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# COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

FOR EDUCATORS OF JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

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FALL 2023



## **Land Acknowledgement**

WHC has sites in Winnipeg on Anishinaabe Land which is also the heart of the Metis Nation. We recognize and honour that this work has been done for generations on this Land by the Women and Two-Spirit People, the Aunties and Kookums of many Indigenous Nations who meet and gather in what is now Treaty One Territory. We work towards creating a more just, equitable world by sharing health information with youth.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Body Image**

### **Body Image Outline**

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Body Image
- » Body Image Activity
- » Body Image Videos
  - Why don't I like the Way I Look?
  - Bodies: Different Shapes and Sizes. All Beautiful
- » Body Image Spectrum
- » Body Image Reflection
  - Letter to my Body
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### **Session Goals**

- » Normalize a range of body sizes.
- » Explore body image and body image issues in youth.
- » Explore media's harmful messaging around bodies and the promotion of Eurocentric beauty standards.
- » Define the concept of body image (from negative to positive) and illustrate that body image is fluid and affects everyone.
- » Redefine beauty.

### **Note to Educators**

As Educators, the ability to critically think about constant media messaging and body image issues is key. Modeling holistic understanding of body acceptance is a powerful tool. This goes beyond exercise and "eating right" messaging, and often includes challenging this oversimplification.

## 1. Check-in

**What is one part of your body that you like?**

### Resources:

- » [amaze.org](http://amaze.org) and [teentalk.ca](http://teentalk.ca)
- » Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Program at HSC: 204.958.9660 under the age 16.

## 2. Introduction to Body Image

When we talk about body image, we are talking about how people feel about their bodies and not about how they look. How we feel about our bodies can affect our whole health. We know sometimes body image issues can be difficult to talk or hear about and part of this discussion may include eating disorders. For some their body doesn't match how they "know" themselves to be when it comes to their gender. If you need to put your head down, it's okay as long as you don't interrupt other people from learning.

We will discuss body image issues and explore how we can support one and other in moving towards body acceptance. Body acceptance isn't about you learning to love every part of your body, but rather making peace with and caring for who you are.

## 3. Body Image Activity (True to False)

**There is a true and false sign on the wall and I'm going to read some sentences and want you to walk to the sign or in-between to where it best reflects your thoughts.**

- 1. Twins can look exactly the same and feel completely different about their bodies.**
  - » True, our body image is about how we feel about our bodies not actually about what we look like.
- 2. I think most youth feel good about their bodies and the way they look.**
  - » Mostly false due to the unrealistic beauty standards that we compare ourselves to on social media, in some families, mass media etc.
- 3. Many companies make money off of people being unhappy with their bodies and encourage them to buy stuff to feel better.**
  - » True and what are some things we are encouraged to buy? Make up, clothing, surgeries, diet products, brand name clothing, skin and hair products etc.
- 4. The diet industry cares about our health.**
  - » False, most diets fail and then people blame themselves. Restrictive diets are not good for our health.
- 5. Our society welcomes and accepts all bodies.**
  - » Mostly false again due to unrealistic beauty standards that we compare ourselves to on social media, in some families, mass media etc.



- 6. I can recognize when body shaming is happening and challenge it.**
  - » Some things you could say are, “that’s not ok,” “we don’t make fun of people’s bodies,” and “all bodies are beautiful.”
- 7. There is social media and celebrities that celebrate a large range of bodies, ages, skin colors, abilities.**
  - » True, such as... Lizzo’s Yitty Clothing Line, Rihanna’s skin care line Fenty Beauty. Mindy Kaling, Demi Lovato, Jameela Jamil, Sam Smith, Drake, Vin Diesel, Robert Pattinson. Stars like Lizzo, for example, and current media depictions are improving on this. However, in the grand scheme of things they are not the norm and these people are often considered exceptional.
- 8. A person’s body size is a good measure of how healthy they are.**
  - » False, what we eat, and drink, how we sleep, our emotional wellbeing, our friendships are better markers of our health.
- 9. What is considered beautiful is the same throughout the world.**
  - » False, for example certain clothing is culturally specific. What is in fashion in one part of the world is different than in other areas and the same goes for hairstyles, piercings etc. There is still however, because of colonization by Europeans and multinational companies the influence of western beauty standards meaning that white, tall, thin for women, muscular, tall for men are idealized.
- 10. When many people try to change their bodies, once they stop, their body returns to its former shape.**
  - » True, often once a person stops whatever intervention, their body returns back to its former shape.
  - » It’s important to think critically about the messages we get around our bodies, and how we should see ourselves because all our bodies deserve care and acceptance.
- 11. Being trans is a body image issue.**
  - » False, being trans is not just a person feeling uncomfortable in their body or having a negative body image. That being said, some trans people struggle with body image issues as a result of not being born into their ideal gendered body.
- 12. It’s important to be patient with my body when it doesn’t perform the same as other people’s bodies.**
  - » True, many of us have high expectations of what our bodies can and should do and compare it to others. Take time to listen to your body when it’s hurting or needs more care. Understand that bodies are not all the same and do work differently.

