

“I’M THE BOSS OF ME”

*Saskatoon Sexual
Assault & Information*

in Partnership with:

Saskatoon
Public
Schools



Caring to Learn - Learning to Care



PUPPET SHOW

Written by L.C. Ratcliffe

Script adapted for:

**Holy Cross High School Pilot Project
RBC/College of Nursing Faculty Development Grant**

**Produced by the
Saskatoon Sexual Assault and
Information Centre
in association with The Red Cross**

The “**I’m The Boss of Me**” puppet production has been adapted to arm students with developmental disabilities with the knowledge of what abuse is, why it is wrong, how to get help, and to let them know it is never their fault. This story also deals with some of the emotions that abused children face when experiencing or revealing abuse. Some of these emotions may prevent them from seeking help. This story, of four friends, shows youth how strong and courageous abused kids are. It also reveals that courage is one of the most important tools abused children have. It will help them ask for help.

A puppet show such as this cannot be brought into the classroom without preparation for the students, including providing an opportunity to debrief following the show. A number of presentations/discussions are planned prior to the presentation of the puppet show.

It is imperative that teachers be comfortable with the content of the presentations and puppet show. Using proper terminology and normalizing the use of this terminology will help students who are being abused feel more comfortable in talking or reporting. It is possible that the play might trigger emotions as well as bring about disclosures of abuse. Resources and support will be provided if needed. Information will also be provided for teachers on how to handle a disclosure and what procedures to follow when a child has disclosed abuse.

Sexual Assault is a sensitive topic and precautions need to be taken before starting any lessons of this manner. It is important to make yourself aware of your school’s policy on abuse.

If you have any questions please contact:

Lee Murray, College of Nursing

Phone: (306) 966-6239

or

Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre

Phone: (306) 244-2294

I'm The Boss of Me

A Narrator Enters.

Narrator: Does anyone know what abuse is? Abuse is anything mean and cruel that is done to someone, to hurt them on purpose. There are three kinds of abuse: Emotional, Physical, and Sexual.

Emotional Abuse: is when somebody's feelings get hurt by either getting teased, ignored, put down, or left out from groups and/or group activities... This is always done on purpose.

Physical Abuse is when someone hurts you... physically. Some examples are: getting bullied, punched, pushed, or kicked. This is always done on purpose...

Sexual Abuse is when someone is forced or tricked into looking at or touching someone else's sexual body parts (private parts). It also includes being forced or tricked into letting someone else look at or touch their sexual body parts. The sexual body parts are: the vagina, penis, breasts, bum (and sometimes the mouth?). This is always done on purpose. Abuse is against the law.

Today, we are going to see a puppet show about sexual abuse and learn how teens can ask for help.

A BELL rings. Vince, Tala and Jason all come out talking and mumbling to each other (hanging out at the mall, playing Wii)

Narrator: Tala, Jason and Vince are all in high school. School has just ended for the day...

Carrie enters. She keeps to herself.

Obvious turn toward Carrie

Jason/Vince: Hey Carrie. *(vary what you say – Yo, etc)*

Carrie: (Quietly) Hey guys.

Tala: Carrie, why weren't you in school all week?

Carrie ignores them and exits. Tala, Jason and Vince watch her with perplexed looks.

Tala: I'll talk to you guys tomorrow. I'm gonna see what's going on.

Jason and Vince watch Tala off.

Vince: I wonder if Carrie knows about the math test on Monday?

Jason: I don't know(**Pause**)
Let's go to the mall, Vince (**humor**).

Vince: Okay.

The boys exit. The Narrator enters.

Narrator: Is Carrie mad? Is something wrong? Sometimes, when our friends or people we know are acting different we wonder why. Sometimes it's for a good reason and sometimes not. What would you do if something seemed

different about someone you knew? When Tala sees her friend Carrie acting different from normal, she wants to know why.

Carrie enters. The Narrator leaves. Tala enters.
(stage right) (stage left)

Tala: Carrie! Wait!

Carrie stops.

Carrie: **(Quietly)** Oh...hi Tala.

Tala: Why didn't you want to talk to us back there?

Carrie holds back and picks up her pace again.

Carrie: **(quietly)**.I... I have to get going. I'm late for supper

Tala: But we always walk home together.

