In the context of sexual activity, [respect] is essential. Without respect, sexual activity can easily cross into sexual violence.

A culture of [respect] can prevent sexual violence.

Respect is a concept that can represent a number of things to different people. However, at its core, it reflects a thoughtful consideration of others. Respect builds healthy, safe relationships and communities. Healthy relationships and positive experiences - with your partner, your classmate, a friend of a friend, or even a stranger you don't know - are based on respect.

Respect means knowing where the line is and not crossing it. It means engaging in open communication, not assuming consent, accepting others decisions and limits, watching out for your friends when you are out, resisting peer pressure to go along with or join in on sexually offensive behavior or harassment, and having empathy and compassion for victims.

We can all play a role in preventing sexual violence in our communities. It starts by standing up for respect. For yourself and your friends.

KNOW THE LINE
It is important to know the line between consensual sexual activity and sexual violence. Inform yourself and others by being aware of key facts about sexual violence, including:

Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows. This might be a friend, acquaintance, or intimate partner. It is often someone trusted. Many sexual assaults occur in either the victim or the offender's home. Weapons are rarely used. Instead, offenders trick, pressure, coerce, threaten or intimidate victims into unwanted sexual activity.

Alcohol use often plays a role in sexual violence. Alcohol is a factor in a majority of sexual assaults, especially those involving persons between the ages of 18-29. Alcohol use or intoxication does not cause or excuse sexual violence. Alcohol does make it easier for people to misinterpret signals and blur the lines of [respect]. Consent must be clear and freely given. Sex without consent is rape.
Bullying can lead to sexual violence. Boys and girls who engage in bullying behaviors, like name-calling, taunting, spreading rumors, and homophobic teasing, are also more likely to sexually harass others later. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence. Bullying, like all forms of sexual violence, is about power and control. Stopping bullying early can prevent it from escalating later.

[respect] THE LINE
Respect others by obtaining consent for all sexual activity.

Engage in open communication. Ask others what's on their mind. Actively listen to what they have to say. Show others that their thoughts and beliefs matter to you.

Pay attention to body language. People don't always express themselves with words. Their bodies may be saying a lot without the person saying anything at all. If someone you are with seems distracted or distant, ask if he/she is ok.

Value and accept differences of opinion. You may not always agree with others, but you can acknowledge their choices and beliefs without making them feel bad or guilty, or pressuring them to change their mind.

Imagine what it is like in someone else’s shoes. Instead of judging, try to understand someone else’s feelings as if they were your own. Having empathy and compassion for others are ways to show [respect].

There is no respect in bullying. Put-downs and intimidation are painful and can have long-lasting effects on people's lives. Respect is earned by being kind to others, not making them fear you.

PROTECT THE LINE
Bystanders can help prevent sexual violence from happening.

While most people do not commit sexual violence, many people are bystanders to sexually offensive talk or behavior. This may include witnessing forms of sexual aggression or harassment toward others, or hearing others make degrading jokes or brag about tricking or forcing someone into sexual activity. By standing up to this behavior and intervening to stop it, upstanders can spread the message of [respect] and prevent opportunities for sexual violence to take place. What can you do if you hear something that might be offensive or hurtful?

Say something. Ask questions, convey disapproval, or engage the person in a thoughtful dialogue. Making the person reflect on their own insensitive remarks can help the person to see just what was wrong with the statements or actions in the first place.

Stay silent. Oftentimes, people are just looking for attention, for laughs, or for a rise out of people. Sometimes silence can make the loudest statement.

Be creative. You can stop aggressive or harassing behavior and prevent violence before it escalates. It can be as simple as interrupting and distracting the conversation: "Do you have the time?", "Did you see that?", "I need to tell you something.", "I've been looking for you!"

Do the right thing. Hold the people around you accountable to [respect]. Encourage others to join the movement and live respectfully.

Bring your completed reflection to the PAU Violence table during our [respect] Fair in the Lama Library Learning Center (2nd floor) on September 12th between 10am-1pm to receive a prize!