## 4. Body Image Videos

### Why don't I like the Way I Look? Video

#### Debrief

**What was the main message?** Many people are heavily influenced by media and as a result feel bad about how they look.

### Bodies: Different Shapes and Sizes. All Beautiful! Video

#### Debrief

**What was the main message?** We are all beautiful in our own way and focusing on our gifts and abilities is also helpful.

## 5. Body Image Spectrum<sup>i</sup>

**When it comes to your body image, think about how you feel about:**

- » your relationship to your body?
- » your relationship to activity?
- » your relationship with food?

**Let's think about what having a negative body image might be like.**

**How might they feel about their body?** They may feel bad or hate their body and they may spend a lot of time comparing themselves to other people. They may try to change their body without putting their wellbeing first.

**How might they feel about activity?** They may over exercise and not give their body breaks or listen when it is injured or not exercise enough because they feel shamed or embarrassed.

**How might they feel about food?** They may constantly think about food and their body. This may mean eating more than their body needs, or not enough and at risk of developing disordered eating or an eating disorder.

Eating disorders are a group of mental illnesses that can seriously affect how someone sees their body and their relationship to food. People can and do recover from eating disorders but it takes support. Someone with disordered eating is doing some of the same behaviors as someone with an eating disorder, but at a lesser frequency or to a lower degree. Both eating disorders and disordered eating can negatively affect someone's emotional, physical and spiritual health.

**Now let's think about what having a positive body image might be like.**

**How might they feel about their body?** They will be comfortable with themselves and provide their body with care.

**How might they feel about exercise?** They will move their body in a way that feels good, take breaks as needed and focus on having fun.

**How might they feel about food?** They will listen to their bodies needs and eat a variety of food that they enjoy.

We can see how having a negative or positive body image can affect our lives, and many of us do not live at either one of these extremes. We may feel good about some parts of our body, and bad about others. We also might move around depending on what messages we are receiving.

Being able to accept our bodies takes support. Surrounding ourselves with positive people, those who accept us for who we are can help boost how we feel about ourselves. If we're feeling good about ourselves we're more likely to treat ourselves well and resist harmful messages.

### **6. Body Image Reflection (see handout)**

- » **Draw or write:** What does ideal beauty and attractive mean in your culture/ community and your family?
- » **Draw or write:** What does ideal beauty and attractive mean in your friend group?
- » **Draw or write:** What does real beauty mean to me?

### **A Letter to My Body**

Take a few moments to think about all the things your body can do and what you like about your body. Write a note to yourself and keep it in a special place for when you need a reminder. How can we feel good about ourselves? What makes me happy?

### **How can we make others feel good about themselves?**

- » Some examples can be complimenting them on all the ways they are amazing, listening to them, enjoying each other's company, talking positively about all types of bodies, being critical of the media messages, valuing what people can do, how they think and who they are.

### **Debrief**

Sharing with the class should be optional. Notice the range for ideal beauty and what real beauty can mean. Remember that real beauty is more than about looks.

### **7. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » Bodies come in many shades, shapes and sizes.
- » All bodies deserve care.
- » Many feel bad about how they look comparing to others and media images.
- » Find ways to feel good about ourselves and make others feel good.
- » We are all beautiful in so many ways.



## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Body Image***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

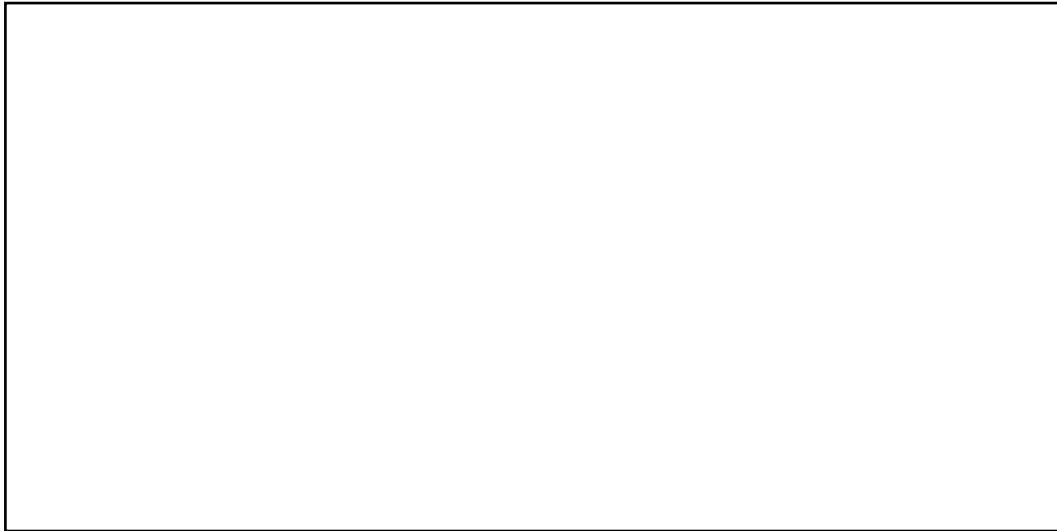
#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.4.7.A.3 Explain the benefits of using the decision-making/problemsolving process for making responsible and health-enhancing personal decisions.
- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » 11.MH.2 Examine media influence(s) on self-image and behaviour.
- » 11.MH.4 Examine the signs and symptoms of mental-emotional health issues related to stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. (Eating Disorders only.)
- » K.3.S2.B.4 Investigate the contributions self and/or others can make to community/global health and sustainable development.
- » K.4.S1.A.1 Examine personal strengths, values, and strategies for achieving individual success and a positive self-image.
- » 11.MH.2 Examine media influence(s) on self-image and behaviour.
- » K.4.S2.A.3 Analyze factors that influence personal and or group decisions for action, healthy lifestyles.
- » K.4.S2.A.1 Assess personal attributes and talents across a variety of domains, and assess how each contributes to self-esteem/self-confidence.
- » S1 5.1.1 Discuss factors that influence self-concept.
- » S1 5.1.7 Define and discuss perception and its influence on oneself and others.
- » S1 5.2.1 Analyze information from several sources to determine society's changing perception of beauty.
- » S1 5.2.2 Describe unhealthy eating patterns and body-altering substance abuse, e.g., fad dieting, compulsive eating, anorexia and bulimia, steroids.
- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

## Body Image Handout

### *Body Image Reflection*

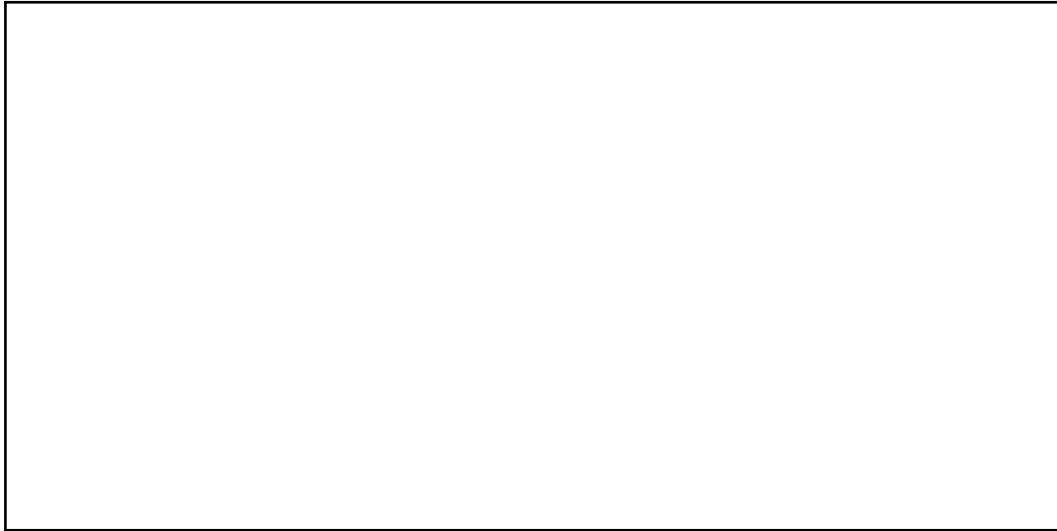
**Draw or write:** What does “ideal” beauty and attractive mean in your culture/community and your family?



