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**Preventing Sexual Harassment, Sexual Bullying, Sexual Abuse, Acquaintance Rape, and Date Rape Among Students at Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio: A Teacher Resource Guide and a Student Awareness Pamphlet**

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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(typed date of defense)

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE PROJECT PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Michelle E. Amrein ENTITLED **Preventing Sexual Harassment, Sexual Bullying, Sexual Abuse, Acquaintance Rape, and Date Rape Among Students at Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio: A Teacher Resource Guide and a Student Awareness Pamphlet** BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF HUMANITIES.

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## Table of Contents

Introduction: The Problem of Child Sexual Abuse.....	3
Sexual Misconduct among High School Students and its Effects.....	5
Current Legislation.....	8
Problems with Current Prevention/Intervention Programs in Schools.....	9
Recommendations for Improvement.....	10
Middletown High School, Middletown, Ohio.....	12
How Serious is the Problem of Student to Student Sexual Harassment and other forms of Sexual Misconduct at MHS?.....	14
Teacher Survey Results and Discussion.....	15
Student Survey Results and Discussion.....	17
Conclusions.....	21
Teacher Resource Guide.....	22
Student Awareness Pamphlet.....	42
Works Cited.....	54
Appendix A.....	57
Appendix B.....	59

**Introduction: The Problem of Child Sexual Abuse**

The sexual abuse of children has been and continues to be one of the most complex, persistent, serious, and disturbing social issues in American culture. Despite society's increasing awareness of the problem, our efforts legislatively, sociologically, psychologically, educationally, and preventively children continue to suffer sexual abuse at the rate of as many as one in three girls (*Stop It Now! Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children*) and one in six boys (*Darkness to Light: End Child Sexual Abuse*) before they are 18 years old. The inestimable cost of this abuse is paid by individual victims, their families, and ultimately by every member of society who comprehends that sexual victimization, especially that of children, diminishes the quality of life in a free, civilized society.

After more than forty years of progress in this area, why are the numbers of victims still so high? What more can and should be done to prevent this crime in any of its forms from being committed? Knowing there are federal and state laws in place; law enforcement officers diligently upholding them; social agencies, medical, and psychiatric facilities in every state with caring, trained professionals responding to all concerns; researchers delving in to every facet of the issue; books, pamphlets, websites, educators, trainers, and advocates providing information and resources for support; we cannot help but ask ourselves: what are we missing? What more should Americans be doing to combat this problem? Helen Keller once said, "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do something that I can do." No one person can remedy the scourge of child sexual abuse, but certainly everyone can do something.

This project is the result of one person's contribution to the effort of protecting children from sexual abuse. The researcher is a graduate student in the humanities, a veteran high school English teacher in the small urban district of Middletown, Ohio, and the mother of a teenage girl who became the victim of acquaintance rape just after she had turned 14 years old. This particular set of attributes points clearly to a project involving high school students in the area of peer sexual abuse. This project will include clarification of the types of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct that high school students experience, including sexual bullying, sexual abuse, date rape and acquaintance rape; and discussion of the range of deleterious effects these experiences have on young people. A summary of current legislation will be presented along with a review of current prevention/ intervention strategies in American high schools, and some problems associated with them. The project will further discuss recommendations from experts in the field for more intensive prevention and intervention with a view to suggesting or spearheading improvements to building policies specifically at Middletown High School.

As a capstone of the project, a consumable teacher's guide will be presented for the purposes of raising consciousness about the problem, reminding teachers of their ethical, professional, and legal obligations to protect students, and offering strategies and support for prevention and intervention geared specifically toward Middletown High School students. As a companion to the teachers' guide, a student awareness pamphlet will also be presented designed for raising awareness of inappropriate sexual behavior among Middletown High School students and urging students to "call a personal foul" on any

kind of sexual misconduct at school. Both guides will detail procedures and protocols for reporting concerns, suspicions, or behaviors in any area of sexual abuse.

### **Sexual Misconduct among High School Students and its Effects**

“Studies show that 50-90 percent of girls *and* boys experience student to student [sexual] harassment.” They suffer sexual comments, jokes, gestures, jibes, name-calling, texts, emails, notes, drawings, pictures, graffiti, rumors, touching, grabbing, propositions, advances, all manner of inappropriate and unwanted sexually charged behaviors (Hill and Kears 6). Students are actually harassed more often by their peers than by adults (Sandler and Stonehill viii). Although the general consensus is that sexual harassment is decreasing in the workplace, peer sexual harassment may be increasing in the public schools (3). Young and colleagues found that three out of four high school girls reported being sexually harassed and more than 50 percent reported being sexually assaulted (1077).

A more intense form of sexual harassment is sexual bullying. Sexual bullying is more persistent and aggressive in nature. Neil Duncan points out that sexual bullying includes such behaviors as sexualized name calling and verbal abuse, ridiculing physical appearance, criticizing one’s sexual performance or behavior, aggressive propositioning, unwanted touching, threatening behavior or physical assault (127). Jimerson and colleagues see sexual harassment and bullying as distinct but overlapping in the respect that they both have the “hallmark characteristics of repetition and intentionality” (177). Sandler and Stonehill further clarify that “Both bullying and sexual harassment

intimidate, both are forms of aggression, and both have the potential to harm both the victim and the person committing the aggression” (12).

*Darkness to Light*, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children from sexual abuse, defines sexual abuse as “any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one exerts power over the other.” Interestingly, their definition also includes “non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and communicating in a sexual manner by phone or internet” (*Darkness to Light: End Child Sexual Abuse*). *Stop it Now!*, another organization for the prevention of child sexual abuse, claims “more than one third of all sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18” (*Stop It Now! Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children*, Finkelhor 169). They add that size, status, ability and power are features that differentiate abuse from normal sexual curiosity in young people.

Acquaintance rape and date rape are more serious forms of peer child sexual abuse. *TeenHelp.com* defines date rape as “nonconsensual sexual activity between two or more people who know each other, including friends, boyfriends and girlfriends, study partners, people who meet at parties, and so forth.” Young and colleagues differentiate between acquaintances and dating partners pointing out that a victim’s knowledge of a casual acquaintance, such as a friend of a friend or someone they met at a party, is considerably less intimate than a dating partner (1073). According to *Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network*, 44% of rape victims are under the age of 18 and up to two thirds of rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. In their Youth Risk Behavior Screening Survey conducted in 2008, the CDC learned that nearly 8% of high

school students reported being forced to have sex when they did not want to (Weisz and Black 2).