Carrie: **(starts to get angry)** I just don't feel like it today.

Tala: **(tentatively)** Are you mad at me?

Carrie: No

Tala: **(Checking)** Are you sure you're not mad at me? **(insistently)**

Carrie: **(Angrily/explosive!)** I said "no" already!

Tala: **(angry)** Whoa man! You don't have to bite my head off!

Carrie: **(Pulling back)** I'm sorry. I don't feel very good.

Tala: **(concerned)** Are you feeling sick?

Carrie: No.

Tala: Hey, you left your math book at my house.

Carrie: So.

Tala: So...you know we have a math test on Monday, right?

Carrie: **(mind is elsewhere)** What? Oh yeah. I was gonna come and get it.

The girls walk in momentary silence. Pause. Carry shrinks, looks down

Tala: Carrie?

Carrie: What?

Tala: What's the matter with you? Is something wrong?

Carrie: No

Tala: You can talk to me Carrie. What's the matter?

Carrie: Nothing.

Tala jumps in front of her.

Tala: **(loud)** You're sure being weird. Something's wrong!

Carrie: Okay, I'll tell you but it'll sound stupid.

Tala: **(softer)** So what!

Carrie tries to build up her courage.

Carrie: You know I was at home all week, right?

Tala: Right.

Carrie: **(lower tone)** Well, my step-dad was there all week too.

Tala: Your step-dad? Didn't he go to work?

Carrie: **(keep low tone)** No. He stayed home with me.

Tala: Oh. That's good. . . *isn't it?***(responding with Carrie's tone)**

Carrie doesn't respond. Turns away, puts head down.

Tala: Well, isn't it?

Carrie turns and confronts Tala with her issue.

Carrie: Tala, have you ever felt creepy around somebody?

Tala: Creepy, What do you mean?

Carrie: Like you feel gross or dirty or something.

Tala: **(Thinks, shakes head)** No, I don't think so .

Carrie: **(PAUSE:Trying to find the right words.)** Well, my Dad . . .he comes into the bathroom when I'm in the bathtub, and he walks into my room when I'm getting dressed, and he never ever knocks. I turn around . . . and he's there. Sometimes, he even hugs me when I'm changing. So it makes me feel . . . you know, weird.

Tala: **(empathetic) OH SICK!** I wouldn't like that.

Carrie: Is that stuff normal? Does your dad come into the bathroom when you're having a bath? Does he hug you when you have no clothes on?

Tala: No Way! My dad always knocks or else just talks to me through the door.

Carrie: I wish my step-dad would just do that. Do you think it's stupid, 'cause it makes me feel . . . gross?

Tala: **No.** I think it's kinda creepy. You should tell someone.

Carrie: Well, I tried to tell my mom, but she just got mad at me and said I was . . . well, she said, "don't make up stories."

Tala: **(surprised)** She said that?

Carrie nods her head.

Tala: What are you going to do then?

Carrie: I dunno.

Tala gets an idea.

Tala: **(upbeat)** Hey, ask if you can sleep over at my place tonight.

Carrie: **(low tone, thinking)** Ummm . . . my mom might not let me.

Tala: **(Trying to persuade her)** Just ask her.

Carrie: **(more positively)** Alright.

Carrie and Tala exit. The Narrator enters.

Narrator: Carrie is being sexually abused by her step-dad and she needs help. Think about who you would talk to if you needed help. It takes a lot of courage to tell somebody that someone is hurting you and giving you a "creepy" feeling. Remember, it's not your fault. You need to talk

to somebody who will help you. You can try to tell a friend but they can't really make the abuse stop. It needs to be an adult. When someone is hurting you, it is important to tell because it needs to stop. It is also important because the person hurting you also needs to get help so they won't hurt anyone else. Keep telling until somebody believes you.

The Narrator leaves. VINCE KNOCK "at the door"-under table. Tala approaches the door and opens it.

Tala: Hi Carrie.

Carrie: Hi. My mom said that I could stay for supper, but I have to be home by 8 o'clock.

Tala: Good. I phoned Jason too. He's going to come over for supper.

Carrie: (stops - mad) What? What'd you do that for?

