilitate stimulating and productive discussions about common situations that young women in high school often experience, but rarely have the chance to talk about in a safe educational setting.

The scenarios in the Playbook focus on young women as bystanders to sexist and abusive behavior, not as the targets or potential targets of this behavior. The goal is to suggest ways that friends, classmates, teammates, and others can speak out in the face of abusive or harassing behavior, as well as provide support and assistance to your peers.

The idea is to help create a peer culture climate in your school and in your social circles whereby harassing and bullying behavior - by boys or girls - will be seen as uncool, not funny, and completely socially unacceptable.

In this new climate, rates of sexual harassment, sexual assault, teen dating violence, and bullying will decline dramatically, as will the amount of unnecessary pain and suffering they cause. Another positive outcome of this reduction of violence will be that both girls and boys will better be able to interact and communicate with each other honestly and respectfully.

WORKING DEFINITIONS *

Assault When your behavior towards a specific person is calculated to cause that person to be afraid, even when no contact is made, you may have committed assault. For example, when a man exhibits intimidating behavior toward a female, he may have committed an assault against her.

Battery When you intentionally and unjustifiably use force, make unpermitted contact with a person, or physically harm that person, you have committed battery. Battery generally requires that you have touched the person or made contact with that person by use of yourself, a weapon, or other device.

Consent (involving alcohol and/or drugs) A male who engages in sexual intercourse with a woman when he knows she is under the influence of alcohol or drugs may also be guilty of rape. Here the act of sexual intercourse is considered to be against the woman's will if she cannot use her judgment, thereby making the act nonconsensual. If she is asleep or unconscious, she is incapable of consent. If the female remains conscious, although under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but does not object, sexual intercourse may be considered rape because her ability to resist has been taken away by the alcohol or drug use.

In a situation in which the defendant is charged with rape and he claims as a defense that he was too intoxicated to have known what he was doing, courts have found that voluntary intoxication cannot be used as a defense to the charge or as an excuse or justification for the crime.

Rape If you force a person to have sexual intercourse, oral or anal sex, against her/his will or by using force, threatening to hurt that person or a third person, you have committed rape. Penetration, no matter how slight, is necessary to call the act rape, but emission is not necessary. Penetration may be of the vagina, the mouth or the anus and may be by penis, finger, tongue, or other object.

Self-Defense A right to use reasonable non-leadly force may arise where a person is reasonably concerned for his or her own personal safety. The extent to which a person may

use force in his or her own defense depends upon many circumstances, including whether the person has availed him or herself of all other available means of retreat or escape. If self-defense is claimed, the force used to defend one's self must also be reasonable under the circumstances. Some of these circumstances may include the place of the attack, the type of attack, the relative physical prowess of the people involved and the opportunities for escape. Self-defense cannot ordinarily be claimed by a person who initiates an affray.

Sexual Assault If you touch someone in a sexual manner (making sexual contact) and the touching is offensive to that person, you have committed sexual assault. 'Sexual contact' is any touching of the sexual or intimate parts (breasts, abdomen, buttocks, inner thighs, pubic and genital areas) of a person to arouse or to meet your sexual desire.

Sexual Harassment Repeated and unwanted sexual advances, requests for favors and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which makes the person uncomfortable or intimidated where he or she works or is a student is sexual harassment. This is particularly true where the person making the demand is the boss or the teacher, requiring sexual favors in exchange for special treatment, promotions or good grades. It can also be true with coworkers or fellow students who say sexually suggestive things or touch people inappropriately, creating what is called a "hostile environment."

Statutory Rape Sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16. Consent or reasonable mistake as to the identity of the victim are NOT considered defenses to this crime. Because of the age of the victim, the law presupposes that she/he is not able to give consent, and her/his "consent" will not absolve the defendant.

*These definitions were provided by Vin Lembo, General Counsel for Northeastern University. These are working definitions only and are in no way intended to serve as legal definitions.

HOW TO USE THE PLAYBOOK

Read each scenario and imagine yourself in the situation. In most instances you will be asked to see yourself in the role of a bystander before, during, or after the fact of some form of abuse. Once you've read the scenario, you'll need to determine if you have all the necessary information to make a good decision. What other questions do you need to ask? Look at the TRAIN OF THOUGHT for assistance.

Now you can decide which OPTION or OPTIONS seem most appropriate. Consider what's right, wrong, most effective, or missing about each option. If none of these are right for you, come up with your own PERSONAL OPTION. Be ready to discuss your choices.

