



**PRE- AND POST-SHOW
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

For

You The Man

A guide to helping students and communities address unhealthy relationships, dating violence, and sexual assault.

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Welcome.

Thank you for bringing **YOU THE MAN** to your community. Dating violence and sexual assault are tricky, sensitive and volatile issues, and public discussion of these issues can be challenging, even potentially dangerous. But opening community dialogue can save lives and create healthier, stronger families and communities. Your school or organization has already made a commitment to break the silence about sexual assault and dating abuse. ADD VERB Productions hopes you will find the content of the performance fresh and complementary to your wellness programming. A play is not a substitute for your campus or community resources, but theatre is a dynamic way to foster open, honest discussion. ADD VERB Productions has created this guide in order to support you in your efforts to create a safe, supportive environment in which your audience can explore healthy and unhealthy relationships with honesty and integrity.

This is a guide and only a guide. A thorough examination of what follows should prepare you to produce **YOU THE MAN**, but we cannot possibly anticipate every situation that will arise. The Site Coordinator, Moderator, Panel Members, and Discussion Facilitators must use their best judgment. The Site Coordinator Evaluation forms are very important to us at ADD VERB, as that feedback continues to inform and improve what information and resources we can offer to support a successful presentation of **YOU THE MAN**.

Please refer to your Site Coordinator Checklist, which will assist you in organizing and producing **You THE MAN**. ADD VERB's main office (207-772-1167, info@addverbproductions.com) and your booking agent, Gina Kirkland, Kirkland Productions, (866-769-9037, gina@kirklandproductions.com) are available to offer clarification.

Pre-Performance Guidelines

Below is a full description of what needs to be done prior to a performance. If these matters are not dealt with in time for the performance it will be necessary to postpone the performance and reschedule so adequate attention can be given to these details.

CONTACT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OUTREACH ADVOCATES:

Your first phone calls once you have decided to produce **YOU THE MAN** in your community should be to these two agencies. You will need their collaboration and support throughout the entire process! If you have in-house services, please consider also bringing in outside local resources, as it is in the best interest of your audience to have as many resources available as possible. **You will be asking these experts to address faculty, facilitators, and possibly peer mediators prior to the show's performance date. They will be a part of your panel for the post-performance discussion, and should be available for on-site referrals the day of the performance.** Ideally they would also be available in the weeks and months after the program to continue taking referrals and providing additional support to your school or organization. If you have never brought DV or SA people in before, know that this sort of invitation is not usually an imposition and that they are looking for opportunities to let young people know about available services. It will be important to coordinate advocate schedules with your intended performance times. **Provide these advocates with copies of the Plot Synopsis, the Facilitators Guide, Discussion Questions, and the Troubleshooting Tips.**

TRAINING OF FACULTY:

Prior to a performance, faculty and staff need to be briefed by experts in dating violence and sexual assault (DV/SA). We cannot emphasize how important this is, particularly in high school settings as faculty and staff will be on the front line. They are the ones who see interactions in the hallways, hear remarks in class, or may be approached for help by students. If your faculty members will be facilitating small group discussions, please refer to the next section.

TRAINING OF SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS:

Well in advance of the performance, distribute the Plot Synopsis, the Facilitators Guide, Discussion Questions, and the Troubleshooting Tips to all who will be working with audience members. The primary criteria for a panelist or facilitator are expertise and ability to work effectively with your particular community. Suggestions for group facilitators include teachers, coaches, police officers, affirmative action coordinators, and men who work with men around violence. Please have this group briefed by your DV/SA advocates.

TRAINING OF PEER MEDIATORS:

Many schools have created highly successful peer mediator programs, and many campus climates are improved by peer assisted mediation. However, it's appropriate to **remind peer mediators that they must not attempt to mediate dating violence/sexual assault or sexual harassment situations.** Peer mediators should be trained by DV/SA advocates to identify warning signs for abusive or unhealthy relationships, when they should seek expert assistance, and how to make a referral to community services.