Tala: Hey, don't freak out! I only told him you weren't mad at us and that you were worried about something else.

Carrie: (Suspiciously, confronting) You didn't tell him about my step-dad, did you?

Tala: (Assuringly, serious) No, but he had some stuff happen to him last year. Kinda like what happened to you.

Carrie: What happened to him?

Tala: He'll tell you.

Carrie: (defensive) Okay, but I'm not telling him about my step-dad. I'm embarrassed already because I told you.

Tala: You don't have to tell him anything. He said that he would tell you about what happened to him.

Carrie: Okay, but I'm still not telling him.

Tala: Okay. Let's go and see what mom's cooking.

Tala and Carrie leave. The Narrator enters.

Narrator: Your friends may have had a problem like yours. Many kids experience abuse. You're not alone. Your friends may have some ideas about how to get help.

The Narrator leaves. VINCE: another KNOCK at the door. Tala and Carrie enter.

Tala: Oh, that must be Jason.

Carrie: (One last time) I really, really don't want to tell him . . . anything. (nervous, hides behind Tala)

Jason enters, STAGE LEFT.

Jason: Hi guys.

Tala: Hi.

Carrie: (nervous, uncomfortable) Hi.

AWKWARD PAUSE...

Tala: You guys want a pop?

Carrie: Yeah.

Jason: Sure.

Tala leaves. PAUSE: Carrie look shy, uncomfortable.

Carrie: Did Tala tell you what I told her?

Quick banter / humour, this section

Jason: No. She just said that she wanted me to tell you about what happened to me last year. She said it might help you.

Carrie: Are you sure she didn't tell you anything?

Jason: I'm sure. Okay?

Carrie: Okay. Well?

Jason: Well, what?

Carrie: Well, what happened to you?

Jason: Well. . .

Pause

Carrie: Well?

Jason: Hey, don't hassle me.

Carrie: Sorry.

Jason: No, I'm sorry . . . it's . . . just . . . hard to tell people.

Carrie: Okay, I'll be quiet.

Jason: Okay (deep breath). . . here goes. Last year, I had a really big secret. And, let me tell you, keeping a secret between a kid and an adult is a bad idea, especially if that

secret gives you the “creepy” feeling. Anyway, I had this secret I was supposed to keep from everyone.

Carrie: (impatiently) What was the secret?

Jason: Well, give me a minute, and I'll tell ya.

Carrie: Okay.

Jason: Last summer, I was hanging out in the front yard when I saw a big truck pull up. It was one of those big moving trucks. There was a man and a woman moving into the little yellow house across the street. You know the one?

Carrie: Yeah, I know that house. I think I remember those people.

Jason: (more upbeat, remembers good things) Anyway, back to my secret. The guy was Ralph, and he would always buy me **a pop, some chips and dip** and let me watch big screen **TV** and play **video games** at his house. He even bought video games for us to share. He said I was “special” and he liked it when I came over ‘cause he was lonely and they had no kids and his wife was always at work.

Carrie: Sounds like fun! I guess.

Jason: (tone changes) It was. Then it started to get weird.

Carrie is suddenly more drawn into his story.

Carrie: What happened? Did he stop buying you things and letting you hang out at his house?

Jason: No, nothing like that. Ralph still let me play there and stuff, but then he started wanting me to do *other* stuff too. He wanted me to do stuff that made me feel ... really... bad ... you know, “weird...gross”.

- Carrie: Weird, gross? That's how I felt too.
- Jason: Yeah. Ralph wanted to play games with me that were a bit creepy (Hard to talk) with kissing and touching and stuff. I told him I didn't want to come over to his house anymore.
- Carrie: (shocked) WOW! That is creepy. What did he say?
- Jason: He called me some names and said that if I told anyone they wouldn't believe me. He also said that if I told my parents they would be mad at me and they would not love me anymore. . . And I believed him.
- Carrie: (surprised, shocked) You didn't tell anyone?
- Jason: Not right away. I stayed in my room a lot. My mom asked me why I didn't go over there anymore. I thought my mom might find out about the creepy games and get mad. So I started hiding in the park and telling her that I was at Ralph's house. She stopped asking questions. I thought my secret was safe.
- Carrie: Did your mom find out you were lying? Did she find out you were in the park?
- Jason: (shakes head) No. Cause one day, Ralph saw me at the park and told me that if I didn't come to his house he would tell my mom and dad that I stole some video games from his house! I was scared that my mom would think I was stealing, so I started going to Ralph's house again.
- Carrie: (slightly angry) **Whoa!** He sounds really Nasty!
- Jason: He was, but then I got all mixed up. Like, ...he still bought me stuff and let me use his games and watch his TV. Only, I had to play his "touching games" too. He was nice to me most of the time. But he'd get mad when

(lowers tone) I didn't want to play his... Touching games.

