

# MVP TRAINER'S GUIDE

FOR WORKING WITH

**MALE** HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**MVP**  
STRATEGIES

Gender Violence Prevention  
Education and Training

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Title

|  |   |
|--|---|
| A brief history of the MVP Model                           | 2 |
| Introduction to the MVP Playbook                           | 3 |
| Note to Trainers   | 3 |
| Note about trainers  | 3 |
| Opening an MVP session                                     | 4 |
| Empathy Exercise   | 4 |
| Scheduling MVP sessions                                    | 5 |
| Focus on the bystander                                     | 5 |
| Developing MVP mentors to work with middle school students | 6 |
| Tips for Getting Started on the Scenarios                  | 7 |
| Working Definitions  | 8 |
| How to use the MVP Playbook                                | 9 |

## Teaching: Awareness-Raising Scenarios

11

| Scenario       | Topic               |    |
|----------------|---------------------|----|
| Slapshot       | dating violence     | 12 |
| Talkin' Trash  | sexual harassment   | 14 |
| Force Out      | bullying            | 16 |
| Illegal Motion | alcohol and consent | 18 |

## Teaching: Advanced-Thinking Scenarios

20

| Scenario           | Topic                 |    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----|
| Offsides           | street harassment     | 22 |
| Locker Room Heroes | sexist jokes          | 24 |
| Wild Pitch         | harassment of gay men | 26 |
| Safety             | gun threats           | 28 |

## Teaching: MVP Leader Scenarios

30

| Scenario              | Topic                  |    |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----|
| Interference          | harassment of lesbians | 32 |
| Crunch Time           | friend in need         | 34 |
| Blocking the Plate    | pressure for sex       | 36 |
| Unnecessary Roughness | emotional abuse        | 38 |

# 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 male version focuses on young men not as perpetrators or potential perpetrators, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. The heart of

the MVP Model is discussion, using real life scenarios that speak to the experiences of young men in high school and college. The intent of the interactive dialogue is to help create a male peer culture climate whereby the abuse of girls and women by some boys and men, and the bullying of other boys, will be seen as totally socially unacceptable.

**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. It is important to note that while the MVP Model was first developed in the sports culture, the MVP approach is not intended for use only with student-athletes. It is effective in working with varied and diverse populations of students and professionals.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE MVP PLAYBOOK

**The heart of the MVP Model** consists of highly interactive, facilitated discussions. The recommended minimum number of sessions/classes for any group is three, to be held no more than one month apart. The key teaching tool used during the sessions is the MVP Playbook. The MVP Playbook for male high school students is designed to help accomplish three major goals:

- ⊙ To raise awareness among young men of issues that traditionally have been considered "women's issues."
- ⊙ To encourage young men not merely to be passive bystanders, but to play an active role in reducing gender violence\*, harassment, abuse and bullying.
- ⊙ To empower high school student leaders to mentor and educate younger males on these issues.

## NOTE TO TRAINERS

**This Trainer's Guide** is designed to assist you in utilizing the MVP Playbook in educational sessions with high school students. The Guide is structured like the MVP Playbook itself: it is centered around a series of scenarios involving actual and potential incidents of harassment and

violence against young women, as well as other instances of sexism and bullying. Once you have introduced the MVP Model and run through a couple of preliminary exercises, you will be ready to move right into the scenarios.

## NOTE ABOUT TRAINERS

**Ideally**, MVP training should be done in teams of two. The MVP training teams (i.e. professionals who are working with classes, athletic teams, student leadership groups, etc.) should be racially diverse whenever possible, in order to underscore the fact that gender violence, harassment, and bullying are pervasive societal problems that cut

across social distinctions. The most critical function of MVP trainers is to facilitate an open and honest discussion about issues that directly or indirectly affect most young people in our society. In doing so, the trainers are not just imparting important information. They are also serving as anti-sexist male role models.

*\*Gender violence: A continuum of violent and controlling behaviors perpetrated by an individual's partner, former partner or acquaintance, including physical violence, sexual relations without affirmative consent, and acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex. This definition also includes hate crimes committed against people for reasons of gender or sexual orientation.*

# OPENING AN MVP SESSION

**The trainers** establish the premise of MVP: that you're here because we need more young people to start speaking out against gender violence, harassment, and bullying behavior.

Tell the students that it's time we stopped avoiding or denying the problems, and instead started doing more to prevent them. Tell the young men that because men and boys commit approximately 90% of interpersonal violent crime in the U.S. — including the vast majority of violence against women — men have a special role to play in intervening before, during, and after abuse occurs. Then ask the young men to raise their hand if they have a sister, mother, grandmother, or female

friend. While this seems like a simple and somewhat manipulative question, the point is clear: most if not all of us have women in our lives who are deeply important to us.

The problem of gender violence may seem remote to some of us. Unfortunately, in reality it is not. Remind the students that during the course of this session, every woman we talk about who has been sexually assaulted, abused by her boyfriend, or assaulted by a man in some other way, is somebody's sister, mother, daughter, friend. This violence doesn't happen to some abstract category of "women." It happens to girls and women we know and love.

## EMPATHY EXERCISE

**One of the trainers** asks the students to close their eyes. Once everyone's eyes are closed, the trainer says: "Imagine the woman you care about the most: your mother, your girlfriend, your sister, your grandmother, your aunt, your friend. She's in a room somewhere, or on the street, and a man is assaulting her. Now imagine that there's another man in the scenario, a bystander, who sees what's going on, is in a position to do something to stop this from happening — but chooses to do nothing. This bystander either watches or just walks away.

When the young men open their eyes, ask them how it felt to imagine the woman closest to them being assaulted. They'll probably reply that they're upset by the assault. Then ask them how they felt about the bystander and what words they would use to describe him. They'll probably reply that they're disgusted that the bystander didn't intervene and describe him as a "coward" or a "wimp." Finally, ask the young men to

raise their hand if they feel that the bystander should have done something. Throughout the session, remember to remind the students about how they felt towards men — or people in general — who were in a position to prevent or interrupt sexist abuse, but did nothing.

This interactive exercise reinforces the need for leadership on these issues, because of course no one wants to think of himself as a coward or a wimp. The exercise also highlights the role of bystanders in reducing incidents of gender violence, harassment, and bullying. MVP doesn't address male students as potential perpetrators; we address them as brothers, friends, teammates, popular students — and as potential mentors for younger kids. We help them see that they are in a position to provide the male leadership necessary to prevent a lot of pain and suffering.