CHOOSING A MODERATOR:

The Moderator will introduce the program, direct people into discussion groups, and be the liaison between audience and panel members for whole-group discussion. Some of you who are site coordinators will want to be the moderator as well. However, you should consider delegating or sharing duties, as feedback and experience tell us that it's most likely too much for one person to do everything well. **Your moderator should be personable, confident, credible, and someone your community respects.** In schools, it's generally recommended that it not be an outside guest or expert, as they will not be as familiar with your protocol and should not be expected to address disciplinary issues. The **Moderator's Script, Discussion Questions, and Troubleshooting Tips** are on separate pages in this packet.

PUBLICITY:

Included in your packet for duplication is a **poster with space for you to fill in with appropriate dates and times** and a standard press release. If we may be of any help in your publicity, please contact ADD VERB's main office. It might be appropriate to coordinate a bathroom poster campaign with hotline numbers for your local support agencies. Any releases to the papers should be done at least two weeks in advance, and phone calls to go along with your fax or mailing seem to work best. While **YOU THE MAN** is copyright protected and no videotaping is authorized without permission from Cathy Plourde, Executive Director of ADD VERB PRODUCTIONS, television or radio may tape for news coverage. **Please notify the actor prior to the performance if there will be any cameras, and do not use flash photography.**

VENUE REQUIREMENTS:

A performance space of 15' by 20' or larger is required, on a stage or in a classroom. Conference-type settings, which are often huge, high-ceiling rooms, should provide a raised stage for optimum viewing. Otherwise, the show needs very little technical support, depending on your venue. Please have a technical support person to assist with lights and microphones one hour before show time. Be sure your available seating meets your audience requirements. Your venue requirements checklist:

- _____ 15' by 20' stage or performance area
- _____ Off-stage preparation area for actor.
- _____ Wireless Microphone for the actor (venue dependent)
- _____ Microphones for moderator and panel members (venue dependent)
- _____ Lights: ON! You may raise and lower the lights for the actor to open and close the performance, but it is not necessary to adjust during the performance. Be certain that the entire space is evenly lit, without dark shadows or lines. House lights should be on for post-show debriefing.
- _____ 2 armless sturdy chairs
- _____ 1 3' stool
- _____ 1 table, 6' in length.
- _____ 1 standard flip chart with stand.
- _____ Nearby "Safe Room" secured.
- _____ Break-out rooms as needed.

PHOTOCOPY THEATRE PROGRAM AND TAKE-AWAY HANDOUTS:

Included for duplication in this packet is a theatre program, as would be distributed at a regular play. There are six characters performed in this one-man show, and audience members may find it helpful to have the list of who's who. Even more importantly, though, **the program doubles as an opportunity to put in every audience member's hand the names of local support services, agencies and their phone numbers.** National numbers are on the back, with space below for you to paste in your local resources' information.

Also provided in this packet is a resource list and other handouts that are suitable for distribution to your audience members. Your local agencies or panel members may also have materials that you would like distributed, so please be in contact with them on this.

Day of the performance

ACTOR CONTACT/SUPPORT:

- If the actor is flying in, arrangements to get the actor from the airport to your site will be necessary. Please coordinate details with your contact at Add Verb.
- If the actor is driving to your location, someone will need to meet him at the venue one hour in advance.
- **The actor will need time to set up his stage and warm-up in the space before the audience is allowed in.**
- An off-stage area or room, and access to facilities should be available while the audience is entering the stage.
- If you are having more than one performance back to back, he will need a half hour to himself between being on a panel and doing the next performance.

TECH SUPPORT:

At the performance site, a technical support person should be available one hour before the show to assist with the wireless microphone and lighting. Moderator and panel member microphones should also be set up and tested at this time.

SUPPORT PERSONS AND SAFE ROOM(S):

You must provide a nearby safe-room and support people for the duration of this program. Depending on the size of the group, you may wish to have more than one private room available. **Individuals should be posted at the doors with instructions to follow anyone—adult or youth—who leaves the room to see if they are in need of support.** Dating violence and sexual assault are highly emotional issues, and it is very possible an audience member will become upset during the performance or during the discussion, and need to leave the room. It is more likely that support will be needed and/or sought during the debriefing, rather than the performance itself.

