



MAKING CONNECTIONS...

The Boy & The Bindi **By: Vivek Shraya**

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.

The book, "The Boy & The Bindi" brings us the story of a young boy who is interested in his Ammi's bindi. Bindis, are traditionally worn by women and girls of South Asian descent to represent one's culture, religion, or even marital status. However, the boy in the story said he wanted a bindi to stay safe and true. He was able to wear a bindi by asking his Ammi.

This moment of expressing himself brings the boy peace as he describes feeling calm and how his bindi is like a "third eye." Children are often socialized even before birth about what their gender is and how to express it. The Centers for Disease Control cited strict adherence to gender roles as a risk factor for sexual violence. It is important to have conversations from a young age, specifically with boys, around gender and sexuality.



RESILIENCE
EMPOWERING
SURVIVORS
ENDING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE



CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

1 Have you ever been told you could not dress up or play with something because it belongs to "girls"?

What are "boy" things? How do boys dress? How do they walk? What feelings do they have? Do you always feel those things?

2

3 What is a bindi? Have you seen a bindi before?

In the story, the boy's friends ask him about his bindi. How do we know what questions are okay or not to ask someone? Has someone ever asked you a question about your identity?

4

5 Just like actors in a movie, sometimes boys and girls feel like they have to play a "role" in being a boy or a girl. What are things we feel like we have to play with, dress as, or say because we are a boy or a girl?