# SCHEDULING MVP SESSIONS

**The MVP Model** is most effective when trainers can conduct multiple training sessions with each class, team, or group. (Additional sessions can be scheduled for exceptional individuals who want further training to enable them to work on these issues with middle school students.) The 90-minute sessions should be held no more than one month apart. They can be held in classrooms, locker rooms, or other school or community settings.

Before scheduling any sessions with students, the MVP trainers, when possible, should give a presentation to the school administrative staff and/or faculty, at a meeting organized by the school. At this meeting, the trainers should introduce the MVP Model in much the same way as they would with students, including a demonstration of how to use the MVP Playbook.

## FOCUS ON THE BYSTANDER

**At the first session** with the students, after you've introduced yourselves and gone through the preliminary exercises, it is time to distribute the key teaching tool, the MVP Playbook. The Playbook then becomes the focus of this or any future discussions. The Playbook consists of a series of real life scenarios portraying actual and potential assaults against young women, as well as male-on-male bullying. The scenarios range from sexist comments, to physical assault, to date rape. You need to emphasize that all of these manifestations of sexism are interconnected, and that violence against lesbians and gay men is also gender violence. Most of the scenarios focus on empowering young men to be active bystanders in these situations. Remember, MVP sessions are designed to be highly interactive, not traditional lectures or presentations.

The Playbook scenarios are designed to be as realistic as possible. For example, the first one, called "SLAP-SHOT," sets this scene:

*You're in the hallway between classes. You see a couple you know arguing, then you see the guy push his girl-*

*friend into her locker. The guy isn't a close friend of yours, and neither is the young woman, but you do hang around with the same group of students. Nobody else is doing anything.*

After having someone read the scenario, have someone else read the "train of thought," which is a type of mental checklist for bystanders in these situations: "*If nobody else is stepping in, why should I?...If I say something, he might come after me....Am I ready to get into a fight, if it comes to that?...What if he's got a weapon?...But if I don't say something, I'm saying it's ok for a guy to abuse a girl....What should I do in this situation?*" The train of thought is followed on each page by a list of practical and realistic options for intervention, including: "*Nothing - it's none of my business....Shout out something so that everyone in the hallway hears....Talk to the young woman, at some point later, and let her know I am willing to help....Talk about the incident to a parent, guidance counselor, the school psychologist, a teacher, the nurse, or my coach.*"

The train of thought is adapted from the Habits of Thought model developed by Dr. Ronald Slaby of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Slaby's model provides a basis for understanding the behavior of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. He suggests that behavior is the outcome of social experiences, including personal experiences with violence and those transmitted by the media, interacting with habits of thought (i.e. beliefs, impulsive and reflective tendencies, and problem-solving skills) (1994).

The great benefit of implementing this model in working with male students on the issue of gender violence is that rather than focusing on the young men as actual or potential perpetrators, you focus on them in their role as bystanders. This shift in emphasis greatly reduces the participants' defensiveness. It also allows you to emphasize a key MVP concept: that when people don't speak up or take action in the face of sexist or any sort of abusive behavior, that constitutes implicit consent of such behavior.

When you discuss with the young men their options for intervention in the various scenarios, be careful not to choose for them the "best" option. That choice is for each person to make based on a unique set of circumstances. The options MVP provides are meant to serve as a guide. The list is not comprehensive. But the one option you should always include, and strongly discourage, is to do nothing.

Note: Many people mistakenly believe that they have only two options in instances of actual or potential violence - intervene physically and possibly expose themselves to personal harm, or do nothing. They often choose to do nothing as a result. But this is a false and limited set of choices. The MVP Model seeks to provide bystanders with numerous options, most of which carry no risk of personal injury. With more options to choose from, people are more likely to respond and not be passive and silent - and hence complicit - in violence or abuse by others.

Many of the young men with whom you will be working, and people in our society in general, have been socialized to be passive bystanders in the face of sexist abuse and violence. This conditioning is reflected in the oft-heard statement that a situation "between a man and a woman" is "none of my business." When you hear this sentiment articulated in MVP sessions, frequently refer back to the Empathy Exercise, in which you asked the young men how they felt about someone who did nothing when he was in a position to stop violence against a woman they cared about. Remind the young men that they all agreed that the passive bystander was a loser and a coward. (To be fair, you might want to acknowledge that the bystander in the thought exercise might have been scared or otherwise immobilized.) In other words, you've positioned the response "it's none of my business" in a new light.

The MVP Playbook and its various scenarios lead to highly interactive discussions about real-life situations that most young men have experienced, or at least known about, in their families, circles of friends, or on their teams. Presenters should share appropriate stories from their own lives, and encourage the young men to do likewise. However, it is important that you make it clear to them that no one is expected to share personal experiences unless they freely choose to. When they do, they should not name names, or discuss situations that violate others' privacy. NOTE: If you are a mandated reporter, you need to make that clear before discussions begin. You also should emphasize that what comes out in an MVP session "stays in the room." The discussions are typically animated and fast-moving. It is not unheard of for a group to spend an entire class period or even longer discussing just the SLAPSHOT scenario.

Trainers can use personal anecdotes and accounts to raise a number of different issues: Why do men hit women? Can

a man establish his manhood by physically controlling a woman? What, then, does it mean to be a man? Why do friends often hesitate to get involved even when they know someone's behavior is abusive? The specifics vary, but the message advanced in these discussions is consistent: that everyone has a critical role to play in reducing gender violence, harassment, and bullying. Emphasize, furthermore, that violence is located on a continuum. It's not just the overt acts of physical abuse, but the full range of behaviors including sexist comments and jokes, and sexual harassment. Make it clear that we need more young men to speak honestly and courageously about all of these problems.

## **DEVELOPING MVP MENTORS TO WORK WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Additional training sessions** can be reserved for selected students who have participated in MVP sessions and have expressed an interest in talking to middle school boys and girls about gender violence, harassment and bullying. The selection process itself is a key to the success of this aspect of MVP, because you need to be sure that the "mentors" you're training are credible on these issues. You're not necessarily looking for young men who have advanced levels of feminist consciousness. The most important requirement is that their reputation and record be consistent with their public commitment to work against sexist and abusive behavior.