PERFORMANCE PROTOCOL:

Crowd control is critical. Post enough adults in authority throughout the audience to quell disruptions. One particular area of concern is the back of the room, or middle areas where it is harder to reach students. **If at any time an audience becomes too disruptive, it is at the discretion of the actor, the moderator, or the site coordinator to halt the performance.** Most likely, the moderator or the site coordinator would best in a position to handle this, as the actor's focus will be on his work. Having to halt a performance is not anticipated, but due to the nature of the topic, it is possible, and if the audience is that hostile, it might not be wise to resume. The pace of the show is quick and engaging, and **audience response and "noise" is normal**, but the topic is uncomfortable for some and if an audience becomes hostile, the actor cannot be expected to continue.

EVALUATIONS:

Evaluations are best done as soon after the program as possible. It is not necessary to have the entire audience, including faculty, fill one out. An audience sampling will be fine, though we'll be interested in seeing as many as you can gather. The information from the evaluations is a way for ADD VERB to assess the effectiveness and impact of **YOU THE MAN**. Please send the Site Coordinator's Evaluation as soon as possible, as well.

Post-Performance Debriefing

The Post-Performance Debriefing is the most critical part of the site-coordinator's responsibility, and will require the most thought of how to balance ADD VERB's guidelines and requirements with what will best suit the needs of your community. What the debriefing looks like at each performance site will be particular to your own situation and circumstance. Small groups are recommended as the first step, as honest responses, greater opportunity for more people to speak, and a formulation of thoughts and remarks can better be made in a smaller setting, fostering real social change. Included in this packet are specific resources for your facilitators and panel members, including a **Plot Synopsis, Discussion Questions, and Trouble Shooting Tips**. **In all cases have support persons available and allow enough time to fully process.**

College and University Settings:

Small Group Discussions followed by a whole-group interaction with a panel of advocates and resources. The Moderator will direct the audience into small groups where they will have the opportunity to discuss feelings and responses to the show, and to formulate questions to take back to the panel. **Please consider the advantages of having your audience initially break into single-gender groups (see explanation below), and then provide an opportunity for small mixed gender groups.** Feedback from students indicates that this is very effective. Students who need support or wish to talk to a support person in greater detail should be given opportunity to do so, at any time in the proceedings of the program. It is very important to have a coordinated plan of increased availability of support resources in the days and weeks following the performance.

Conference Settings:

Question and Answer session with a Panel of advocates who are involved in your community's response to dating abuse and sexual assault. Unless you are using the play as a plenary session followed by break-out groups, ADD VERB recommends an organized opportunity to hear remarks from a panel, and to ask questions.

Your Panel:

In addition to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocates who must be present for the performance, please include others who are a part of your community's consistent and coordinated response to DV/SA. Talk to the DV/SA advocates with whom you are working for suggestions of appropriate community members to include on the panel. In high school and college settings it would be appropriate to have a trained male and female student present as well.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER SINGLE GENDER GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

- **Safety.** First and foremost, **this measure is taken to help provide a safe space to deal with the issues of dating violence and sexual assault.** Separating the genders may help cut down on showboating and public aggression. It may make for a safer experience for victims in the audience sitting next to or near their perpetrators.
- **Efficacy. This separation helps cut down on feelings of shame, blame, and victimization—critical to creating change in attitudes and behaviors.** Separating males from females and using small groups may give both sexes a better opportunity to be open and honest, and may also reduce “politically correct” but insincere responses. Until individuals can address true feelings and reactions, there can be no movement and no change on attitudes about dating violence and sexuality. The issues raised in an all-female group will be different from an all-male group.

The suggestion for single gender discussions has been created in consultation with school-based outreach educators and with men who do violence-prevention work with men on campuses. More and more schools and colleges around the country are finding the need to deal with violence and respect issues first in single gender groups, followed by a facilitated discussion with both genders. Same-gender violence, whether homophobic or aggressive in general, also occurs, but the largest percentage of dating violence and sexual assault is heterosexual, and male on female.

If you need any help in thinking through your post-show debriefing, please feel consult with your agent or call ADD VERB PRODUCTIONS' main office at 207-772-1167.

Moderator's Script

Moderator: Welcome to (sponsoring organization) _____'s performance of **YOU THE MAN**. I am _____, your moderator for today's program.