Carrie: Sounds confusing to me.

Jason: It was. I mean – I didn't want my mom and dad to be mad, but Ralph still bought me stuff and played fun games with me. I didn't want him to be mad at me. **(confused)** I kinda felt stuck.

Carrie: Why didn't you tell someone?

Jason: I was too scared that Ralph would tell my mom and dad that I was stealing, and that **(embarrassed, ashamed)** everyone would know what I was doing at Ralph's and that Ralph would get mad at me, and then Ralph would get into trouble.

Carrie: So – what happened? **(with urgency)** What did you do?

Jason: Well, one morning Vince phoned to see if I could go to a movie at the mall. I really wanted to go, but Ralph had a special present for me and I had promised to go to his house. I was too scared to say “no” to Ralph. So, I told Vince that I couldn't go.

Carrie: I'd be scared too.

Jason: I was really mad. **(express with anger)** ‘Cause I really wanted to go with Vince.

Carrie: Mad?

Jason: Yeah, and I was really sad too. Then my mom came into my room. She said that I looked upset and asked me what

was wrong. I guess she could tell I was upset about something.

Carrie: Did you tell her about Ralph?

Jason: **(lower tone)** Not right away. I was too scared.

Carrie: **(with empathy)** Yeah.

Jason: But, she said if something was wrong then I should tell her. I told her it was a secret, and that I had promised not to tell *anyone . . . especially* her and Dad. She told me that I should *never* keep secrets about things that make me feel *weird or dirty*, from them.

Carrie: Do you think that's true?

Jason: **Yeah**, I do *now*. I thought my Mom would get mad at me if I told her what happened. She said she would never hurt me or try to make me feel bad. She said I could trust her. Then she gave me a hug and said that she and my Dad love me very much.

Carrie: So, did she help you?

Jason: Yeah, she did. My mom listened to me, and said that I didn't *ever* have to listen to Ralph again, and she wasn't mad at me at all. She said that adults who hurt kids are wrong – not the kids.

Carrie: So, what happened next?

Jason: I could tell that she was upset, but she gave me a big long hug and said I could invite Vince over the next day and **(with excitement)** *watch movies* and *order pizza*. She also was gonna take me to a counsellor for some help. She said that I didn't

have to worry about Ralph anymore and that things would be taken care of. (Remorsefully) I **really** wish he hadn't done those things to me.

Carrie: (Nodding – pause, sigh) That's kinda like my step-dad, but my mom wouldn't listen to me. She doesn't think I know anything. She only listens to my step-dad, cause I'm "just a kid".
(**defeated**) I wish she would help me like your mom helped you.

Jason: If your mom doesn't believe you, maybe your teacher can help – or someone else. . . like a counsellor.
(**reassuringly**) They'll understand.

Carrie: Tala said I could talk to her mom . . .(**unsure**) if I wanted to.

Jason: (**encouraging**) That's a good idea.

Carrie: (**scratching head**) I don't know. Maybe I should tell someone else...like my Grandma?

Jason: (**encouraging**) Yeah that's a good idea too.

Carrie: (**smaller tone**) But I'm still scared and embarrassed.

Jason: I know. But you want your step-dad to stop what he's doing to you, right?

Carrie: Yeah.

There's a moment of silence.

Jason: (**gets great idea**) You know what Carrie? "You're the boss of you."

Carrie: What do you mean?

Jason: That's what my counsellor told me. It means that I'm inside this body and **no one else is!** (**upbeat**) So I have the final say.

Carrie: The final say? You mean like **I'm** the boss of **everything** that happens to me?

