

School Employee Sexual Abuse Scenarios

These stories are based on actual cases. For each scenario:

- What made the students vulnerable to grooming by the perpetrators?
- What grooming behaviors and manipulation techniques did the perpetrators use?
- What enabled the perpetrators to continue abusing the students?

1. Joseph is a high-school student with special needs. He would come to school looking unclean and wearing the same clothes every day. He confided in his teacher that his parents “didn’t get along” and “ignored him.” The teacher told Joseph that he could stay with him at his house. He bought Joseph gifts, including new clothes. The teacher began to rape Joseph--at the house, in hotels, in classrooms, and in the car. Joseph feared disclosing the relationship because of what he imagined would be severe consequences from his parents. The teacher was sure no one would find him guilty of assaulting Joseph since he was a married heterosexual man with children.

2. Chloe was somewhat surprised when her highly popular science teacher gave her his phone number. As he walked by Chloe’s desk, he would manage to brush up against her. He commented that he liked the way she looked in shorts. He started texting her with flirtatious messages, and soon called her at night at her home. He asked about her sex life and texted her about sleeping with him. At school, the teacher didn’t hide his affection for Chloe. He didn’t have to. The school did nothing about it despite the concerns other teachers expressed to the principal.

3. Laura’s family didn't have the money to support her after-school activities. But in her sophomore year, Laura’s tennis coach offered to give her free private lessons. Laura’s parents were grateful that the coach could support Laura’s passion for tennis. He began lavishing Laura with gifts like designer tennis shoes. They began spending less time at the school tennis court and more time at his house. She was 15 the first time they had sex. The coach told Laura he could get her a scholarship to attend college. Their relationship continued until Laura graduated.

4. The elementary school gym teacher enjoyed watching the boys play in soccer matches on- and off-campus. He started taking some of the boys out for lunch, and later for bowling, movies, and shopping. He would drive the boys around in his SUV, buying them small gifts, and inviting them individually to his home, where he would sexually abuse them. The boys didn't tell their parents because they were embarrassed and didn't want to get the teacher in trouble. They were also afraid that no one would believe them or that they’d get in trouble for reporting the abuse. The teacher later started hosting sleepovers, sometimes sleeping in the same bed as the boys.

5. Anne is a high school biology teacher in a small town. One of her students, Brian, was a tall 14-year-old who played on the basketball team. Anne e-mailed Brian, offering to assist him with

his homework after school, first in her classroom and later at her home. Anne started asking Brian about whether he had ever made out with girls, requesting him to describe the details. She befriended Brian's parents who allowed him to take an overnight trip with her to a state science fair. They had sex on that trip, and continued having sexual relations in hotels, in her car, and in her classroom during her free period. He experienced depression for many years because of this relationship.

6. Travis worked as a teacher's aide in a special education classroom. He developed a fascination with Jim, a 12-year-old student. Jim has Down Syndrome, which makes it difficult to perform routine activities and limits his ability to communicate and protect himself. Travis asked the teacher if he could be assigned to help Jim with classroom activities. Soon Travis was escorting Jim to the bathroom, at first waiting outside, and later going inside with Jim where he groped and fondled Jim's genitals. Jim understood that Travis was his "special friend." Travis told Jim to keep their relationship a secret, otherwise Travis would no longer be his friend. The abuse continued for an entire year during which time Jim became withdrawn and exhibited signs of trauma.

7. Tanya was a physical education teacher who coached the girls' basketball team, which included Sandy, a 15-year-old student. Sandy's parents had divorced, and she felt that her mom was more interested in dating other men than caring for her. Tanya frequently complimented Sandy on her athletic talent and suggested they meet on weekends for extra training. Sandy told her mother that her coach believed she could win a basketball scholarship to college but that it would require more intensive, private instruction. Tanya then invited Sandy to an out-of-town weekend training seminar, and they shared a hotel room. Sandy's mother became alarmed when a friend told her that she saw Tanya and Sandy embracing in an empty classroom. Sandy's mother confronted Sandy, and during a heated argument Sandy announced that Tanya made her feel special and she was in love with her and wanted to live with her after graduation.

8. The third-grade teacher turned off the lights and started to show a video to his class. Sitting at the back of the classroom with the class facing the screen at the front, the teacher put seven-year-old Christine on his lap. He slid his hands into her underwear and put his fingers in and out of her vagina during the entire movie. Throughout the school year, the teacher abused Christine about once a week. A custodian witnessed and reported one of these incidents. It wasn't the first time the district had heard about the teacher's behavior. But each time, the district allowed him to return to the classroom with a warning to not touch female students. Instead of thoroughly investigating the incidents to make sure that the teacher did not keep abusing children, the district increased his access to students by putting him in charge of an after-school activity.

9. Cooper is a talented and bright 6th-grade student with a mild developmental disability. When his father-figure uncle died at the beginning of middle school, Cooper became noticeably withdrawn. His male math teacher noticed this and offered Cooper extra tutoring at lunch time. They met in a classroom in a remote part of campus that was scheduled for remodeling. Soon the teacher began showing Cooper pornography and took him to an isolated bathroom where

he repeatedly raped him over two years, threatening to kill Cooper if he told anyone. The teacher convinced Cooper that his mother approved of their relationship and that he would be keeping a watch on Cooper from his nearby home. Cooper's emotional health worsened but he did not disclose the abuse for several years. He asked to continue his education at home and has not recovered from this trauma. Cooper's perpetrator, married to a woman, committed the abuse shortly before reaching retirement age.