First, if you would please turn off your cell phones and alarms. Thank you for doing so at this time.

YOU THE MAN is a play that deals with one of our culture's most serious issues: dating abuse and sexual assault. The play runs approximately 45 minutes, and immediately following the play we'll be having a debriefing session.

YOU THE MAN is a one-man play, featuring six different characters. It presents unhealthy relationships, dating abuse and sexual assault as issues. The issues are not resolved in the play, which will give us an opportunity to examine our own responses and consider what we ourselves might do in one of these situations. We'll break up into small groups and have an opportunity to talk about what we've seen. Following those discussions, we'll reconvene and have a chance to talk with advocates who are trained in these issues.

At this time it is my pleasure to introduce **YOU THE MAN**, written by Cathy Plourde and performed for you today by (actor) _____. Please enjoy the performance.

Immediately following the performance:

For small group discussions:

Moderator: [Give instructions for small group discussion, instructing how to divide up and where to go. Each group is assigned a facilitator. Indicate how much time they will have before returning to a whole group discussion with the panel. This information will come from the site coordinator. The moderator may want to circulate and sit in on one or two groups to get a sense of audience reaction, and then be able to use this as segue material during whole-group discussion. **Pick up with the script below:]**

For large group discussions with panel: The goal of a whole-audience discussion is to ask specific questions about relationships, dating violence, and sexual assault to the panel of experts.

Moderator: [*Or, once reconvened from small groups*] **Introduce the panel members.** Ask them to each **briefly** make a remark.

Moderator: I'd now like to open this for discussion of your responses to **YOU THE MAN**. We have ____ minutes remaining.

- Are there issues or questions you would like to pose to our panelists at this time?
- Or, what issues or comments were made in your small group that you could share with all of us?
- What did you think about the play? What did **YOU THE MAN** make you think about?

Moderator: We have to wrap things up at this time. Do the panelists have any final remarks they would like to make?

Moderator: [**Thank panelists, individuals and sponsors** who made this program possible today.]

MODERATOR TIP:

****Be familiar with Discussion Guide and Trouble Shooting Tips.** Draw questions from the audience to the panel of experts, focusing the question and answers on issues of dating violence and sexual assault. Repeat audience questions so that all can hear. Do not let a panel member or an audience member dominate the conversation. Redirect individuals with personal concerns to post-performance processing options.

Discussion Facilitation Guide

Moderator, Panel Members and Small Group Facilitators should all be familiar with this information:

TO THE MODERATOR AND SITE COORDINATOR:

- Have people posted near doors so that if someone does leave, they can be followed out to offer assistance if they are in distress. Be certain the room is secured.
- **Crowd control is incredibly important for the success of the show.** Have ample adults of authority in areas where there might be disruption, especially the back of the room. If people are becoming disruptive, please address this immediately and quietly. If necessary, you may halt the show and ask the actor to pick up where he left off.

TO FACILITATORS:

If you have been asked to facilitate a small group, please familiarize yourself with the Plot Synopsis, Troubleshooting Tips, and the questions with guided answers. Typical responses of dating violence and sexual assault issues can derail a productive discussion. The following are strategies that to help keep a discussion focused.

Facilitating Small Group Discussions:

The goal of small group discussions is open communication of feelings inspired by the play and its characters, and the formulation of questions for the panel discussion. **Note cards** might be helpful for recording the questions.

Ground rules: Establish a short list of ground rules for how the group will be run. Offer these and see if there are any the group would like to add.

1. Don't blurt out people's names. You don't know how what you say will affect the people around you.
2. Confidentiality. What's said stays in this group and is not repeated elsewhere.
3. Respect people's opinions. We won't all agree on everything, and we all have a right to an opinion.
4. No personal stories. If someone wants to deal with a personal situation today, they may go to the designated area/person now or at a later time in the day.

Be aware of:

1. Digressions. Redirect, redirect, redirect! When stuck for how to answer something, return to the play. How did the different characters respond or handle that issue? Why?
2. Your own expectations. Think of this program as planting a seed. It may take students some time to process this information, and to connect it to their own lives.
3. See the Trouble Shooting Tips for a detailed list of topics and concerns.

