



MAKING CONNECTIONS...

Don't Touch My Hair By: Sharee Miller

As caretakers of young people, making connections and continuing the conversation is helpful to developing critical thinking skills and extending compassion. This includes helping us broaden our understanding of how issues of immigration, race, incarceration, gender, and more are linked to sexual violence. This connection is crucial when thinking about how to keep our communities safer and work towards a future free from harm.

Aria loves her hair. It's soft, bouncy, and grows up towards the sun like a flower. However, Aria has one problem. "Don't Touch My Hair!" takes the reader through a story of Aria's struggles as people touch her hair without permission. Aria tries to make a great escape as people grab onto her strands of soft and bouncy hair much to her dismay. Finally, Aria has a moment where she tells people to not touch her hair and to ask permission. This leads to more people asking her and Aria feeling comfortable to say yes or no.

Consent applies to many interactions from hugs to touching someone's hair. For Black children and Black girls, it is important that we support them around their bodily autonomy. While seemingly well-intended, Black hair has been commodified, which means it is seen as an object rather than a part of a whole person. This form of tokenization or singling out a feature of another race for the purposes of self-serving interests is dehumanizing not uplifting. This can lead to the erasure of boundaries and consent practices. While people loved Aria's hair, she did not want them to touch it. Aria's moment of anger was justified as she is the boss of her body.



RESILIENCE
EMPOWERING
SURVIVORS
ENDING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE



CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

1 Why didn't Aria want people to touch her hair? Who decides who is allowed to touch Aria's hair?

Is it easy or hard to say no? Is saying no to certain adults like teachers or parents easy or hard?

2

3 Do you think it is easy or hard for girls to say no? Do you think girls cry too much or get upset easily? If yes, why?

Have you ever given someone a touch they do not want? How did they feel? How did you feel?

4

5 Race is a way to describe the color of your skin. This means white, Black, or brown. People might treat others differently based on their race or the color of their skin. Do you think the color of Aria's skin or her hair makes it harder for her to say no?

