SAFEBAE
BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

Teaching Guide
September 2025

Rape Culture & How to Shift to a Culture of Respect

This teaching guide was created by SafeBAE to accompany the short video "Charlie Coleman Talks About Rape Culture" produced with *Teen Vogue*. Its purpose is to spark meaningful discussion about the cultural norms that sustain rape culture and to equip students with practical steps to begin shifting their schools and communities toward a culture of consent and respect.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

The purpose of this film and teaching guide is to raise awareness about cultural attitudes and behaviors that normalize sexual violence. It is designed to help students recognize how rape culture shows up in everyday life, challenge harmful norms, and practice creating healthier, more respectful communities.

Please Note

Because these conversations can surface strong emotions or even lead to disclosures of abuse, we encourage you to take steps to create a supportive classroom environment including:

- **Inform school counselors in advance of teaching this content and ask them to be available for students who may need additional support.**
- **Let students know they may step out or take a break if the material feels overwhelming.**
- **It is also important to remind students that school staff are typically mandated reporters; be clear about your school's policies and state laws so that students understand the limits of confidentiality before choosing to disclose.**

Please also share national, 24/7, confidential support resources with your students:

Text: LOVEIS to 22522
Chat: www.loveisrespect.org
Call: 1.866.331.9474

SAFEBAE
BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

What is Rape Culture?

Rape culture refers to the values, attitudes, beliefs, and everyday behaviors that make sexual violence seem normal, excusable, or less serious than it is. Instead of treating assault as unacceptable, rape culture allows harmful actions to continue by downplaying or even encouraging them.



The term "rape culture" might sound extreme, but it describes a very real problem. When we excuse or ignore harmful behavior, it creates an environment where sexual violence is more likely to happen — and less likely to be challenged.

Watch *"Charlie Coleman Talks About Rape Culture and His Sister Daisy's Sexual Assault Teen Vogue"*



Discussion Questions:

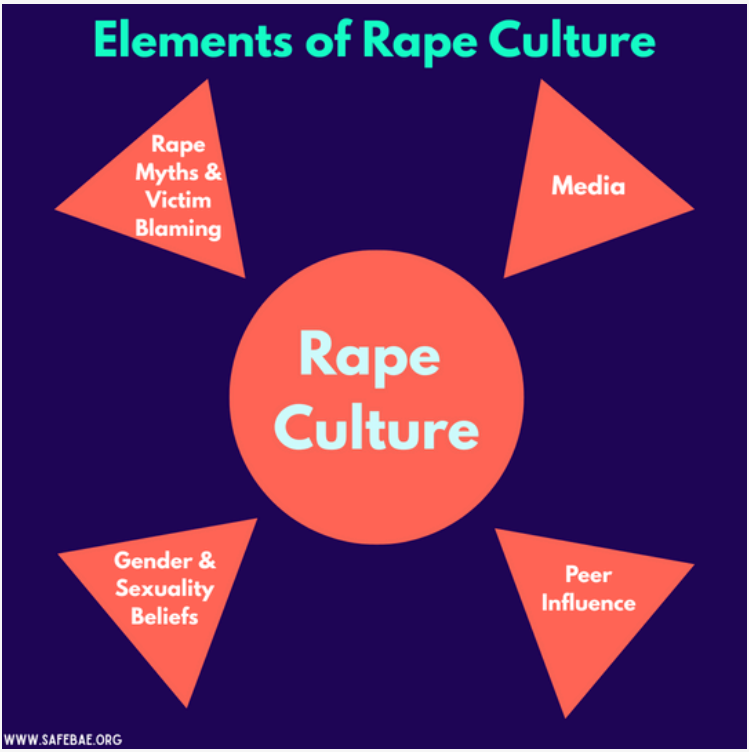
First reactions: What stood out to you in this video? How did it make you feel?

Language in your community: Have you ever heard jokes, comments, or phrases like the ones Charlie mentioned? How did people respond?

Recognizing non-consent: Charlie points out that “no” isn’t the only way to show someone doesn’t consent. What other signs (verbal or nonverbal) might show someone is uncomfortable or not giving consent?

Gender expectations: Charlie talks about certain standards and pressures for men. How do these expectations affect not only men, but everyone? How might you challenge or respond to this kind of talk in your own life?

Where is This Behavior Learned?



Media Influence

We often absorb messages from media about relationships & sexuality, sometimes without even noticing. Films, music, ads, & games can send harmful signals about power and consent.

Examples include:

- TV shows with no positive representation of LGBTQ+ or gender-diverse relationships.
- Movies that treat catcalling or harassment as a joke.
- Fashion ads that glamorize violence or objectify bodies.
- Pornography that depicts violence or non-consensual sex.
- Music lyrics that normalize abuse or misogyny.
- Video games that reward violence, including sexual violence.
- Male characters shown as always wanting sex and never taking “no” for an answer.
- Female characters rarely shown as sex-positive or asking for consent.

Have you noticed these patterns in the media you watch, listen to, or play? What impact do you think they have on people’s real-life behavior?

Rape Myths & Victim Blaming

Rape culture is reinforced by myths and stereotypes. These false beliefs excuse harmful actions, shift responsibility away from perpetrators, and silence survivors. When people believe these myths, it makes it harder for survivors to come forward and easier for violence to continue.

Why Myths Matter

- They **shift blame** from the perpetrator to the survivor.
- They **silence survivors**, making them less likely to report or seek help.
- They **normalize violence**, allowing harmful behavior to go unchallenged.