Special Notes—

As a Facilitator you will need the following information, to be provided by Site Coordinator:

Breakout room location:

Number of people in your small group:

Time allotted for small group discussion:

Location to send students who need more personal attention:

Names of your group's Co-Facilitators:

Troubleshooting Tips for Facilitators

Substance Use and Informed Consent:

These two issues, often interconnected, repeatedly anger people. They say, "If both people are drinking, why is it the guy's fault, why isn't she responsible? That's not fair."

What is really at hand here is: What does it mean to get consent? Under what conditions can one get or not get consent?

What to acknowledge: Stating, "if she didn't want to have sex, she shouldn't have been drinking" is blaming the victim. Explore what it means to have power over another person and what it means to be able to give or get consent.

What is not a helpful approach: Constantly reiterating that sex without consent is against the law, although it is good to remind them that this is the case. This is not helpful because it is not about **values**, it's about rules.

What is helpful: Ask individual to remove him or herself from the situation, and consider it was his/her grandmother, or a friend who is in this situation. Focus on empathy, and what it means to get consent. People often believe getting consent will break the mood; if appropriate, ask for ways getting consent could be done that are creative and would not break the mood. Making sure your partner is comfortable is a good strategy.

Sexual Orientation: This is almost guaranteed to come up, and once they are down the track of talking about sexual orientation, it will be very hard to get them to stop.

What to do: Let the group know that homophobic remarks are not appropriate (if that has happened). Remind them that the topic at hand is relationships and violence, and move on.

Men's power in this culture: Some students do not understand that our culture is patriarchal, and that women and minorities are oppressed. Some males struggle with being identified as being a part of a privileged class. Some members of oppressed groups don't personally identify as such.

What to do: To get people to understand the power structure, use historical examples and illustrations—such as property laws, or how at a wedding the woman is given away by her father—which helps to depersonalize this issue for people. Talk about how the media uses women's bodies and sex to sell everything from soap to cars to cereal.

What not to do: Do not argue about this. Move along to another question, or ask a question related to the play.

Personal Disclosure: It is almost certain that an audience or group discussion member will want to offer personal information about themselves or another person that the group is likely to know.

What to do: Have a plan! Know where the individual may go right now or later to talk to someone. Remind the group that talking about their own or others personal experience is not appropriate in this setting.

What not to do: Do not let them discuss their own situation, or refer to or talk in code about others.

When dealing with minors: Know your legal obligation of what you must report, and what that procedure is. See you site coordinator if you have any questions about this.

Jealousy and possessiveness: It is common that when jealousy and possessiveness comes up that everyone in the room will turn to look at one girl who has a jealous and possessive boyfriend. (For some reason they will not look to him.)

What to do: Keep it general, and not personal. Ask what is jealousy? What are the feelings that are mixed up in jealousy? (e.g., insecurity, fear, anger, sadness, hurt...) What types of behaviors are jealous and controlling? Ask about how do you know when is particular behavior a

nice thing, and when does it become controlling? Ask what might make someone uncomfortable about being treated with such control?

Anger toward victim: There are many reasons why people express anger toward victims, and it's often because people don't understand why a victim does not leave the abusive situation.

What to do: Name and validate the feelings you hear being expressed. Ask how they might formulate a concrete question for the panel discussion. Explore what might make it difficult for a person to leave a relationship?

Male Bashing: The scenario of a guy being falsely blamed will come up. Being falsely accused is wrong and unfair, and while it does happen, it is a relatively rare occurrence, while rape and violence occur more frequently.

What to do: If "male-bashing" comes up, refer to how the play did not shame, blame or victimize any men, and was not about hating men. Often males feel they have no protection, and that they are always being blamed. Remind them that they in fact do have protection in their control: **they are in charge of getting consent.**

Responding to violence with violence: People may find all sorts of reasons why this should be the response to someone who has hurt someone close to them.

What to do: Remind them that this will put the victim in even more danger, and should not be attempted.

Discussion Questions

Below are questions specifically pertaining to the play YOU THE MAN, followed by more general guided questions, some with partial answers.