Jason: Yeah. Like, if someone tries to make you do something that makes you feel bad, (**say directly to children**) remember who's the boss and say "**NO**". And if something bad does happen, you can find people to help you.

Carrie thinks about this.

Carrie: (**A light bulb sparks**). That's a good idea. "I'm the boss of me". So if I don't want my step-dad to look at me, I have to find someone to help me make him stop.

Jason: Right. You have to tell someone.

Carrie: (Coming around, thinking). I think I'll tell Tala's mom, and she'll be able to help me. (pause) Thanks for telling me, Jason.

Jason: Yeah, no problem.

Tala enters.

Tala: There's some pop on the table. Supper's ready too.

Carrie/Jason: YAAAY! (yay, I'm starving, awesome, great!!!!)

They all exit.

Lights go down.

Lights come back up.

The Narrator enters.

Narrator: If you are being hurt in any way, always go to an adult that you can trust. Remember, you can stand up for yourself. And it doesn't hurt to have your friends nearby, for support.

Narrator leaves.

The SCHOOL BELL rings. The sound shifts to hallway activity. The sound of footsteps and kids voices echo.

Carrie, Tala, Jason and Vince enter.

Vince: Well, see ya guys. I'm gonna go out to hang at the mall. Come on Tala.

Tala: Are you guys coming?

Jason: Yeah, we'll be there in a minute.

Vince and Tala exit.

Jason: Carrie, did you talk to Tala's mom after I left?

Carrie: Yeah, I did and she phoned my mom and they had a long talk.

Jason: What did Tala's mom tell you?

Carrie: She said that what my step-dad did to me was **sexual abuse and it** was wrong and that I did the right thing. (Pause) Thanks for telling me what happened to you, Jason.

(appreciative) Now I know that I am not the only one.

Carrie turns out to the audience.

Carrie: So – if you are ever in a situation where someone forces or tricks you into doing things with your body that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can say “**NO.**”

Jason turns to the audience.

Jason: That’s right. Remember, Sexual Abuse is wrong, whether you’re a boy (points to self). . .

Carrie: Or a girl (points to self) . . . or a little kid . . . or a teenager, or even an older person.

Jason: Remember, there is help out there for you. But you need to speak out and tell the truth. Remember, it is never your fault if you’re sexually abused.

Carrie: I am glad I spoke out.

Jason/Carrie: There are always people who will listen.

The Narrator enters and stands between them...

Narrator: If you ever need help and are too scared to ask for help, or if you don’t know who to ask for help, or if you are in danger, there are some places that you can call for help. We are giving you a hand-out today, with some numbers on it where you can call for help: the Sexual Assault Centre, the Kid’s Help Line, and 911. If you can’t remember these places, look in the front of the phone book for the “Abuse Help Lines”.

And remember, it is important to tell the truth. Tell an adult you trust. If they don’t help you, tell someone

**else. Keep telling someone until you are listened to
and you get the help you need.**

Vince and Tala come back on stage.

Carrie: I'M THE BOSS OF ME...

Jason: I'M THE BOSS OF ME...

ALL: ...(everyone point hands out to the children)

AND YOU'RE THE BOSS OF YOU.

Lights go down.

THE END

“I’m The Boss of Me”

Discussion Questions

1. Icebreaker: What was your favourite puppet? What did you like about her/him? (Ensure all kids answer)
2. What do you think it means to say, “I’m the Boss of Me?” Practice saying it. Each child has a turn to say, “I’m the Boss of Me.”
3. The Play talked about Courage. What is courage? (*Discuss) In the play the narrator says: “It takes a lot of courage to tell.” Why do you think it takes a lot of courage to tell?
4. When is it NOT okay to keep a secret? (Note: Jason’s mom says it is not okay to keep a secret when it makes us feel bad)
5. In the play Carrie told her mom and she didn’t believe her. What do you do if you tell and that person doesn’t believe you? What could you do if that person believed you but did nothing? (Talk about people you could tell)
6. In the play, Jason tells Carrie “You’re the boss of you. It means that I’m inside this body and no one else is. So I have the final say ... Like, if someone tries to make you do something that makes you feel bad, remember who’s the boss and say “NO”. And if something bad does happen, you can find people to help you.” Does everyone understand this?