The effects of sexual abuse on young people can vary widely and have far-reaching consequences. Sandler and Stonehill observe that students can suffer fear of coming to school or attending certain classes, the inability to concentrate, feelings of anger, hostility, confusion, shame, humiliation or anxiety. Students can become physically ill with headaches or stomach aches; they may lose sleep. They can suffer from self-blame, feelings of isolation or worthlessness, or increased vulnerability (20). Paludi adds that teenage girls who are victims of sexual harassment can experience lowered self-esteem or confidence, confused identity, self-consciousness, poor body image, eating disorders, diminished emotional well-being, even post traumatic stress (169). Hill and Kears point out that very often the negative effects of sexual harassment take a toll students, especially girls, education in terms of decreased productivity and increased absenteeism (3). Capper and colleagues claim “sexually degrading name-calling [like gay, faggot, or queer] appears to have contributed to the psychological and emotional deterioration of boys, ultimately leading to violence (128). More serious effects can include depression, thoughts of or attempted suicide, alcohol or drug abuse, long-lasting or permanent emotional damage (Sandler and Stonehill 20), unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV (Sapp 159). Capper and colleagues stress that sexual teasing, harassment and bullying occur among students far more often than educators will admit and has far more damaging effects than they generally acknowledge (124).

## **Current Legislation**

Under Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972, schools receiving federal dollars can be held liable for monetary damages if they are “deliberately indifferent” to sexual harassment or if the harassment interferes with a student’s access to educational opportunities (Sandler and Stonehill 13). In 1997, The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education issued its “Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties” that makes clear institutions are responsible for student to student harassment and must follow the ORC’s standards for the investigation and resolution of allegations (162). The ruling in a landmark case in 1999, *Davis V. Monroe County Board of Education*, set a national standard for a school board’s liability for student-on-student harassment (Miller 206).

In Ohio, Governor Ted Strickland signed the “Tina Croucher Act” into law in 2009. The law requires Ohio schools to have dating abuse education in grades 7-12 and develop a policy on dating violence (“CADV - Ohio | Citizens Against Domestic Violence - Teen Dating Violence & Domestic Abuse”). Pursuant to House Bill 204 and Ohio Revised Codes, the Middletown Board of Education “Code of Student Conduct” also includes a section about sexual harassment. Students are warned that sexual harassment and misconduct of a sexual nature, including public displays of affection, “will not be tolerated.” Why, despite these and many other state and federal statutes that have been enacted over the past several years, does sexual misconduct among students persist?

## **Problems with Current Prevention/Intervention Programs in Schools and Suggestions for Improvement**

Sandler and Stonehill observe that many school districts do not have written policies dealing specifically with student to student sexual harassment; they are either inferred in the Title IX provisions or lumped in with general bullying and harassment policies (40). Districts also worry about airing their “dirty laundry” if their policies are too detailed and specific about sexual matters between students (38). Capper and colleagues observe that school administrators downplay inappropriate behavior and assume it is part of our modern culture. They don’t take reports seriously enough and often tell victims to “tough it out” or “it’s all part of growing up” or “it’ll get better next year.” Teachers often look the other way in order to avoid the hassle of referrals, conferences or procedural entanglements, as they already have an onerous workload. In turn, students do not have the confidence to report instances of abuse because they believe school authorities will not do anything about it (132-35). If they tell and no meaningful consequences ensue, many victims assume that retaliation from the harassers will only make things worse. Additionally, students often fear being labeled “snitches” or “tattletales” so they go along with a tacit “code of silence.” They don’t want to be blamed, accused of bringing it on themselves, or laughed at. They may tell themselves they can or should handle it alone, or convince themselves it was not as bad as they thought. Bystanders fear they will be next (Sandler and Stonehill 22).

## **Recommendations for Improvements**

Studies are inconclusive about what makes an effective prevention/intervention program in public schools: developmental differences in students require different approaches, statistically significant results can be nearly impossible to obtain given so many variables in the research process, controversy swirls among experts about whether presenting knowledge aimed at changing attitudes really translates into changes in behavior, some experts question whether there is too much focus on the victims and not enough on the perpetrators (Weisz and Black 4-8). Weisz and Black go so far as to say that “prevention” is a misnomer that implies the victim has control of a perpetrator’s behavior. “The only person who can prevent a rape is the one doing it,” and perhaps a more appropriate program goal would be for “risk reduction” (25).

The experts cited in this research, Sandler and Stonehill; Finkelhor; Hill and Kearl; Capper, Schulte and McKinney; Weisz and Black; Scarbek and Parrish; and Wiseman agree that more needs to be done in schools to address sexual misconduct among students. They advocate the following improvements to existing school programs:

- Staff training and ongoing professional development, providing resources and materials.
- Administrative united front that holds all staff and students accountable.
- Open dialogue with students, classroom activities or lessons that inform and sensitize students and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Teambuilding.
- Clearer, more explicit code of conduct and consistent consequences that reinforce a “no tolerance” policy.

- A clear procedure for handling, investigating, documenting, reporting and following up on all complaints and allegations of sexual misconduct.
- A clear, confidential, safe way for students to report concerns or effects. Support groups, harm- mitigation resources.
- A high visibility Title IX legal district liaison.
- Communication with the Board of Education in meetings, brainstorming sessions, reports and community forums.
- Parent information and increased involvement.
- Better supervision of students in common areas, such as cafeterias, locker rooms, buses and open campuses.
- Partnerships with local agencies and youth programs/facilities.

In her book, *Owning Up Curriculum: Empowering Adolescents to Confront Social Cruelty, Bullying and Injustice*, Rosalind Wiseman says it can be very challenging for both students and educational leaders to confront misconceptions and stereotypes about sexual harassment. Since our media is so saturated with sexual references and images, students often question their basic assumptions about sexual harassment; they are not sure if certain behaviors are detrimental or just so common that they are considered normal (329). She goes on to emphasize that students must be free to have open dialogues about the issue, even if they express themselves inappropriately or incorrectly. Educational leaders should take the opportunity to dispel myths and misconceptions and present facts. It is also important to discuss harassment issues facing gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning students, despite the strong reactions such conversations

may elicit. The more uncomfortable students are, the more necessary the conversations become (329). Whatever the strategies, more needs to be done to protect students from harm and create safe, positive learning environments in schools.

### **Middletown High School**

Middletown High School is the only high school in the city of Middletown, Ohio. Middletown, Ohio is located in Butler County about half way between Dayton and Cincinnati. According to citydata.com, Middletown has a population of about 51,600 people, 83 percent of whom are white, 10.8 percent black (above the state average), and 2.5 percent Hispanic. The median household income is \$37,800, but the largest number of households have an income of only \$10,000- 15,000 per year; 60 percent of Middletown's population is considered "disadvantaged" (the state average is 46.5 percent). In 2011, unemployment reached 10 percent and Forbes Magazine ranked Middletown, Ohio tenth on its list of America's fastest dying towns.

Middletown High School has an enrollment of approximately 1740 students. The graduation rate presently stands at 80 percent. For the past six years, Middletown City Schools have received a "Continuous Improvement" rating on the state report card, about a "C" average and an average rating for a small urban district. Staff number approximately 117 educators, five administrators and about a dozen support staff. Middletown City Schools' Title IX district liaison is the Director of Human Resources, Stephen Bartalo, but as Mr. Bartalo is acting as interim human resources director, Dr. Sam Isom would currently assist in Title IX concerns.