- What do you think Mitch's concerns were about trying to help Jana? What would your concerns be if Jana were your friend or sister?
- What did Mitch do well in trying to help his friend Jana? What could he have done differently?
- While "The Virgin Larry's" situation is sad for Larry, he knows it is even worse for the girl in the video. When do you need to think about how other people's choices can affect you personally?
- Jana pushed away most of her friends, or they dropped her. How could you be a good friend, even when someone is pushing you away?
- Dr. Wing took a risk by letting Jana know he was concerned. What was smart about how Dr. Wing handled his conversation with Jana?
- Jana's Dad was upset but ultimately get the truth about Jana's situation. Would you approach a parent of a friend? How would you feel if you didn't, and something happened? What help could adults give?
- Dr. Wing's old girlfriend had been abused. Besides impacting what future relationships a person would have, how do domestic violence situations affect the people around him or her? How do they affect a whole community? What impact does physical and emotional violence have on a person's ability to earn money or manage a family?

Guided Discussion Questions

Does drinking cause violence?

Many people drink and do not get violent. Drinking is not an excuse. If a person promises not to drink anymore, it doesn't mean they won't be violent anymore. Violence is a choice, and is a way that some people use to control their partner.

Can males be raped?

Yes. Most people who rape young men are straight adult males. These men are usually married or have a girlfriend and are not gay or bisexual. People who rape do so for the desire of power and control over someone weaker. This causes a male victim of rape a lot of emotional confusion. Male genitals respond to touch, and a boy can get an erection and even ejaculate while being raped. This does not mean the boy liked it, but that his body responded involuntarily. As with females, male victims should talk to someone for support and help.

What is jealousy?

Everyone wants to be liked and cared about. But when a person wants to know every move you make and who you are with, that isn't love or caring. That is jealousy and possessiveness. If someone wants to control you, they aren't treating you as a person but as a possession. The jealousy isn't your problem, but is a problem of the jealous person.

How can you tell if you might be in an unhealthy relationship?

Here are some questions to think about...Are you afraid of your dating partner's anger? Are you afraid to say what you think or want? Are you constantly called names, insulted or put down? Does your dating partner make you feel like you're wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate? Does he or she tell you what to wear or how to behave? Do you avoid spending time with friends or family because of his or her jealousy? Have you been repeatedly accused of flirting or having sex with others? Are you forced to justify what you do, where you go, and who you speak with? Do you feel like you have to ask permission to go out with friends, get a job, or join a club or team? Have you been hit, kicked, shoved, or had things thrown at you? Do you feel pressured about sex? Does he or she make excuses for abusive behavior, saying it was because of alcohol or drugs, or, "just a joke" or "because I was jealous"?

If you answered yes to some of these, you may still think, "it's not that bad." But feeling scared, humiliated, or pressured, or controlled is not the way you should feel in a relationship. You should feel loved, respected, and free to be yourself. Your feelings and safety are important.

What do you do?

Take your situation seriously. Believe the abuse is not your fault. Tell somebody, like parents or trusted friends, and let them know how they can be helpful to you. If the first person you try to talk to about this makes you feel bad, try someone else! You deserve to be supported! Call a hotline. Plan for your safety. Listen to and trust your feelings and gut instincts. Do things for yourself that make you feel strong.

Why do people stay in emotionally or physically violent relationship?

People are confused by the violence, and sometimes take responsibility for things not working out. But no one likes being in a violent situation. Often the victim is living in fear and is afraid to break it off.

How might something you say or do make it worse for someone in an unhealthy or dangerous relationship?

How do you think stereotypes about male and female behavior could lead to dating violence? For females? For males? On what are these stereotypes based?

Is it ever okay to hit someone? Where do you draw the line?

What do you think your rights are in a relationship?

What are some reasons why someone might be abusive? Where do people learn about being abusive? Is it necessary to have seen violence in one's own home to be abusive?

Where could you go if you were in an abusive situation, or if you wanted to talk to someone about it?

What would you do if you knew you had a problem with being abusive? Who could you tell? Where could you go to get help?

Do you think it's important to get out of an abusive relationship? What might happen if you stay? What might happen if you leave?

