



## PEN PICTURE: TESSA Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis

TESSA is Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis's Prevention Project for young people of secondary school age which aims to raise awareness of issues surrounding sexual violence, including consent, grooming and how we can prevent sexual violence. It seeks to challenge inappropriate sexual behaviour and support those who may have experienced it.

We deliver a range of age-appropriate workshops to schools, parents groups and youth clubs. These workshops are designed to be interactive and fun while still giving important information, tips and hints on appropriate behaviour and keeping yourself and others safe, both on and offline. We aim to create safe spaces for young people to discuss their concerns and ask questions without fear of judgement or getting in trouble.

There is a significant evidence of increasing prevalence of sexual and other violence happening in young people's relationships, as well as high levels of childhood and adult sexual violence. The use of social media and mobile technology in sexual harassment and bullying is also documented. These forms of violence can also reflect the increasing sexualisation of children and young people including the availability of pornography, and the subsequent influence on young people's perceptions of appropriate sexual behaviour. Our workshops enable young people to explore these issues and develop their knowledge and understanding, including considering how the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 relates to sexual conduct and issues such as consent.

When young people have found that they are or have been a victim/survivor of sexual violence in any form, the impact on their lives can be devastating, particularly when they do not have the right support they need. They may be afraid of what others, including their friends, family and teachers, may think of them. Some young people can become reclusive and not want to mix with anyone, sleeping patterns may be disturbed causing concentration to be affected, and this can appear as though they no longer care, potentially getting them into trouble at home and school. This can undoubtedly have an impact on their education and their later life. TESSA workshops use a range of materials to show young people what they can do should they find themselves in a vulnerable situation, as well as ways they can help protect themselves and others from getting into vulnerable situations – although we are always clear that they are never to blame if they are a victim of sexual violence. Whilst exploring this, we ensure that each young person is aware that there are several ways to access help and support should they need it, including CEOP, ChildLine and of course Argyll and Bute Rape Crisis.

These short films are an example of those which we use with young people. They have been designed specifically for young people and in workshops, we use them to open discussions around sexual violence, considering what is wrong with the situation, what they could do if they found themselves in a situation that was similar, and how things like consent factor in.

Losing Control: Jay <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qul9bEant2E>

Who are you? Bystander intervention <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUj2OHLAG3w>

More about our work here: <http://www.tessaproject.co.uk/>