

# AUDRIE & DAISY

## AUDRIE & DAISY DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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## Introduction

If you're like most people who have seen *Audrie & Daisy*, the true stories of sexual assault in high school may have taken you by surprise. The casual cruelty shown to Audrie Pott and Daisy Coleman may make you want to look the other way.

Please don't.

While sexual violence against young women is real, we believe *Audrie & Daisy* can transform lives and behavior, and that change can take place during conversations between parents and children around the dinner table, at a baseball game or on the morning drive to school. We hope that the film will inspire parents everywhere to have challenging conversations with your children.

If you can use the conversation tips and suggestions in this guide to motivate just one young person to stand up to bullying or sexual harassment, to put an end to malicious texts or social media, you may save or change a life.

Here are three questions just to get the ball rolling with your children:

1. What did you think of the film?
2. Does this kind of online harassment and/or sexual violence take place at your school?
3. If you or a friend were to experience a sexual assault, or get bullied by classmates, who would you reach out to for help?

This Discussion Guide for Parents and adult allies is intended to translate the power of this film into informed action and prevention. It examines the mosaic of decisions and experiences, both on and off line, where Audrie's and Daisy's stories take place, revealing the many spheres of influence where, together, we can intervene and make positive change.

We hope this guide will inspire dialogue, motivate action and provide support for survivors, their friends and families, and the loved ones of those, like Audrie, who are no longer with us.

## Letter from the filmmakers:

Dear Friend,

We have been making documentary films for over 20 years and never has a film subject struck us quite as personally as with *Audrie & Daisy*. As parents of teenagers ourselves, we were deeply troubled by the frequency of sexual assaults in high schools across the country. But, even more shocking and new to us were the pictures and videos posted online - almost as trophies - by teens that have committed and witnessed these crimes. The online forum for sharing these images and comments has become the new public square of shame for our adolescents.

During the making of *Audrie & Daisy*, we grew close to the families that participated in the film and were continually inspired by their resilience. We are grateful to now launch the film as a Netflix Original documentary. We are also excited that the film will be accompanied by a robust educational and outreach campaign. Talking to survivors, their families, and their communities, we found hope amid the disturbing epidemic of sexual violence. We view the Discussion Guide for *Audrie & Daisy* as a cornerstone of the campaign that engages parents, educators and communities who want to create conversation around this issue and explore some potential paths towards change. This kind of education amongst parents and educators will allow for a more compassionate communication with children and teens.

When we began to screen the film, we witnessed first-hand the powerful, illuminating discussions that take place when teenagers, families, and communities see *Audrie & Daisy*. It is because of the stories of Audrie and Daisy and the Pott and Coleman families that we ourselves have been able to have open, honest conversations with our own children about these difficult-to-broach subjects. We view *Audrie & Daisy* as an opportunity to address these complex issues in a refreshingly concrete manner. It is in this spirit that we offer the film and educational material to teachers, parents, and communities.

Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk

## Message from Esta Soler, Founder of Futures Without Violence

When I first started working in the field of violence against women there were no cell phones, no Internet or social media. In fact, we barely had language such as “domestic violence,” “sexual assault,” or “rape” to describe the violations that millions of women and children were experiencing. As my good friend Gloria Steinem says, “Back then we just called it “life.”

Thirty-five years on the front lines have shown that change is not only possible, it’s happening. Thanks to the efforts of so many women and men working together, we have seen domestic violence decline by 67 percent in the United States.

But the stories of Audrie Pott and Daisy Coleman demand that we do more for our children and teenagers. Too many lives continue to be diminished by sexual and physical violence. Too many of our daughters and sons are suffering from social media bullying and shaming.

As parents and adult allies who care about children, it is easy to get overwhelmed by the increasingly complicated youth landscape where our children are bombarded with all kinds of mixed messages about masculinity, sex and violence. Add to it the role that technology often plays in facilitating dangerous attitudes and behavior, and we are left not knowing where or how to begin a conversation with our kids.

This is where we come in. This Discussion Guide for Parents is filled with critical information, scenarios, conversation starters and practical resources to help you engage in courageous discussions with your children—now, and in the future.

Thank you for standing with us to create a future that is safe, just, and healthy for us all.

With respect,



Esta Soler  
Founder and President,  
Futures Without Violence

## WATCHING AUDRIE & DAISY

*“[Audrie] was so large in life, she was a great athlete, great musician, good student, good kid. And then she was gone...We had to do something. We are giving a voice to our daughter, we have to so nobody else dies.”*  
—Larry Pott

*Audrie & Daisy* is a powerful testament to the young women portrayed, but it inevitably evokes difficult emotions for the viewer. For many survivors, victims and their families, the film may trigger memories of past experiences. For parents, teens, educators and others, it may cause fear and concern and feelings of helplessness. Shame, anger, denial, and blame—all are emotions that can make it hard to talk about the trauma of sexual assault and the culture that perpetuates it. These same emotions can also silence survivors.

The film can be challenging to watch because it vividly brings the reality of high school sexual assault into our classrooms and homes. Victims and survivors like Audrie, Daisy, Delaney, Ella, and Jada, and perpetrators like John\_B and John\_R live in our communities. They go to our children’s schools, play on the same sports teams and are in their social media networks. In *Audrie & Daisy*, they share their experiences, highlighting the urgent need to better protect our children.