**Draw or write:** What does “ideal” beauty and attractive mean in your friend group?



**Draw or write:** What does real beauty mean to me?



***A Letter to my Body***

Take a few moments to think about all the things your body can do and what you like about your body. Write a note to yourself about what makes you happy and feel good?

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What are two things that I can do to make others feel good about themselves?

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## Communication Skills

### Communication Skills Outline

- » Check-in
  - Check-in Reflection
- » Introduction to Communication Skills
- » Languages
- » 4 Types of Communication Styles
- » Communication Scenarios
- » Communication and Trust Mazes
- » Listening Activity
- » Difficult Conversations: 5 Ws, Tips, and Practice
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Discuss the importance of effective communication.
- » Emphasize the importance of trust and respect in relationships.
- » Discuss and practice different styles of communication: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive.
- » Practice sharing, listening and how to have difficult conversations.

### Note to Educators

A powerful tool we have as Educators is role modeling healthy communication styles, especially with stigmatized topics and in difficult situations. Our communication style can affect how others react to us and how effective we ultimately are in getting our ideas across. Knowing the difference between passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive communication will help youth identify their own tendencies and enhance their communication skills. Listening and sharing are also important skills that need to be cultivated.

Our dominant culture prefers to shy away from difficult conversations. Gender stereotypes, expectations, and assumed gender roles can create barriers to healthy communication.<sup>ii</sup> Teaching young people about the harms of gender roles (see gender literacy outline) and how to communicate effectively helps them maintain a range of healthy relationships.

## 1. Check-in<sup>iii</sup>

### Note to Educators

Checking in, by virtue of its nature, the sharing of power, time and space, embodies a feminist, decolonizing approach. When checking in, youth should be provided with a choice of speaking to writing down their responses and even passing at certain times. When it is a whole group activity, it is important to give each youth the space and wait patiently while the speaker collects their thoughts. As the educator is also required to check in, it is essential to model appropriate boundaries and authenticity. Authenticity is our expression of emotions, reactions, thoughts and ideas that are consistent with our internal experience.<sup>iv</sup> Youth need to see adults sharing feelings, difficulties, and most importantly how they are dealing with them in appropriate ways. Appropriate in terms of when difficult life circumstances are shared by educators, they are shared generally, without great detail, and the focus is on coping and what gets us through. As a result, youth may feel more connected to the adult and may empathize with what other youth may be going through. Most importantly, it will help them find their own authentic selves.<sup>v</sup> Finally, if a youth shares a concerning issue, such as self-harm, distress, abuse, violence, suicidal thoughts, etc. the educator should follow up ideally one-on-one, to assess the situation, provide resources and appropriate support.

**What is your name?**

**What are your pronouns? (optional)**

**How are you feeling?**

**What is something that happened?**

**If you could speak a new language for you, what would it be?**

**Check-in Reflection: What do you like/appreciate about check-ins?**

**Resource:**

» [amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org)

## 2. Introduction to Communication Skills

Learning how to have difficult conversations is a valuable skill that will help us throughout our lives. Communication is what we do to give and get understanding. It is the process of sending and receiving messages. Successful communication occurs when there is understanding. **Communication is talking and listening which is sending and receiving messages. Beyond the words, what do we use in communication?** Facial expressions, body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and these are all culturally specific. This means that what can be seen as the norm in one culture can be considered offensive in another culture. **Many people have a bicultural or multicultural identity and code switch between two or more languages and/or dialects of the same language as they speak. How many of you speak more than one language? Who can give us an example of body language or facial expression that is different than in our dominant culture here?**

### 3. Languages

**It is believed that languages began on what continent?**

Southwestern Africa      America      Australia

**How many languages are there in the world?**

1000      2000      6500      9000

There were 300 languages spoken on North America (Turtle Island) before colonization and now there are half. Because of this, there are language revitalization programs such as the Indigenous Languages of Manitoba founded in 1985 to preserve and support Anishinaabemowin, Ininimowin, Michif, Inuktitut, Dene, Dakota, Anishinimowin. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report also includes actions specific to Indigenous languages and revitalization that everyone can support.