In the Middletown City School District's Code of Student Conduct there is a section specific to "Sexual Harassment and/or Misconduct." The three subsections read as follows:

- a. Sexual harassment towards another student will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexually suggestive nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment. Examples of such contacts may include, but are not limited to, suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, derogatory comments, slurs, jokes, epithets, graffiti, assault, touching, impeding or blocking movement, leering, exposing oneself, gestures, or display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons.
- b. Any student who knowingly or intentionally submits a false allegation concerning sexual harassment by another student will be subject to corrective disciplinary action.
- c. Misconduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated. Sexual misconduct may include, but is not limited to, public display of affection, kissing, holding hands, exhibitionism, or any act committed for the purpose of sexual interests.

Assistant principals deal with referrals for these offenses with consequences ranging from detention or work detail to in-school or out-of school suspension or, in extreme cases, civil or criminal charges. Teachers, counselors and other school personnel are expected

to do their part in intervening, correcting, and reporting inappropriate student behavior as they encounter it in the hallways, classrooms, locker rooms, cafeteria, school grounds, or any other areas accessible to students.

### **How Serious is the Problem of Student to Student Sexual Harassment and other forms of Sexual Misconduct at Middletown High School?**

When asked what she wanted students to know about the issue of sexual misbehavior at our high school, Principal Carmela Cotter replied, “It is real and it does happen here. It’s not only between males and females either. Students have the right be safe and know that this behavior will not be tolerated here. We need to raise awareness and have open conversations. We need to teach students to advocate for assistance. Teachers must model appropriate behavior and teach correct, respectful behavior. We cannot let this behavior disrupt the learning environment.” The counseling team wanted to urge teachers to do something about any inappropriate behavior as they see it arise in the classrooms or hallways. Counselor Karen Gardner said, “We (counselors) are not in a position to see what goes on outside our offices, we only hear students’ concerns. Teachers need to remember that doing nothing about sexually inappropriate behaviors among students is not an option.”

Student Resource Officer Phil Salm said, “I believe we have a serious problem here at MHS, but most incidents are not reported. Statistics related to this problem are usually not accurate for two reasons: the first is that this type of crime usually goes unreported and the second is that there is a cultural misperception in this generation that being treated like a sex symbol is acceptable. Females are more sexually outgoing than in the

past.” Officer Salm said he investigated three complaints last year and explained that they are treated just like any other criminal complaints. If investigation shows the complaint to be a civil matter, it is forwarded to the principal. If it is found to be a criminal matter, then it is his responsibility to take it through the court system. He added that he is also responsible for investigating any complaints of “sexting” or “cyber stalking.”

When asked about prevention, Officer Salm said there have been numerous guest speakers at staff meetings who have addressed the subject of sexual harassment, but no ongoing training for staff. Salm said he himself was working on a presentation for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. “If we are going to do a better job of preventing sexually inappropriate behavior among students,” he said, “we need to enforce the existing rules in the student code of conduct. We need to teach young students the proper way to conduct themselves around others of the opposite sex when they are caught misbehaving. We need more guest speakers and we need to keep talking to students about the problem. We are addressing the problem of bullying, but as far as sexual harassment goes, there needs to be more focus in that area.”

### **Teacher Survey Results and Discussion**

Middletown teachers were surveyed about this issue through a web-based program called “Survey Monkey.” The request for respondents and the survey web address went out over teacher email and respondents replied anonymously. Teachers were asked eight open-ended questions including “Are you male or female?” Of the 117 members of MHS staff, 58 responded to the survey: 22 males and 36 females. When asked if teachers

thought student to student sexual harassment was a problem at Middletown High School, 59% said yes. Sixty-six percent of respondents claimed they had witnessed sexually inappropriate behavior among students the hallways and classrooms at Middletown High School. A shocking 26%, however, responded that they never intervene when they see students behaving in a sexually inappropriate way with one another. Teachers who reported that they did intervene did so with reprimands to the offenders, referrals to the counselors or principals, or phone calls to parents.

Thirty percent of respondents claimed they did not know what the procedure was at Middletown High School for reporting sexual harassment or sexual misconduct among students. The rest said they assumed that a referral to a counselor or a principal was the correct procedure. A disturbing 80% of teachers reported they had never attended a teacher in-service that specifically addressed the problem of sexual misconduct among students at MHS. Fifty-eight percent of teacher respondents claimed they had no knowledge or understanding of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and 100% of respondents had no knowledge whatsoever of the existence of a Title IX district liaison.

At best, the results of the teacher survey could be characterized as mixed. There is clearly no consistency among teachers with regard to awareness of sexually inappropriate behavior among students, how to handle it on the spot, or with regard to building and district policy concerning the handling of complaints. It is important to explore the reasons 26% of teacher respondents claimed they never intervened in student behavior they know is at best inappropriate and at worst, illegal! It seems clear that better communication needs to take place between administration and staff. Teachers need to

be clear about how to handle incidents of sexual misconduct among students, what building and district policies entail, and most important, what legal, ethical and professional responsibilities they must fulfill.

### Student Survey Results and Discussion

One hundred seventy eight students responded to the survey, 51% female and 49% male. Although 10 students skipped the question, “In your opinion, is sexual harassment among students a problem at Middletown High School?” 53% of the remaining respondents said, “yes, somewhat,” and 15% said, “yes, definitely.” The second question provided a great deal of interesting and disturbing information:

2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?

	answered question						178
	skipped question						0
	One or more times EVERY DAY.	Three or more times a week.	Three or more times a month.	Once in a while.	Very rarely.	Never.	Response Count
Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks.	19.2% (34)	15.8% (28)	7.3% (13)	20.3% (36)	13.6% (24)	26.6% (47)	177

2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?

<b>Wrote sexual messages , texts or drew pictures to you or about you.</b>	6.2% (11)	5.6% (10)	6.7% (12)	12.9% (23)	11.2% (20)	<b>58.4%</b> <b>(104)</b>	178
<b>Spread sexual rumors about you.</b>	6.9% (12)	3.4% (6)	8.6% (15)	8.0% (14)	13.7% (24)	<b>59.4%</b> <b>(104)</b>	175
<b>Said you were gay or lesbian, or called you "Gay" or "Fag."</b>	10.2% (18)	6.8% (12)	2.3% (4)	5.1% (9)	17.0% (30)	<b>58.5%</b> <b>(103)</b>	176
<b>Touched, grabbed or pinched you in a sexual way.</b>	15.5% (27)	6.9% (12)	8.0% (14)	12.1% (21)	12.6% (22)	<b>45.4%</b> <b>(79)</b>	174
<b>Pulled at your clothing in a sexual way.</b>	9.0% (16)	7.9% (14)	5.1% (9)	7.3% (13)	13.0% (23)	<b>57.6%</b> <b>(102)</b>	177
<b>Intentionally brushed against you in a sexual way.</b>	10.2% (18)	6.3% (11)	5.1% (9)	10.8% (19)	14.8% (26)	<b>52.8%</b> <b>(93)</b>	176
<b>Forced you to kiss him or her.</b>	3.4% (6)	1.1% (2)	3.4% (6)	4.0% (7)	9.6% (17)	<b>79.1%</b> <b>(140)</b>	177
<b>Forced you to do something sexual, other than kissing.</b>	2.8% (5)	1.1% (2)	2.3% (4)	4.0% (7)	10.2% (18)	<b>81.4%</b> <b>(144)</b>	177