The MVP Model for preparing male high school students to become mentors for youth does not require extensive knowledge on the part of participants, and at every level the message is streamlined to enable the trainers to involve as many students as possible. MVP trainers should provide several articles for the students to read in order to provide a better understanding of some of the issues surrounding gender violence and bullying. You can also discuss at some length the process of talking both to boys and girls about men's violence against women, including issues such as what to expect, how to answer difficult questions, and the difference between being a role model and being an expert in the eyes of adolescents.

# TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED ON THE SCENARIOS

*(Once you have introduced yourselves, and talked about the need to rethink gender violence, harassment, abuse and bullying as issues that profoundly relate to and affect most young men, you are ready to introduce the MVP Playbook.)*

❶ It is useful to walk the students through the Introduction and Table of Contents before starting on the first scenario.

❷ Ask someone to volunteer to read the scenario aloud. This helps to connect the young men to the material, as well as to establish the premise that this is not a lecture, but an interactive dialogue. If at first no one volunteers, a simple "come on, someone help us out" usually suffices.

❸ Once the scenario is read aloud, ask another volunteer to read the "train of thought" which follows.

❹ After the scenario and the "train of thought" have been read aloud, try and get the students to start talking about the scenario. A trustworthy prompt is: "How many of you have been in or know of a situation like this one?" Chances are, someone who has been in this situation will raise their hand. Your goal as trainers is to spark as much interactive dialogue as possible. Remember, MVP sessions are facilitated workshops, not lectures.

Questions like this one or others in the Trainer's Guide should stimulate sufficient dialogue. However, if no one responds to your questions, don't be afraid to break the ice by using your own personal experiences as a bystander, or tell a story about a friend. Most of the young men will be able to relate to your story, and they will respect your honesty and willingness to share personal experiences. Sharing anecdotes is often the best way to loosen up a tough audience.

❺ Maintain control of the discussion. The issues surrounding relationships, gender roles and identities, sexuality, and abuse are numerous and potentially complicated. As a result, the conversations often get animated, and the students engage each other as well as the presenters. This is all good. But as trainers, you must remember that these sessions can seem to fly by, and there are many more scenarios to discuss. Sometimes you need to close off discussion on one topic by saying "This is great, but we have to move on," and then raise another discussion starter or move to another scenario.

❻ Approach the end of each scenario by reviewing the list of options. Ask the young men to say which one they would choose or if they have their own personal option. Then ask them to explain why they chose that option. Emphasize that the list is not comprehensive, and that individual circumstances can vary widely. It is also effective to emphasize that we don't prescribe any particular options, but we do discourage "It's none of my business." It is also important to remind participants to keep their personal safety in the forefront of their minds. In other words, facilitators should explain that physical intervention should be considered as one of the last options.

❼ The scenarios do not have to be read exactly in order, although they are laid out in a loose progression.

❽ Attempt to personalize each scenario as much as possible. An effective question might be, "What if it were your sister in this scenario?"



# 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 woman, 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 female 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-deadly 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 oneself must also be reasonable under the circumstance. 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 MVP PLAYBOOK

**Read each scenario** and imagine yourself in the situation. You will be asked to see yourself in the role of a bystander. Then 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 girlfriend - from becoming a victim of rape, sexual assault, teen dating violence, or some other violent act.

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

**NOTES:**

## Teaching: Awareness Raising Scenarios

Note to trainers: Before setting up the first scenario, you should make it clear to the students that most scenarios in the MVP Playbook focus on bystander behavior. This is important in establishing a comfort level in the room, in part because it helps to reduce the defensiveness that some young men feel around discussions of gender violence. It also furthers the MVP goal of empowering young men to take a proactive, leadership role on these issues.

# Awareness-Raising Scenarios

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

**Dating violence**

**Sexual harassment**

**Bullying**

**Alcohol and consent**

# TEACHING : SLAPSHOT

## BACKGROUND

“Slapshot” has proven to be an effective initial scenario for stimulating an interactive dialogue on some of the dynamics of teen dating violence.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think men hit women? (Note: Typically, a young man abuses his girlfriend or significant other to establish or regain power and control over her.)
- If he does this in public, can you imagine what he might do in private?
- How would you feel if someone hit your sister in public and no one did anything? (refer to the Empathy exercise on page 4 of this Guide, where the guys said men who didn't intervene when a woman close to them was being hit were “cowards” and “losers.”)
- You can say: “This is a really difficult situation, isn't it? It's tough to confront a guy who is abusing a young woman.” You can also bring up the young men's understandable anxiety or fear about intervening in a situation where they might face a serious threat of violence. However, you can point out that intervention can be indirect and they need not put themselves in danger.

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ⊗ Differing experiences with weapons: high school students will have varying experiences with and consciousness about weapons, depending on such factors as whether they grew up in a rural, suburban, or urban setting, whether their family keeps guns in the home, etc.
- ⊗ “What if the woman stays with the man?” You can discuss briefly some of the reasons why young women stay with abusive men: low self-esteem, emotional attachment, fear of being more severely abused or even killed. But emphasize that we need to be focused on why some men beat women, not why some women stay with men who beat them.
- ⊗ “It's none of my business.” The single most important thing the MVP Model can accomplish is a change in this attitude.

**End the scenario by making it clear that battering is indefensible under any circumstance and that other men's silence condones and hence perpetuates this behavior. Also, caution the young men that when assisting a young woman who has been battered, it is important to be respectful and sensitive to her needs. Tell them: Don't pressure her to admit to being abused. But let her know that she can count on your support if she wants it.**

# 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 guy isn't a close friend of yours, and neither is the young woman, but you do hang around with the same group of people. Nobody else is doing anything.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

This is an ugly situation..... This guy is being *real rough* with this *girl*.... 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.....Am I ready to get into a *fight*, if it comes to that?.....what if he's got *a weapon?*.....Besides, if he treats her like that and she stays with him, who am I to get involved? 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 young woman.  
*What should I do* in this situation?

