

Not With Me!

Information regarding sexual abuse toward young people

Sexual abuse rarely occurs during a student's exchange year. However, we wish to inform you about how to recognize sexual abuse so you do not become a victim.

While on exchange, it can be hard to understand different family and cultural behaviors. And while sharing affection is one of the nicest things in the world, it is possible that someone will show you affection that makes you uncomfortable.

If you feel uncomfortable due to attention you're receiving, physical or otherwise, tell that person to stop! If the behavior doesn't stop you do not have to tolerate it! Tell your United Studies representative, the United Studies Director of Student Affairs or the United Studies National office staff what you are feeling. It is never too late to let someone know.

Your body belongs to you!

- **Your body is your business!!**
You have the right to determine your body's boundaries.
- **Trust your feelings.**
You should take your feelings seriously! Listen to your intuition and follow your best judgment.
- **You have the right to say NO!**
It is always OK to say NO.
- **Keeping secrets—good or bad?**
You decide whether to share or keep secrets. It is never wrong to tell a trusted adult if you are feeling uncomfortable.
- **Talk about things and ask for help!**
You decide when and with whom to talk about sexual misconduct that you have experienced. There is always an adult at United Studies who can help you. You may also choose to talk with a teacher, school counselor, friend or a friend's parent.
- **It's not your fault!**
The adult or abuser is the one responsible. It is never your fault.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse can include different kinds of activities such as:

- Becoming the object of suggestive looks or comments;
- Being made to kiss someone;
- Touching private parts of the body;
- Being made to engage in unwanted sex or sexual acts;
- Being made to look at pornographic videos or magazines;
- Other behaviors that make you uncomfortable and continue after you've asked that they stop.

Perpetrator Strategies

- **Intensifying the relationship:** The relationship is intensified in order to establish a supposed equality between the perpetrator and the victim. For example the perpetrator may begin by sharing confidences or marriage problems, allowing the victim to break United Studies or family rules or becoming jealous of other relationships.
- **Isolation:** Friendship with other young people or contact with United Studies and the student's natural family is prevented in order to deliberately establish isolation.
- **Seduction:** Emotional devotion, tenderness, gift-giving, recognition or simulated love could be fostered or intensified.
- **Ignoring the victim's resistance:** The perpetrator's inner-conflict is ignored, thus your clear feelings of discomfort may go disregarded.
- **Keeping the victim silent:** The intense relationship is used to impose a sense of responsibility and guilt on the victim in order to keep him or her quiet. This can happen through threats to report rule breaking or to get the student sent home early. You should not fear the consequences of talking with an adult about your discomfort.

For Help in the US Call 1-800-869-8585

Where to find help.

In the United States:

You and your parents can call a 24-hour toll free line to reach a United Studies support staff member by dialing 1-800-869-8585.

Important:

In the United States it is mandatory to report sexual abuse to the authorities. This means that if a person finds out about an act of sexual abuse, he/she is liable if it is not reported.

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