Common Myths vs. Facts

- **Myth:** "Real rape" only happens with strangers.
- **Fact:** Most rapes are committed by someone the survivor knows.

- **Myth:** People often make false rape reports.
- **Fact:** False reports are rare (2–10%), about the same rate as other crimes. Meanwhile, many assaults are never reported at all.

- **Myth:** Only women can be raped.
- **Fact:** People of all genders experience sexual assault. About 1 in 10 rape survivors are male, and nearly 1 in 2 transgender people will experience sexual assault.

- **Myth:** Clothing or behavior "invites" assault.
- **Fact:** No one ever asks to be assaulted. The responsibility always lies with the perpetrator.

- **Myth:** If someone didn't fight back, it wasn't really rape.
- **Fact:** Freezing or shutting down is a common survival response. Lack of resistance does not mean consent.

- **Myth:** If a person is drunk or high, they are to blame if assaulted.
- **Fact:** Being under the influence never makes someone responsible for violence done to them. Consent cannot be given when someone is incapacitated.

How do these myths show up in your community, school, or on social media? Who benefits when these myths are believed?

Peer Influence

Peer pressure and group dynamics can fuel rape culture by making harmful behavior seem normal, or even expected.

- **Complacency:** When friends laugh off harassment or don't challenge harmful behavior, it becomes easier to ignore or excuse. *Remember you're only as good as the company you keep.*
- **"Proving" manhood:** For many boys and young men, fitting in with peers can feel like it requires degrading others. Talking about women as objects or mocking survivors is sometimes used to show toughness.
- **Herd mentality:** Following the group without thinking critically can lead to bullying, harassment, and even violence. Without someone willing to step up as a compassionate leader or active bystander, harmful behavior can spread.



When have you seen peer pressure — positive or negative — shape how people act? What difference does it make when someone chooses to speak up?

Gender Norms & Sexuality Beliefs

Cultural expectations about gender & sexuality often reinforce rape culture. Harmful stereotypes suggest who is "available" or "deserving" of respect, and who is not.

- **Oversexualization:** Girls & women of color, LGBTQIA+ youth, and people with disabilities are often portrayed as hypersexual, always available, or targets of sexual abuse.
- **Intersections of oppression:** Racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism combine to put certain groups, especially Indigenous and Black girls, and transgender youth, at the highest risk of sexual violence.
- **Unequal standards:** Different curfews, stricter rules for girls, or the exclusion of LGBTQ+ experiences in sex education all send the message that some people's safety and dignity matter less than others'.

How Can You Create Culture Change?

Changing culture starts with everyday choices. Here are some powerful ways you can push back against rape culture and build a culture of respect:

- **Broaden your perspective:** Rape culture isn't just one man assaulting one woman. It shows up in many forms — like child marriage, rape as a weapon of war, or "corrective rape" targeting LGBTQIA+ people. Recognizing these realities helps us understand the full scope of the problem.
- **Practice enthusiastic consent:** Consent should be clear, verbal, and enthusiastic. Anything less is not consent.
- **Challenge harmful beliefs (& root causes):** Don't accept ideas that masculinity must be violent or dominant, or that femininity must be weak, passive, or less valued.
- **Redefine gender expectations:** Reject the myth that men have to be sexually aggressive or that women should "play hard to get." Expect and model honesty and respect in relationships.
- **Stop victim blaming:** Survivors are never at fault. Clothing, sobriety, or past experiences don't excuse assault. Responsibility always lies with the perpetrator.
- **Respect privacy:** Never share intimate photos or messages without permission. Make it clear you won't tolerate this from your peers either.
- **Take an intersectional approach:** Rape culture affects everyone, but some groups, like transgender youth, Indigenous and Black girls, and people with disabilities, face especially high risks. Any solution must address these inequities.
- **Believe survivors:** When someone shares their experience, listen with compassion and affirm their truth.
- **Challenge harmful humor:** Don't laugh at rape jokes or "locker room talk." Let others know it's not okay.
- **Be an active bystander:** If you see harassment or assault, step in safely or get help. Silence allows harm to continue.



What is one small action you could take this week that would help shift the culture?

Thank You

Talking about rape culture can feel overwhelming, but keeping these conversations going is an important step toward culture change. When students recognize harmful norms, they can choose healthier alternatives — whether that means challenging a rape joke, practicing enthusiastic consent, speaking up as an active bystander, or simply listening and believing survivors.



We hope this guide was useful for you and helped spark meaningful conversations with your students. Your feedback is invaluable to us. Please take a moment to complete our short survey — and if you used this guide in a classroom setting, we encourage your students to fill it out as well. You can access it directly here: **https://forms.gle/SpZiCHDUkBU5kZcQ9**

To go deeper, we encourage you to explore our other teaching guides that connect closely with this guide:

- ***#KnowB4UNude*** — a non-judgmental guide and PSA about the risks of sexting and image-based harm.
- ***Sexual Assault of Men: Supporting Male Survivors*** — a powerful resource addressing gender, myths, stigma, and strategies for supporting male-identified survivors.

We also encourage you and your students to stay engaged with SafeBAE and continue building safer, more respectful school communities. Here are a few next steps you can take:

- **Become a Certified Peer Educator**
- **Start a SafeBAE Club Chapter**
- **Bring Our Programs to Your School**

Thank you for your commitment to empowering youth, supporting survivors, and creating a culture of consent.

SAFEBAE
BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

@Copyright September 2025