

TRUTH-TELLING

**BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS IN
ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST
YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS**

(This issue is selected from the list given in the Parliament of Canada Published [News Release](#))

Submitted to

**The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women for its
Study on Violence against Young Women and Girls in Canada**

By

Jeanne Sarson, MEd, BScN, RN and Linda MacDonald, MEd, BN, RN

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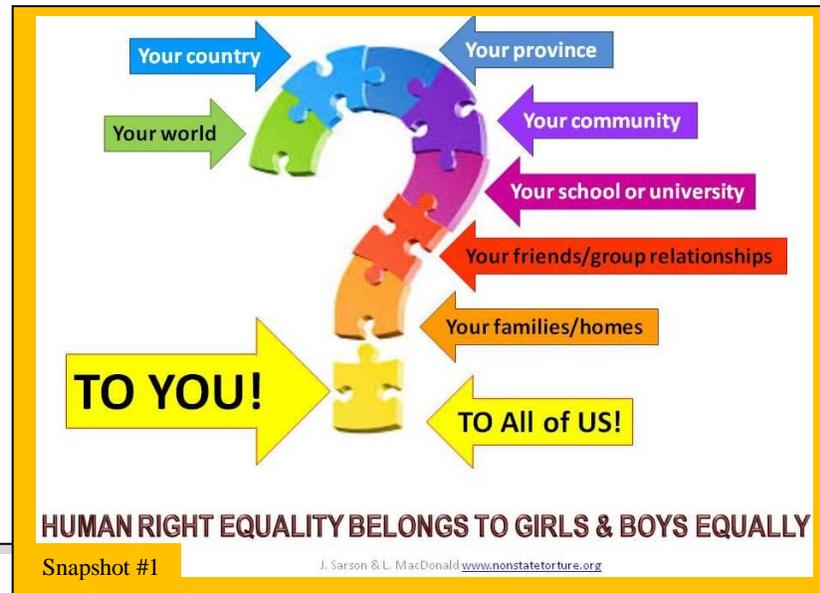
Contact Information:

Jeanne Sarson, MEd, BScN, RN and Linda MacDonald, MEd, BN, RN
Persons Against Non-State Torture (NST) | Web: www.nonstatetorture.org
General email contact: contact@nonstatetorture.org

TRUTH-TELLING

We have selected this title, “Truth-telling” because this is the best practice required to initiate human rights equality and healthy living in relationships. Relational transformation occurs by truthful discourses about the social construction of gender-based inequality and oppression, of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours whereby girls and women are considered inferior to boys and men which leads to constructs of control, coercion, and violence against girls and women within society and relationships. In this brief we present snapshots of some of our best practices, research, and evaluations gained from our individual/combined experiences teaching children, youth, and university students. The snapshots are examples of visual art used which are adapted according to the age and purpose of our presentations. These snapshots are selected to impart some of the **fundamental concepts** that our experiences suggest represent best practices for engaging boys and men in addressing and preventing violence against girls and women.

SNAPSHOT #1: HUMAN RIGHTS EQUALITY.
 Promote a human rights educational framework based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to