#### **Why are languages important?**

We use them to express ourselves and they are a foundation of culture. For cultures that are oral societies like Indigenous Nations, the Nation's history is amassed for generations. Language holds stories, protocols, family histories, connections, worldviews, and more.

#### **Why are the words we choose important?**

Language is powerful. Words can really hurt people especially ableist, racist, sexist, sizeist, homophobic slurs. It makes other people look less human, so take care not to spread hateful words. Words are also how we show compassion, build relationships, and challenge hateful words. We can create belonging and inclusion simply with the language and words that we choose daily.

### 4. Four types of Communication Styles

We are going to talk about four different communication styles. All of them can be of use in specific situations. However, we are going to focus mainly on assertive communication which means saying exactly what you want in a considerate way. It can result in all people feeling they are heard and having some of their needs met.

#### **Passive**

- » Other's needs are put before their own.
- » Keep their feelings inside when something bothers them.
- » Can sound like they don't care, or don't have an opinion.
- » May say "sorry" a lot.
- » Say things like, "Ok"; "Guess so"; "Whatever"

**Aggressive**

- » Their needs are met at the expense of other people's needs.
- » Take their feelings out on others.
- » Can sound and act like a bully.
- » May not listen and yell, threaten, scare others.
- » Say things like, "You'll do it my way"; "Listen or else"; or become generally uncooperative or upset when things don't go their way.

**Passive-Aggressive**

- » Avoid or deny feeling by pretending to go along with others.
- » Let their feelings out behind someone's back.
- » Can sound sarcastic, snobby and manipulative.
- » May gossip.
- » Say things like, "Of course!" and later say to others, "Can you believe it?"

**Assertive**

- » Find a way to balance their needs with others.
- » Is open about their feelings and able to listen.
- » Can sound sincere and caring.
- » Is able to negotiate and compromise.
- » Say things like, "What about..?"; "This time we.. and next time we.."; "Is it fair?"

**5. Communication Scenarios (see handout)**

**Read the scenarios and match the response with the correct communication style: passive, aggressive, assertive, and passive-aggressive.**

We are going to work on matching the communication style with responses to the scenarios.

**Siri and Ray are at the store. Ray stuffs pants in their bag and doesn't know Siri saw. Siri responds by:**

- » Pretends not to notice and gets very quiet. – passive
- » "No way! Are you stupid?" – aggressive
- » "Can you put that back? I don't want us to get into trouble for stealing." – assertive
- » Smiles at Ray and then tells security that their friend is stealing. – passive-aggressive

**Pat and Jay are playing video games at Jay's house. Pat takes a beer from Jay's fridge. Jay responds by:**

- » "Sure I guess, it's no big deal." – passive
- » "Get out of my house." – aggressive
- » Goes along with it then tells the family that it's all Pat's fault. – passive-aggressive
- » "I know we've snuck beer before, but I don't want to get in trouble again." – assertive

**Terry and Kris went on a date. Terry likes Kris as a friend. Kris asks if Terry's free Friday. Terry responds with:**

- » "I'm happy to hang out as friends not more." – assertive
- » "Maybe another time." – passive
- » "I've got better things to do." – aggressive
- » "I would like to hang out." Then doesn't show up on Friday. – passive-aggressive

### **Debrief**

While assertive communication helps us meet our needs at the same time as respecting other's needs and rights, the other communication styles can also serve a function. Passive communication is helpful when we are in a dangerous situation like being robbed. Mildly aggressive communication is helpful when family members aren't listening to your needs or wants. Passive aggressive communication shows up when people do not feel safe openly stating their needs and feelings and is best when used less frequently than assertive communication.

### **6. Communication and Trust Mazes**

**Split the class into teams. Have each team choose one or two walkers. They will be asked to leave the room for the set up. Have the remaining youth create one obstacle course or maze using chairs, tables, books, etc. The walkers will have to walk through and around the maze while being timed. Once the maze has been created, let the walkers back in the room and make sure they are blindfolded/have their hoodies on backwards before they enter.**

- » The first walkers should be verbally led through their Maze by a few members of their team.
- » The second walkers should be verbally led through their Maze by a single (chosen) member of their team. The rest of the team must remain silent.