What does it actually mean to get informed consent?

What do you think you can do to prevent dating violence?

Plot Synopsis of YOU THE MAN

Please distribute to those who will be conducting any discussions or debriefing. It is NOT appropriate to distribute this to the audience.

Dear Facilitator: This summary's purpose is to prepare facilitators who may have not yet seen the play. While this will not determine all that may come up in a post-show discussion, it will provide an understanding of the play's content.

YOU THE MAN (YTM) is a one-man play addressing unhealthy relationships, dating violence, and sexual assault. It cannot possibly cover every aspect of these issues, though it does serve to raise concerns, dispel myths, address social pressures, and offer insight as to how devastating this violence can be. The approach of YTM is one of promoting empathy—this is not a play that seeks to blame, shame or victimize anyone but rather explores choices and consequences. The actor plays 6 different characters, moving in and out of each one quickly, changing voice and body, and is assisted by a few minimal props. Three of the characters are connected by plot; the other three are unrelated but serve to complement and contrast. None of the characters themselves are being abusive or violent, and no violence actually occurs on stage. Obviously, the play refers to sex and sexuality but does not use swearing or denigrating language. Each of the characters are described below, accompanied by teaching points:

STAN THE MAN. Hip-hop meets Dear Abby, Stan is “here to steer you clear.” Stan The Man responds to letters written in to him, dispensing advice to guys trying to figure out how to have relationships with women. This character focuses on empathy, asking the audience to consider the circumstances as if it were their sister, mother, grandmother who was in a difficult situation. Stan's motivation for dispensing “advice with attitude” comes from having grown up with a mother who was abused by his father. His teaching points are: buying gifts or meals for a girl does not merit sexual attention; date rape drugs, seen by Stan as abominable, are cause for women to be extra cautious; consent is required at all times, and if a woman is intoxicated that means she is unable to give consent.

THE VIRGIN LARRY. A ball player stuck with a childhood nickname, The Virgin Larry focuses on male athletic attitudes and the associated cultural pressure to be sexually active. He and his team watch a video created by another player who is violating a girl. When the girl finds out about the video after the fact, she reports it to the police and the team faces expulsion and loss of scholarships. The Virgin Larry realizes his complicity and responsibility, as a not-so-innocent bystander who has failed to take action. His teaching points are: homophobia; proof of manhood being inappropriately determined by sexual prowess; his responsibility in the face of a wrong.

MITCHELL. Nice Guy who is accepted in most all circles but is too independent to be in just one. His friend Jana is in increasing danger and he doesn't know how to help her. We watch him wonder whether or not to intervene, then determine how to be of help, to then understand that he needs not only more information but also some expert advice himself. Most importantly, he recognizes Jana's safety is at stake, and that he must proceed with caution. His teaching points include: recognition of warning signs of abusive behaviors; appropriate and inappropriate strategies for intervention, including curbing frustration; awareness of and provision for a victim's safety; and a victim has the greatest expertise about his/her own situation.

DR. WING. Science teacher to Jana, Dr. Wing recognizes that his student is in trouble, and correctly assesses that he is not the best person to provide Jana the help she needs. Instead of being a passive and blind bystander, he finds a way to safely let her know he is concerned and to give her a hot-line number. His intervention is non-judgmental, does not blame the victim, and is done with tact.

JANA'S DAD. Dad is loving and supportive, yet he has trouble expressing his love and concern to Jana. Perhaps no longer as close with Jana as when she was a little girl, he's just catching up to recognizing his daughter "may" be sexually active, when really, that's old news and she is currently in an abusive relationship. He feels rage and helplessness.

OFFICER FRIENDLY. Easy going speaker who addresses the audience with questions, statistics, and the finer points of the law, in a charming and humorous southern drawl. His main teaching points are: most rapists are known to the victim; rape or other forced sexual contact can happen in couples who are married or dating; no one is ever asking to be raped; the number of falsely reported rapes (often what are considered to be "revenge" motivated accusations) are statistically no different than other falsely reported crimes; that most rapes go unreported; that oral sex is sex; and, if you are a victim of rape, it is quite possible that the rapist may violate others.

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