The MVP PLAYBOOK may one day give you an idea of how to prevent someone you know - perhaps your sister or friend - from becoming a victim of rape, sexual assault, teen dating violence, or some other violent act. It might give you some ideas about how to prevent other acts of bullying or cruelty by boys or girls.

It may also help you prevent a friend or relative from becoming a perpetrator of one of these abuses.

NOTES:

Awareness-Raising Scenarios

The following scenarios are designed to raise awareness about bystander options on the issues of:

Dating violence

Sexual harassment

Nasty rumors

Alcohol and consent

SLAPSHOT



You're in the hallway between classes. You see a couple you know arguing, then you see the guy push his girlfriend into her locker. The young woman isn't a close friend of yours, and neither is the guy, but you do hang around with the same group of people. Other students in the hallway aren't doing anything.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

This is an ugly situation..... This guy is being real rough with her.... I wonder what's going on?.....

Should I say something? *But if nobody else is stepping in, why should I?.....If I say something,*

he might come after me.....Then again, she's probably scared and needs some support....Is it any of my business?..

But if I don't do something, I'm saying it's okay for a guy to abuse a girl.

What should I do *in this situation?*

OPTIONS

- 1 Nothing. It's none of my business.
- 2 Attempt to distract the couple somehow, maybe by talking loudly, in order to defuse the situation.
- 3 Shout out something so that everyone in the hallway hears, like "Hey, what are you doing? Leave her alone!" and stick around to make sure the situation has "cooled" down.
- 4 Talk to the girl at some point and let her know I saw what was going on and am willing to help her. Find some literature about abusive relationships and offer to share it with her.
- 5 I shouldn't do anything immediately. But as soon as possible, that day or later, I should talk to the guy -- or one of his friends -- and tell him that what I witnessed was not ok, and he needs to get some help.
- 6 Talk about the incident with a parent, guidance counselor, the school social worker, a teacher I can trust, or the school nurse, and ask their advice on what to do.

7 Personal Option: _____

FOUL BALL



You're hanging out after school one day with some of your female friends. Guys in a group nearby start making sexual gestures and harassing remarks about one of your friends, commenting about her body and clothing and teasing her that she enjoys the attention. You can tell your friend is getting upset, but no one else is saying anything.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is there such a thing as *harmless teasing*, or is this really **Sexual harassment?**

...I can see that my friend is uncomfortable....Should I say something? What if the boys start picking on me? Am I ready for that?...But don't I have a responsibility to my friend to **speak up?**

...**What should I do** in this situation?

OPTIONS

- 1 Don't say anything; it's not worth the hassle.
- 2 Try to convince my friends as a group that we should tell the guys to stop being punks.
- 3 Tell the guys to quit the sexist talk, saying something like "I'm offended by how you're talking to my friend. Have you guys ever heard of sexual harassment?"
- 4 Ask my friend if she wants to leave.
- 5 Say nothing now. Later, talk to my friends about what to do next time if something like this happens.
- 6 Talk to a parent, teacher, or another trusted professional in school and ask her/him for some advice about how to handle situations like this.
- 7 Personal Option: _____

DOUBLE FAULT



A female student you know is spreading unflattering rumors about another young woman. You're not sure there's any truth to the rumors, but you know they're nasty and you wouldn't want people saying stuff like that about you.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is this any of my business?.....Besides, it's just talk. This kind of thing goes on all the time
.....Then again, **RUMORS** can be really hurtful.....And if I don't say something,
aren't I saying it's okay?.....But if I **confront the girl** who's spreading the **RUMORS**,
what if she starts saying stuff about me?.....
What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Don't say anything; it's really none of my business.
- 2 Talk to the girl who's spreading the rumors, either by myself or with another friend. Let her know, respectfully but firmly, that I think she should stop saying bad things about another person.
- 3 Talk to the girl who is the target of the rumors, and let her know that I think the trash talking about her is wrong and hurtful.

- 4 Talk about the situation to my parents or a trusted adult, and get some advice about what I can do to stop the spreading of malicious rumors.
- 5 Personal Option: _____

DANGEROUS PLAY



You're at a party where people are drinking. A friend of yours has gotten drunk, and a guy is trying to convince her to go into a bedroom with him. She seems reluctant.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Gays and girls who are drinking **hook up** all the time. Then again, she looks really drunk. She can't be fully consenting if she's drunk, can she?... **What about him?** Has he been drinking? Is he planning to drive? I can't ignore that, either.... Most date rapes involve alcohol. Could this be one in the making?... My **gut instincts** tell me this isn't right.... But what if I'm overreacting? Won't my friend be mad at me?... Will she even listen to me?... But if I don't do something, I might be letting her down....