## OPTIONS

- ❶ Nothing. It's none of my business.
- ❷ Attempt to distract the couple somehow, maybe by talking loudly, in order to defuse the situation.
- ❸ 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.
- ❹ Talk to the girl at some point and let her know I saw what was going on and am willing to help her.
- ❺ Do nothing immediately. But as soon as possible, that day or later, I should make a point of talking to the guy and suggesting he get some counseling to deal with his abusive behavior.
- ❻ Talk to my parents, a guidance counselor, the school psychologist, a teacher, or the school nurse, and ask their advice on what to do.
- ❼ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : TALKIN' TRASH

## BACKGROUND

This scenario introduces the subject of sexual harassment. It provides an opportunity to discuss the issue of sexism and objectification in situations that do not involve explicitly physical violence. It also can open up discussion about young men's attitudes toward young women's appearance and sexuality.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What is sexual harassment? What is the difference between flirting and harassment? (See "Working Definitions" on page 8 for clarification.)
- Would those guys be saying these things if they were alone, or are they trying to show off for their friends? Why would harassing a woman be seen as something "cool" guys do?
- By the way they dress, flirt, or talk, do women bear any responsibility for provoking men's comments or behaviors? Who decides when a situation turns abusive or harassing?
- Has anyone here ever asked a female friend or sister how she feels when men make these sorts of comments, on the street or on campus? What did she say?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✂ Some young men will rightfully feel like they're risking losing status with their peers if they speak up in a situation like this. (i.e. they're not "one of the guys.") This can lead to a discussion of status hierarchies in groups of men, and the role of homophobia as a silencer. Focus on the role of leadership and the need to take risks.
- ✂ Some young men might argue that some young women actually enjoy this sort of commentary from men. You can point out that the scenario explicitly states "the young woman is getting upset." Also, you can ask how they think women feel when they're subjected to this sort of treatment from men.

**End the scenario by reminding the guys that sexual harassment by definition is not just harmless fun. Someone is being harmed. It's wrong, and it might be a crime.**

# TALKIN' TRASH



You're sitting on the stairs outside of school with a few friends. A young woman walks by wearing a tight mini-skirt. Your friends start making crude gestures and harassing remarks, referring to her body and clothes, and saying things like "we know you like it." The young woman is obviously getting upset.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is she really **upset**, or does she like the attention?.....Is it true what they're saying?..... Does that matter?.....Girls have the right to wear whatever they want....How would I feel if the girl was my sister, or my friend?.....If I remain silent, am I agreeing with my friends' behavior?.....What if she reports **the incident?**.....Will my friends ask me to lie for them?.....  
What should I do?

## OPTIONS

- 1 Keep quiet.
- 2 Join in (although my heart's not in it) because I don't want my friends to think less of me.
- 3 Drift off to the side, away from the activity. Later, apologize to the young woman for my friends' immature and sexist behavior.
- 4 Distract my friends by saying something like "chill out, guys," and try to convince them to stop.
- 5 Leave the scene, but later talk to each guy individually and let them know that I have a problem with the way they treated this person.
- 6 Talk about the issue with a parent, a teacher or another adult I can trust.
- 7 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# TEACHING : FORCE OUT

## BACKGROUND

This scenario introduces a discussion of bullying, which recent research confirms is a widespread problem in K-12 populations nationally. The first MVP Playbook, written in 1993, did not include any scenarios explicitly about bullying. Increasingly, however, educators have been addressing the inter-connection between bullying behavior and many other forms of violence, including, in extreme cases, school shootings.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do some kids pick on, ridicule, and bully other kids? What, if anything, does this behavior teach us about the bully?
- There's an old saying: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Do you think this is true? (The linguist Julia Penelope rewrites the saying: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words cause permanent damage.")
- When should people get involved in the affairs of people they don't know well?
- Is it possible that the bully's behavior intimidates other kids – bystanders — into silence? Does that mean that, in a sense, they're being bullied as well?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ Physical fear is often the reason why people speak up in these types of situations, even if they feel uncomfortable or empathetic with the victim. You can talk about the realistic fear many people have, perhaps relating a story from your own experience, where either you acted – or failed – out of fear.
- ✘ Kids who bully often have emotional, psychological, or family problems. Many have been abused or lied themselves, at home or in school. It is okay to talk about these dynamics. However, MVP discussions are not therapy sessions. As a facilitator, you need to try and keep the group focused on what you, as individuals or as a group, can do to respond to the abusive behavior.

**End the scenario by emphasizing that emotional, verbally, or psychologically abusing another person is wrong and should not be tolerated. It does not matter if the bully is a boy or a girl. It does not matter if the target is a boy or a girl. It's not just harmless adolescent cruelty. Bullying is serious abuse, and can lead to even more serious problems, like self-abuse, and further violence.**

# FORCE OUT



A guy you hang around with frequently insults and makes fun of another young man you know. You've never seen him hit the other student, but you wouldn't be surprised if he did.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

*Is this any of my business? I feel bad for the student who's getting picked on, but is it my place to intervene? Neither kid is really a close friend of mine. Also, I don't want the aggressive guy to pick on me. But I feel really uncomfortable when I see a person treating another person like dirt.*

*What should I do?*

## OPTIONS

- 1 Do nothing. It's best not to get involved in someone else's business.
- 2 Talk to the student who's doing the bullying, in a calm situation with people in the general area, and tell him that I think he shouldn't be so mean to the other kid.
- 3 Talk to the student who's getting picked on, and tell him I've seen what's going on and don't like it. Ask him if there's anything I can do to help.
- 4 Talk to my mother or father, and ask them how they would handle the situation.
- 5 Talk to a trusted adult in the school - a teacher, a counselor, a coach, the school psychologist - and let them know about the situation.
- 6 Ask some friends if they've seen what I've seen. Get a group of friends together to go talk with a trusted professional in the school.
- 7 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : ILLEGAL MOTION

## BACKGROUND

This scenario sparks a discussion of some of the issues surrounding alcohol and consent. This is a highly realistic and common scenario. Most of the students have been in this situation, either as participants or observers.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How many people here know the legal definition of rape? (Consult "Working Definitions" on page 8.) How many of you feel confident that you understand when a young woman is or is not able to give consent to sexual activity when alcohol is involved? Does anyone know what the law is regarding alcohol and consent? Does anyone know what the law is in this state regarding statutory rape? (Consult "Working Definitions").
- How does alcohol affect your judgment?
- What is your relationship to your friend? Do you have a responsibility to him, as well as to the woman? Could a sophomore confront a senior in this situation? Also, how might a person's status in their peer culture affect their willingness to act?
- Focus on the phrase "she seems reluctant." This brings up the possibility of coercion, which then can be discussed. (Consult "Working Definitions" on page 8 for clarification of terms.)