*Audrie & Daisy* compels us to be bold, to follow the lead of courageous victims and survivors—the young women and men, their families and loved ones—who, by speaking out in the film and elsewhere, are instigating a national conversation to bring the longstanding culture of sexual assault from the hidden corners into the light

*“I found my voice when I decided to show my face in my first interview.”*

—Jada Smith

*“Finally after being misunderstood for years and going through so much pain and absolutely hating myself, I decided that if no one is going to talk about it, I will.”*

—Ella Farion

Though the *Audrie & Daisy* film does not represent stories of childhood sexual abuse, research shows that children, both boys and girls, who experience sexual trauma in childhood are much more likely to be victimized again later in life, and to experience other harmful long-term physical and psychological effects, including becoming perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>

If you are in need of immediate support or need help understanding how to best help a friend or someone close to you, text, chat or call RAINN’s anonymous 24/7 Sexual Assault hotline services to get information: 1-866-656-4673, or visit <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

If you or someone you love is in crisis, you can call or chat with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. They are available 24/7: 1-800-273-8255, or visit <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>.

For information tailored for teens on dating violence, relationship abuse, stalking, safety planning and support: visit [LoveIsRespect.org](http://LoveIsRespect.org); Text: love is to 22522 or call 1-866-331-9474. Additional services and resources are listed at the end of this guide.

## THE FACTS ABOUT TEENS

Although the stories we see in the film focus on Audrie Pott and Daisy Coleman, two young white women from financially comfortable families, we know that sexual assault can and does happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, class, gender identity, physical ability or sexual orientation. As a companion to *Audrie & Daisy*, this guide is focused on the experiences of victims and survivors in high school, and the cyberbullying and harassment that exacerbates the trauma and shame of survivors.

*Young people 12 to 19 years old experience the highest rates of rape and sexual violence in the United States. 68 percent of sexual assaults are never reported to the police, and 98 percent of perpetrators will never spend a day in prison.*<sup>2</sup>

- Approximately one in three adolescent girls and boys in the U.S. are victims of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a **dating partner**.<sup>3</sup>
- 60 percent of all middle and high school students are **sexually harassed** each year.<sup>4</sup>
- Nearly 30 percent of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth experience dating violence in high school,<sup>5</sup> and the rates are higher for their transgender peers, especially those of color.<sup>6</sup>

In this climate of sexual violence, social media is intricately woven into teens' lives:

- 92 percent of Americans age 13-17 are online for social media at least once a day.<sup>7</sup>
- 42 percent of teens 13-18 years old said their parents know nothing or very little about what they do online.<sup>8</sup>
- 95 percent of teens report witnessing cruelty or bullying online, and 21 percent joined in when they saw it.<sup>9</sup>

## RECOGNIZING A CULTURE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

It's hard to understand the "culture" of anything because culture is almost like the air we breathe. It's not something you can see or touch. It's a collective understanding of beliefs and behaviors, shared by a society.

*Audrie & Daisy* holds up a mirror to our culture, giving us the opportunity to glimpse it as an outsider might. We need this view, because to many teenagers sexual harassment and violence seem almost inevitable. In a 2014 study of teen survivors of sexual violence, the respondents said they didn't report their abuse because they thought what happened was normal.<sup>9</sup> John\_R was not a mysterious stranger in a dark alley. He was a kid whom Audrie knew and considered a friend. Yet, he wasn't. John\_R's actions reflect his understanding of a pervasive culture that condones and normalizes violence against women.

In the film, we see:

**Girls who, after being violated, are dismissed, shamed, threatened, and violently harassed.**

The responsibility for the assaults are assigned not to the perpetrators but to victims who "should have known better," or dressed differently or had less to drink. This phenomenon is known as victim blaming.

**Boys who assume that sex is their due and their right, regardless of the wishes or the sobriety of the girls they assaulted.**

In advertisements, music videos, movies and pornography, men are often portrayed as aggressors. Images of macho men are so common they almost seem like background noise. Yet it's still uncomfortable and even taboo in many communities to talk openly about healthy relationships, sex and consent.

## The vast power of social media to amplify, blame, and re-traumatize survivors.

Social media is increasingly woven into the fabric of our daily lives and bullying and harassment online have real-life and long-term consequences.

We can see that the stories of Daisy and Audrie are not isolated incidents, but the results of a cultural context that we have the power to see and change. In this guide, we will look at victim blaming, unhealthy notions of masculinity and misuse of social media, and offer tools and advice for how to address them.

## START BY BELIEVING AND SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

In *Audrie & Daisy*, we see the story of Daisy’s assault and the effect it had in the small town where she lived. We get to know her and her family, and hear the context of her story. It’s easy for us to care about her, believe her and want justice and healing for her.

However, some of the community responses were quite different:

*“But what did she expect to happen at 1 AM in the morning after sneaking out? There are telltale signs of this girl actually lying.”*  
—Fox News commentator

*“One of the real fatal flaws of our society is that it’s always, it’s always the boys. And it’s not always the boys. The girls have, girls have as much culpability in this world as boys do.”*  
—Sheriff Darren White

These prevailing and dangerous attitudes stem from the myth that victims “deserve their assault,” for what they wore or had to drink, and that “boys will be boys” without the capacity to control their desires. For survivors, these skeptical or disbelieving responses can seem like another attack.

*“That’s the biggest problem— schools, parents, teachers —when survivors come to you, don’t let your first reaction be ‘were you drinking?’ Your first reaction when you hear someone has cancer isn’t ‘were you smoking?’ The first words I heard when I told my best friend were, ‘God I can’t believe you’re going down this path.’ That changed my life, made me feel so alone, traumatized. If she had believed me, I might have reported it right then”*  
—Delaney Henderson

In *Audrie & Daisy*, we see the tragic consequences of what happens when victims of sexual assault feel shamed for what happened to them.

*“We know from what (Audrie) said that in the process of investigating her own crime she felt that her reputation was ruined forever. She didn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel.”*  
—Sheila Pott

How we respond to a survivor matters a great deal. Survivors need a circle of unquestioning, nonjudgmental support around them to begin to heal.

