**IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

The U.S. Department of State requires that as a program sponsor, we at Pan Atlantic Foundation educate and provide students with information on how to identify and report sexual abuse, exploitation, or harassment. It is also imperative that we provide area representatives with the tools and knowledge to know how to identify sexual abuse and how to take appropriate action.

**Why is sexual abuse so important to discuss with exchange students**?

When it comes to sexual abuse, foreign exchange students are particularly vulnerable due to their cultural differences. It may be hard for them to identify sexual abuse and it may also be hard for them to talk about it. Here are some reasons behind that behavior:

* Due to cultural difference, students may think the behavior, especially in the \*grooming\* stages, is “normal”.
* The predator may tell the student that if they tell anyone, they will get in trouble and be sent home or the student may perceive that to be the case.
* An exchange student may feel guilty for reporting the abuse since the host family was kind enough to volunteer to host them, so they don’t want to make them feel bad or seem ungrateful, especially if they are not sure if what they are experiencing is abuse.
* A student may be from a country where it is taboo to even talk about sex or even encouraged to NOT talk about sexual abuse, as it would bring shame upon their natural family.
* A student may be from a country where the idea of “reporting” someone in a position of authority would be unheard of.

***Statistics***

* *Amongst teenagers, girls are more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse and 1 in 4 girls will have been sexually abused by the age of 18.*
* *The majority of teenage sexual abuse victims know their abuser.*
* *The most common type of abuser is a family member or someone who has close ties to the family.*
* *More than 50% of females who are raped in the U.S. are raped before they turn 18 and teenagers account for more than half of all reported sexual abuse in this country.*
* *The majority of sexual abuse against teenagers happens in their own homes.  Teenagers also make up almost a quarter of sexual offenders.*
* *While the report rate for sexual abuse across all ages is about 50%, this statistic drops to 31% amongst teenagers.  Due in part to anxiety about the social stigma of being a victim and fears of retribution, many teens choose not to report their abuse in an attempt to forget it happened at all.*

*“Statistics” taken directly from:* [*http://www.doorwaysarizona.com/sexual-abuse-in-teenagers-what-parents-need-to-know/*](http://www.doorwaysarizona.com/sexual-abuse-in-teenagers-what-parents-need-to-know/)

***The Signs***

*It is very common for victims of teen sexual abuse to have changes in behavior and to exhibit the same symptoms as a teen who has survived a traumatic event.  Common behaviors seen in victims of teen sexual abuse include:*

* *Increased anxiety and* [*panic attacks*](http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/default.htm)
* [*Eating disorders*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eating_disorder)
* *Depression*
* *Displaced anger*
* *Nightmares and difficulties sleeping*
* *Problems in school including acting out in class and rapidly falling grades*
* *Withdrawing from friends, family, and activities*
* [*Self destructive behavior*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-destructive_behaviour) *like cutting, using drugs, or promiscuity*
* *Poor hygiene or excessive bathing*
* *Running away*
* [*Suicidal thoughts*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicidal_ideation)*, talking about suicide, and attempting suicide*
* *Discussing sexual knowledge or language that is not age appropriate*

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**Grooming- Knowing the Signs**

**What is “Grooming” in the context of an exchange student?**

It is hard to identify grooming in the exchange student setting because the first stages of grooming are inherent in the program…*#1. Gaining the Victims Trust, and #2. Filling the Victims Needs.\**

That is why it is very important to watch the next stage, which would be “Isolating the Victim”. Signs of this would be:

* + Not allowing the student to make friends or do activities outside of the home.
  + Becoming angry or aggressive toward a student’s desires to have close friends outside the home or make them feel guilty for doing so.
  + Finding or creating opportunities (outside the norm) to be alone with the exchange student.

The next step would be to “Normalize Sexualized Behaviors”, such as:

* + Walking in the student’s room when they are dressing and telling them it is okay and that they should not be shy around their “parent”.
  + Inviting the student into their bed alone to watch TV or to talk.
  + Offering or requesting massages/backrubs.
  + Offering the student alcohol or drugs…letting them “get away with something” that can later be used against them.
  + Showing a student explicit videos or movies with high sexual content.

\*adapted from http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/child-sexual-abuse-6-stages-of-grooming

**Taking Action**

**What do I do if I think a student is experiencing sexual abuse or being groomed**?

If you feel like there may be a problem but you are just not sure, talk to your Regional Director immediately about what your next steps should be. You should remove the student from the home immediately. Do not worry at this point about what to tell the family or about the student’s belongings. Getting the student to a safe place is the priority.

