



Workshop: Cancel Culture

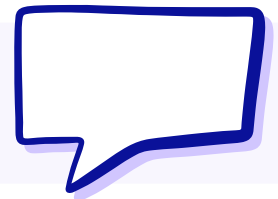
I SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES



LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Express greater comfort discussing their opinions and feelings related to cancel culture, sex, and false reporting.
- Describe the reasons why cancel culture began– specifically, the extent that sexual violence and harassment take place without consequences.
- Support peers be accountable to principles of respect and non-violence.
- Recognize when criticisms of cancel culture diminish the harmful impacts of sexual violence.

II SAMPLE INTRODUCTION



“Cancel culture” is a big lightning rod in today’s society. Some people say that the conversation has gone too far and people have to be too careful nowadays. Others say that “canceling” someone is a way to get justice. We know that many men (about [one-third](#)) worry about being accused of sexual assault after a sexual encounter and that there’s a lot of discussion about false reports. Today, we’re going to discuss all these topics in a way that we can be open, real, and also learn about the history of where the term “cancel culture” came from.”

**III SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Where did you first hear the term “cancel culture” and what was being said about it?
- Does anyone know the history of when the term “canceled” was created and why?
- What are the benefits of “cancel culture?” What are the risks or detriments of “cancel culture?”
- What kinds of actions can get someone “canceled?” Do you think that’s fair?
- If you have fears that cancel culture has “gone too far,” what specifically are you worried about? What experiences of yours inform your opinion?
- What can we do to prevent “cancel culture” (or at least, the harmful parts)?
- How can we talk about “cancel culture” with friends in a way that is caring, but also acknowledges the problem of sexual harassment and violence?



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS



- ▶ The core of the criticism of cancel culture is that the response to what is said or done is overblown, unjustified, or incorrect. So, what should the appropriate consequences for sexual harassment, assault, or rape be?
- ▶ I've heard many ideas about where the term "cancel" came from and what it means. With "hot button" topics like cancel culture, it is important to analyze all the sources of information so that we come to our own conclusions because there are many myths surrounding how overblown issues like sexual harassment, assault, or rape are.
- ▶ The term "cancel" comes from the #MeToo movement in [2017](#) in order to describe how figures like movie producer Harvey Weinstein and actor Bill Cosby should be held accountable for the sexual coercion and rape they committed.
- ▶ Research shows that there are valid reasons why people might want to "cancel" someone. There is a major discrepancy between how violence is portrayed in TV and media versus our real-life experiences:
 - Only [5.7%](#) of rape reports lead to an arrest, only 1.1% are referred to a prosecutor, and fewer than 1% are convicted compared to 29% of reports leading to convictions in media.



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS (CONT.)



- Only [2.5%](#) of rape reports are confirmed false compared to media portraying 6.8% as false.
 - [60% of women](#) say they have experienced unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, sexually crude conduct, or sexist comments in the workplace (Feldblum & Lipnic, 2016).
- Although it is uncomfortable, I encourage everyone to consider their personal reasons why we may have issues with cancel culture: Are we worried we will lose friends or credibility? Are we worried that we will have to look in the mirror at our past actions?
- Let's try to balance the following perspectives:
- Everyone deserves fairness. Even after someone does something harmful, they shouldn't be discarded.
 - Given the severity with which real violence and harm is overlooked, it is important, then, to direct our frustration and energy towards the lack of alternative resolutions and consequences that are healthier, rather than direct it at those trying to achieve some fairness and accountability.
 - No one has to fear being sexually assaulted and no one has to fear having their reputation irreparably damaged. We can change our culture and policies to achieve this, together.



V SAMPLE ACTIVITIES



**ANALYZING MEDIA:
REDDIT STORY &
COMMENTS DISCUSSION**

Print and distribute this Reddit Post and a few key comments about an individual who has been accused of sexual harassment. Use this to discuss the balance of how to take responsibility for one’s actions while acknowledging the challenges of “gray areas” in sexual encounters.

Sample Key Comments:

- Usernames: “ellyite”; “jgainit”; “manyjournals”

Sample Discussion Questions:

- What feelings does the Original Post bring up for you?
- What questions do you have about the scenario raised by the Original Poster?
- Is there a “gray area” in the scenario presented? What lessons can we learn from this scenario and the discussion thread?



**TRUE OR FALSE:
MYTHS ABOUT RAPE**

Display a few statements, one at a time. Ask participants to raise their hands if they think each statement is true or false. Use each statement to spark discussion about people’s perspectives, experiences, and feelings about the frequency and myths about sexual violence.

Sample Statements from The Representation Project report:

- Most people who are raped report to law enforcement.
- False accusations of rape are common.
- Most rape is committed by strangers.



VI WORKSHOP RESOURCE LIBRARY



- **Article:** Cancel Culture Is Not Real—At Least Not in the Way People Think - Time Magazine
- **Article:** The second wave of “cancel culture” - Vox
- **Article:** One Way Forward: From A Cancel Culture To An Accountable Culture - Forbes
- **Video Panel:** Is Cancel Culture a “Teachable Moment”? – ASU+GSV 2023
- **Video:** How Does Cancel Culture Impact Students? – Above the Noise from PBS
- **Video:** Canceling “Cancel Culture”: Loretta J. Ross on Empathy & Activism – The Man Enough Podcast
- **Student Opinion Survey:** How Do You Feel About Cancel Culture? – The New York Times
- **Reddit Thread:** Misconceptions about Rape
- **Research:** False Report Statistics – End Violence Against Women International
- **Research:** Ten Rape Myths in Media –The Representation Project