We cannot look at this data in terms of percentages and statistics; we need to look at this data remembering that each of the parenthetical numbers underneath the percentages represents a number of young people who actually experienced the behavior explained in the question. While it is encouraging to note that every item garnered a majority of responses in the “never” column, school personnel must concern ourselves with, for example, the thirty four students who claimed that one or more times a day they were plagued with “sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks.” How do we face eighteen students who said that one or more times a day someone at school calls them “gay” or “a fag?” What do we say to the twenty seven students who said they were “touched, grabbed or pinched in a sexual way” one or more times a day at school? How do we answer to FIVE students who said they were “forced to do something sexual, other than kissing” one or more times a day when they are supposed to be participating in normal school activities as a part their public education! These are real students who said that other students at Middletown High School did these things to them when “they did not want them to.”

Ironically, 26% of students said they were “very confident” and 37% of them said they were “somewhat confident” that “teachers, counselors and administrators at MHS would handle the problem” if they reported any of these things happening to them. This certainly begs the question Officer Salm alluded to: Why don’t they report these incidents? Forty one percent, or 70 of the students surveyed said if they saw sexually inappropriate behavior among their classmates, they would “ignore it and say nothing.” This also begs questions such as: What kind of school climate allows for behavior like

this to go unreported? Why are young people so desensitized to this kind of misconduct and abuse? What are the effects of this abuse on its victims?

The survey itself only asked about two specific effects of sexual misconduct on students in school. Eleven students claimed they had “stayed home from school or skipped class” because someone was bothering them in a sexual way that made them feel uncomfortable. Twenty-four students reported they “could not concentrate on schoolwork” because of someone bothering them in a sexual way that made they feel uncomfortable. These findings beg several more questions: How seriously has the academic success of these students been compromised as a result of inappropriate behavior on the part of their peers? How it is teachers and administrators are not aware of this obstruction to student learning? Why are there not stricter rules in place that prevent victimization of students who are in school to learn? What are the long term emotional and psychological effects of this kind of abuse on students? How does it affect their ability or willingness to continue to strive for success in school? Will their attitude and approach to any future school environment be tainted?

Lastly, the question was asked of students: “Have you, yourself, ever sexually harassed another student at MHS?” A vast majority of the respondents, 147 students, answered no to this question. However, 10 students said yes and 24 students responded, “I don’t know/not sure.” These findings point to the necessity of educating students about the exact definition and characteristics of sexual harassment or sexual abuse. If it is true that, as researchers point out, prevention also includes focus on prospective perpetrators, this little bit of data would certainly bear that out.

## **Conclusions**

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse are unacceptable realities in society. Citizens, educators and lawmakers are especially beholden to children to prevent this abuse from happening to them. Adults must protect children and educators must protect students. Sexual misconduct among students is a reality in American schools; it is a reality in the very school where this researcher works. Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio is not appreciably different from any other urban school in America. There are students with a range of social, economic and personal problems and challenges that often have nothing to do with education, but often have a deleterious effect on it. As educators, we cannot overlook the role sexual victimization of students at school has on academic success. Indeed we are professionally, ethically and legally bound to address it. Sexual misconduct among students is a reality at Middletown High School and measures must be taken to stop it and prevent it.

With that purpose in mind, a teacher resource guide and a student awareness pamphlet specifically designed for teachers and students at Middletown High School are presented here to help address the problem. One rule, one law, one person cannot fix the problem. It takes awareness, education and empowerment. It takes everyone.

Preventing Sexual Harassment  
and other forms of Sexual Misconduct  
Among Students  
at Middletown High School:  
A Teacher Resource Guide

Presented by Michelle Amrein

Fall 2012

## Table of Contents

Introduction: "I know you have a lot on your plate."

PART 1: "It Happens Here:" Sexual Misconduct and  
MHS Students Behaving Badly.

PART 2: "Remember Yourself:" Professional, Ethical and  
Legal Responsibilities.

PART 3: "Don't do Nothing:" What to do and What NOT to  
do about Student Sexual Misconduct.

PART 4: "Open Dialogue:" Ideas for Conversations and  
Activities in the Classroom.

Resources and Suggested Reading.

Concluding Thoughts: "Just trying to do the right thing."

"I know you have a lot on your plate:"

A special note to teachers.

*I myself have been a teacher for over twenty years. I am often overwhelmed with the workload for which teachers are held accountable. We must wear many different hats, sometimes in the same day. We have to be educators, counselors, parents, social workers, secretaries, nurses, repairmen, law enforcement officers and more. We have lesson plans, paper grading, conferences, meetings, committees, evaluations, teacher in-services, coaching, extra-curricular advising, phone calls, emails, and tutoring all in addition to a full day of teaching six, sometimes seven, classes. We all work very hard to manage the huge responsibility that is teaching.*

*I am asking you to think about one sobering responsibility that teachers must keep foremost in our minds: the responsibility of keeping young people safe from harm at school. Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual abuse harm students in devastating and far-reaching ways. We must all do our part to protect children, especially when our position as educators provides us with such a powerful opportunity to intervene and correct. Thank you for your serious consideration of the following material. I salute you for your perseverance in our noble profession.*

*Sincerely,  
Michelle Amrein*

## PART 1: "It Happens Here:"

### Sexual Misconduct and MHS Students Behaving Badly.

Our principal, Mrs. Carmela Cotter, our counseling team and our student resource officer, Phil Salm, were interviewed about the problem of sexual misconduct among students at MHS. Mrs. Cotter said, "It is real and it does happen here. It's not only between males and females either. Students have the right to be safe and know that this behavior will not be tolerated here. We need to raise awareness and have open conversations. We need to teach students to advocate for assistance. Teachers must model appropriate behavior and teach correct, respectful behavior. We cannot let this behavior disrupt the learning environment."

The counseling team wanted to urge teachers to do something about any inappropriate behavior as they see it arise in the classrooms or hallways. Counselor Karen Gardner said, "We (counselors) are not in a position to see what goes on outside our offices, we only hear students' concerns when they come in to talk to us. Teachers need to remember that doing nothing about sexually inappropriate behaviors among students is not an option."

Student Resource Officer, Phil Salm, said, "I believe we have a serious problem here at MHS, but most incidents are not reported. There is a cultural

misperception in this generation that being treated like a sex symbol is acceptable. Females are more sexually outgoing than in the past. If we are going to do a better job of preventing sexually inappropriate behavior among students," he said, "we need to enforce the existing rules in the student code of conduct. We need to teach young students the proper way to conduct themselves around others of the opposite sex when they are caught misbehaving. We need more guest speakers and we need to keep talking to students about the problem. We are addressing the problem of bullying, but as far as sexual harassment goes, there needs to be more focus in that area."

