

# Ontario Dress Purple Day: Lesson 4



## Activity: Reasons Why Youth May Need to Get Help – Myth or Fact?

<b>Grade Range:</b> Grades 9-12
<b>Task Time:</b> 30-40 minutes
<b>Activity Objective:</b> The objective of this activity is to dispel myths and stereotypes about abuse, violence, and other situations where youth may need help.
<b>Materials Needed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Myth or Fact? handout (for the facilitator)</li><li>• Two signs with the labels "MYTH" and "FACT"</li></ul>
<b>Activity Description:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Move desks and tables out of the way so there is space to move from one side of the room to the other. Divide the room in half and put up the "MYTH" sign on one side and the "FACT" sign on the other. Have the whole class gather in the middle.</li><li>2. Explain to the class that you will be reading out some statements about abuse, violence, and other reasons why youth may need to get help. The class will decide whether they think the statement is a myth or a fact and then move to the appropriate side of the room.</li><li>3. Read out the first statement and give the students time to move to either side of the room. Once everyone has made a choice, have the individuals turn to the person on their left side and give their reasons for their decision.</li><li>4. Engage in a whole class discussion by inviting individuals from both sides to explain their reasoning for their choice.</li><li>5. Provide the correct answer for the statement and explain the rationale behind it. Give students an opportunity to ask questions and talk about what they have learned after you revealed the answer.</li><li>6. Continue this process with all the scenarios.</li></ol>
<b>Adaptations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instead of moving around, the class can be divided into small groups and each group is given one or two statements. They will discuss in their groups whether these statements are myth or fact and then present to the class for a discussion. The students can be asked to act out a skit that depicts the signs of an unhealthy relationship, the setting of healthy boundaries, and/or getting help.</li></ul>

**Comments and/or Additional Resources:**

- It is important to keep in mind that there may be individuals in the class who have been impacted by abuse. Encourage all students to respect each other's feelings and experiences and review class conduct around respectful discussions and confidentiality.

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## Activity: Myth or Fact? Resource

Grades 9-12

**1. A good friend keeps all their friend's secrets. (Myth)**

If a friend tells you they are hurting themselves or are being hurt by someone else, this is not a secret to be kept. Yes, your friend may be angry that you told an adult in order to get help. It is more important that your friend is safe.

**2. People who are abusive towards others do so because they are unable to control their anger. (Myth)**

People who are abusive are not abusive to everyone and therefore **can** control their anger. They are making a choice. Help is available if they want to change their behaviour. They are responsible for their actions. You did not do anything to cause them to become angry.

**3. Healthy relationships have conflict and arguments. (Fact)**

All relationships have conflicts. It is how you choose to resolve the conflict that makes it healthy or unhealthy. In a healthy relationship, people listen to each other, speak respectfully, and try to figure out a solution together.

**4. Emotional abuse is not really abuse. (Myth)**

Emotional abuse can have a huge impact on one's self confidence and well-being, often resulting in anxiety, low self-esteem, and overall distress. Emotional abuse leaves scars on the inside.

**5. Jealousy is a sign of true love and caring. (Myth)**

Jealousy and possessiveness come from feeling insecure and are signs of an unhealthy relationship. It shows a lack of trust, which is very important in healthy relationships.

**6. Racism is not nice, but it is not really abuse. (Myth)**

Racism is a form of emotional abuse that can leave deep scars. An attack on anybody's race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, language, culture, and religion can deeply impact their well-being.

**7. If a girl dresses in a certain way, she is "asking for it". (Myth)**

NO ONE asks to be harassed or assaulted. Too often the victim is blamed for the actions of the aggressor, who is totally responsible for their behaviour.

**8. People who harm themselves do it for attention. (Myth)**

There are many reasons people self-harm. It is a coping skill, or perhaps a request for help. For most it is a way to relieve their intense distress. Most often it is a very private act, and if shared at all, only with one or two selected friends. If you suspect that someone is self-harming, it is important for you to encourage them to get help. If they refuse, talk to a trusted adult to get help for them.

**9. Caregivers who harshly criticize their children when they fail to meet unrealistic expectations are helping their kids succeed in this world. (Myth)**

Conforming to unrealistic expectations often happens at the expense of a youth's own personality development, and can negatively impact their well-being.

**10. Not having access to food, hygiene, aids like eye glasses, medical attention, and supervision doesn't affect you as deeply physical or sexual abuse does. (Myth)**

The impact of not having basic needs met on a regular basis can be just as, or more harmful than physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Caregivers sometimes cannot provide basic needs because they are struggling with chronic challenges such as mental health, addictions, and extreme financial stress, but children and youth still need help.