



A short film about bravery in relationships

What is VALIANT?

VALIANT is a short, educational film about building and maintaining healthy relationships and developing protective behaviour skills. Using four stories, it focuses on issues related to consent, sexuality and healthy relationships for people with disability.

VALIANT is supported by an educational guide developed by the Sexuality and Relationship Education team at leading disability service provider, Northcott. This guide aims to encourage discussion and learning around the topics of relationships, dating and sexual consent. It is intended to help spark conversations between people with disability, teachers, carers and others in their support network. It also provides tips and advice to help people with disability and their families and carers build respect for each other and better understand another person's needs and wishes.

Funded by the Australian Department of Social Services, VALIANT is a project from not-for-profit organisation Bus Stop Films and disability service provider, Northcott.

For more information and to watch the film, go to northcott.com.au/sexuality-and-relationship-education/valiantfilm



EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

People with disability and relationships

Everyone has the right to intimacy and building healthy relationships, including people with disability. Yet access to education and understanding about sexual consent, relationships and dating is often limited – or non-existent.

For young people with disability, the need to learn about relationships, sexuality and sexual health can be overlooked, ignored or deemed unnecessary. In reality however, people with disability – and their parents, carers and support networks – often need extra support to learn about relationships and how to express their sexuality in positive and healthy ways.

Coupled with this educational guide, VALIANT aims to provide an entertaining, judgement-free tool to help start conversations about relationships for people with disability.

How to use this guide

This guide is intended to be used with the VALIANT film and is recommended to be completed with the assistance or support of a friend, family member, support person or teacher. We suggest first watching the film in its entirety and then reviewing each of the four scenes separately while discussing the questions. The questions aim to start open conversations while also exploring some of the common issues that arise in relationships. Use the 'Key Points' to understand the central 'take away' points for each scene.

Setting up a safe space

Setting up a 'safe space' is essential for learning and the delivery of the *VALIANT education guide*. The space should be safe in the sense that students and teachers can share their ideas, opinions and questions without fear of judgment or silencing.

In order to build a safe space it is a good idea to jointly establish some ground rules with the students as this will provide structure to the learning environment and can improve student confidence and engagement. Ground rules also allow the teacher and fellow students to call out interactions or behaviour that does not fit in the safe space.

Examples of ground rules you may like to include are:

- Respect one another
- Respect the opinions of others
- No personal attacks
- Take a non-judgemental approach
- If discussion includes personal stories anonymity must be preserved
- Everyone has the right to pass
- Disclosures must remain confidential within the learning environment unless legislation requires reporting.

Scene 1 – Please Don't Text Me



[Watch Scene 1](#)



Lou

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you think Lou is feeling about the breakup?
2. How do you think Billie is feeling about the breakup?
3. Who could Lou and Billie speak to if they are feeling upset about their breakup?
4. What could Lou and Billie do to help cope with tough emotions during a breakup?



Billie

Key points about breakups:

- Breakups can be difficult. When going through a breakup you might feel confused, sad, lonely or angry. These feelings are all normal.
- It's important to respect the decisions that a person makes and respect that each person needs their own space and time apart.
- If you are going through a breakup, it is not helpful to do things like:
 - Shout at the other person
 - Send angry text messages, emails or phone calls
 - Post rude things on social networking sites
- Things you can do to feel better during a breakup could be:
 - Do things that you enjoy
 - Hang out with friends
 - Speak about your feelings
- If you are worried or have questions about a current relationship (romantic or not) it is helpful to speak to someone you trust like a friend, family member or counsellor.

Scene 2 – We All Have To Start Somewhere



Alex



Sam

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you think Alex felt when Sam asked him on a date? Why?
2. How do you think Sam felt when Alex didn't say yes?
3. How do you think Sam felt after Alex explained that he just wanted to start out as friends?

Key points about dating:

- Some people have romantic or sexual feelings towards another person. These are normal feelings. Some signs that you might have sexual or romantic feelings toward somebody may be:
 - You spend time thinking about them when they are not around
 - You feel nervous when you spend time with them
 - You dream and think about kissing and cuddling them
- There is always a risk of rejection when starting a new friendship or romantic relationship. Asking someone on a date takes courage. It is normal to feel nervous.
- If the person that you ask on a date doesn't want to go on a date with you it's important not to get angry at them. There could be many reasons why that don't want to go on a date with you. It's important that you give them space and respect their decision.