Teachers and students were surveyed anonymously on Survey Monkey. Fifty-nine percent of the 22 male teachers and 36 female teachers surveyed, said they felt sexual harassment was a problem among students in this building. Sixty-six percent of the teachers said they had witnessed sexually inappropriate behavior among students in the hallways or classrooms. Most teachers said they did intervene in some way and knew that a referral to the principal or report to the student resource officer was the correct procedure to follow, but 30% of teachers surveyed said they did not know what the procedure was for reporting sexual misconduct among students and a shocking 26% said they never intervened. More than half of the teachers surveyed said they did not know what Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was and 100% of them said they were not aware the Middletown City School district had a Title IX liaison. Interestingly, 80% of the teachers surveyed said they had never attended a

teacher in-service that specifically addressed the problem of sexual misconduct among students at this school.

Fifty-three percent of the 178 MHS students surveyed said they thought student to student sexual harassment was “somewhat” of a problem at this school and an additional 15% said it was “definitely” a problem. When asked about the frequency of a variety of inappropriate behaviors, students responded as follows:

2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?

	<b>answered question</b>						<b>178</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>						<b>0</b>
	<b>One or more times EVERY DAY.</b>	<b>Three or more times a week.</b>	<b>Three or more times a month.</b>	<b>Once in a while.</b>	<b>Very rarely.</b>	<b>Never.</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks.</b>	19.2% (34)	15.8% (28)	7.3% (13)	20.3% (36)	13.6% (24)	<b>26.6% (47)</b>	177
<b>Wrote sexual messages , texts or drew pictures to you or about you.</b>	6.2% (11)	5.6% (10)	6.7% (12)	12.9% (23)	11.2% (20)	<b>58.4% (104)</b>	178

2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?

<b>Spread sexual rumors about you.</b>	6.9% (12)	3.4% (6)	8.6% (15)	8.0% (14)	13.7% (24)	<b>59.4%</b> <b>(104)</b>	175
<b>Said you were gay or lesbian, or called you "Gay" or "Fag."</b>	10.2% (18)	6.8% (12)	2.3% (4)	5.1% (9)	17.0% (30)	<b>58.5%</b> <b>(103)</b>	176
<b>Touched, grabbed or pinched you in a sexual way.</b>	15.5% (27)	6.9% (12)	8.0% (14)	12.1% (21)	12.6% (22)	<b>45.4%</b> <b>(79)</b>	174
<b>Pulled at your clothing in a sexual way.</b>	9.0% (16)	7.9% (14)	5.1% (9)	7.3% (13)	13.0% (23)	<b>57.6%</b> <b>(102)</b>	177
<b>Intentionally brushed against you in a sexual way.</b>	10.2% (18)	6.3% (11)	5.1% (9)	10.8% (19)	14.8% (26)	<b>52.8%</b> <b>(93)</b>	176
<b>Forced you to kiss him or her.</b>	3.4% (6)	1.1% (2)	3.4% (6)	4.0% (7)	9.6% (17)	<b>79.1%</b> <b>(140)</b>	177
<b>Forced you to do something sexual, other than kissing.</b>	2.8% (5)	1.1% (2)	2.3% (4)	4.0% (7)	10.2% (18)	<b>81.4%</b> <b>(144)</b>	177

Twenty-six percent of students said they were very confident and 37% said they were somewhat confident that teachers, counselors or principals would handle the problem if they reported any of these things happening to them. Ironically, a whopping 41% of respondents said they would "ignore it and say

nothing" if they saw sexually inappropriate behavior among students at MHS. Six percent of respondents said they have stayed home or skipped a class because someone was bothering them in a sexual way that made them feel uncomfortable. Almost 14% said they felt as if they could not concentrate on their schoolwork because of someone bothering them in a sexual way that made them feel uncomfortable. When asked, "Have you, yourself, ever sexually harassed another student at MHS?" 5.6% of respondents said yes. Of the 178 students who responded to the survey, 48.6% were males and 51.4% were females.

If the principal, the student resource officer, the counselors, the teachers and the students at Middletown High School agree that sexual misconduct among students is a problem, the next logical question is: What are we going to do about it? As this is a "teacher" resource guide, the following focuses specifically on teachers' responsibilities, "do's and don'ts" surrounding this sensitive issue, and suggestions for classroom dialogues and activities that will raise awareness and sensitize students to inappropriate, harmful behavior.

## PART 2: "Remember Yourself:" Professional, Ethical and Legal Responsibilities.

As educators, we don't need to be reminded that we labor under constant accountability for test scores, student achievement and state report cards. But it doesn't hurt to be reminded of our human responsibility to protect the young people in our charge from any sort of harm while on school property. Many of us have parental instincts to protect and guide our students as if they were our children, and indeed that is what is assumed in the legal doctrine of *in loco parentis*. But we have also signed a contract with our board of education that obligates us to uphold the student code of conduct. We are also subject to the code of professional conduct set forth by the Ohio State Board of Education. Furthermore, the federal government has charged educators with protecting students from bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. Sobering responsibilities indeed.

Pursuant to House Bill 204 and Ohio Revised Codes, the Middletown Board of Education "Code of Student Conduct" includes a section specific to "Sexual Harassment and/or Misconduct." The three subsections read as follows:

- a. Sexual harassment towards another student will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual

advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexually suggestive nature when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment. Examples of such contacts may include, but are not limited to, suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, derogatory comments, slurs, jokes, epithets, graffiti, assault, touching, impeding or blocking movement, leering, exposing oneself, gestures, or display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or cartoons.

- b. Any student who knowingly or intentionally submits a false allegation concerning sexual harassment by another student will be subject to corrective disciplinary action.
- c. Misconduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated. Sexual misconduct may include, but is not limited to, public display of affection, kissing, holding hands, exhibitionism, or any act committed for the purpose of sexual interests.

Teachers and administrators have the authority of the code of conduct to provide students with the protection to which they are entitled, even if it is from each other. We can all create a united front against sexual misconduct among students by consistently enforcing the rules we have in place.

Section 2 of the

## **Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators**

addresses a teacher's professional relationship with students:

**Educators shall maintain a professional relationship with all students at all times, both in and out of the classroom.**

*An educator's responsibility includes nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students and providing a safe environment free from harassment, intimidation and criminal activity. An educator creates, supports, and maintains an appropriate learning environment for all students and fulfills the roles of trusted confidante, mentor*

*and advocate for students' rights. An educator must serve as a champion against child abuse and be cognizant of student behaviors that suggest abuse or neglect.*

**Conduct unbecoming** includes, but is not limited to, the following actions: .....

g) Failing to provide appropriate supervision of students, within the scope of the educator's official capacity, which risks the health, safety, and welfare of students or others in the school community.

h) Knowingly contributing to or knowingly failing to intervene in the harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student.

