



Resolution Affirming NFTY's Stance on Preventing Sexual Violence

Submitted to NFTY General Board at NFTY Mechina 2017 Asefah

Background: NFTY, as a teen powered movement, has the power and obligation to take a stand against sexual violence; specifically sexual violence that takes place within the youth community. While this issue has been at the forefront of discussion in the media and amongst young people in general, NFTY has not yet engaged with this topic in an official capacity. Though our affiliate organizations (WRJ, RAC, URJ, CCAR, ARJE, etc...) have also identified this topic as being important, many of their official stances and statements were created in the early 1990s and are therefore outdated and lack the specific focus on youth that NFTY provides for the Reform Movement. NFTY would be the first Reform Jewish affiliate organization to take a formal stance on our role in the education on and prevention of sexual violence against young people. NFTY, being comprised of young people, has the unique opportunity to prevent sexual violence from being perpetrated, prepare potential bystanders to effectively take action, and dispel misconceptions about how and to whom sexual violence occurs.

WHEREAS according to the US National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in four girls (24.7%) and one in six boys (16%) are sexually abused before they reach the age of 18; and,

WHEREAS according to the United States Department of Justice, an estimated 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by minors; and,

WHEREAS the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) has passed three resolutions on sexual violence, including: Resolution on Violence Against Women (1990), Resolution on Domestic Violence (1990), and Resolution on Women's Health (1993); and,

WHEREAS the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) has created their own stance on this issue by passing the Resolution on Violence Against Women in 1991; and,

WHEREAS the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) has created their own stance on this issue by passing the WRJ Resolution on Crimes Against Women in 1991; and,

WHEREAS the obligation to repair the world, *tikkun olam*, is one of NFTY's Thirteen Principles and is mentioned in NFTY's mission statement; and,

WHEREAS another of NFTY's Thirteen Principles is *tzedek*, the obligation to work for justice for all; and,

WHEREAS it is against NFTY's B'rit Kehillah to perform any act that may be deemed as sexual harassment; and,

WHEREAS It is stated in the Torah that, "You shall not wrong one another; but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 25:17); and,



WHEREAS in 2009, President Obama become the first US President to declare April to be National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a tradition that has been continued every year since so far; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that NFTY affirms its commitment to the importance of protecting all students and young people from sexual violence and supporting survivors of sexual violence in its communities; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that NFTY strongly encourages its individual regions to take action on the issue of sexual violence and note it is highly recommended that such action in NFTY's regions include programming on the issue of sexual violence in order to better educate ourselves and our communities, and pledging to address and confront the issue of sexual violence; and,

LET IT BE RESOLVED that NFTY recognizes and affirms the definition of consent as defined by the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center: "When someone agrees, gives permission, or says 'yes' to sexual activity with other persons. Consent is always freely given and all people in a sexual situation must feel that they are able to say 'yes' or 'no' or stop the sexual activity at any point."; and,

LET IT BE RESOLVED that NFTY formally recognizes and pledges to take action and educate about sexual violence during National Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April; and,

LET IT BE RESOLVED that at the end of each school year, graduating NFTY seniors will be asked to commit to upholding consent on campus by signing a pledge at their final event; and,

LET IT BE RESOLVED that NFTY commits itself to creating significant cultural changes in its own communities around the issue of sexual violence; it is suggested that such a cultural change manifests in the following ways:

- I. Actively working to break down pre-existing stigmas regarding sexual violence and abuse through conversation and education
- II. Evaluating possible disparities in regional dress codes
- III. Working to eliminate systems or games that encourage objectification in a sexual context; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the URJ, in consultation with the NFTY Executive, is asked to revise the language in the Brit Kehilah to include an explicit statement about refraining from any non-consensual interactions of a sexual nature"



Respectfully Submitted,

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Respectfully Co-Signed,

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