In *Audrie & Daisy*, we are forced to confront the reality of the implications of sexual assault, cyber bullying and attempted and completed suicide. While difficult to discuss, the film creates a critical platform for raising awareness about the risks of suicide, warning signs, and ways in which we can offer potentially life-saving support.

Some survivors contemplate suicide and while many do not complete it, it is a real and terrifying experience for them and their families. Parents and other loved ones of teens who commit suicide struggle with how it could have this been prevented.



From Audrie's Facebook Chat with John R.:

"I now have a reputation I can never get rid of.  
The whole school knows.

My life is over."

Suicide warning signs must always be taken seriously. The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), [The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#), and [The Trevor Project](#) offer resources for information, support, and crisis intervention.

With both Daisy and Audrie, we saw how shame and blame can spiral out of control and do real and possibly irrevocable damage.

*"You begin to believe that all these bad things they're saying about you are actually true. So your image of yourself completely changes and you kind of become a shell of yourself.*

*You almost see that, you know, doing away with yourself is the only way to fix things, which isn't the truth at all. But it's all you can truly see when you're sitting in a dark corner and you're not looking around at the light."*  
—Daisy Coleman

**When we stand with survivors, let them know it's not their fault, that they have options, they can begin to move through the shock and trauma to think more clearly about what to do next.** Giving victims and survivors a safe space to contemplate their options begins a healing process of regaining power after theirs has been taken away.

*"I got a call from my friend who had just learned her daughter was sexually assaulted. She kept asking me what to do...I told her as hard as it was, she needed to sit with it, explain her options to her and let her daughter lead. She needed to keep a watchful eye but not take full control." I helped to stabilize her so she could support her daughter."*  
—Lonna Davis, Futures Without Violence

The more people in a survivor's life who can practice the principles demonstrated in the scenario below, the better chance a survivor will have to recover and thrive.

**Scenario:**

Your sister calls you and says her 16-year-old daughter was sexually assaulted by a boy at a party. Your sister knew that your niece was hooking up with boys but you were shocked to hear this had happened. Your sister was downplaying it a little, saying things like, "It couldn't have been that bad." "Maybe she doesn't quite remember it right since they were all drinking," and "Maybe what happened wasn't really sexual assault."

**Response:** (Simple guidelines to support a survivor):

**Believe them:** Let them know that you trust their story.

*Suggested Response: "I'm so sorry this happened!"*

**Acknowledge and validate:** Give them time to experience the emotions (anger, sadness, fear, etc.) and create space for them as they arise.

*Suggested Response: "That's awful. She must be so upset.*

*I'm here for you and her."*

**Check your assumptions:** Confront your own notions about sexual orientation, gender, race, culture, underage drinking, etc. and how those are influencing your response. Focus on the survivor's perspectives and perceptions.

*Suggested Response: "I know binge drinking isn't good for anyone, but clearly she is saying she felt violated. Let's not jump to judgment."*

**It's not the victim's fault:** Assure them it is not their fault. State it clearly and repeatedly, over and over again.

*Suggested Response: "No matter what the situation is, it's never OK to assault or rape anyone."*

**Offer Assistance:** Ask what type of support would be most helpful; don't make false promises, such as "we'll fix this", or "we'll get him"

*Suggested Response: "What do you need from me? How can I help?"*

**Offer options:** Share some options, but give them the power to decide who to tell and what to do next. Statements like, "I'm calling your parents/the cops/the school" may make the survivor feel more scared and even less in control.

*Suggested Response: "Can I help find a crisis counselor? Have you thought about taking her to the hospital, or whether she wants to report it?"*

**Keep the confidence:** With the exception of those who are mandatory reporters, keep their story in total confidence.

*Suggested Response: "Does she know you are telling me? I don't want her to feel like the whole family knows, but I want to offer her support."*

There is no perfect response, but following these principles will allow the survivor to keep control of what happens next and set them on a path of healing. Thinking this question through will help you support a survivor directly or through another person. Take a second and think about how you would apply these principles if you learned someone dear to you had been sexually assaulted.

#### Reflection questions:

- How will I respond if someone shares with me they were sexually assaulted?
- What are the emotions I imagine might come up for me if my child is assaulted?
- What support resources are available in my community?

As we saw in *Audrie & Daisy*, the ripple effects of sexual violence touch many people. So even if you never actually hear a direct disclosure of sexual assault, it is likely that someone you know is dealing with this.

Activity: Write down what words you might choose if someone you care about shared their assault with you

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MAN?

We're all swamped with influences from popular culture— friends, the neighborhood, TV, social media, music and more. And, increasingly, young people learn about sex and sexual relationships from social media and internet pornography.<sup>10</sup> They hear, read and see all kinds of messages that to “be a man” is to be tough and in control. That men are more valuable than women. That sex is free of emotional attachment and should be readily available to them. **Most boys also receive very few positive messages about how to feel and express their emotions or how to have healthy relationships or positive values around sex, sexuality and consent.**

There is as much to say about the limits society's expectations put on women and transgender people, and people of different races. The [Representation Project](#), [See Jane](#), [TransEquality](#), [Black Women's Blueprint](#), and others provide resources for learning more about those.

**Most men do not commit acts of violence against women.** But in this guide we are focusing on men and boys because they perpetrate the majority of sexual violence in our society.<sup>11</sup> The pervasive idea that “boys will be boys” creates the expectation, and therefore the excuse, for some boys and men to act in destructive, impulsive and aggressive ways.

