# It Wasn't My Fault

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

**NSES ALIGNMENT:**

By the end of 12th grade, students will be able to:

**PS.12.CC.4** – Explain why a person who has been raped or sexually assaulted is not at fault.

**PS.12.IC.1** – Demonstrate effective ways to communicate with trusted adults about bullying, harassment, abuse, or assault.

**PS.12.AI.1** – Access valid resources for help if they or someone they know are being bullied or harassed, or have been sexually abused or assaulted.

**PS.12.AI.2** – Demonstrate ways to access accurate information and resources for survivors of sexual abuse, incest, rape, sexual harassment, sexual assault and dating violence.

**TARGET GRADE:** Grade 9 Lesson 3

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Desktop or laptop with PowerPoint on it (depending on whether the panelists plan to speak or use PowerPoint)
- LCD projector and screen
- Index cards – one per student
- Extra pencils in case students do not have their own
- "Teacher Resource: Guidelines for Selecting Guest Speakers" – one copy
- Student worksheet: "I Think, I Feel, I Wonder" – one per student
- Homework: "Online Resources to Deal with Rape and Sexual Assault" – one per student

## ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Note: This advance prep may take longer than most.

- Reach out to a local agency that works with rape survivors to find two or more people to serve on your panel. As part of this process, review the handout, "Guidelines for Teachers in Selecting Guest Speakers." Try to find, if you can, survivors who are close in age to the students you work with, as well as survivors of more than one gender. If you cannot do this, then you can both prepare some questions connecting the speaker to the students specifically relating to age – such as, "What advice would you give these 9th graders?", and intentionally point out that people of all genders are sexually assaulted – not just girls and women.
- Be sure to talk with the agency about relevant aspects relating to your class, especially the grade level of the students and any key topics you want them to focus on. Ask the panelists in advance how they feel about a question/answer period after they share their stories, especially whether any topics or questions are off-limits. If the panelists do not wish to participate in a Q and A session at the end, extend the processing time with the students, making sure panelists have already left the room before discussing their presentations.
- Ask each panelist to provide you with a brief description of how they would like to be introduced (some may simply wish to share their name and age). Be sure to check pronunciations of names and gender pronouns.
- During the class before this class, let students know that this topic will be addressed and that there will be rape survivors telling their stories. Make arrangements for any students who may have had personal experience with rape or sexual assault, should they be concerned that being in this class would be triggering to them. You will need to work with your school team to determine what is appropriate, whether giving the student(s) a study period in the library or having them sit in on a different class.
- Let the school counselor know about the class topic and format and invite them to be in the room to observe the panel. If they cannot attend, follow up with them after the class session to summarize what was presented so they are prepared should any students choose to come to them about rape or sexual assault.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe at least two impacts of rape and sexual assault on someone who has been assaulted. [Knowledge]
2. Explain why a person who has been raped or sexually assaulted is never at fault. [Knowledge]
3. Reflect on their own feelings about rape and sexual abuse. [Knowledge, Affect]
4. Name at least two online resources a rape or sexual abuse survivor can access for more information and support. [Knowledge]

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Introduce the topic by distributing the index cards and saying, "As you know, today's class is going to deal with a very serious and sensitive topic: rape and sexual abuse. We are very lucky to have some generous and brave guests with us today who have survived rape and sexual abuse. They're here to share their stories [and to answer questions you may have]. Both [all] the panelists will speak and then we will open it up to questions and answers – so you may wish to use the index cards I gave you to write down any question you may have as they're speaking to make sure you remember it when it's time."

***Note to the Teacher:*** *If the panelists have told you in advance that certain questions are off-limits, this is the appropriate time to let students know that. You may also wish to write these on the board so they don't forget.*

Introduce each of the panelists as they have indicated. Have each speak for 10 – 15 minutes, depending on how many panelists you have (31 minutes, subject to change depending on number of speakers).

