

Abuse of Authority and Trust

If someone uses his/her power or authority to make a victim believe they have no other choice but to have sex, this is sexual assault. Abuses of power or trust can include misleading a victim under the guise of being an expert, threatening someone's job or safety, or simply taking advantage of someone significantly younger than they are. Any person in a position that is looked up to or respected can be in a position to abuse their authority. This does NOT mean that all people in power will abuse it. But being aware that it is possible, we can be more apt to listen with our gut when we are uncomfortable. Let's explore some examples:

- Christine is spending her summer interning in order to earn a letter of recommendation for her college applications. As the summer comes to an end, Christine's boss asks her out for dinner. Christine doesn't think that would be appropriate so she declines. Her boss says that if she doesn't have time for dinner, he doesn't think he will have time to write her a recommendation letter. What can Christine do?
- Gavin is getting fitted for a suit for his older brother's wedding. While measuring his inseam, the tailor gropes Gavin's penis over his pants. Gavin was very uncomfortable and asks the tailor not to touch him like that. The tailor tells Gavin that this is the way to get an accurate measurement. Gavin doesn't know what the normal procedure is for measuring inseams so he believes him and suffers through the uncomfortable experience. What can Gavin do?
- Elaina is a competitive diver in high school. She has had the same diving coach for more than 10 years. Her coach is one of her trusted adults. During a private practice, Elaina's coach tells her that diving without a bathing suit will help with her technique. Elaina has no reason to question her coach. What can Elaina do?

