

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

SEXUAL ASSAULT



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus
in a Disconnected World

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A Parent's Guide to Sexual Assault

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I always wondered why survivors understood other survivors so well. Why, even if the details of our attacks vary, survivors can lock eyes and get it without having to explain. Perhaps it is not the particulars of the assault itself that we have in common, but the moment after; the first time you are left alone. Something slipping out of you. Where did I go. What was taken. It is terror swallowed inside silence. An unclipping from the world where up was up and down was down.

CHANEL MILLER, *KNOW MY NAME*

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A LETTER FROM AXIS

Dear Reader,

We're Axis, and since 2007, we've been creating resources to help connect parents, teens, and Jesus in a disconnected world. We're a group of gospel-minded researchers, speakers, and content creators, and we're excited to bring you the best of what we've learned about making meaningful connections with the teens in your life.

This parent's guide is designed to help start a conversation. Our goal is to give you enough knowledge that you're able to ask your teen informed questions about their world. For each guide, we spend weeks reading, researching, and interviewing parents and teens in order to distill everything you need to know about the topic at hand. We encourage you to read the whole thing and then to use the questions we include to get the conversation going with your teen—and then to follow the conversation wherever it leads.

As Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen point out in their book *Difficult Conversations*, “Changes in attitudes and behavior rarely come about because of arguments, facts, and attempts to persuade. How often do *you* change your values and beliefs—or whom you love or what you want in life—based on something someone tells you? And how likely are you to do so when the person who is trying to change you doesn’t seem fully aware of the reasons you see things differently in the first place?”¹ For whatever reason, when we believe that others are trying to understand *our* point of view, our defenses usually go down, and we’re more willing to listen to *their* point of view. The rising generation is no exception.

So we encourage you to ask questions, to listen, and then to share your heart with your teen. As we often say at Axis, discipleship happens where conversation happens.

Sincerely,
Your friends at Axis

¹ Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 137.

**REAL TALK
ABOUT SEXUAL
ASSAULT**

WE ALL PRAY that our children will experience a world safe from harm. We do our best to love and protect, but what do we do when things are out of our control? Sexual assault is a serious and scary thing, and we need to talk to our kids about it. As parents, we should equip our kids and ourselves with practical tools to prevent the unthinkable.

The National Center for Victims of Crime reports 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse.¹ If our children haven't experienced abuse, chances are they've got a friend who has. So it's our job to learn how to love our kids through it if they've experienced it firsthand—and to prepare them to be a good friend to victims of abuse.

**WHAT IS
SEXUAL
ASSAULT?**

SEXUAL ASSAULT is any form of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the victim. It's a big umbrella term that includes much more than rape—it can be attempted rape, uninvited touching or fondling, forcing the victim to perform sexual acts, or any other case of unwanted physical contact. Above all, it is *never* the victim's fault.

Sexual assault usually falls into one of three categories:²

1. Penetration crimes
2. Contact with intimate body parts
3. Exposure of intimate body parts

Each state varies slightly in its definition of what sexual assault is, but when it comes down to it, there is no excuse for unwarranted sexual acts.