

## 9th Grade, Objective 9.04

Discussing the subject of sexual assault may be upsetting to some students. They may show signs of having been involved in an abusive situation. It is important to be sensitive when teaching this subject. Make sure your students know they are in a safe environment in your classroom. We suggest that counselors in your school be given advanced notification before teaching this lesson. Allow a student the option of leaving class and reporting to counselor if subject matter is disturbing.

### **Objective:**

Create a safe plan to prevent sexual assault and sexual abuse and demonstrate skills needed to report to the appropriate resources.

### **Materials Needed:**

Poem, Learning to Swim by Ann Turner

Video “Acquaintance Rape” at <http://iluvtwilight.multiply.com/video/item/843/> [If not in the school library, the poem can be accessed through Amazon.com for about \$6.]

Computer and projector for Teacher Input section of the lesson

Appendix 1 – copies of How Can I Reduce the Risk of Sexual Assault?

Appendix 2 – How to Help a Friend

### **Statement of Objectives:**

*In a previous lesson, we have studied what constitutes sexual assault, that it is always against the law, and we have learned misconceptions and stereotypes. Today we will cover how to reduce the risk of sexual assault, what to do if you ever get sexually assaulted or if you are a survivor of sexual abuse.*

### **Review:**

On the board, write the word Barriers. Ask students why they think a person who has been sexually assaulted or abused might not want to tell anyone. Write down student responses as they are mentioned. Examples: fear of not being believed, embarrassment, shame, guilt, not wanting friends or family to know, don’t want to be viewed as “damaged,” not wanting to get the person in trouble, concerns about confidentiality, worry over being perceived as gay (male victims), and threats by or fear of retaliation by the perpetrator.

### **Focus:**

Ask six students come to the front of the room. Provide a copy of the book (poem) *Learning to Swim* by Ann Turner. Have each student read five pages, then pass the book to the next student. Because the book is a poem, the reading goes quickly and will take about ten minutes.

Here is the review of ***Learning to Swim*** from Publisher's Weekly:

*Using spare vignettes laid out like poetry, Turner recalls the summer she was six years old, when she was sexually abused by a neighbor. Convincingly assuming a child's voice, the narrative blends Annie's routine activities such as playing with dolls and swimming lessons with darker images of the neighbor boy's transgressions (the boy "telling me to touch him/ in a hard, breathless voice, and I didn't even know/ I could say/ no"). Because Annie lacks the vocabulary to describe what is happening to her, it is her actions that most often imply her emotions (she draws an angry picture, she brushes her teeth five times a day, she tries to hide). Turner also describes Annie's painful longing to confide in someone (she says of her father, "I wish my words/ were smoke/ he could breathe in") but she is silenced by fear of what the neighbor boy might do if she tells. Annie's mother extracts the truth. Throughout the volume, the narration shifts, sometimes addressing the reader, a few times her abuser; sometimes speaking in the immediate present and others recalling the recent past. The narrative itself may be at times disjointed, but the emotional truth comes through clearly. If older readers can get past the youth of the narrator they will likely appreciate the poetic voice and courage of the heroine. Ages 12-up.*

Process the book by saying many young people find it difficult to tell someone if they have been harmed by others. That is one explanation as to why so many survivors suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many survivors learn they have to tell a confidante to be able to heal from the hurt of sexual abuse or sexual assault.

**Teacher Input:**

Show the video "Acquaintance Rape" with Kristen Stewart. It may be found in 3 parts, totaling 24 minutes at <http://iluvtwilight.multiply.com/video/item/843/>. The video was produced in March of 2009 and may be purchased. Kristen Stewart is the female lead in the Twilight movie series. She takes a serious role in narrating this documentary which does an excellent job presenting risk reduction, positive suggestions for both females and males, and seeking help in the event of sexual assault.

Present the PowerPoint slides, Sexual Violence: Risk Reduction and Seeking Help.

**Guided Practice:**

Tell the students that they have already heard some suggestions on how to reduce the risk of sexual assault. Ask them to choose a partner and make a list of other strategies that they could do to reduce the risk of sexual assault. If they seem to struggle, perhaps suggest that they think in terms of "planning" or "thinking ahead" before going out. Allow each team to share their results. Appendix 1 is offered to help capture other ideas and a study guide for the next exam.

Copy Appendix 2, one for each small pair of students. Allow them to read both scenarios and decide which to work on. They are to discuss what they would do to help their friend. Ask them to make notes so they can share it with the class. Suggestions for how to help are at the bottom of the page, but they must give specific strategies to fit the situation. Call on a few volunteers to get feedback for each scenario.

**Independent Practice:**

Ask students to find contact information using a local phone book about a local agency that has professionals available to deal with sexual assault or sexual abuse survivors.

**Closure:**

*I can see that from the work you have done today, you will know how to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault. While sexual assault has decreased in numbers over the last few years, it is good to know that should you or a friend become a victim, you know how to seek help.*

# How Can I Reduce the Risk of Sexual Assault?

- Know your limits – do not get drunk or high.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Use the buddy system.
- Walk with confidence – you look stronger.
- Avoid walking alone. Stay in well-traveled (busy) and well-lit areas.
- Drive in well-traveled and well-lit areas.
- Use your door locks. If you leave your car, even for a minute, roll up windows and lock doors.
- Be assertive.
- Know who is on the other side of the door before opening it.
- Keep your car in good shape with plenty of gas.
- Keep your cell phone with you and fully charged.



# How to Help a Friend

- Listen without judging.
- Believe your friend.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Let them know the assault or abuse was not their fault.
- Let them know they did what was necessary to prevent further harm.
- Let them know that you care about them.
- Encourage them to seek medical attention.
- Encourage them to talk about the assault with an advocate, mental health professional, or someone they trust.
- Let them know they do not have to manage this crisis alone.

*Sources:*

*National Center for Victims of Crime, [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)*

*ETR Associates, [www.etr.org](http://www.etr.org)*

## My Friend, Mary

You have been out on a date and arrive home at 11:00 p.m. As you pull into the driveway, you see Mary, your best buddy parked in her car with her head hanging low and her hair in shambles. You go up to her car, knock on her window. She unrolls her window and you can tell something is not right. She looks as though she has been crying. You ask her what's wrong. She is quiet for a while and then reveals that she has been sexually assaulted by Roger. You know that Roger is someone she met last week at a party. You realize she needs more assistance than you are qualified to give. [Males and females can select this scenario.]

## My Friend, Jamal

You have gone to basketball camp for a week in the summer. You have been assigned Jamal as your roommate. You have played on the same Rec League teams with him since middle school. The first night he asks if it's okay to leave the light on. By the third evening, he trusts you enough to tell a secret he has not told anyone else. Since third grade, he has experienced sexual abuse by an uncle. He has never told anyone because the man has threatened to hurt his family. You believe he needs more help and counseling than you are able to give. [Only males can select this scenario.]