### **Debrief**

- » **What stood out for you?**
- » **What was helpful communication and what wasn't?**
- » **Was it easy to trust your guide?**
- » **What were some of your feelings in the Maze? Outside the maze? (stress, pressure, frustration, excitement, etc.)**
- » **Can we relate this to real life situations?**



## 7. Listening Activity<sup>vi</sup>

- » Have youth choose a partner. Have pairs choose a talker and a listener (or two if there are three people). Ask the listening partner to go outside the room with one educator/EA.
- » Instructions to remaining group: Your partner will come in and sit with you.
- » Talk for 3 minutes about anything: what your future plans are, your favourite TV show, your pets, etc., as long as it's not too personal.
- » Instructions to outside group: When you go in, sit with your partner. They will talk to you for 3 minutes. All they know is that it is their job to talk and yours to listen. Now you are going to listen differently for the 3 minutes.
- » First minute: Listen with all of your best listening skills which is be engaged, head nodding, not talking/interrupting.
- » Second minute: Start to become distracted gradually i.e. look around, lose interest etc.
- » Third minute: Keep listening, but do your best to make it seem like you are paying no attention i.e. look out the window, flip through your cell, etc.
- » Let the group know when each minute has passed.

## Debrief

- » **How did it feel to be the talker? What did you notice?**
- » **How did the you the talker respond to the various minutes?**
- » **How did you show you were listening in the beginning?** Body language, nodding, etc.
- » **How did you know they weren't listening?** Lack of eye contact, texting, acting distracted, etc. **What aspects of a listener make it harder to talk about a situation?** Feeling like you'll be judged, that they aren't interested, that they'll spread what you said, feeling uncomfortable with them, etc. When people who are dealing with oppression have multiple experiences of minute 3 it can make it harder to be assertive. That is why believing people especially when they are sharing experiences of discrimination or any kind of "tough stuff" is important.
- » Tell the whole group what the instructions were and give them a few seconds for the listener to apologize to the talker.
- » **How did it feel to be the listener?**
- » **Do most of us communicate in minute 1, minute 2, or minute 3?** Minute 2. It's okay if we aren't able to give great minute 1 style listening to everyone all the time, but it is important to let others know where you are at especially if they have something important to say. Even being honest and saying you are distracted or that you can't listen as well as they deserve and suggesting meeting another time or referring them to another person, a crisis line, a teen clinic, or a guidance counsellor is a good idea.
- » A simple way to improve and build healthy relationships is to give people our first minute attention as much as possible and communicate about it when we aren't able to.

## 8. Difficult Conversations: 5 Ws, Tips, and Practice (see handout)

Some conversations are really hard. You might have to say something that embarrasses you or hurts someone else. You may need to say something, but every time you think about it, you worry about how to say it, or how the person will react, or how things will change once you say what you have to say.

One thing to remember is that the clearer you are with yourself about what you want/need from the conversation, the easier it will be. By asking yourself a few questions beforehand, you can be better prepared. To remember, we are going to use the 5Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How).

### **Who?**

Who are you needing to speak to? How well do you know them? What do you think they are thinking/feeling about the situation? (Don't assume they see the situation the same way you do.)

### **What?**

What am I bringing to the conversation? Have I made assumptions that may not be true? Am I angry or have another challenging emotion that will affect the conversation? Do I have other intentions, like do I want to manipulate someone or something unfairly?

### **When?**

When are you planning to have this conversation? Make sure it is a good time for yourself and the other person. Make sure you're not overtired or stressed or busy. Make sure you have enough time to say what you want to say. Make sure you allow enough time for the other person to say what they need to say – sometimes you or they will need to go away and sort things out before finishing the conversation. Prepare for this as well.

### **Where?**

Where are you going to have the conversation? Where is a place that's comfortable/convenient for both of you like in a quiet place or a crowded room/hallway? Try to make sure it's not in a place that might trigger thoughts or emotions that don't belong in the conversation.

### **Why?**

Why do you want to have the conversation? What are you hoping to have resolved? What is an ideal outcome? What has been your part in creating the situation?

### **How?**

How will you approach the conversation? Make sure you are not bullying or manipulative. Try to stay level headed and calm. Try to bring forward the issue without an overwhelming amount of emotions attached. Try to admit your part in the problem.

### Difficult Conversation Tips

Once you have prepared for a conversation, there are a few tips for how to present yourself during the conversation itself:

#### **Be clear**

Know what the issue is and how it affects you and stick to these facts.