**STEP 2:** Thank the panelists for sharing their stories. Ask the class whether they have any questions, and facilitate the question/answer session. (12 minutes)

***Note to the Teacher:*** *You may wish to have some questions ready in advance in case students don't think of any. It is also common for students to be quiet after these types of presentations as they are processing the stories. Possible questions might include:*

- Who in your life did you go to for support? In what ways did they help you get through this?

- Did anyone imply or say straight out that they thought it was your fault that this happened to you? If so, how did you respond to that?
- How have you been able to get from where you were when this first happened to where you are today, able to speak publicly in front of a group about what happened?
- What is one thing you want to be sure these 9th graders remember about rape and sexual abuse after you've left?

**STEP 3:** Thank the panelists again. Tell the class that sometimes it's difficult to talk about these things in a group, so you're going to give them the chance to think about and share their reactions to what they just heard individually.

Distribute the reaction sheets and ask students to complete them individually and in silence. Let them know they will have about 5 minutes in which to complete their sheets. Ask students to turn their sheets face down when they are done so you know they have finished. (5 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Tell the students that if they still have anything left over from the presentations they wish to talk about, that the school counselor is available to support them. Explain that their homework assignment for next class will be to find two websites which a person who has been sexually abused or assaulted can go to for resources and support. Distribute the homework assignment. (2 minutes)

***Note to the Teacher:*** *It is not uncommon for students to disclose their own experiences with abuse after the class session is over. Although students can and should be referred to the school counselor, how you respond to the student in the moment is important. Please see the resource relating to student disclosure in the Teacher's Guide.*

## RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The panel and reflective writing afterward will enable teachers to fulfill objectives one through three. The homework assignment will fulfill objective number four.

## HOMEWORK:

Students will be asked to search for two reliable websites for teen rape or sexual abuse survivors that are inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations.

# Teacher Resource:
# Guidelines for Selecting a Guest Speaker

Here are some questions to consider when both selecting a guest speaker and preparing the guest speaker to present to your class.

1. Is the speaker's information factually accurate?

2. Is the presentation (including method and materials) age- and developmentally-appropriate for your students?

3. Are you sure the speaker does not use fear-based educational techniques?

4. Has the speaker been trained in speaking to high school classes? How much experience doing this do they have?

5. Is the philosophy of the speaker and/or organization they represent aligned with your curriculum?

6. Is the material appropriate for use with learners of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and physical abilities?

7. Are the instruction and materials used in the classroom free from the teaching or promotion of religious doctrine?

8. Is the material free from promoting bias?

*(Adapted from the New Jersey Department of Education and California Department of Education.)*

# Student Worksheet: I Think, I Feel, I Wonder

Name: _____ Date: _____

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please finish the following sentence stems based on what you just heard from the panelists about rape and sexual abuse. Please write a minimum of two sentences for each sentence stem, although you may write more if you wish.

**WHEN IT COMES TO THE PANELISTS' STORIES, I THINK…**

**RIGHT NOW, I FEEL…**

**I WONDER…**

# Homework:
# Online Resources to Deal with Rape and Sexual Assault

Name: _____ Date: _____

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Using a search engine, find two online resources for a teenager who has been raped or sexually abused and needs to figure out what to do or how to deal with what happened to them. **Please keep in mind that teens of any gender and sexual orientation can be raped or abused**, so please be sure to select websites that are welcoming of all people.

**Website #1:** _____

**URL:** _____

**What did you find on their site that you felt would be useful to someone who had been raped or sexually abused?**

_____

_____

**Did they offer a hotline?** YES / NO **If so, what is the hotline #?**

_____

**Is this a website you'd recommend to other people your age? Why or why not?**

_____

_____

_____

**Website #2:** _____

**URL:** _____

**What did you find on their site that you felt would be useful to someone who had been raped or sexually abused?**

_____

_____

_____

**Did they offer a hotline?** YES / NO **If so, what is the hotline #?**_____

**Is this a website you'd recommend to other people your age? Why or why not?**

_____

_____

_____