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ This scenario raises all sorts of questions and concerns about the definition of consent. You need to make it clear to the students that you are not law enforcement (unless you are), but that you are here to discuss ways to prevent violence.
- ✘ Many men will express surprise, then frustration and anger, that if both parties are drunk, they're the ones who bear legal responsibility for any technically "non-consensual" sex. You can remind them that this is the law, like it or not, and that it is their choice whether or not to put themselves in a situation where they're not sure of the propriety of what they're doing. This is what we refer to as the "gray area" between consensual and non-consensual sex contact.
- ✘ Approaching a friend in this situation can be extremely awkward and difficult. It is important to acknowledge this. One way to frame the issue is that you're doing him a favor by confronting him (not to mention preventing her from being assaulted). Although statistically it is highly unlikely this circumstance will lead to a rape charge, (even if an actual rape occurs), the stigma for young men of being charged with rape, as well as the potential disciplinary and legal proceedings that result, should be discussed.

End the scenario by reminding the students that a high percentage of date rapes involve alcohol. Also remind them that while it might seem awkward, confronting a friend in this situation could prevent a tragedy for everyone involved.

# ILLEGAL MOTION



You're at a party, and when you walk outside, you see a friend of yours trying to get a drunk young woman to leave with him. She's not just buzzed; she's stumbling over her own feet. You know the young woman, and she seems reluctant.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is this any of **my business?**.....Guys and girls who are **drinking** hook up all the time..... Then again, **she looks really drunk**. Maybe she's not in a position to make a good decision.....What about him? Has he been drinking? Is he planning to drive? I can't ignore that, either....I know a lot of "date rape" involves alcohol. Could this be **one of those situations?**..... But what if I'm overreacting? Won't my friend be mad at me? Will he even listen to me?.....But if I don't do something, I might be letting her down.  
**What should I do?**

## OPTIONS

- ❶ Do nothing. It's really none of my business.
- ❷ Try to get my friend to leave her alone. Tell him he has to be real careful dealing sexually with a drunk girl.
- ❸ Find some of her friends and try to convince them to get her home safely.
- ❹ Approach the young woman and ask her how she feels, and if she wants help getting home.
- ❺ Try to find an adult or someone who seems responsible, and ask them to assist me in defusing this situation.
- ❻ Get a group of my friends together, male and female, and confront my friend, firmly telling him to stop pursuing this drunk girl. If he's been drinking, make sure he doesn't drive.
- ❼ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Teaching : Advanced-Thinking Scenario

Note to trainers: The second section of the MVP Playbook is designed to build on the first section by encouraging advanced thinking and proactive bystander behavior. After discussing all of the scenarios in the first section, it is okay (and sometimes inevitable) to jump around from section to section in each training session.

# Advanced-Thinking Scenarios

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

**Street harassment**

**Sexist jokes**

**Harassment of gay men**

**Gun threats**

# TEACHING : OFFSIDE

## BACKGROUND

This scenario presupposes that the students either drive cars or have friends that do. It provides a good opportunity for young men to try to imagine young women's experience of the public world, and how that differs from men's.

The scenario raises a key question about gendered differences in men's and women's lives and consciousness: how could one person's experience of harmless cruising behavior be another's experience of street harassment?

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Does anyone here have a sister or girlfriend who jogs? Have you ever talked to her about how she feels when guys in cars yell things at her? Has she ever been scared or intimidated?
- When guys yell something at girls out of a car window, what are they trying to accomplish? Who are they trying to impress? The girl? Their friends?
- Does a young man have a responsibility to support or defend a woman he doesn't know and might never meet?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ Some people will argue that some women give a sort of attention. They might even give a thumbs up. How young women have responded to these types of comments from young men on the street. You can acknowledge that some women might like it, the vast majority do not. Many women feel violated and angry by the unwelcome attention from men.
  - ✘ Some young men will respond defensively to the suggestion that behavior which they consider "good guy behavior" is being defined as problematic. There's a good chance that they've never heard of street harassment. In this scenario – and others – it is sometimes difficult to point out that you're not saying that men who yell at women are bad guys by definition. It's important that we need to be more aware of how our actions can negatively impact other people.
- End the scenario by emphasizing that "good guy behavior" like yelling at women out of car windows is not just innocent fun. Many women experience it as threatening and a violation of their personal space. Therefore men with a conscience should not do it and should speak up when others do.

# OFFSIDES



You're riding in the back seat of your friend's car late one afternoon with two other male friends. Someone spots a young woman jogging a few hundred yards ahead and the driver starts to slow down. Your friend in the front seat starts to roll down his window to yell something at her.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

What's he going to say? Will it be **something sexual**, or is he just going to yell out something stupid? Does it matter?.....How will this girl feel to hear a group of guys in a car **shouting** at her? Will she be **scared**? We're just **a harmless group of guys**, but how could she know that?.....I know girls who jog. I wonder if they ever get **harassed** by guys in cars.....Can I say something to **stop my friend** from saying something? Won't he get ticked off at me?  
**What should I do?**

## OPTIONS

- ❶ I shouldn't say anything. It's just harmless fun and speaking up would do more harm than good.
- ❷ Try to change the subject in order to distract my friends and get their attention off of the female jogger.
- ❸ Tell the driver to speed up and say "come on, guys, let's leave her alone."
- ❹ Don't say anything right then, but later, tell my friends that I don't think we should be harassing women like that.

❺ Talk to a female friend of mine who jogs and find out how she feels when guys drive by and yell things.