*“(Audrie) passed out and we colored half her face black and colored all over her body, like her boobs. And it said \*\*\*\*, it said \*\*\*\* was here. And then her pants, by her vagina, it said \*\*\*\* was here. And it said ‘harder’ on her leg, and had an arrow to her vagina. And on her back it said ‘anal’ and had an arrow down to her ass, and there was just, there was just sharpie everywhere. Everywhere. It was hilarious. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. My friend said, “So technically you stripped her and drew everywhere?” **Uh, I said, not, not just me, all the guys.**”*  
—John\_R in *Audrie & Daisy*

In the film, Daisy's brother Charlie, feels deeply betrayed that it was his teammate who assaulted his sister. Parents, teachers and other trusted adults can start unpacking twisted gender messages from a very young age whenever the opportunity arises. Charlie did that with his little league team when he started coaching baseball:

*“I don't think I ever thought about teaching them greater life lessons until I heard a couple boys making comments about a girl. And I said, all right, we're having a powwow now, and I circled everybody up. And I was like, here's the thing guys, I'm here to teach you baseball. But this isn't the kind of stuff I accept. This isn't what I'm about. If it's what you're about, that's fine, but that's not what we are going to be about. And you're more than welcome to take yourself out of here. After that one incident something clicked...”*  
—Charlie Coleman

As you and the young people in your life interact with the world, watch for those signals that dictate how gender “should be,” and work through them together.

## PROMOTE HEALTHY MASCULINITY

All young people need trusted adults to advise and model how to behave towards others and become themselves, whoever they are. All young people in your life are constantly listening to and watching adults to figure out how they will act, or whether they will accept certain behaviors. That said, boys are most often directly impacted by definitions and stereotypes of manhood. So let's teach them early and often that there is no place for abuse and violence in any relationship.

### Reflection Questions:

What does healthy masculinity mean to you?

How does your own family background and culture influence the way you understand what it means to be a man?

How do you and the other men in your children's lives model healthy masculinity for your sons and other boys?

### Activity:

Make a list of the attributes of a healthy man.

Compare this list to the stereotype of manhood that media and society often show. What are the differences and similarities?

Healthy masculinity may mean different things to different people, but it should always include treating everyone with respect.

### Elementary School Scenario:

Your son comes home from elementary school having heard jokes about one of the girls in the class who is developing early, and repeats the joke to you. What do you say?

### Response:

- Can you explain to me what that joke means? (This can help you get an idea of your child's understanding of what he heard.)
- How do you think that joke made her feel?
- I would imagine she's feeling kind of anxious about her body changing. How would you feel if your friends made jokes about your body?

### High School Scenario:

Your daughter tells you there is a boy whom she texts with sometimes who now wants to take her to the dance. She doesn't want to go. When you press her about why not, she says he's not cool—he's soft, not tough like the other boys.

### Response:

- What are the qualities you look for in a romantic partner? What is important about each one?
- What do you want your relationships to feel like?
- What do you mean when you say "tough boys?"
- What is good about being tough?

In conversations like this, your kids might roll their eyes at you. But saying even a little something plants the seeds in their minds to think critically about the world around them. Sharing your own answers to the questions you ask helps them learn your values and beliefs. Those matter, especially when children navigate the mixed messages coming at them from so many other directions.

Coaches are in a unique position to influence boys and young men. Futures Without Violence's [Coaching Boys Into Men](#) program features a toolkit for coaches to use, making what is often a men's-only space a place to learn about and practice respecting and honoring women. The toolkit includes an easy-to-use playbook for coaches that includes a beginning-of-the-season script, a team pledge against violence, examples of teachable moments, and ideas for young men about how to avoid 'staying on the sidelines' when they see a teammate doing something against the pledge, but rather 'taking the field' for better behavior.

**Scenario:**

During a time out at practice, Jennifer, a freshman on the tennis team, is walking alone across the gym floor toward the east entrance. She's known to the guys to be attractive. While you're preparing to show your players a video on teamwork, some of your boys notice Jennifer and start howling, whistling and making inappropriate comments. You notice that she is uncomfortable and perhaps a little scared, but she holds her head up and continues through the gym."<sup>12</sup>

**Response:**

- Hey guys, catcalling isn't funny; it's disrespectful and cowardly.
  - Check out [this perspective](#) on how catcalling feels to women.
- I don't think any woman is asking for harassment, no matter what she's wearing.
- Let's treat every woman as we would want our sisters treated.

## WHAT IF MY CHILD IS ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ASSAULT?

If you google "what if my child commits sexual assault?" all you will find is information on falsely accused students and legal strategies. While this is important for those two to eight percent of parents whose child is falsely accused, the vast majority of parents will have to cope with the painful reality that their child is guilty.

Your family may need professional support to sort throughout the psychological and legal repercussions. Certainly, you can help your child learn from the situation so it never happens again, regardless of the outcome of the case. It would be important to understand why this happened and what is needed to avoid another experience down the road.

From a legal standpoint, it's important to communicate with your child that they cannot have any contact with the victim. They may experience the desire to try and explain or work it out, or to retaliate through harassment, threats or intimidation. These responses can further implicate your child and re-traumatize the survivor.

(Please note that retaliation includes harassment, threats, intimidation and reprisals not only against the alleged victim, but also against his/her friends and acquaintances. It also includes encouraging friends to retaliate or retaliating anonymously).

## CREATE A RESPECTFUL ONLINE CULTURE

*“You already have this wound just ripped clean open. And you’re vulnerable and you’re going through a really hard time. And to have all these people attacking you (online) on top of it, it almost makes the bullying seem more extreme.”*  
—Daisy Coleman

Social media is a central part of young people’s lives, friendships and relationships. It can provide a sense of community, connection and voice. Yet it can also be used to perpetuate the culture of sexual violence. The scope and nature of the retaliation against Daisy in the film is difficult to imagine. Policy and prevention organizations use the word “cyberbullying” to describe it, but that term may not capture the cruel and relentless harassment and abuse she and other survivors have faced.