Scene 3 – You Never Want To Have Sex With Me



[Watch Scene 3](#)



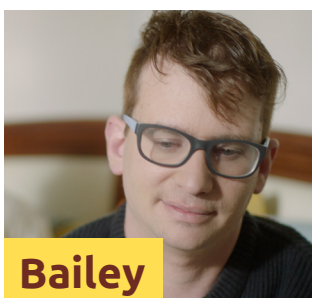
Casey

Questions for discussion:

1. Is it ok for Casey to say no to sex with Bailey?
2. How is Casey communicating her decision about having sex with Bailey?
3. Do you think Bailey is respecting Casey's decision to not have sex? What could he do differently if anything?
4. Why is asking for consent important, even in relationships?

Key points about sexual relationships:

- Some people in a romantic relationship may decide to have sex. Others may decide to wait until they are ready or not to have sex at all.
- People may decide to have sex for lots of reasons such as:
 - To show how much they like or love each other
 - To have fun and feel good
 - To have a baby
- Before having sex with someone you have to get their consent. Consent means to give permission or agree to do something. It's important that both people agree and give their consent. Consent can be communicated verbally and non-verbally.
- Even if you are in a romantic relationship with someone, you have to ask for consent every time you want to touch them - especially in a sexy way.

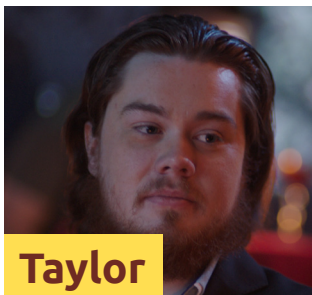


Bailey

Scene 4 – You're Just Saying That



[Watch Scene 4](#)



Taylor

Questions for discussion:

1. What are some feelings somebody might have when going on their first date?
2. How do you think Taylor was feeling when Joe was talking to the bartender?
3. What are some first date safety tips that you could give to Taylor and Joe?



Joe

Key points about first dates:

- Going on a first date with someone can make you feel lots of different emotions. You might feel nervous, excited or awkward. Your emotions might also change as the date progresses.
- Open communication is important in maintaining a healthy relationship, even on the first date.
- When choosing a location for a first date, it is best to meet in a public place where there are other people around. This way you will not be alone and risk an unsafe situation. Remember you don't know the person well yet.
- It is important for your safety to tell someone you trust where you are going and the time you plan to be finished with the date.

Making VALIANT

VALIANT is produced by filmmakers and actors/talent with disability.

The content for VALIANT was developed during six 3-hour workshops run through Bus Stop Film's Accessible Film Studies Program. People with disability actively participated in conversations about consent and healthy relationships. These conversations evolved to become the screenplay for VALIANT, written by Emily Dash. The film was directed by filmmaker Claudia Bailey, who also ran the workshops. Students from Bus Stop Films participated as cast and crew.

Artist Meaghan Pelham from Studio A created the artwork.

About Bus Stop Films

Bus Stops Films is a not-for-profit organisation, teaching adults with disability and others from marginalised communities film studies. Bus Stop Films uses filmmaking and the film industry to change community attitudes globally around the rights and contribution to society of and by people with disability.



About Northcott

Northcott is leading disability services provider with more than 90 years of experience. Our Sexuality and Relationship Education service is the first of its kind to be offered by an Australian disability organisation. Developed following customer demand to lift the lid on taboo topics, our educational services have been created to support people with disability to achieve their sexuality and relationship goals and desires.



Need more information or support?

Northcott's Sexuality and Relationship Education Service is for people with disability aged 16 years and over. It provides one-on-one counselling to explore relationships, educational workshops to build understanding about relationships, sexual health and sexuality, and support to access safe and non-judgemental sexual experiences.

Contact Northcott on 1300 605 996 or northcott@northcott.com.au.