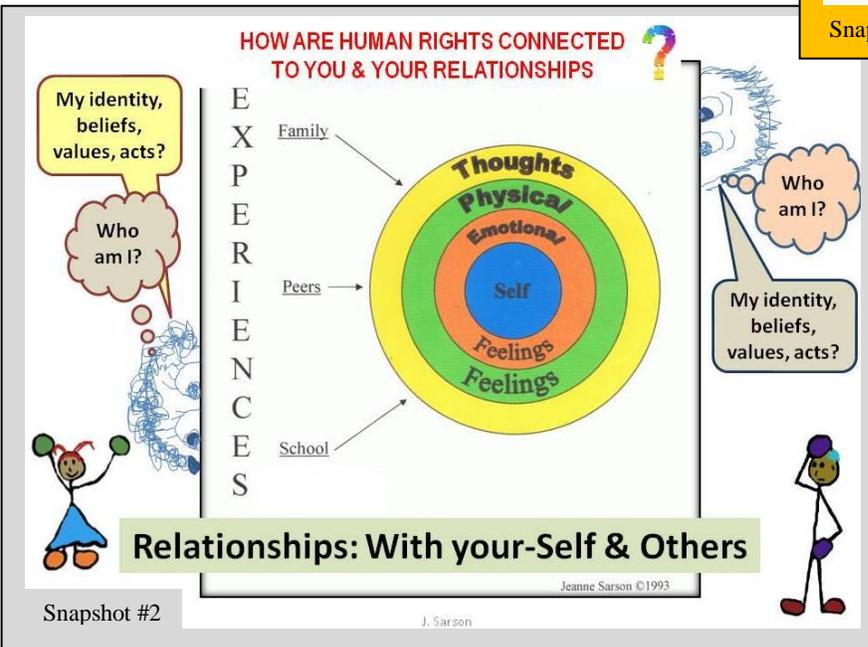


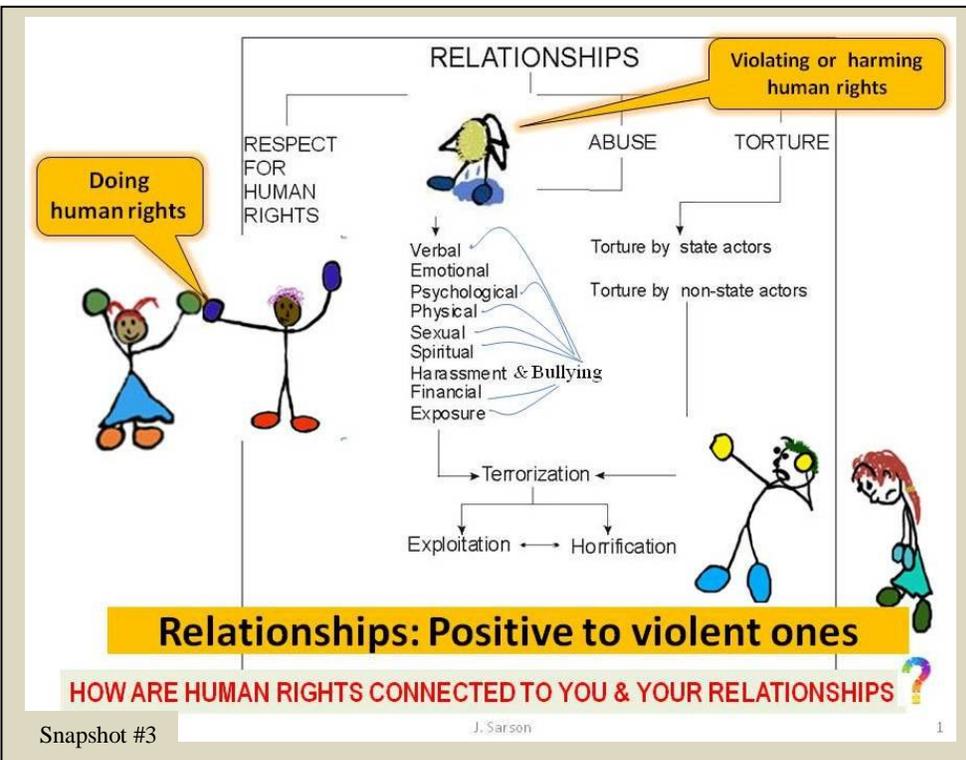
establish awareness of gender-based inequalities and discrimination that exists nationally and globally. A Grade 7 male student’s evaluation read, “*human rights boys have but girls have to fight for*”.

Snapshot #2:¹ Promoting awareness of a relationship with /to/for Self and with others helps define “Who am I?” and “What are my beliefs, values, perceptions and how do these impact on my actions?” This model promotes Self-awareness as our experiences suggest young people need to distinguish between physical and emotional feelings, positive and painful; they need to discover they talk to them-Self and need to listen to

their Self-talk to decide whose voice they will listen to—their voice or that of a peer. **Evaluation comments:** Presenting these concepts at Home & School groups, parents often said they had never considered they had a relationship with Self. Of the almost 600 grade 4 students approximately 98% said that learning that they as a person have a relationship with Self was the most important concept learned.

¹ Stick figure drawings were created for us by David MacDonald.





SNAPSHOT #3:

RELATIONSHIP CONTINUUM.

All forms of violence must be named and explained to boys and girls, women and men, because both can normalize relational and gender-based violence depending on their exposure since birth and the messages society delivers. Besides these examples pornography—torture and snuff—are discussed because by Grade 7 children can be exposed so need to know that if they view sexualized non-State torture what this means and the consequential risks. Sexualized exploitation regarding prostitution and human trafficking is also open dialogue. **Student evaluation:** “I learned lots of new things and also

got a chance to fully understand the human rights and points to a healthy respectful relationship.”

SNAPSHOT #4: LANGUAGE IMPACTS. Criminal sexualized assault language is frequently delivered in language that refers to such violent crimes as sex—oral, vaginal, or anal. This is a serious delivery of mixed messaging that must be stopped. The message in the yellow box was from an educational document for grade 12 students who were peer mentors for Grade 9 students. We presented a challenge to the male and female youth and their teachers who realized that describing sexualized assaults as oral, vaginal, or anal sex was indeed incorrect. To address ‘rape culture’ it is essential that language distinguishes sexualized crimes from consented to sexual behaviours.

Teachers’ evaluations: They would take the mixed messaging material to their curriculum development meeting. **Students’ evaluations:** We distribute the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is the component of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (A/RES/66/137). Some students hugged theirs saying they now had a framework to take to the Grade 9 students. In another presentation a student reflected their understanding on mixed messaging as, “*mixed messages that you think mean the same but really don’t*”.

What are Mixed Messages?

What is sex? What is a sexualized assault?

Oral sexualized assault

Vagina sexualized assault

Anal sexualized assault

Any kind of sexual activity that the other person doesn’t consent to is sexual assault. The legal definition of sexual assault includes (among other things):

oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, touching, kissing, grabbing, masturbating another person, forcing another person to masturbate you, and masturbating over another person.

Snapshot #4 J. Sarson & L. MacDonald www.nonstatestorture.org

CONCLUSION: Best practices requires a human rights and relationship approach that dialogues the truth about all known forms of relational violence, addresses gender-based human rights discrimination, and articulates in clear correct messaging what is sex and what constitutes sexualized criminal violence.