- 92 percent of Americans age 13-17 are online for social media at least once a day, and 56 percent are on several times per day.<sup>13</sup>
- 48 percent of middle and high schoolers report that they have experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment online.<sup>14</sup>

*“The bullying on social media followed me everywhere, at home, at the pool, at school, it never stopped. Kids were sitting in class posting at me. I felt like the whole world hated me.”*  
—Delaney Henderson

When Daisy spoke out, her life was irrevocably changed. As her peers took to social media in tirades of anger, she struggled to keep perspective.

*“You begin to believe that all these bad things they’re saying about you are actually true. So your image of yourself completely changes and you kind of become a shell of yourself.”*  
—Daisy Coleman

*Daisy is lucky she moved schools. #Jordanandmattarefree*

*#ihatedaisy*

*#daisyisaliar*

*#matt1daisy0*

*She admitted she offered sexual favors for booze...*

*She is equally to blame in this case*

*We can see how the Coleman’s like having charges ruining their lives now that they failed and #Jordanandmattarefree*

Screenshots and re-tweets and re-posts can make it nearly impossible to erase the history of a photo, video or conversation. For victims and survivors, that digital history may follow them for the rest of their lives. Even as they work through the trauma of the event within their circle of supporters, the online aftermath can continue. The hurt of being blamed and shamed goes on.

## SUPPORT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:

Throughout *Audrie & Daisy*, we also see how social media can also be a transformative tool for connection and change. It can help survivors connect with each other, realize that they are not alone, and see that their voices have power.

The survivors we meet in the film connected with one another through social media, and eventually formed [Safe Bae](#), an organization dedicated to preventing assault and connecting high school survivors.

*“Finally meeting Daisy, it was a reassurance that I am not alone.”*

-Delaney Henderson in *Audrie & Daisy*

*Audrie & Daisy* highlights the critical need to educate young people and the trusted adults around them about the power of social media tools to prevent sexual violence and create healthy online communities.

For example, Circle of 6 is an app that helps create healthy communities by encouraging young people to identify six friends and/or trusted adults they can reach at a touch of a button to give their location and ask for help. The act of downloading the app itself is an opportunity to discuss how to choose your six supports, and to have a talk about relationships, trust and planning for safety in potentially risky situations.

When you introduce the app to a teen in your life, you might ask:

- Who are the people in your life you trust the most?
- How do you communicate with one another about where you are going and who you will be with?
- What is your plan for how to watch out for each other when you attend parties or other events?

## NAVIGATE CYBERBULLYING, ONLINE HARASSMENT AND ABUSE:

For parents, understanding our kids' online world is a challenge. It's relatively new to us and it's ever-changing. It's tempting to support them by flat-out spying on their every online move. But joining all the same networks and following every account is no answer. You can tell them that even though you may not understand all that happens online, you still care about what happens to them. The goal is to keep your kids talking to you and to ensure that no matter what, you will help them, even when they make a mistake.

Here are some conversation starters for the young people in your life:

- Which social media platforms do you use?
- Who do you interact with most online?
- Have you seen anything like the harassment that happened to Audrie or Daisy?
- How do you respond when you see people being mean to each other online?
- Has anyone ever threatened to humiliate you online? How did you respond?

One of the most important things a parent can do is help a young person anticipate what may happen to them if they are bullied or shamed on social media, and that you have their back.

If a young person in your life is seeing or experiencing bullying or harassment online, there are tools and resources to help you navigate that. [StopBullying.gov](#) is a website from the U.S. government with tips and resources for how to report cyberbullying to web providers, schools and the police. For example, the steps they recommend to take immediately when bullying happens include:

- Make sure a parent or trusted adult knows.
- Change your password if you have ever shared it with others.
- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying.

Some additional options to consider:

- Delete your online presence altogether.
- Take a step away from social media for a while.
- Create a new account under a false name to be shared only with trusted friends.

Other resources, like [ihollaback.org](http://ihollaback.org) are creating online movements and advocacy to raise awareness and garner community support for targets of cyberbullying, including specific guides for reporting on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, and Reddit.

### **Reflection Questions:**

How much do you know about how the young people in your life are connecting online?  
How would you respond if your child or friend was getting bullied and harassed online?

## **ALL ABOUT SEXTING**

In *Audrie & Daisy*, social media is not the only form of pressure young people face. Audrie's friend Amanda describes the pressure she and other young women got in middle school to share naked pictures of themselves:

*“They were pretty persistent, the boys in middle school. It was very odd. Like even today, I think back and it's like, wow. There was definitely pressure...”*  
—Amanda Le

- **20 percent of teen girls, and 11 percent of tween girls (age 13-16) have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves.**
- **51 percent of teen girls say pressure from a guy is a reason they send sexy messages, and nearly half of all of them know it is common for nude or semi-nude photos to get shared with people other than the intended recipient.**<sup>15</sup>

It will likely be easier to respond to these requests if your son or daughter knows they might come and what you think about them. Futures Without Violence's [ThatsNotCool.com](http://ThatsNotCool.com) provides parents and adult allies with a [toolkit](#) for helping young people navigate online relationships and create healthy online behaviors.

Think of the internet as any other social space for teaching, as you would for table manners or interactions as a birthday party, looking for teachable moments to talk through these issues.



**Son Scenario:**

You are friends with your son on Facebook. You see he has commented on a photo of two girls from his class in their bathing suits, "Too much clothing!" How do you talk to him?

**Daughter Scenario:**

Your daughter leaves her phone on the counter and you notice a text pop up that says, "Hey girl you looked hot today. Text me a nude pic."

**Response:**

- Is that something you would say to those girls in person?
- I am wondering about how that comment might be taken by those girls. Uncomfortable? Embarrassed? What do you think?
- I heard about this web site created by and for high school students called [ThatsNotCool.com](http://ThatsNotCool.com). It features real kids like you, and it's filled with information and fun tools on how to prevent digital abuse and harassment. Check it out.

