

Sam's Story:

A Story of Healthy Relationships

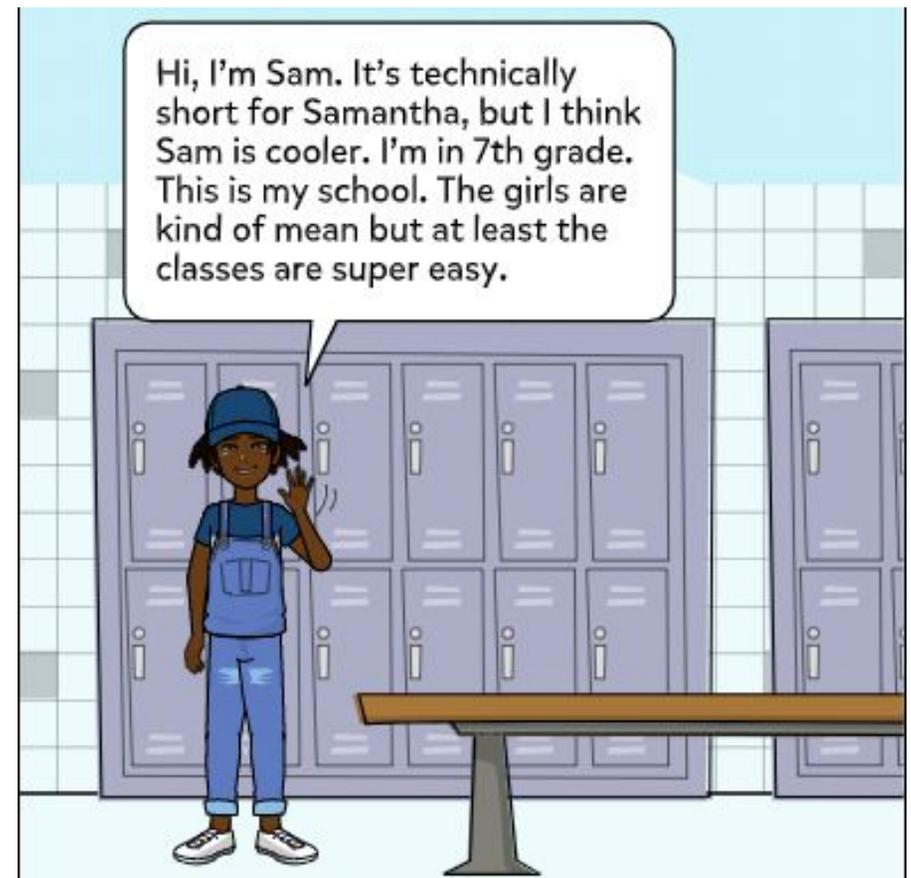




Directions:

1. Print out the book or work on a separate piece of paper
2. Every few pages there are some questions to answer. Think about these questions and either write 1-2 sentences or draw a picture as your answer
3. Feel free to doodle or decorate the book pages as you read

Hi, I'm Sam. It's short for Samantha, but I think Sam is cooler. I'm in 7th grade. This is my school here. It's not my favorite. The girls are kind of mean but the classes are super easy, so that's something, right?



This is where I live. I live with my dad and Susan. Ewww, Susan! Dad wants me to call her mom, but she's NOT! Dad and I were perfectly fine until Susan moved in.

She gets mad at me all the time and yells at me for no actual reason. She even throws things sometimes when my dad isn't around! She hates me so much. I think she's even trying to send me away. I am never enough for her!



Hey Readers!

Color this super good time my Dad and I had. While you're doing this remember some tips of a healthy relationships:

- They never pressure you into something you do not want to do
- They respect the boundaries you set
- You always feel safe
- There is open communication



Once You Have Colored, Keep Reading

My science teacher got mad at me today because I put the chemicals together to make a volcano. Well at least all of my classmates thought it was funny. She still sent me to the principal's office which didn't bother me until I realized that they might call Susan.

When I get to the office, Mr. J, the principal is there. I don't like him. He keeps looking at me real creepy. I beg him not to call Susan because I don't want to be sent away. Susan will scream at me for not being a good enough science student and then talk about what a burden I am for having her come and pick me up from school.





Hey Readers,

Spot the warning signs or 'creepy' phrases/words you see on the next page that show the relationship between Sam and Mr. J is inappropriate.