Under Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972, schools receiving federal dollars can be held liable for monetary damages if they are "deliberately indifferent" to sexual harassment or if the harassment interferes with a student's access to educational opportunities. In 1997, The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education issued its "Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties" that makes clear institutions are responsible for student to student harassment and must follow the ORC's standards for the investigation and resolution of allegations. The ruling in a landmark case in 1999, *Davis V. Monroe County Board of Education*, set a national standard for a school board's liability for student-on-student harassment. No staff or individual educator wants to be responsible for costing his or her school district thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars in lawsuit settlements for being indifferent to sexual misconduct among students.

## PART 3: "Don't do Nothing:"

### What to Do and What NOT to Do

### about Student Sexual Misconduct.

In their book, *Student to Student Sexual Harassment K-12: Strategies and Solutions for Educators to Use in the Classroom, School and Community*, researchers Sandler and Stonehill offer valuable insight into taking control of this problem and protecting students. They stress that how a teacher handles situations involving sexual harassment they observe or reports from students of sexual misconduct has everything to do with students' level of trust and sense of safety at school. How incidents are handled by teachers has everything to do with whether a student reports future incidents, experienced or observed, or simply says nothing. Teachers cannot make the mistake of assuming students, even high school students, can handle these situations on their own. Along with our subject matter, we have to teach them how to conduct themselves appropriately at school. We have to be willing to seize the opportunity to intervene, correct and support students if we find them sexually abusive situations with one another.

Sandler and Stonehill acknowledge that teachers don't always know what to do when we witness sexual harassment or other inappropriate sexual behavior among students. Some of us may feel embarrassed, we may assume it is none of our business or that students should work it out themselves. What we don't realize is that failing to respond to observed sexual harassment "inadvertently conveys a message of approval," implies complicity in the social attitudes that foster it, or demonstrates weakness or even apathy on the part of the educator. Students take their social cues from teachers and, as Officer Salm said, we need to take the opportunity to correct students' behavior at the moment we see it happening.

Experts and researchers agree that teachers should intervene with some basic techniques:

- Say something immediately upon ascertaining that something inappropriate is going on:
- "Hey, that is very inappropriate behavior."
- "That is sexual harassment and we do not tolerate that behavior here."
- "Stop that now, and I want to speak to you individually."
- Privately clarify with the offender that his/her behavior is strictly against school policy and decide if the situation is serious enough to warrant referral to a principal or the student resource officer.

- Privately clarify with the victim that the behavior you witnessed was indeed unwanted. Show empathy for his/her feelings and reassure him/her that it was not their fault and you will take care of it.
- Students may correct the behavior with a warning from you, but if it recurs, take steps to refer students for disciplinary action. Follow up.

If a student comes to you to report an instance of sexual harassment he/she has experienced or peer sexual misconduct that he/she has been a victim of, be sure to:

- Show concern or empathy and validated feelings of distress or fear.
- Take the report seriously. Don't minimize or dismiss it.
- Reassure the victim that there are rules and laws in place to protect him/her and to deal with this problem. It is not the victim's fault.
- Report the incident to the proper authorities, document and follow up.
- Check in with the victim later to see if the problem has been satisfactorily resolved. See if he/she is okay.

If you witness an incident of sexual misconduct among students, there are several things NOT to do:

- DON'T ignore it and do nothing.
- DON'T tell yourself you don't have time to get involved.
- DON'T assume it's just kids being kids, that it happens all the time around here and it's no big deal.

- DON'T assume the victim brought it on themselves by how they act or how they dress.
- DON'T assume students can or should handle the behavior themselves.
- DON'T assume the victim knows he/she is a victim or an offender knows he/she is an offender. We have to educate them.
- DON'T tell victims, "He was just kidding around; that's just how he is," or "Maybe you just took it wrong," or "You're going to have to toughen up a little; the world is a rough place" or "She'll quit if you just ignore her."
- DON'T tell victims not to be "snitches" or "tattle tales." When it comes to sexually inappropriate behavior in a public school, we want them to tell.

Our students told us in an anonymous survey that they were confident teachers, counselors or administrators would handle a situation they reported. They also told us they were more likely to say nothing and walk away than to tell someone when they experienced or witnessed sexually inappropriate behaviors. We must create a school climate that allows for them to come to us and express their concerns or ask questions for clarification if we are to protect them as much our professional obligation requires us to do.

## PART 4: "Open Dialogue:"

### Ideas for Conversations and Activities in the Classroom.

In her book, *Owning Up Curriculum: Empowering Adolescents to Confront Social Cruelty, Bullying and Injustice*, author and researcher, Rosalind Wiseman suggests strategies for addressing sexual misconduct issues in the classroom. Her suggested objectives for classroom teachers are:

- "To define and describe different types of sexual harassment
- To help students recognize and respect their boundaries for wanted and unwanted sexual attention
- To enable students to challenge the assumption that all sexual behavior between peers is acceptable
- To help students become aware of harassment issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning students

- To increase awareness that sexual harassment is against the law as well as against school policy and encourage students to report sexual harassment”

Wiseman agrees with Mrs. Cotter’s belief that the problem needs open conversations and candid discussions led by teachers in classrooms where students feel comfortable expressing their views or asking questions without being censored or scolded. Teachers can listen for misconceptions and misinformation, and then provide information and direction. Teachers can ask questions similar to the ones asked in the anonymous survey and get the inside view from students about what goes on their world when teachers are not looking. Students will tell us if we create a safe space for them to share. Teachers can present facts, statistics, definitions, and strategies. They can create role playing situations or ask students to role play situations they have seen and then process them with open discussion.

Wiseman suggests the following classroom activity:

### **Three Corners Exercise**

**Set up the room with a sign in one corner that says: AGREE.**

**Put a sign in the opposite corner that says: DISAGREE.**

**Put a sign in the middle that says: IN THE MIDDLE.**

**Read the following statements aloud and ask students to stand by the sign that signifies their answer:**

- 1. People who sexually harass other people always know they are doing it.*
- 2. People usually feel flattered when they get hit on.*
- 3. Being gay or lesbian is fine as long as you don't flaunt it.*
- 4. Gay and lesbian students feel safe at our school.*
- 5. There is a federal law that protects students from harassment.*

**Have students discuss their point of view in their small group, then share with the larger group.**

For further discussion, Wiseman suggests teachers ask the following questions:

- Has anyone in this room ever been unsure about how you are expected to act when you like someone?
- Has anyone ever not known how to act because what one person thinks is a compliment, someone else may find offensive?

- Have you ever dealt with a person who just wouldn't get the message that you weren't into them?

Listen carefully to all student responses. Keep communication open.

This is obviously a small sampling of strategies and activities for addressing this problem with students. There is a lot out there. A few resources I found interesting and valuable were:

Hill, Catherine and Holly Kearn. *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. United States: American Association of University Women, 2011.

Manvell, Elizabeth Cervini. *The Violence Continuum: Creating a Safe School Climate*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. Print.

Sandler, Bernice Resnick., and Harriett M. Stonehill. *Student-to-student Sexual Harassment, K-12: Strategies and Solutions for Educators to Use in the Classroom, School, and Community*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2005. Print.