❻ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# TEACHING : LOCKER ROOM HEROES

## BACKGROUND

“Locker Room Heroes” is the only scenario in the Playbook where the young woman who is being harassed is not physically present. This creates an opportunity to discuss some of the ways that negative attitudes toward women can be shaped among groups of males.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do guys really talk like this, or is sexist “locker room” talk just an unfair stereotype about men?
- Would you feel any differently if you didn’t know the young woman who was being disrespected? In other words, do you have to care about a specific female to be concerned about sexism and the mistreatment of women in general?
- Is there a connection between words and attitudes, and actual physical violence? Can one lead to the other? How? Or why not?
- Would it be OK if a group of white students were telling racist jokes, if there were no people of color present? Is that situation any different than this one?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ Talk about young women and sex is common among groups of young men, athletes and non-athletes alike. Therefore, there might be some defensiveness in talking about it when the guys know they might face criticism. One way that MVP trainers can deal with this is to acknowledge that it’s commonplace perhaps one of you can recount how before you were aware of these issues, you used to engage in that sort of talk — or tolerated it in others.
- ✘ Some guys might think this is taking these issues too far. They might say “rape and abuse is one thing, but this is getting so I can’t even tell jokes or look at women without people jumping down my throat.” You can affirm his frustration, but emphasize that all these behaviors are related and that we’re kidding ourselves if we think we’re going to eliminate physical assaults without addressing the attitudes that so often lead to them.

**End the scenario by reasserting that attitudes influence actions, and that means we have an obligation to question how we might be contributing to men’s violence against women in ways that appear to some to be innocuous.**

# LOCKER ROOM HEROES



You're hanging around with a few male friends. One of them tells a joke that degrades women, and everyone laughs. Other kids start telling their own sexist jokes. You don't think it's right, but you have to admit you find some of the jokes funny.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Is it ok to laugh at sexist jokes when no girls are present? What's the harm?.....Some girls laugh at this stuff.....Then again, some don't. And if some of my female friends wouldn't appreciate the humor, how can I participate in this jokefest with **the guys?**.....But if I say something, aren't they just going to tell me to **lighten up?**  
**What should I do in this situation?**

## OPTIONS

- 1 Don't say anything. Just laugh along and try not to be so serious all the time.
- 2 Try to change the subject so my friends will stop telling jokes.
- 3 Say "hey, guys, can we tell some other kinds of jokes?"
- 4 Ask the guys how they would feel if we were joking about their mothers or other female loved ones.

5 Leave the scene, making it clear that I'm not comfortable with the way the guys are laughing at women's expense.

6 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : WILD PITCH

## BACKGROUND

“Wild Pitch” is the first scenario dealing with homophobia (the second is “Interference.”) This scenario addresses the harassment of a homosexual young man and a potential gay-bashing episode.

While it depicts a bystander situation, discussing this scenario can raise for some young men issues that they have never talked about rationally with their friends. Hence it partially serves as a mini consciousness-raising session about homophobia and male sexual identity. But it is important to remember that the emphasis of the MVP Model is preventing violence and harassment, not resolving complex and controversial societal debates about sexual orientation.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do you think this is a realistic scenario? Does anyone here know an openly gay male, in your family, your school, or your town? (Remind people to be respectful of others, including others’ privacy). If you don’t, why do you think that is?
- Why do some heterosexual men beat up gay men? What does that sort of assault say about the assailant?
- Should people have the right to be and express who they are in public, even if that makes other people uncomfortable?

## COMMON CONCERNS

(See “Interference” on pages 32 and 33 for supplementary material.)

- ⊗ As a facilitator you need to be aware that there might be gay people in the session. You can’t assume everyone is straight.
- ⊗ Homophobia is deeply rooted and touches on complex issues of gender and sexual identity. Occasionally, some of the young men will try to justify their intolerance through reference to their religious beliefs, social norms, evolutionary biology, etc. Whatever you may think about homosexuality, as an MVP leader you have to be prepared to address these rationalizations and keep them focused on their own responsibility for their attitudes and actions.
- ⊗ Homophobia often runs so deep that some young men won’t speak out against it because they don’t want to risk being labeled a “fag.” This provides a good opportunity to talk about leadership and the need to take chances in standing up for what you believe in. Also you can bring up for discussion the way that men are often reluctant to speak out against sexism for the very same reason.

**End the scenario by restating that sexism and homophobia are directly related: both are about gender and sexual identity, and fear of being called gay silences men who might otherwise speak out against the abuse, harassment, and mistreatment of women.**

**Violence against gay men and lesbians is also wrong in and of itself. Regardless of sexual orientation, everyone has the right to be free from violence or the threat of it.**

# WILD PITCH



One of the guys you hang around with constantly makes anti-gay comments. He calls lots of people "gay" in a mocking tone, and you've seen him write graffiti with messages like "fags die." He's an aggressive guy, and though you've never seen him physically abuse any gays or lesbians, you're worried that he could with the slightest provocation.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

I can't control what all of my friends are gonna say and think. Some people are just uncomfortable with homosexuality. Isn't that their right?....But what if he does something violent? I know that it's attitudes like his that sometimes lead to violence....But what can I do about it? Why would he listen to me? Will he, or others, think I'm gay if I speak up about this?....  
What should I do in this situation?

## OPTIONS

- 1 Do nothing. It's really none of my business anyway.
- 2 Talk to my friend one day in private, and tell him that I'm not comfortable when he makes anti-gay remarks.
- 3 Talk to a couple of other people who know him, and who seem sensitive to these sorts of issues, and come up with a group plan.
- 4 Find a gay-straight alliance, either in my

school or somewhere else, and ask someone in the group for advice. Contact the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network at [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org) for support or more information.

- 5 Talk to a parent, or a teacher I can trust, for some ideas about how to handle this situation.

6 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : SAFETY

## BACKGROUND

This is the only scenario in the Playbook that explicitly addresses the potential use of firearms. Recent research has shown that in many school shootings, the perpetrators provided clues as to their intentions before carrying out their crimes. This scenario provides a basis for discussing a range of ways that peers can respond to implied or overt threats of gun violence.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why would someone tell others of their intent to commit serious violence?
- What if this turns out to be just an unfounded rumor? Is there any harm in overreacting to a potential threat? How does that compare to the potential harm in the event that the threat is real and you don't speak up?
- Is it possible to tell from surface impressions whether someone is capable of doing serious violence? Several of the perpetrators of school shootings in recent years were seemingly "normal" boys and young men who didn't fit the stereotypical profile of pathological killers.

