

RESPECT 101: A classroom guide

“Music/Media Influences on Relationships” Activity

Objectives and Requirements:

Learning Objectives: To assist students to develop critical thinking regarding our entertainment; culture’s acceptance of violence and humiliation of girls and women. Also to allow reflection on how that relates to personal dating relationships. To encourage students to take a stand and reject the idea that relationship norms need to be sexist or be about power and control.

Materials Needed: Contemporary music or video clip that is popular with students and demonstrates gender inequality, glorified violence and/or power and control in dating relationships.

The song, “Love the Way You Lie” by Rihanna and Eminem is a good choice to illustrate this.

Length of Activity: 10-15 minutes

Activity Instructions:

After breaking the class into small groups, ask one person from each group to be the recorder or spokesperson for that group. Tell the students they are going to hear a song/or watch a clip, and they are to record as many examples of gender stereotypes and gender inequality that they can find; as well as examples that condone the use of violence, force or put downs of women and girls by men. After the song is played, hand out a copy of the lyrics (if using music) to each group. Let the students know you will give them 5-8 minutes to discuss their responses before they present to the class.

Processing the Experience:

Although they are listening to lyrics that seem to make it not only normal – but cool – for boys and men to control and humiliate women, ask students if there is anything normal, natural or inevitable about this mentality?

Invite students to share the qualities of the man they admire most in their personal life. Ask students if these qualities match the perceptions of what men are “supposed” to be like from the list elicited from the “gender box activity” and the “music influence activity”.

Facilitator’s Notes/Key Points:

If time permits, this activity can become a contest to see who can come up with the largest list of examples of unhealthy stereotypes.

