Scenarios

Before beginning this activity, be aware that the scenarios outline various kinds of harm, and while discomfort is common and necessary here, there is a chance they may elicit trauma responses if people have previous experiences of violence. Details are included to notice where and how victim/survivors resist violence and to notice where decisions were made to ignore (or respect) personal boundaries, body language and any other efforts to resist violence or otherwise indicate a “no.” Please know you can opt out, move on to the next scenario, take breaks, and connect with support people or services.

# Scenario 1

Rohan has just been hired and is eating his lunch in the staff room alone. His new boss, Brad, walks into the room and stands close to him. Rohan nudges his chair slightly further away. “Hey, great to have you on the team!” Brad exclaims. He sits down beside Rohan and pulls his own chair closer. Rohan scoots his chair backwards. During Rohan’s department orientation, Brad disclosed that he was gay and recently single. Rohan is also gay and hesitantly disclosed his own sexual orientation in response.

“What a weekend!” Brad continues, “I tried out a new dating app and I really nailed it, if you know what I mean.” He winks at Rohan, who nods his head and looks down at his sandwich. Brad shares a sexually explicit story about the man he had a date with on the weekend. Rohan rarely looks at Brad while he’s talking, but occasionally offers a small smile as Brad carries on. Brad asks Rohan if there were any dating apps “back in his country” and remarks that Rohan should really consider getting online to date. Rohan says nothing. Another colleague walks into the room. “Hey, maybe we’ll end up going on a date, eh?!” Brad laughs and walks out of the room.

# Scenario 2

It’s the beginning of the semester and Matt and Eva have been assigned to work together. Matt shares that he just started on the lacrosse team. Eva shares that she arrived from Brazil two weeks earlier and is eager to gain more English speaking skills. At the end of class, Matt asks Eva if she would like to go for a beer. Eva declines. For the next several weeks, Matt repeatedly asks Eva to hang out, offering to help her with her English skills over a beer or dinner. She continues to decline, citing tiredness and other obligations she has. Matt begins to show up other places on campus that Eva spends time, including her favorite coffee shop, a specific section of the library, and her usual bus stop. They often make eye contact, but Eva has stopped responding to his smiles. He tries to engage her in conversation, but she usually keeps her head phones in. Eventually, he approaches her one night at the bus stop when no one else is around. He asks her to go for a drink again and asks why she keeps playing hard to get. He seems angry. Eva says nothing, but turns and quickly walks away from the bus stop. He sends her several messages on Facebook, pleading for her forgiveness. She does not respond to any of them. Eva contacts her instructor to ask to switch partners and ends up sharing what has been happening.

# Scenario 3

Will and Issa live in residence and have been dating for a few weeks. Issa brings Will back to her dorm room for the first time. Will brings a bottle of gin and a few shot glasses. Issa expresses her preference for mixed drinks, and so they have a few glasses while they watch a movie in bed on her laptop. Issa begins yawning and talking about how the alcohol hit her really hard. Will laughs and calls her a lightweight. He pours two shots for them. Issa decines and says she needs to get up early for class. Will says that he’ll go if she takes the shot of gin. Issa reluctantly takes the shot. Will leans in to put his mouth on hers and she laughs and pulls away. She shifts backwards to reach for the light switch and Will begins trying to pull her shirt up, saying he thought Netflix and Chill is what she wanted. Issa pushes at his chest, saying “Hey” progressively louder until she is shouting. Will shouts “Hey!” back and Issa freezes. Issa’s roommate knocks on the door and they both quickly sit up.

# Scenario 4

Julia just moved to a new department. Her co-worker, Brandon, is friendly and is training her on her new job duties. After a few days, when no one else is around, Brandon comes over to chat. He talks about going to a strip club the night before, then laughingly apologizes and says “Jeez, you better not tell HR about that!” Julia is surprised that Brandon would bring up such a topic in the workplace and says nothing in response. Later that day Brandon needs help with a jammed photocopier. Julia kneels down to look inside the machine and sees the piece of paper right away. She stands up and hands it to him. With a chuckle, Brandon says, “Too bad you weren’t on your knees for longer.” When Julia gives him a look of uncomfortable disapproval, Brandon insists he was kidding and it was just a joke.