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ It is perfectly understandable that some students, out of fear, will express their reluctance to get involved in a situation with a potential school shooter. You can acknowledge the validity of their concern and urge them to brainstorm responsible options that maintain their anonymity.
- ✘ Some people feel that the national outcry about school shootings has been disproportionate to the actual threat. After all, they argue, these shootings are still exceedingly rare. You can acknowledge this concern, but emphasize that threats need to be taken very seriously by everyone -- students as well as school professionals.
- ✘ Because this scenario involves a gun, there is a chance that the discussion could gravitate toward debate about gun ownership, public safety and the Second Amendment. It is important to keep the discussion focused on the ways fellow students can respond when another student is threatening to use a gun with malicious intent, and not allow the larger political issues to dominate.

**End the scenario by emphasizing that all threats of violence need to be taken very seriously, and that effective prevention means promptly addressing these threats, not ignoring or minimizing them.**

# 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

❶ Do nothing. It's none of my business and nothing will probably happen anyway.

❷ Try to get more information to make sure this isn't just a rumor.

❸ Talk with my friends and come up with a group strategy about how to proceed.

❹ Talk about this situation with my parents, a teacher, a coach or another professional in the school.

❺ Talk about this situation with the school resource officer.

❻ Call in an anonymous tip to my principal or another member of the school administration.

❼ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Teaching : Scenarios Designed for MVP Leaders

Note to trainers: The third and final section of the MVP Playbook is designed to be used in advanced sessions, especially (but not exclusively) with student leaders who want to work with their peers and younger students on these issues.

# **MVP Leader Scenarios**

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

**Harassment of lesbians**

**Friend in need**

**Pressure for sex**

**Emotional abuse**



# TEACHING : INTERFERENCE

## BACKGROUND

**“Interference” is the first scenario that deals directly with the harassment of lesbians. Because sexism and homophobia are both forms of oppression linked directly to gender and sexuality, any discussion of sexism that fails to address heterosexism is limited by definition. This scenario provides the opportunity to address the problem of harassment of lesbians and gays, while linking it to the larger issue of gender violence.**

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Does anyone here know of a situation where lesbians have been harassed?
- Why do some men feel the need to harass homosexual women? Are they threatened by these women? Why?
- Is this sexual harassment? (It could be. See “Working Definitions” on page 8 for clarification).

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ⊗ Homophobia is deeply rooted and touches on complex issues of gender and sexual identity. Occasionally, some of the students will try to justify their intolerance through reference to their religious beliefs, social norms, evolutionary biology, etc. You have to be prepared to address these rationalizations and keep them focused on their own responsibility for their attitudes and actions.
- ⊗ Some students – and professionals – may experience discomfort when addressing homophobia. This discomfort is often expressed as laughter. You also have to keep in mind that there may be gay students in the class; you can’t assume in your use of language that everyone present identifies as heterosexual.
- ⊗ Keep the discussion focused. This is a conversation that can easily be diverted away from men’s violence against women and into an unresolvable debate about homosexuality. You can keep the discussion directly relevant by searching for common ground. One way to do this is by asking: “Can we all agree that harassment or violence of any sort is not an acceptable way to deal with differences?”

**End the scenario by restating that harassment and violence against lesbians is by definition harassment and violence against women, and cannot in any way be justified or tolerated.**

# INTERFERENCE



You're hanging out with your friends when you see two women holding hands. One of your friends says "Look at that. That's so sick." You aren't sure that the women heard the comment, but you know they would be offended if they did.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

This is embarrassing....How do I **shut my friend up?**....I wonder how his comments make these women feel....I won't join in on **harassing** the women....But do I have **a responsibility** to them to say something to my friend?....**What'll he think of me?**....The issue isn't whether my friend or I am comfortable with others' homosexuality.... It's whether anyone has the right to harass or abuse people who are different from themselves...Come to think of it, is this **sexual harassment?**

Could we get in trouble?....

**What should I do?**

## OPTIONS

- 1 Don't say anything. Just hope my friend doesn't take things too far.
- 2 Try to divert my friend's attention and make him forget about the women.
- 3 Tell my friend to shut up now, mind his own business and leave them alone. Then go over to the women and apologize.
- 4 Warn everyone in the group that we could get in trouble for harassing these women.

5 I shouldn't say anything now. But I should plan to speak with my friend later about his attitudes toward lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people.

6 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : CRUNCH TIME

## BACKGROUND

This scenario deals with a difficult interpersonal situation that might arise if a young man becomes identified as a leader on the issue of preventing men's violence against women. It provides an opportunity to discuss what that role entails — both on a personal level and in the role as leader and mentor.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Does anyone here know a woman who has been raped? You don't have to tell us who it is. How did you feel when you found out? (If no one responds, you can ask "how do you think you would feel if a young woman you knew came to you and told you she had been raped?")
- Does loyalty to your friends supercede everything else in this circumstance? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about becoming identified as a guy that young women can trust on these issues? If you start speaking out, they might tell you things that otherwise you probably wouldn't have heard.

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ✘ It is important to emphasize that rape is a seriously traumatic event, and that the needs of the woman who has been raped are paramount. You can reassure the young men that if they feel like they're in over their heads, on this or related issues, they have plenty of support and backup, and should not feel isolated. One of the functions of the student leaders is to provide a basic referral service (i.e. if someone with a problem approaches an MVP trainer or student mentor, he should know, at the very least, how to contact a professional at school who can deal with the matter).
- ✘ You can point out that the last line of the scenario says "...this is a very serious situation." Sometimes people will shy away from situations like this out of fear, or concerns about getting themselves in trouble. It is important to emphasize that rape is a felony and is never something to ignore or treat lightly.
- ✘ This scenario highlights the fact that young men who are going through the MVP training need to be mature enough to handle some sensitive and difficult situations. Finding such individuals is a key to the success of the program. It might be useful to remind the young men that one thing that leadership is about is standing up, taking risks, and dealing with situations from which others might shy away.

**End the scenario by emphasizing the positive aspect of this unfortunate situation: that a young woman has trusted you with a profoundly personal revelation, and that therefore you have an obligation to handle the situation with care and thoughtfulness.**

# CRUNCH TIME



A female friend from school whom you're close to comes to you, upset, and tells you that a male student from school raped one of her friends. The victim hasn't yet pressed charges; only a couple of people know about it. You're stunned, but you know from the way she told you that this is a very serious situation.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Can this be *true?* Could this student be *a rapist?*.....Or might there be some sort of *misunderstanding?*.....But what if there isn't? What if he really raped her?.....I *feel terrible* for the girl..... I *can't even imagine what it must feel like to be raped*.....Is there something I can say to her?.....And what about the guy? Do I have a responsibility to *stick up for him?* What if it comes down to a *he-said, she-said?* Then who do I support?  
**What should I do?**

## OPTIONS

- 1 Try to stay as far away from this mess as possible. It's a no-win situation for me.
- 2 Talk to the accused guy, let him know what I know, and hear out his side of the story.
- 3 Have a discussion with my female friend and anyone else who knows, and make a group decision on how to proceed.
- 4 Call a local rape hotline and ask them if they have any advice on what to do, or literature that

we can read for more information about these kinds of situations.