Here is a hint: We will highlight them in red too!

So Mr. J leaned in real close with his coffee breath and told me we could **make a deal so he wouldn't have to call Susan.** I mean, it sounded pretty creepy but I kept hearing the sound of Susan's stupid voice inside my head, so I said "what's the deal?"

He said, **"Don't scream,"** as **he touched my hand.** Then he started **touching me near my training bra** which was really weird. I think I should yell, but **he is the principal; so whatever he does must be OK.** At some point I stopped thinking about it and focused only on the wall which had pictures of past students. I wonder if they could jump out of the pictures and help me. He sent me back to science class as he said, **"Don't tell anyone what happened or else."**



I went back to science class with a note and kept my head down for the rest of the day. I wasn't too sure how to feel after what just happened. Am I angry? Am I upset? Guilty?

I tried not to think about it when I got home, but of course, Susan started yelling at me and I felt even worse. I couldn't do anything right anymore.

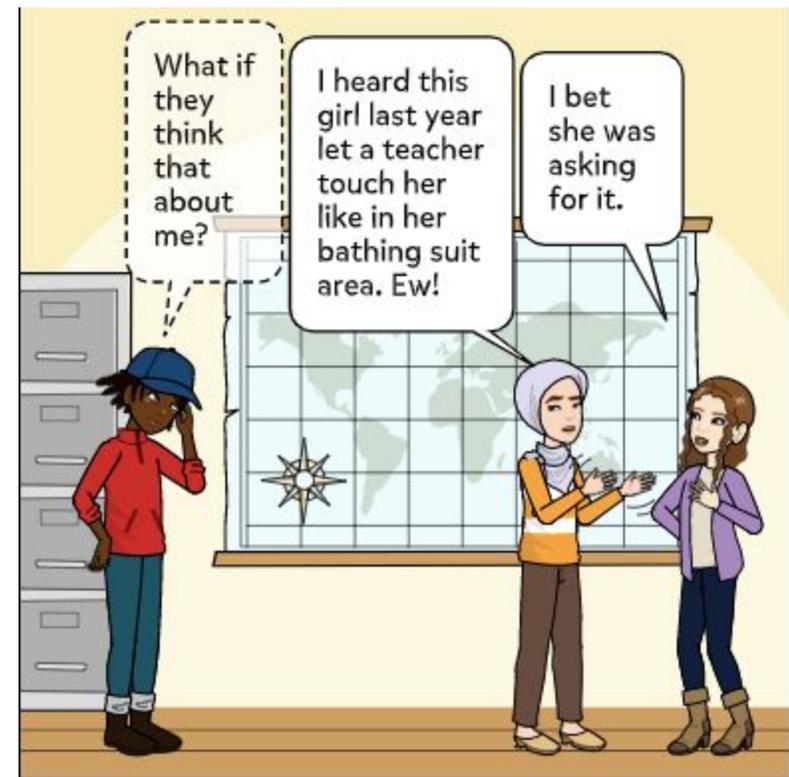
When she was done yelling, she sent me to my room. I was alone and I couldn't stop thinking about what happened in the Principal's office with creepy Mr. J.

It made me uncomfortable, Mr. J touching me near my bra. I'm not sure if it was OK but adults are older which means I have to do what they say--right? I don't know if I should tell someone?

Dad's still gone, he went on some business trip a couple days ago and told me he'd be back tonight. I think I'll tell dad. He'll know what to do.



I was walking to my English class when I heard my friends talking about a girl who let a boy touch her like Mr. J did to me. They said she was asking for it and no one would talk to her after it happened. What if Dad thinks that about me? What if they send me away?



I sulked on the walk home. I feel like I have to tell someone because I can't keep what happened secret. I'll try to talk to Susan because Dad is still away. I tried rehearsing what I would say to Susan and how to explain what happened but nothing seemed right. I was getting closer to the house and I still had no idea what to say. Even so, I came home to see Susan knitting.

"Hey Susan. Can I talk to you about something?" I said.

"Hi Sam. What?" She replied sourly as she looked up at me. We never talked about anything unless it was whether the laundry was done or not.

"Well it's about the principal." I replied.

"Did you get in trouble? Samantha Green, I swear if you got sent to the principal's office, we are sending you away." She yelled.