Weisz, Arlene N., and Beverly M. Black. *Programs to Reduce Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Assault: Perspectives on What Works*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print.

Wiseman, Rosalind. *Owning up Curriculum: Empowering Adolescents to Confront Social Cruelty, Bullying, and Injustice*. Champaign, IL: Research, 2009. Print.

## Concluding Thoughts

*"Thanks for reading; I know this is a lot to take in about a very serious subject. Please don't feel overwhelmed. Remember the old saying "One person can't do everything, but everyone can do something." Please do something about Middletown High School students sexually harassing each other. It's an enormous responsibility, I grant you, but it's the right thing to do. I have always thought that the staff in this building is best group of people on the planet. I am honored to work with such fine people and call so many of you my friends. You are caring and dedicated to a very challenging group of young people in this community. I know in my heart that at the end of the day, just like me, you all want to be sure you have done right by our students. Keep up the outstanding work.*

*Michelle*

# **ATTENTION**



**We need to have a**

**SERIOUS TALK**

**about SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**among students at this school!**

**This is a pamphlet you should read if you have ever  
experienced or witnessed sexual harassment**

**at Middletown High School**

**Submitted to you for consideration by your teacher,**

**Mrs. Amrein.**

## CONTENTS

Introduction- "Let's get real about sexually inappropriate behavior among students at MHS."

PART ONE: "What you thought was true may not be true: Get ready for some shocking facts."

PART TWO: "Call a Personal Foul on Sexual Harassment: How to back yourself up and stand up for others, too."

PART THREE: "Messages from the People in Charge Here: What Mrs. Cotter, Officer Salm, Counselors and Teachers want you to know."

**“Okay everybody! Let’s get real about  
sexually inappropriate behavior  
among students at MHS.”**

***You’ve seen it:***

Every time that certain guy walks by that certain group of girls in the main lobby, they tell him how hot he is and try to grab his butt. He laughs and walks away.

***You’ve heard it:***

That homosexual student walking down the hall gets called “Fag!” That lesbian student gets called “Dyke!”

***You know about it:***

That girl in your math class who sent her boyfriend a sexy picture of herself on her phone and he forwarded it to all his friends.

***You may have even experienced it:***

**That guy in your lunch period hugs you every time he sees you. You don't like it but you don't want to hurt his feelings.**

**According to an anonymous online survey, students at this school said sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct happen here EVERY DAY. 178 Middies took the survey, 91 girls and 86 boys. Look what they said: (the number underneath each percentage is the actual number of people that happened to)**

**2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?**

	answered question						178
	skipped question						0
	One or more times EVERY DAY.	Three or more times a week.	Three or more times a month.	Once in a while.	Very rarely.	Never.	Response Count
<b>Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks.</b>	19.2% (34)	15.8% (28)	7.3% (13)	20.3% (36)	13.6% (24)	<b>26.6%</b> <b>(47)</b>	177
<b>Wrote sexual</b>	6.2%	5.6%	6.7%	12.9%	11.2%	<b>58.4%</b>	178

2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you DID NOT WANT THEM TO?

messages , texts or drew pictures to you or about you.	(11)	(10)	(12)	(23)	(20)	<b>(104)</b>	
Spread sexual rumors about you.	6.9% (12)	3.4% (6)	8.6% (15)	8.0% (14)	13.7% (24)	<b>59.4% (104)</b>	175
Said you were gay or lesbian, or called you "Gay" or "Fag."	10.2% (18)	6.8% (12)	2.3% (4)	5.1% (9)	17.0% (30)	<b>58.5% (103)</b>	176
Touched, grabbed or pinched you in a sexual way.	15.5% (27)	6.9% (12)	8.0% (14)	12.1% (21)	12.6% (22)	<b>45.4% (79)</b>	174
Pulled at your clothing in a sexual way.	9.0% (16)	7.9% (14)	5.1% (9)	7.3% (13)	13.0% (23)	<b>57.6% (102)</b>	177
Intentionally brushed against you in a sexual way.	10.2% (18)	6.3% (11)	5.1% (9)	10.8% (19)	14.8% (26)	<b>52.8% (93)</b>	176
Forced you to kiss him or her.	3.4% (6)	1.1% (2)	3.4% (6)	4.0% (7)	9.6% (17)	<b>79.1% (140)</b>	177
Forced you to do something sexual, other than kissing.	2.8% (5)	1.1% (2)	2.3% (4)	4.0% (7)	10.2% (18)	<b>81.4% (144)</b>	177

(Thanks, by the way, to all you students who volunteered to take this survey. You ROCK!)

**Twenty-six percent of students said they were very confident and 37% said they were somewhat confident that teachers, counselors or principals would handle the problem if they reported any of these things happening to them, BUT 41% said they would “ignore it and say nothing” if they saw sexually inappropriate behavior among students at MHS. Six percent of respondents said they have stayed home or skipped a class because someone was bothering them in a sexual way that made them feel uncomfortable. Almost 14% said they felt as if they could not concentrate on their schoolwork because of someone bothering them in a sexual way that made them feel uncomfortable. When asked, “Have you, yourself, ever sexually harassed another student at MHS?” 5.6% of respondents said YES!**

**Teachers were also surveyed and 59% of them said sexual harassment among students is a problem at this school. Mrs. Cotter said, “It’s real and it does happen here.” Officer Salm said, “I believe we have a serious problem here, but most incidents are not reported.” The counselors said they just wanted the problem to be addressed. SO: STUDENTS think we have problem here.**

**TEACHERS think we have a problem here.**

**THE PRINCIPAL thinks we have a problem here.**

**OUR RESOURCE OFFICER thinks we have a problem here.**

**What NOW?**

**PART ONE: "What you thought was true may not be true: Get ready for some shocking facts."**

- **Sexual harassment is defined as UNWANTED and UNWELCOME sexual attention and behavior.**  
**It's nothing you like or want.**
- **Sexual harassment includes the following:**
  - **Sexual pictures, photos or messages sent by any form of technology.**
  - **Sexual graffiti on bathroom walls or locker rooms.**
  - **Spreading sexual rumors and rating other students based on sexual performance or activity.**
  - **Derogatory comments about sexual orientation.**
  - **Talking about your own sexual activity in front of others.**
  - **Exposing yourself or touching yourself in a sexual way.**
  - **Touching, grabbing or pinching someone in a sexual way.**

- **Pulling at someone's clothing in a sexual way or pulling clothing off or down.**
- **Brushing up against someone in a sexual way.**
- **Blocking someone's way or cornering them in a sexual way**
- **Forced touching or kissing.**
- **Sexual harassment is determined by the person being harassed, NOT by the one doing it.**
- **Sexual harassment is AGAINST THE LAW. You have the right to be safe from sexual harassment and you are responsible for NOT harassing others.**
- **Schools are REQUIRED BY LAW to have a policy against sexual harassment. Do you know what our school policy is? Have you read the Student Code of Conduct?**
- **You can file a sexual harassment complaint and your school HAS to do something about it.**
- **Boys can be sexually harassed just as much as girls. Boys can harass other boys and girls can harass other girls.**
- **It IS sexual harassment to call someone "Gay" or "Fag" or "Dyke" even if they are not homosexual.**
- **Sexual harassment can be a form of bullying too.**

- **People who sexually harass others sometimes do it because they think it's part of school life, they were dared by their friends, they think others like it or they want a date with the person.**

## PART TWO: "Call a Personal Foul on Sexual

Harassment: How to back yourself up and stand up for others, too."