**Response:**

- I know that lots of kids your age are experimenting with sexting, sending nude pics, etc.
- Is that happening in your school? Are any of your friends doing it? Have you ever been asked for nude pics.
- Has anyone sent you any texts or asked you to do things that made you feel uncomfortable?
- Sometimes folks forget that pics, especially ones that are provocative/sexy, can last forever and can be things that a future college or job might be able to dig up. Your online life is such a vulnerable thing.
- If you are asked by friends, dating/hook up partners, etc. to send nude pics, I want you to consider the following
- How would you feel if you sent pictures and he/she showed his/her friends, or shared them online?
- Since its top of mind, I really want to make sure you have the info for yourself, or for a friend who may need help. Check out [BreaktheCycle.org](http://BreaktheCycle.org) and [That's Not Cool](http://That's Not Cool). Both offer great information for teens about healthy online relationships.

Help your child prepare quick responses that they can have in their back pocket. “If something like this is sent to you and you don’t like it or don’t want it--what might you say?”

Brainstorm possible responses with your child, from something straightforward like, “No, and please don’t ask me again”, to something a little lighter and humorous, like sending an image of a pig with wings.”In both scenarios, ask your kids to consider how long digital images and messages last. Remind them that the pics and messages could be shared and reproduced countless times, and could still exist for their own kids to see.

[Click here](#) to access more conversation starters and talking points for digital safety, like:

- It is never OK for someone to use pressure or threats in a relationship, especially in a sexual situation or to get someone to send a nude or private picture. When you tell someone no, or that you’re feeling uncomfortable, he or she should respect your decision.
- You have the right to make decisions that keep you safe and comfortable and you deserve to be in relationships where your decisions are honored and respected. If you’re feeling uncomfortable, trust your instincts.
- If someone shares a nude or private picture with you, do not pass it on. Spreading private information can be embarrassing, harmful and illegal. Tell an adult immediately.<sup>16</sup>

## ALCOHOL IS NOT AN EXCUSE

Too often, alcohol becomes the scapegoat for sexual assault: “Well, was she drinking?” As we see in *Audrie & Daisy*, alcohol and sexual assault do often go together, but let’s be clear: Alcohol itself does not cause sexual assault. Yes, we need to help teenagers make good decisions about alcohol, but **we cannot accept the myth that sexual violence is a reasonable punishment for the mistake of drinking too much.** The blame for assault always lies with the perpetrator, whether or not alcohol is involved.

An important part of talking about alcohol and its relationship to sexual activity is the issue of consent. **According to federal law, a person cannot give consent for sexual contact if they are impaired by alcohol or any other substance.**<sup>17</sup> This is particularly important for adolescents to understand, as alcohol functions differently in their developing brains than in adults. Learn more about consent in the [Lesson Plans](#).

Alcohol can also be used specifically to facilitate sexual violence. Perpetrators purposefully get someone so drunk that they pass out and can easily be assaulted. This is using alcohol with the intent to harm. This is sometimes called “target rape,” rather than the more common term “date rape,” because of the way alcohol is used with intention to perpetrate assault.<sup>18</sup>

*“We did a blood alcohol level on (Daisy). It came back 134.9. I mean it tells very clearly, that at the time they dropped her in the yard, just based on half-life, she had to be close to comatose. She had to have been close to blood poison level.”*  
—Melinda Coleman

In such a state, there should have been no confusion about whether Daisy could give consent for sex.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What are your family attitudes about alcohol? What guidance do you want to give the young people in your life about alcohol?
- What messages have they heard about the relationship between alcohol and consent?
- How can you help your child stay as safe as possible if he or she does decide to drink?
- How much do you know about the approach other parents in your community take towards alcohol use?

**Scenario:**

You and your son are driving to soccer practice and he mentions that he's glad he's not on the hockey team because there is so much drama. He tells you one of the hockey players was accused of assaulting a girl after the game at a party of one of the cheerleader's house. He said everyone was drunk or "on something."

**Response:**

Why do you think soccer parties are less likely to have this happen?

I worry about how much drinking happens everywhere, not just at parties hosted by certain teams or groups of athletes.

I am curious about your thoughts on the connection between sexual assault and drinking.

Let's be clear, drinking alcohol does not cause someone to sexually assault another person, and it is never an excuse for violence. From my perspective, anyone who has been drinking or using drugs, would have a hard time giving affirmative consent because alcohol compromises your ability to make good decisions.

## SHARE YOUR BELIEFS WITH YOUR KIDS

*"The really tricky thing for parents, your role is supposedly to say don't drink to excess, don't go to parties, don't walk home alone. But that's antithetical to them coming to you and telling you after it happens. It perpetuates rape culture by making rules for the potential victims. The conversation needs to be: this happens and it's not your fault and I believe you. You can talk to me about this. I want you to know your rights if this happens to you."*

—Parent of Sexual Assault Survivor

As a parent, you can support your child by understanding the pressures they face, teaching them about the facts and risks involved, and equipping them with skills, ideas and words they can use to make good choices in situations where alcohol is involved. It is also important to communicate clearly that if anything happens while they are under the influence, your priority won't be to punish them for the drinking, but to care for their safety and well-being. Many survivors don't tell the authorities or their parents what happened for fear of being in trouble for drinking. Your approach to talking with your kids about alcohol can let them know it's safe for them to come to you with anything.

# MOVE FROM BYSTANDER TO UPSTANDER

## Nine Strategies To Be Proactive About Prevention

### 1. Do Your Own Work First

Before you sit down with your children or local school, take some time to think about your own feelings and values. What came up for you in the film? Were you shocked? Angered? Scared for your child? Any of these feelings can be expected with such a powerful story. At the same time, we need to be steady and focused when we have these conversations.