I thought we'd at least get to the talking but I guess not. Susan would never understand or help me. No one would. Not even dad. I shouldn't have said anything.

"No, it was just that we have to make sure to order a yearbook this year, before the deadline." I quickly said.

"Fine, ask your dad to order one." She said as I left.





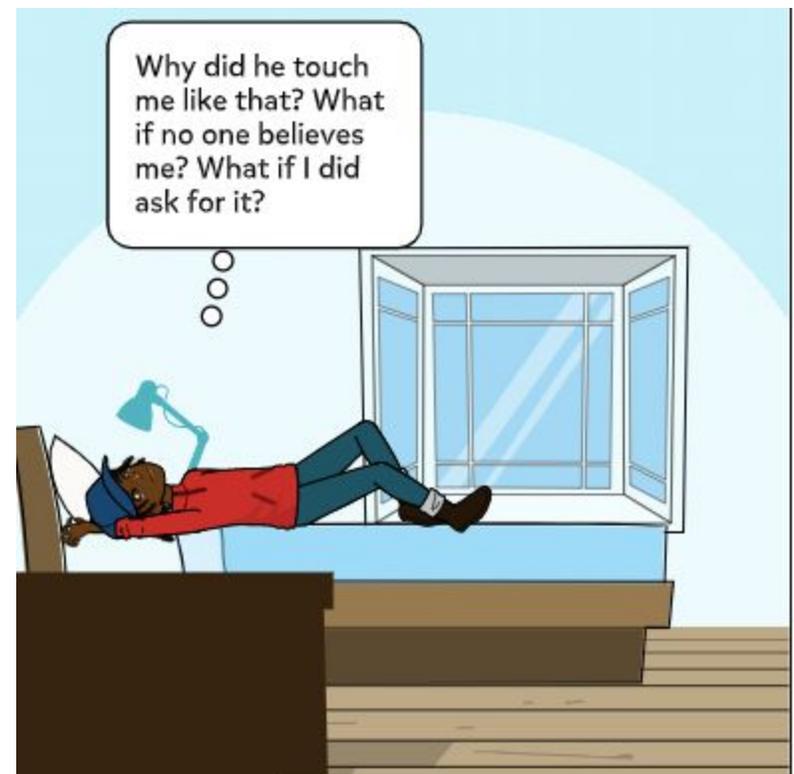
Hey Readers,

Here are some questions to answer about Sam's story so far:

1. What did Susan do that made Sam feel like she couldn't tell Susan about Mr. J anymore?
2. Do you think Susan should have reacted a different way? What would you have said to Sam?

I didn't sleep last night. I can't stop thinking about what happened with Mr. J. I can't get what happened out of my head and I can't stand it! It's driving me crazy and I don't even know how to feel. I don't understand why he would touch me like that.

After what happened with Susan, I'm too scared to talk to anyone else about it. What if they all react like she did? It wasn't my fault. I wasn't asking for it. I think I'll just keep my head down and try and forget about it. Right? Maybe it is all over. Maybe I can put this all behind me.



I took the long route to school today. I needed some time to think. It was a relatively cloudy day and most likely going to pour on me on my way home.

Suddenly though, the sun started to come out and a light breeze made its way past me. I felt so refreshed and happy to be outside. I felt free.

That's when I realized, how could I let someone get away with ruining this feeling of freedom for me? Mr. J should not have any control over me or how I feel. I don't care if I get sent away or yelled at by Susan, I deserve this happiness every single second of every day. I want to tell someone what happened.



That moment I decided to go see Ms. Sanders, my guidance counselor. I am going to tell someone. Ms. Sanders has always been there for me, and she would understand it wasn't my fault. I was walking so fast that I started running into the school and the security guard yelled at me but I didn't care. This needs to be said, right now. I burst open the door to the guidance office and paused. I caught my breath for a second and politely asked if Ms. Sanders was around. Ms. Sanders opened the door and brought me into her office.

“What’s going on, Sam?”

“Ms. Sanders, I’d like to talk to you about something that happened because I’m not sure it was right.”

“Alright, talk to me, Sam.”

“I went to the Principal’s office the other day because I accidentally mixed some liquids in Science class.” I said quickly.