Even if you are not a big sports fan, almost everybody knows what a personal foul is in a sports game like football or basketball. A personal foul is **illegal personal contact with an opponent during a game**. If you think about it, sexual harassment is exactly like a personal foul; it is unwanted and usually gets the offender a penalty. You can "call a personal foul" on someone who showing you unwanted "illegal personal contact."



**You can back yourself up and stand up for others who are victims as well by doing some of these things:**

- **TELL the person bothering you that you don't like what he/she is doing and to STOP IT. Be clear. Let them know they have crossed a line.**
- **In a strong, firm tone with a serious face, look the person right in the eye and point out exactly the behavior that needs to stop. For example, you can say: "Please stop telling sexual jokes in front of me; it makes me very uncomfortable." Or,**

- **“Calling someone gay as a putdown is really offensive. Please stop doing that.”**
- **If harassment persists, TELL a teacher you trust, a counselor, a principal or our resource officer. If your harasser has somehow threatened you if you tell on them, TELL about that, too. If you witness sexual harassment, encourage the victim to tell or tell for them. You can be strong and assertive for someone else.**
- **If someone has harassed you online, on social media, blogs or text messages, do not respond or retaliate. Save the messages and show them to the proper authorities. It’s good evidence.**
- **Remember that the LAW and the SCHOOL RULES are on your side. You have the RIGHT to go to school and not be bothered by sexual**

**harassment. It is a school's responsibility to protect you.**

- **TELL your PARENTS/GUARDIANS and file a complaint with your administrator. The district MUST investigate all complaints.**
- **Talk to student council about a school campaign to raise awareness and address the problem.**
- **Ask administrators to schedule assemblies or speakers to involve the whole student body.**
- **Take care of yourself. Notice how you feel and get support if you need it.**

PART THREE: "Messages from the People in Charge

Here: What Mrs. Cotter, Officer Salm,

Counselors and Teachers want you to know."

Our principal, Mrs. Cotter, has a personal message for all students at this school:

*"Students, please remember that sexual harassment is real and it does happen here. You have the right to be safe while you are in school here. We will not tolerate inappropriate or abusive behavior. Ask for help if you need it. Everyone who works here, principals, counselors, teachers, and secretaries are here to support you, no matter what you need. Do not stay silent. Speak up and we will take care of the problem. It is our job to protect you as well as educate you."*



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## APPENDIX A

Survey Questions for TEACHERS at Middletown High School about student sexual misconduct.

1. In your opinion, is student to student sexual harassment a problem at Middletown High School?
2. Have you ever witnessed sexually inappropriate behavior among students in the hallways or classrooms at Middletown High School?
3. What is the procedure at MHS for reporting sexual harassment or misconduct among students?
4. How often do you intervene when you see students behaving in a sexually inappropriate way with one another? What do you do?
5. Please explain your understanding of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
6. Who is the Title IX liaison for Middletown City Schools?
7. When was the last teacher inservice you attended that specifically addressed the problem of sexual misconduct among students at MHS?
8. Are you male or female?

Survey Questions for STUDENTS at Middletown High School about student sexual misconduct.

1. In your opinion, is student to student sexual harassment a problem at Middletown High School?
2. Since you have been a student at MHS, how often, if at all, has another student done the following things to you when you did not want them to?
  - a. Made sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks.
  - b. Wrote sexual messages, texts or drew pictures to you or about you.
  - c. Spread sexual rumors about you.
  - d. Said you were gay or lesbian.
  - e. Touched, grabbed or pinched you in a sexual way.
  - f. Pulled at your clothing in a sexual way.
  - g. Intentionally brushed against you in a sexual way.
  - h. Blocked your way or cornered you in a sexual way.
  - i. Forced you to kiss him/her.
  - j. Forced you to do something sexual, other than kissing.
3. How confident are you that teachers, counselors or administrators at MHS would handle the problem if you reported any of these things happening to you?
4. What do you do when you see sexually inappropriate behavior among students at MHS?

5. What is the district policy for handling complaints about sexually inappropriate behavior among students at school? Have you read anything about that in the student handbook?
6. Have you ever stayed home from school or skipped a class because someone was bothering you in a sexual way that made you feel uncomfortable?
7. Have you ever felt as if you could not concentrate on your schoolwork because of someone bothering you in a sexual way that made you feel uncomfortable?
8. Have you ever sexually harassed someone at MHS?
9. Are you male or female?



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**DATE:** October 3, 2012

**TO:** Mary L. Rucker, PhD, Professor  
Communications

**FROM:** B. Laurel Elder, Chair *BLE (for LE)*  
WSU Institutional Review Board

**SUBJECT:** SC# 4919

*'Preventing Sexual Harassment, Sexual Bullying, Sexual Abuse, Acquaintance Rape, and Date Rape Among Students at Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio: A Teacher Resource Guide and a Student Awareness Pamphlet'*

At the recommendation of the IRB Chair, your study referenced above has been recommended for exemption. Please note that any change in the protocol must be approved by the IRB; otherwise approval is terminated.

This action will be referred to the Full Institutional Review Board for ratification at their next scheduled meeting.

**NOTE:** This approval will automatically terminate two (2) years after the above date unless you submit a "continuing review" request (see [http://www.wright.edu/rsp/IRB/CR\\_sc.doc](http://www.wright.edu/rsp/IRB/CR_sc.doc)) to RSP. You will not receive a notice from the IRB Office.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call Robyn Wilks, IRB Coordinator at 775-4462.

Thank you!

Enclosure

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

SC# 4919

ACTION OF THE WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXPEDITED REVIEW

Assurance Number: FWA00002427

Title: 'Preventing Sexual Harassment, Sexual Bullying, Sexual Abuse, Acquaintance Rape, and Date Rape Among Students at Middletown High School in Middletown, Ohio: A Teacher Resource Guide and a Student Awareness Pamphlet'

Principal Investigator: Mary L. Rucker, PhD, Professor  
Communications

The Institutional Review Board Chair has approved an exemption with regard to the use of human subjects on this proposed project.

REMINDER: Federal regulations require prompt reporting to the IRB of any changes in research activity [changes in approved research during the approval period may not be initiated without IRB review (submission of an amendment), except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects] and prompt reporting of any serious or on-going problems, including unanticipated adverse reactions to biologicals, drugs, radioisotope labeled drugs or medical devices.

  
Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair, WSU-IRB  
Approval Date: October 03, 2012  
IRB Mtg. Date: October 15, 2012