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Do nothing. It's really none of my business.
- 2 Try to get my friend away from the guy. And tell the guy that he has to be real careful dealing sexually with a drunk woman.
- 3 I should find some of his friends and try to convince them to get him to leave her alone.
- 4 Ask my friend how she feels, and if she wants help getting home.
- 5 Get a group of my friends together, female and male, and try to figure out a creative way to get them to go separate ways tonight, when she's obviously had too much to drink.

7 Personal Option: _____

- 5 Try to find an adult, the host of the party, or someone who seems responsible. Ask them to

Advanced-thinking Scenarios

The following scenarios require *advanced thinking* about bystander options in the areas of:

Sexual assault

Sexist music lyrics

Homophobia

Gun threats

TIME OUT



A female acquaintance of yours has accused one of your guy friends of sexually assaulting her. Some of your friends are "badmouthing" her, saying it wasn't an assault and she's a little "slut" anyway.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Oh, wow. *Can this be true?*.....Is my male friend capable of sexual assault?.....I know that this sort of thing happens, and "normal" guys are usually the perpetrators.....Should I believe my female acquaintance's charge?....Then again, why should I doubt her?.....*Why in the world* would she *make something like this up?*.... Whose side should I take, hers or his?....
What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Try not to get involved in this messy situation.
experience and that false reports -- while they do occasionally occur -- are rare.
- 2 Talk to my acquaintance and try to find out what happened from her, not from rumors.
- 3 Talk to my male friend, and try to find out what happened from him, not from rumors.
- 4 Tell my friends to speak respectfully about the girl who's made the accusation. Remind them that sexual assault is a serious and traumatic
- 5 Talk to my parents, or a trusted professional in the school, to get some advice about what I should do.
Personal Option: _____

- 6 Personal Option: _____

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT



You're at a party. Somebody puts on a CD that contains aggressive and degrading lyrics about women. Several people are loudly singing along.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

I find some of these songs **abusive and offensive**. Then again, I like the beat. Is that hypocritical?.....Who am I to decide what music other kids should listen to?.....Then again, I think lyrics like these promote violence against women.....How can I remain **silent?**.....

But if I say something, won't people get mad at me?.....

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 I should try to ignore the music and hope someone puts something else on soon.
- 2 Tell the person in charge of the music that I find the lyrics degrading toward women and ask them to put on something less offensive.
- 3 Say nothing now, but some time in the next few days individually approach some of my friends who were at the party and discuss with them my thoughts and feelings about this music.

4 I should get a group of kids to go over and ask the people in charge of the music to play stuff that's not disrespectful toward women.

5 Suggest to one of my teachers that we have some sort of school forum or discussion about sexism in rock/hip hop music and videos.

6 Personal Option: _____

RED CARD



You're with a group of friends in the cafeteria. Your friends start making homophobic comments about some lesbian students in another clique in school.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

I don't feel comfortable with what my friends are saying about these girls. So what if some of them are lesbians? That doesn't give us the right to ridicule and reduce them to **stereotypes** But if I say something, will people think I'm **queer**? Do I care? I know some lesbian and gay kids. How would they feel if they knew I took part in this conversation? What is my responsibility to them?

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Try to ignore my friends' comments and hope they stop.
- 2 I should try to change the subject without being obvious.
- 3 Tell my friends that I'm not comfortable with us putting down other kids because of their sexual orientation.
- 4 Don't say anything now, but plan to speak with my friends individually and let them know I think they need to educate themselves about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people and issues.
- 5 Seek out a gay-straight alliance, either in my school or somewhere else. Contact the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network at www.glsen.org for support or more information.
- 6 Talk with a parent, teacher, counselor, or another trusted professional in school, and ask how they would handle this.
- 7 Personal Option: _____

SAFETY



You hear through friends that a male student in your class has made some threatening comments about using a gun. You don't know the student well and you've never actually seen the gun, but you trust that your friends wouldn't be making this up or exaggerating.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is this any of **my business**? This student isn't a friend of mine. Why should I get involved?.....Then again, now that I've heard about this situation, don't I have a responsibility to **act**?.....If I tell someone in authority, will people find out and think I'm a **snitch**?.....But so what? Threats of violence have to be taken very seriously. Someone's gotta do something....

