

How can girls learn how guys are supposed to treat them with few male role models in their lives?

I am a teacher and social worker from Jacksonville, NC that now lives in Chicago, Illinois. I have worked with girls of all ages in Davidson and Charlotte, North Carolina, St. Louis Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois. One of the problems that I see in my classes are that young females fail to understand what it means for a young male to treat them with respect and to carry themselves in a respectful manner. For example, I have seen girls voluntarily sit in boys' laps, let guys touch their private parts in a jokingly manner, and refrain from giving their opinion when guys are present. There are many reasons why this is a problem in our society, however, I think there are two that take dominance.

First, is what the young ladies are exposed to on television and the radio? I have seen countless commercials using sex and females' bodies to advertise products such as beer and cars. Also, a lot of the popular videos have women showing their bodies to please male viewers and artists. Young females watch these images not knowing that their subconscious mind is taking this information and informing them that it is cool to betray themselves like these women. I have heard many parents say that they do not let their teens watch this type of "garage." However, in most cases, if the teens are not seeing it at home, they are being exposed to it from their peers at school.

The second reason why I think many girls do not understand the importance of being treated in a respectful manner is due to the lack of positive male role models in their lives. One of the privileges that I had growing up is a good father figure and older brother that would take me out on dates to spend time with me. Whether they knew it or not, my father and brother were teaching me how a male should treat me when going on a date. They would do things like open the door for me, talk to me about real world issues, and let me know that it is not ok for guys to touch me in an inappropriate manner.

In order to help young females in my life skills classes, I have created the **BEAUTY** program which stands for **B**uilding **E**xcellence, **A**mbition, and **U**nity in **T**eens and **Y**outh. One of the sessions in this program deals with dating etiquette. The purpose of this section is for females to learn about formal dating etiquette techniques and how they should be used. This is the only session where males are allowed to participate. I have included a sample activity from the Dating etiquette session. Try this out with middle school and high school females that you know. If you would like more information please contact Andrea Mills at amills@simplyoutrageousyouth.org.

Sample Activity

1. Put participants in groups of 2 with one female and one male in each group.
2. Give each group a slip of paper with a role play (I have provided 1 role-play below)
3. Give each group 10 minutes to go over their role plays.

4. Once 10 minutes has passed, have each group do their role play in front of all the other participants.
5. After each role play discuss with the students what is considered to be correct dating etiquette instead of what happened in the role play.
6. Have students act out the correct way to act on the date.

Dating Etiquette Role Play

James and Mona have been boyfriend and girlfriend for 6 months. James and Mona planned to go to a party together. Mona decided not to go because James all of a sudden got sick. Mona was bored that night and decides to go to the party anyway. Mona sees James holding hands with another girl. She leaves the party. The next day at school Mona starts a fight with the girl and gets suspended from school.

Correct Dating Etiquette

There is no reason to fight over a boyfriend or girlfriend. No one should bring their significant other to that point. This situation is a good indication that Mona cannot trust her boyfriend. Mona should only confront the girl if they have relations such as being sisters, cousins, or friends. Mona should confront her boyfriend because he was the one that made a commitment to be her.