Some parents worry that if they open the door, they may hear more than they want to know. Understood. The problem is that saying nothing keeps the culture of sexual violence in the shadows; it's on all of us to bring it out into the light. So what do you really think? Explore your beliefs and values with another adult you trust. If you have a personal experience with this topic, e.g. you or a friend or family member has experienced sexual violence, this film may trigger some big feelings and opinions. Take care of yourself and get the support you need.

#### Reflection Questions:

1. What am I trying to accomplish in having this discussion with my child?
2. What am I afraid of?
3. Who can I talk to first?
4. What do I need in order to be clear and focused when I have the conversation?

### 2. Look for Teachable Moments

Seeking out teachable moments doesn't have to mean a sit-down, kitchen table conversation every time. Look for opportunities as they occur. For example, talk to your teen while you are driving in the car—it's an easier way to have a conversation about uncomfortable and or charged subject—and no eye contact required for either of you.

As adults, we can look for these opportunities on media, in school or in our communities, to help young people start to see and challenge the culture of sexual violence. *Audrie & Daisy* is one of those opportunities.

For example, "I saw this movie, *Audrie & Daisy*, it's about two girls who were sexually assaulted in high school by people they knew. There was a ton of fallout on social media. Nude pics, horrible things said. One of the girls felt so trapped, scared she'd never escape the images on the web and the fact her school had seen them, she killed herself. I want you to know that if anything like this ever were to happen to you or one of your friends—I'm here for you or for them."

If these teachable moments happen regularly as you interact with the world, it will become a habit to think critically and talk openly with your child. It is also important for you to share your own thoughts and responses. Knowing the perspectives and values of their parents and other trusted adults helps them sort through the conflicting messages around them.

### 3. Don't Just Stand There. Do Something

*"How hard would it have been for Jordan to text me and say, 'why is your sister at Matt's?' But he didn't. Nick didn't. Cole didn't."*

—Charlie Coleman

In *Audrie & Daisy*, we see many places where people might have intervened to stop the assaults from happening. Charlie says that his friends might have called him to tell him Daisy was in a dangerous situation. Audrie's friend, Amanda, reflects on what might have happened if she hadn't left Audrie at the party, knowing that she was intoxicated.

As adults, we can model the behavior we want kids and other adults around us to emulate. Yet speaking up can be as challenging for adults as it is for young people. For instance, if you witness your kid's friend making an inappropriate comment or an offensive joke, you can ask where they learned it, and what it means to them. While being careful not to shame them, you can share why it is problematic for you. For example, "I don't think you mean to hurt anyone, but I know women who have been assaulted, and it's just not funny to me, and certainly not to them."

Delaney: I've gotten the same threatening texts, Facebook posts, e-mails, scary encounters ... and dealt with the same emotions of wanting everything to end. I just want you to never feel alone again. I'm here.

Daisy: Thank you it means so much!

Several resources exist to help you and the youth around you think about situations you might face and how you might respond. Futures Without Violence's [ThatsNotCool.com](http://ThatsNotCool.com) has features, like the [Cool/Not Cool quiz](#) to help think through what is and isn't acceptable in a relationship. They also have [Callout Cards](#) and printable, sharable online messages young people can use to point out unacceptable relationship behavior, like stalking or spreading lies.

Resources like these help anticipate and rehearse real-life situations young people might face and how they can respond to move from bystander to upstander. There is also a toolkit for Adult Allies to learn, teach, organize and engage with the youth they care about.

### **Scenario**

In *Audrie & Daisy*, Charlie overhears some boys on the little league team he coaches making inappropriate comments about a girl.

### **Charlie's Response:**

"I said, all right, we're having a powwow now. And I circled everybody up. And I was like, here's the thing guys. I'm here to teach you baseball. But this isn't the kind of stuff I accept. This isn't what I'm about. If it's what you're about, that's fine, but that's not what WE are going to be about. And you're more than welcome to take yourself out of here. "

### **Reflection question:**

Think of a recent situation where you heard or saw behavior that made you uncomfortable.

What were the barriers to responding?

How did you respond?

What might you do differently if a similar situation rises again?

### **Activity:**

As you watch *Audrie & Daisy* with young people, ask them to identify moments in the film where others might have intervened to prevent the assaults or the subsequent cyberbullying. Then ask them to imagine themselves in the same situation:

- What could those people have done differently?
- What do you think might have stopped them from stepping in?
- Does that situation remind them of anything they have experienced in their own lives?

[Click here](#) to see resources on the Futures Without Violence website that will help you start conversations with teens, and talking points you can use for discussing healthy relationships and teen violence.

Many parents are themselves survivors of sexual assault, and as their children grow, they must decide whether to share their experience, and if so, how. This, like any other parenting decision, is very personal. Share what your child might need or want to know about your assault. For example, how the experience has affected your life, and what you want them to learn from it. Other questions to consider are how to share in an age-appropriate way, and finding a time and space that makes it safe for the child to have his or her own response.

[This comic](#) shows how one survivor mom started teaching her toddler about consent, and [this article](#) tells how another told her teenage daughter about her assault.

#### 4. [Get Involved At Your School](#)

Schools can and do play a critical role in preventing sexual violence, supporting survivors and educating young people about the culture of sexual violence.

The lesson plans created for *Audrie & Daisy* include information on thinking critically about school culture and classroom environments and their role in fostering healthy relationships between students.

Questions to ask your child's teacher or school administrator:

- How are you teaching students to navigate online life?
- What sexual assault prevention programming do you have?
- Does your school have policies in place regarding how to address inappropriate online behaviors, such as cyberbullying and harassment?
- What are your policies regarding bullying or inappropriate sexual behavior that happens between your students online?
- How does the school work to address the needs of the students most vulnerable to sexual violence, younger students, LGBTQ identified, disabled, etc.?