**If it is after hours and you are made aware of sexual abuse or have concern   
that there may be a case of sexual abuse, please call our 24-hour emergency hotline at 866-227-5335 (TOM-BARK-DELI)**

**Building a Foundation of Knowledge and Trust**

On the following pages, you will find information that is shared with students at orientation to help them know how to identify sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and how to prevent themselves from being an abuser.

* Please familiarize yourself with this material so that you can discuss this important topic with your students.
* We suggest that in your first meeting with the student, that you let them know that you have reviewed the student handbook, including the material on sexual abuse, and that it is safe to talk with you about this topic.
* Reassure your student that, even if you share a close relationship with their host family, your priority and responsibility is to keep them (the student) safe.

**IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

The U.S. Department of State requires that as your program sponsor, we at Pan Atlantic Foundation educate and provide you information on how to identify and report sexual abuse, exploitation, or harassment. It is important for foreign exchange students to understand the risks as predators may take advantage of your cultural differences to engage you in a sexual manner. Please review and retain this document for your safety.

**Please call 911 if you are in immediate danger. Please also call our 24-hour emergency hotline at 866-227-5335 (TOM-BARK-DELI) if you are in immediate danger, feel unsafe, or need to speak with someone immediately regarding sexual harassment or abuse.**

Pan Atlantic Foundation staff are always here to help with any situation. You may also contact us at [services@panatlanticfoundation.org](mailto:services@panatlanticfoundation.org) or call our office at 207-871-8622 for any questions, concerns, or non-emergency situations.

What Is Sexual Harassment? \*

* Sexual harassment is any unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can be a single incident or may happen over time. Examples may include.
  + Inappropriate staring
  + Asking questions or talking about someone’s sexuality, sex life, or body.
  + Telling sexual jokes.
  + Demanding hugs, dates, or sexual favors.
  + Making unnecessary physical contact, including unwanted touching.
  + Using language that puts someone down based on their gender (for example. “sissy”, “bitch”) or sexual orientation (for example, words like “fag”, “slut”, or “dyke”.)
  + Showing or sending sexual pictures, cartoons, or other images (including on social media)
  + Spreading sexual rumors (including on social media)
  + Stalking, making someone feel unsafe, including unwanted visits, phone calls, texts, emails, leaving presents.
  + Threatening to punish someone if they do not accept sexual advances.

Here is an example scenario of sexual harassment:

*A new [exchange] student starts at a high school and soon begins dating a boy. They break up. Other students start calling her names and spreading sex-related rumors about her. Even though her teachers know what's going on, they ignore it.*

This isn't just bullying. It's sexual harassment. And if this happens to you, you shouldn't put up with it.

In the following pages, you will find information on what you need to know about sexual harassment, and how to deal with it.

\*Adapted from: Metcalf, Eric MPH. *What Is Sexual Harassment? How Teens Can Recognize and Deal with Sexual Harassment.* [http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment.](http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment) Accessed November 2016.

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What Does Sexual Harassment Look Like? \*

Sexual harassment comes in many forms. Sexual harassment includes:

**Name calling**: Insults related to a person's sexuality are a form of sexual harassment. This includes calling someone a "slut," "gay," or a "fag,". It doesn't matter who's saying it, or whether the person being harassed is gay or straight, male or female, younger or older. What matters is that you're using those words to insult them -- that makes it harassment.

**Unwanted touching**: If someone touches a girl's breasts and she's not OK with it, it's harassment. If someone grabs or hits a guy in the genitals -- even as a prank -- that's harassment, too.

**Unwanted behaviors**: This includes someone asking you on a date or pressuring you for sex repeatedly after you've said no. If someone stalks you, gets in your personal space, or acts threateningly, that may be a form of sexual harassment, too.

**Pressure from authority figures**: Harassment doesn't just come from other [teens.](http://www.webmd.com/children/tc/growth-and-development-ages-15-to-18-years-promoting-healthy-growth-and-development) Adults may sexually harass you, too. If a teacher offers to give you a better grade – or any adult offers something in exchange for sex or any kind of physical favor, that's harassment. It's still "absolutely" harassment if a teacher is just looking or making comments "in a sexual way that makes the student uncomfortable."

**Hassling**: If a classroom is mostly made up of guys who start picking on one of the few girls during class and making her life uncomfortable, that could be termed sexual harassment.

**Online**: Harassment often takes place in person. But it happens online too -- like if someone emails or texts photos of you in which you're not dressed or you're in a sexual situation.

**Your Rights**

United States laws protect the person that is abused. This means if *you* are uncomfortable, the adult or the abuser is wrong. You are **NOT** at fault if someone abuses you. And remember, the law protects you so no one can retaliate or take revenge for you reporting him or her.