- 5 Talk to a parent, professional counselor or some other adult I respect and get some guidance about what to do.

6 Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : BLOCKING THE PLATE

## BACKGROUND

This is a scenario where the young men are asked to see themselves as a potential perpetrator. "Blocking the Plate" provides the opportunity for the students to examine some of their own attitudes toward young women, sex, and consent.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How many of you guys have been in or can imagine yourselves in this situation?
- Does no always mean no? When doesn't it? What does the law say?
- Why do so many men rape women? (See "Working Definitions" on page 8.)
- A Ms. survey reported that 84% of the men surveyed (whose behaviors met the legal definition of rape) believed they had not done anything wrong. Why not? Where did they learn that their sexually assaultive behavior was "ok"?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ⊗ A prevalent rape myth holds that rape happens because of miscommunication between young women and men. It is useful to acknowledge that communication between the sexes can be complicated, and different patterns of gendered socialization and differing communications styles sometimes conflict. But rape is an act of sexual violence and aggression wherein the rapist willfully violates the basic integrity of his victim. He does not listen because he does not care what his victim wants.
- ⊗ Some young men and women believe that if the man spends a significant amount of money on a woman, he deserves something in return. It should be made clear that neither party ever owes anything to the other.
- ⊗ This scenario can spark a discussion about what sex means, what is a "casual" vs. a "committed" relationship, etc. The MVP Model does not make value judgements about consensual sex between adults. However, facilitators should be aware that some high school students are not of age to legally consent to having sex. (Consult Working Definitions: Statutory Rape). As facilitators we need to steer the discussion toward pressure, coercion, force and other factors that preclude true consent.

**End the scenario by reasserting that men have to take a woman's "no" seriously, that if they don't they risk committing a morally indefensible - as well as a potentially criminal - act.**

# BLOCKING THE PLATE



You are out with a young woman you met recently. The evening goes well, and at the end of the evening you start kissing, but when you try to go further, she asks you to stop. You try several more times, but she's firm. You know she likes you, and you know you're very attracted to her.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Think about the "no means no" thing...Do I really believe it in this case?....It is her right to say **no** at any point in time....Also, I have to ask myself, **do I like this girl**, or do I just want to have **sex with as few strings attached as possible**?....If it's a relationship that she wants, is it fair for me to "**sweet talk**" her just to have sex with her?....  
**What should I do?**

## OPTIONS

- ❶ Press on. Ignore her protests; I know she'll eventually relax and enjoy it.
- ❷ Try every means I can think of to get her to agree to have sex with me.
- ❸ Respect her wishes and back off.
- ❹ Stop and then leave.

❺ Instead of pressuring her, tell her I like her and let her know I would like to go out with her again later.

❻ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# TEACHING : UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

## BACKGROUND

**This scenario deals with some of the difficult interpersonal dilemmas that can arise when a young man is conscious about dating violence and other gender violence issues. The situation in "Unnecessary Roughness" is one that many adult men who have done anti-battering work have had to face. It deals directly with the challenge that is ever-present for anti-sexist men: the challenge of putting into personal practice what you urge others to do, i.e. "walking the walk."**

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Does anyone know some of the warning signs for abusive relationships? Why are constant putdowns and controlling behaviors considered indicators of possible physical abuse?
- Can a relationship be considered abusive if there is no physical violence? What are some examples of emotional or psychological abuse?
- Is it the responsibility of one friend to confront another's abusive behavior, even if such confrontation could threaten the friendship? Why or why not?

## COMMON CONCERNS

- ⊗ This is a very difficult interpersonal dilemma, because confronting one's friend in this situation might entail risking the friendship. But you can point out that a young man not saying something is taking a risk also, a risk that he'll be letting himself down, as well as failing both his friend and his friend's girlfriend.
- ⊗ This scenario provides the opportunity to address directly the idea that what goes on between a guy and his girlfriend is "none of my business." Because it's the last scenario in the Playbook, the young men should long before have gotten the message that it's not responsible to do nothing in these types of situations.

**End the scenario by emphasizing that while this situation is interpersonally tricky, like some of the others in the Playbook, the way we conduct ourselves in our own lives and relationships is just as important as how we teach others to act. Silence in the face of injustice is complicity whether that injustice is continents away, or right next door.**

# UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS



A good friend of yours treats his girlfriend badly. He constantly puts her down, even in public, and tells her what to do, what she should wear, who she can talk to. You've never seen him physically abuse her, but you're concerned about what might go on in private.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Should I say something to my friend? Is their relationship any of my business?.....I know he wouldn't be happy about me saying something.....But if I don't, doesn't that mean that I'm silently supporting his behavior? I don't want to do that.....Is there something I can say to her? What if she gets mad at me, too?.....Then again, maybe what she needs is someone to tell her that she doesn't deserve to be treated like this.....  
What should I do in this situation?

## OPTIONS

- ❶ Don't say anything. It's really none of my business.
- ❷ Talk to my friend and tell him that I'm uncomfortable with the way he talks to his girlfriend, and that maybe he should see someone - a counselor, for example - who can help.
- ❸ Talk to her, and let her know that I'm uncomfortable with the way my friend treats her. Encourage her to seek support from a counselor, or a sensitive female teacher, or someone at the local women's center.
- ❹ Talk to my parents, a teacher I trust, the health coordinator, a guidance counselor, or some other adult. Tell them what's going on and ask them for advice.
- ❺ Talk to some of my other friends, male and female, and ask them if they've seen what I've seen, and how they feel about it.
- ❻ Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**MVP**  
STRATEGIES

Gender Violence Prevention  
Education and Training

For more information about our training programs please email us: [mvpstrat@aol.com](mailto:mvpstrat@aol.com)