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Do nothing. It's none of my business and nothing will probably happen anyway.
- 2 Try to get more information to make sure this isn't just a rumor.
- 3 Talk with my friends and come up with a group strategy about how to proceed.
- 4 Talk about this situation with my parents, a teacher, a coach or another professional in the school.
- 5 Talk about this situation with the school resource officer.
- 6 Call in an anonymous tip to my principal or another member of the school administration.
- 7 Personal Option: _____

MVP Leader Scenarios

The following scenarios are designed for MVP leaders on the issues of:

Abusive relationship?

Friend in need

Disclosure of past abuse

Pressure for sex

PERSONAL FOUL



After spring break, you stop by your friend's house to say "hi." She has a dark bruise under her eye. You recognize the bruise as the remnants of a black eye. She says the black eye came from carelessly bumping into something.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

She's had **unexplained bruises** before... Maybe she's just a physical-type girl who has her share of bumps and scratches... Then again, I wonder if she's being straight with me... She has a boyfriend.

Could he be **abusing her?** ... This is a sensitive subject. Is it **my business** to question her?... If she wanted to talk about this, she would tell me... Then again, she may feel isolated and scared...
What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Don't say anything. It's none of my business.
- 2 Mention to her that it looks like she's been hit, but drop it if she seems defensive.
- 3 Offer her my support. Tell her I'm always available to talk if she needs to.
- 4 Discuss the situation with a another friend, or talk with a parent, teacher, or some other trusted adult to find out how I can help.

5 Present her with options, like giving her the phone number of a local teen dating violence program or teen help line.

6 Personal Option: _____

CRUNCH TIME



Your best friend has missed several days of school and hasn't returned your phone calls. You stop by her house, and she seems very upset. She tells you she was raped.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Oh my God!...I don't know what to say to her...Should I try to get her to talk about what happened? Or maybe she wants to just forget the whole thing...But she's so upset... I'm her friend and I need to support and comfort her no matter how difficult this situation is for me... Maybe she needs professional help...Should I call someone?...But what if she doesn't want to tell anyone?...

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Tell her I'll help her any way I can. Ask her what I can do for her.
- 2 Talk to her about her options, such as calling a rape crisis hotline, going to a clinic or hospital, or calling the police. But don't push it if she doesn't want to talk.
- 3 Later, talk in confidence to the school social worker or another trusted professional about ways I can be supportive to my friend.

1 Stay with her now, but later call a local rape crisis hotline and ask them if they have any advice about what to do.

2 Personal Option: _____

FIELDER'S CHOICE



You find out at school that one of your female friends is dating your ex-boyfriend. He was verbally and physically abusive to you on several occasions, but you never told anyone.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

if he abused me, he may also do it to my friend.....if I warn her, I'll have to tell her how he treated me. This could be embarrassing.....Also, I really want to put it behind me..... But, on the other hand, she has a right to know that he could be abusive.....most abusive guys don't just stop their abuse without help....But what if he's changed?.....And what if she doesn't believe me?

.....She may think I'm just jealous....

What, if anything, should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Nothing. It's none of my business.
- 2 Tell my friend that I was abused by the guy she is dating. But back off if she gets upset.
- 3 Have a neutral friend talk to my friend about her relationship.
- 4 Give my friend some resources that discuss teen dating violence, such as pamphlets, books, or web sites.

5 Talk about my dilemma with a parent, teacher, or another adult I can trust.

6 Personal Option: _____

FALSE START



You are out with a young man you met recently. You've both been flirting the whole night. At the end of the evening you start kissing, but when he tries to go further, you decide that things are going a little too fast for you, and you tell him so. But he persists in trying. You think he likes you, and you know you're very attracted to him.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is he listening to me?...maybe he doesn't believe that no means no and he's gonna keep on trying....
Did I do something to lead him on?...I'd better wake myself very clear....Do I feel safe with him?

....Was I missing some cues from him about what we were doing?....
Then again, I shouldn't have to worry about all of this. He should just respect my wishes and if I don't want to continue, he should just get the message....

What should I do?

OPTIONS

- 1 Tell him clearly that I want to stop fooling around with him right now.
- 2 Make up something to divert his attention and interrupt our physical contact.
- 3 Stop abruptly, and tell him I have to be going.
- 4 Tell him I like him, but this is too fast. Let him know I would like to go out with him again some time soon.

5 Later, I should talk with a friend, an older sister, or an adult who can empathize with young women's issues, and ask them how they have dealt with or would handle situations like this one.

6 Personal Option: _____

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For more information about our training programs, or about how to order MVP Strategies materials, please email us: mvpstrategies@aol.com