# Scenario 5

Alex is in the supply room gathering material for a project. They quietly overhear Luke and Devon talking about how they expected all the women in the program to be weird and unattractive. Devon comments that he thought he’d have to get out and meet some “do-able” women elsewhere once in a while. Luke agreed then said he was surprised that there are quite a few girls that were easy on the eyes. Devon nodded, adding in, “Jen looks like she would be into some kinky stuff. I would.” They both laugh and walk past Alex on their way out. Alex mutters “not cool” under their breath. Luke laughs and says “whoops, we didn’t know you were there, good thing you’re just like one of the guys, right?”

# Scenario 6

Becca is grabbing drinks with a group of male colleagues after a day of professional development. After a few drinks, Aaron starts talking about a date he had on the weekend. He talks about how he could tell his date was easy and that she would put out on the first date. He says he didn’t blame her based on what a stud he is and signals to his crotch. A few other men chime in about their own sexual encounters on first dates, joking about who can satisfy a woman best. Becca remains silent and pretends to be distracted by her phone. Aaron turns to Becca and asks her “Would you have sex on the first date?” Becca responds, “Not with you” and gives him the middle finger. Aaron calls her a bitch, and shifts the conversation back to the training earlier that day.

# Scenario 7

Chantale is in her second month in a new department. She has gone out for drinks with colleagues occasionally after work in the past and has had a good time. Dom walks up to her one afternoon and asks her if she wants to “come out with me and the guys” that evening. Chantale explains she cannot tonight because she has a project due first thing tomorrow morning. Dom laughs and insists she join him. “Come on, don’t play hard to get, we know your people like a good party” and he leers at her suggestively. Chantale shifts uncomfortably in her chair and asks him what he means by “your people.” Dom responds with “You know, you Native chicks! We know you're up for a good time, not a long time!” and laughs loudly. Leaning over he whispers, “We can play a private game of cowboys and Indians, hey? I can show you how we conquered your people back in the day.” Chantale stands up from her desk and quickly excuses herself saying she has a meeting with the manager and walks away.

# Scenario 8

Chris is in his third year of business at university. Chris started the semester off by formally changing his name and pronouns with the admin office and with his class instructors and peers. Chris identifies as a trans man, and with his legal name change recently being approved he felt now was a good time to share with his peers. After class one day, two of his classmates approach him, Susan and Rebecca. They are smiling and giggling as they approach him, whispering quietly to each other. Rebecca asks Chris, “So, you’re a guy now, right?” Chris takes a deep breath and explains, “Yes, but technically I have always been a man. I have just now changed my name to reflect my identity properly.” Rebecca and Susan both laugh again, Susan leans close to Chris, brushing her hand across his chest, and says, “But, are you actually a man now?” Chris is very uncomfortable and tries to take a step backwards to create some space between him and Susan and Rebecca. “I do not know what you mean by that,” Chris states. Rebecca is now standing right at his shoulder, her hand brushes down his chest towards his pants .“You know, are you a guy…down there?” She looks at Susan and they both laugh again. Chris feels his face flush and he turns and leaves the room quickly, hearing Susan and Rebecca giggling and talking behind him as he leaves.

# Scenario 9

Sharan and Vijay are in the same social circle where everyone knows each other and everyone is either a current or former international student. Everyone seems comfortable knowing that they share commonalities and some share familial connections back home. There is a sense of safety and security and some are in romantic relationships with one another. Sharan also feels cared for and protected because living here alone is scary and the larger community is tight and not welcoming. Sharan and Vijay are dating and sexually active. She is careful and does not want anyone to know, fearing that her family back home could find out and that would mean big trouble.

Sharan has been feeling anxious lately. Vijay can be mean sometimes if he doesn’t get his way especially when it comes to sex. He threatens to stop taking care of her, refuses to pick her up after work and take her grocery shopping. Today, Sharan resisted the pressure and physical advances by pushing him back and looking away. He said that she doesn’t appreciate all he has done for her and threatened to tell everyone that she was having sex with other guys. She knows some of the other girls are in relationships and was thinking about talking to them, but feels overwhelmed, embarrassed and ashamed. Sharan does not want to make him angrier, and is already noticing the other guys staring at her, snickering and commenting to each other. Sharan feels that it will be simpler to apologize and “make-up” rather than experience the fall-out.

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