“Alright, that’s okay, accidents happen.” Said Ms. Sanders.

“Right I know, but when I got to Mr. J’s office, he... did something.” I started getting anxious.

Mrs. Sanders asked me, “What happened?”



I felt really upset as I said, “I asked him not to call my stepmom, Susan, because I didn’t want to get in trouble. So he told me he would make a deal with me... if I let him touch me in a private part of my body.” At this point, I was crying.

Ms. Sanders looked at me for a couple of seconds. She was calm as she sat down next to me.

“But I never said yes. I never agreed to the deal. It just happened. I feel so guilty. I didn’t know who else to go to; my stepmom wouldn’t listen and my dad’s away.” I cried. “Oh, Sam, you have nothing to be ashamed of. This was not your fault. He was an adult and took advantage of you. You are an incredible young woman, you know that right? Most kids struggle to find this kind of courage to speak up. I’m so proud of you for coming to me.” Ms. Sanders told me.

“Really?” I asked. “Of course.” She said as she comforted me with tissues and even a doughnut.





Hey Readers,

Here are some questions to answer about Sam's story so far:

1. What did Ms. Sanders do that Susan didn't when she talked to Sam?
2. Why is it important that Sam talked to Ms. Sanders?
3. What does Sam now know about what happened with Mr. J?

The next few days were a bit blurry. I had to tell a lot of cops what happened. I know they were there to help, but it was still difficult. Some teachers were really sweet; like Ms. Sanders who walked me to class. Other teachers and students were not so nice and thought I made up what happened. But, Ms. Sanders was there the whole time to tell me I did the right thing.

I still felt disgusted. I still felt violated. And now everyone knew what happened. But at least Mr. J got fired and I will be keeping the other girls in my class safe; even if they don't know it.

Outside of school, there are many resources available to help me. I started going to a support group for other kids my age who have experienced similar situations. We talk about how we feel and how our weeks have been.

They all tell me, "Even if people don't believe you, it doesn't mean you are not telling the truth."
They say "You did the right thing no matter what anyone says."



I walked home to see Susan standing in the doorway.

“Hey Sam.” She said.

“What, Susan?” I replied, with a little sourness.

“Listen, I just wanna say that you did the right thing. You stood up for yourself and because of you lots of other girls will feel much safer.”

I didn't really know what I was expecting, but that certainly wasn't it. Susan is... being nice to me? I know it's not an exact apology but this is probably the closest I'm gonna get with her.

“Thanks, Susan.” I replied, a little more polite than I had meant to say it.

“Hey, I know you and I don't always get along, but I am really sorry you couldn't trust me enough to tell me what happened with Mr. J. I want to be there for you from now on and I want you to feel like you have someone to trust. Even if that's not me. I still want to be sure that you have someone. Please let me know if I can do anything for you.” Susan said.

“Thanks. I will.” I replied as we both smiled at each other.





Hey Readers,

Here are some questions to answer about Sam's story so far:

1. What did Susan do to support Sam? Was Susan's relationship with Sam healthy or unhealthy before they had an honest conversation? Why?
2. Why is it so important to have a trusted adult to talk to like Ms. Sanders?

I think I did the right thing.

Nah, I KNOW I did the right thing. No one should ever have to deal with an adult who abuses their power like Mr. J did. I trusted him and he did not do the right thing.

I feel much better now that I told someone, even though it was scary and risky.

I know now that it didn't just help me but kept so many other girls safe so Mr. J could never touch them inappropriately. I hope I can help other girls be honest and aware about sexual abuse in the future. That's what I learned happened with Mr. J. He abused me and I am not afraid to tell anyone because it was not my fault.





Hey Readers,

Here are some questions to answer about Sam's story:

1. What do you think would have happened if Sam never told Ms. Sanders?
2. Who could Sam have talked to if she didn't know Ms. Sanders?
3. If you were Sam's friend and she told you what happened, how could you respond?
4. What other strategies can Sam use to recover from her trauma?

Hey Readers!

Color this great day I had! While you're doing this look at some of the red flags we found in Sam's and Mr. J's Relationship. Did you highlight these red flags?

- Mr. J manipulated Sam's fear of calling Susan
- Mr. J used his position of power as an adult and the principal to abuse her
- Mr. J threatened her so she was too scared and ashamed to tell anyone at first