#### 5. [Understand Title IX](#)

In *Audrie & Daisy* both assaults were committed by perpetrators that the girls knew through their schools. Yet because the assaults happened off campus, the schools did not play a central role in the response, even though the bullying and shaming happened on school grounds.

What are schools' responsibilities in these situations?

Title IX is a federal guarantee that all students have equal access to education, regardless of sex or gender. On college campuses, students who have been assaulted have used Title IX to force schools to create clear sexual assault policies and hold perpetrators accountable, even when the assault happened off campus. In high school, rampant sexual harassment and assault impede access to education for anyone who is on the receiving end.

Parents and adult allies can work with schools to request and establish Title IX compliance practices and meet with their district's Title IX coordinator. [KnowYourIX](#) and [NotAlone.gov](#), and the [Safe Place To Learn](#) resource package are rich resources offering research, information and toolkits for students and parents to explore existing policies and to demand Title IX compliance in their districts. [Here](#) is a link to a list of 82 elementary and secondary institutions that currently have open Title IX sexual violence investigations underway.

The *Audrie & Daisy* [Lesson Plans](#) have more information about the kinds of questions to ask about Title IX in relation to your school

## 6. Talk About Consent

We must teach our children to respect others' bodies, their own bodies and to question the messages they get about their own abilities to act with respect, generosity and kindness.

These conversations can feel particularly daunting, and while we don't want to scare our children into thinking he or she may be the next statistic, we must talk with them about what consent means and how to move from being a bystander when these or hear abuse happening, to being an upstander.

Read this letter from a mother to her son about consent:

*“Honey, I want to talk to you about our family’s values and who I think you are –I think you are an amazing kid. And I think you will be an amazing boyfriend to someone-the kind of guy that a friend would say could date his sister.*

*You understand that in this world guys are told and made to think treating women with anything less than total respect is ok. What they are told less often directly is exactly what to do to show respect—so here goes.*

*She deserves to be checked in with all along the way about everything you do. You have to read her cues—is she leaning in or away? Is she pushing your hands off or pulling you close? Tell her at the outset you only want to do what she is comfortable with—including nothing at all and mean it. This will make her feel respected—I think it will make you feel like a good man too.*

*Word to the wise, if she is drinking or high or passes out, you can’t get consent, period.*

*Even if you started making out before you started partying or even if she is less wasted than you are. Affirmative consent is her saying, when she isn’t impaired, she wants to be with you or do what you are suggesting. I know this can get tricky –but it is super important.*

*Lastly, being a great man is about being a role model for others. If you see something and do nothing you are part of perpetuating the problem of women being hurt. I really believe this—my son is and should be the guy who lives by this kind of moral compass -because it is the right way to be a good man.*

*I’m always, always here if you have questions.*

*Love you, Mom*

### Reflection Questions:

- What would you say to your son or daughter in an open letter to them?
- What are your hopes for them around learning about their own sexuality?
- What do you want them to know about the messages our culture teaches about bodies and sex?
- How would your child react to a courageous conversation like this?

### Activity:

Write an open letter to your child and share with other parents or adult allies in your community as a way of starting the conversation about sexual violence.

For more on the kinds of things men can do to help: Check out the [Good Men Project](#) site for resources for and about men to think critically about the meaning of masculinity.

## 7. Host a Screening of the Film

You can convene a group of peers to watch *Audrie & Daisy* together and use the reflection questions from this guide to start discussion. Here is a sample email for such an event,

Dear friend,

I am writing today to invite you to watch the film *Audrie & Daisy* with me in my home. The film is about two young women who were sexually assaulted by people they knew from their high schools, and whose assaults were amplified by being shared and discussed online. I know these aren't easy things to talk about, and what to do isn't always clear. I hope if we watch this film together we can share ideas for talking to our kids and our schools about making changes to keep them safe.

Please come to my home on DATE at TIME, and let's work on this together.

Sincerely,

Your Name

You can also work with your school or other community groups to schedule a screening, and take a look at the lessons for some activities to use in classrooms or with other groups to talk about the themes of culture change, online safety, consent, healthy digital communities, and healthy relationships. To arrange for this opportunity, email [audriedaisy@filmsprout.org](mailto:audriedaisy@filmsprout.org) for booking and/or to request a free DVD copy.

## 8. Become an Activist

There are many organizations and groups working to make change on many levels, from individual behavior change to national policy, all with the goal of reducing sexual violence. In addition to creating change within your family, school and community in the ways we've already discussed, you can get involved with great organizations working to create change as a volunteer, donor, member, or advocate.

## 9. Support Survivors, Always

*"...you know, I wanted them to believe me."*

—Daisy Coleman

Sexual violence is not something survivors just "get over." After trauma, what was previously background noise may trigger fears and memories of the incident, making activities like going to school, watching movies or being in social situations intensely emotional and challenging. As a friend, parent, teacher, or other trusted adult, understanding the scope and nature of the hurt is crucial. You can help by listening—and always believing.

*...I want to be happy and I want to move on with my life... that doesn't always mean just like, forgetting the past. It just kind of means forgiving the past.*

—Daisy Coleman



# RESOURCES

For additional resources, check out the [Resources & Tools](#) section on [www.audrieanddaisy.com](http://www.audrieanddaisy.com).

[Futures Without Violence](#)

[Circle of 6](#)

[Know Your IX](#)

[Break The Cycle](#)  
[Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States](#)

[RAINN](#)

[End Rape On Campus](#)

[Safe Bae](#)

[CalCasa](#)

[Greendot](#)

[Black Women's Blueprint](#)

[Survivors Eradicating Rape \(SERC\)](#)

[Representation Project](#)

[See Jane](#)

[TransEquality](#)

[www.ditchthelabel.org](http://www.ditchthelabel.org)

[National Juvenile Defender Law Center](#)

[The Trevor Project](#)

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

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