***Your body-Your choice!***

You have the right to determine your boundaries in regards to personal space and touching. These boundaries can be very different from culture to culture. If you are uncomfortable, it is a signal that something is wrong. You have the right to decide how and by whom you want to be touched.

***You have the right to say “NO”!***

It is always OK to say “NO” when you feel uncomfortable with someone else’s behavior. Tell your harasser to stop. Say that the words or actions are making you uncomfortable.

***Keep a record.*** Take note of who harassed you, what the person said or did, and how you responded. Write down when and where it happened. Keep any harassing emails, texts, or online postings, too.

***Ask for help and talk to an adult whom you trust.*** You decide when and with whom to talk about sexual misconduct that you have experienced. There is always an adult at PAN ATLANTIC who can help you. You may also choose to talk with an adult whom you trust: a teacher, school counselor, friend, a friend’s parent or the police. Sometimes it's hard to know whether events cross the line from teasing to sexual harassment. Talking to an adult can help you figure out what's happening and how to deal with it.

\*Adapted from: Metcalf, Eric MPH. *What Is Sexual Harassment? How Teens Can Recognize and Deal with Sexual Harassment.* [http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment.](http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment) Accessed November 2016.

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How You Can Avoid Being the Harasser. \*

If you're checking someone out, joking with your friends, or being persistent in asking for a date, is that harassment? It may sometimes seem tricky to tell. Here are some pointers:

* Remember where you are.
  + Things might be different in the United States and jokes or comments you could make with your close buddies may not be OK with someone you don't know as well.
* Don't label people**.**
  + Never call anyone a "slut," and never use "gay" as an insult.
* Hands off.
  + Don't touch people -- especially in a personal or sexual manner -- unless they have told you it's OK to do so.
* Be respectful.
  + If someone asks you to stop doing something that's bothering them, stop immediately. It doesn't matter if it's someone you're dating or someone you don't know -- if they say "stop," stop.
* Don't spread rumors**.**
  + Respectfulness also means not spreading rumors. Don't share personal details or sexy photos that would embarrass someone.
* Watch for signals**.**
  + If someone seems uncomfortable or afraid when you're trying to start a conversation or ask for a date, stop.

**I**t is also very important to understand the definition of consent: \*

What is age of consent? Special concerns for teens:

Teens need information about the laws of consent in their state. As our judicial system holds more teens responsible as adults, there are significant and long-lasting results for teens who engage in illegal sexual behaviors, even with other teens who are close in age. An example would be:

"I know you and your girlfriend love each other but you are 18 years old and she is 15 and that makes being sexual with each other illegal. If she gets pregnant or her parents press charges, you could have to register as a sex offender for the rest of your life. It is important for both of you to wait until you are older."

\*Adapted from: Metcalf, Eric MPH. *What Is Sexual Harassment? How Teens Can Recognize and Deal with Sexual Harassment.* [http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment.](http://teens.webmd.com/features/what-is-sexual-harassment) Accessed November 2016.

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What is sexual abuse?

You might not be sure if what has happened to you or a friend is sexual abuse. That’s why it’s important to pay attention to how you feel. If you feel uncomfortable, afraid, or upset, then something might be wrong. **No one** has the right to make you feel uncomfortable, or make you do anything you don’t want to do.

Is this sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse happens when someone touches another person in a sexual way, and the touching is unwanted. That includes someone touching your breasts, vagina, penis or anus without your permission. Being forced to touch someone else in a sexual way is also sexual abuse, and so is rape (putting a penis or object into part of someone’s body, such as mouth, anus, or vagina). Sexual abuse is usually done by someone who used to seem trustworthy, is older, or who has some kind of authority or power over the person they abuse.

What if there was no touching?

Sexual abuse can happen without touching. Forcing someone to look at a naked person or pictures of naked people, and being forced to watch pornography is sexual abuse. It is also sexual abuse to force someone to watch a person masturbate.

Finding hope

Sexual abuse is very upsetting. It can take a long time to recover from, even if the abuse happened a long time ago. But there is hope, and you will feel better over time. The important thing is getting help and taking things at your own pace. No matter what happened, you can move on.

Below are several links to websites that can help you if you need information while on your program.

<http://teens.webmd.com/default.htm>

https://[www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx)

<http://www.sexandu.ca/consent/sexual-harassment-bullying/>

<http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/tip-sheet-16>

“What is Sexual Abuse?” *Kids Help Phone*. March 2014. [www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth/Violence-and-Abuse/Sexual-Abuse/What-is-Sexual-Abuse.aspx.](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/InfoBooth/Violence-and-Abuse/Sexual-Abuse/What-is-Sexual-Abuse.aspx) Accessed November 2016.

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