#### **Be open**

Simply ask questions about an issue and see what comes up.

#### **Listen**

Let the other person have their say. You might be surprised.

#### **Try to remain as calm as possible**

When challenging emotions get in the way, a conversation can quickly get sidetracked.

#### **Allow for silence**

Sometimes a hard conversation can be softened with silence. Given room to breathe, both people can stay calmer.

#### **Sum it up**

Make sure the conversation ends with you both having a clear idea of what comes next. If you need to verbally recap, then do so.

### Difficult Conversations Practice

**Have the youth create dialogue for both scenarios below and give them the choice to read them aloud or act them out. Then debrief accordingly.**

**Practice:** At home you would like... How will you talk about this with your family? What will you say? (Create a dialogue.)

**Practice:** It bothers you that a friend is... How do you bring this up with them and set boundaries? (Create a dialogue.)

### Debrief

- » What did you think of those scenarios?
- » What was helpful?
- » Remember discussing with others and then practicing often helps when we have difficult conversations.

## 9. Key Messages and Feedback Forms

- » Being an assertive communicator, that is being able to get our needs met while considering the needs of others, is an important life skill.
- » Skills can be learned with practice.
- » Listening well builds healthy relationships.

## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Communication Skills***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.4.6.B.2a Identify different styles of communication and their characteristics.
- » K.4.6.C.1a Determine strategies for sharing and expressing feelings in appropriate ways.
- » K.4.8.B.2a Describe examples of assertive behaviours for resisting negative peer pressure.
- » Grade 7 K.3.7.B.5b Develop strategies (e.g., conflict-resolution skills...) for avoiding situations (e.g., conflict between parents' and peer values, with the law, in competition, within school...) that can potentially lead to conflict and violence.
- » K.3.7.B.6a Establish safety guidelines to protect self and others from sexually abusive situations (e.g., pornography, incest, stalking, prostitution, sexual assault...).
- » K.3.7.B.6b Demonstrate an understanding of skills (i.e., problem solving, conflict resolution, communication, assertiveness, anger management skills) in dealing with case scenarios related to sexually abusive situations and ways to seek help.
- » K.4.7.B.2a Identify the characteristics (e.g., compliance/ conflict, confidence level, tone of voice, eye contact, body language...) associated with each of the communication styles (e.g., passive, aggressive, assertive...) and leadership qualities (e.g., enthusiasm, presentation skills, reliability, organization...).
- » K.4.7.B.3a Identify anger-management skills (e.g., use self-statements, participate in physical activities, write letters to express feelings...) as alternatives to aggression and violence.
- » K.4.7.B.3b Describe how conflict situations (i.e., change, new situations, negative group influences, dishonesty) affect personal behaviour and development (e.g., adapting to new surroundings or routines, making new friends, coping with change, being assertive...).
- » K.4.7.B.3c Review strategies (e.g., mediation, conflict resolution...), possible outcomes (i.e., win/win, win/lose, lose/win, lose/lose), and behaviours (e.g., compromising, negotiating, accommodating, blaming, avoiding, collaborating, consensus building...) for conflict resolution among friends and/or peers.
- » K.4.8.B.2b Identify roles and responsibilities (e.g., loyalty, commitment, support, respect, leadership...) in developing positive relationships (e.g., between friends, within families, in a sports team, band/choir...).
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.3b Examine effects of conflicts and the importance of seeing diverse sides of issues in developing meaningful personal and/ or team relationships.



- » K.4.S1.B.2a Identify communication skills and strategies that promote team/group dynamics.
- » S.4.S1.A.3 Apply interpersonal skills in case scenarios related to developing close, meaningful relationships.
- » S.4.S2.A.3 Apply communication skills and strategies in case scenarios for getting along with others in a variety of contexts.
- » S.4.S2.A.5 Apply stress-management strategies and communication skills for stress reduction for self and/ or others in case scenarios related to stressful situations.

## Communication Skills Handouts

### *Communication Styles*

#### **Passive**

- » Other's needs are put before their own.
- » Keep their feelings inside when something bothers them.
- » Can sound like they don't care, or don't have an opinion.
- » May say "sorry" a lot.
- » Say things like, "Ok"; "Guess so"; "Whatever."

#### **Aggressive**

- » Their needs are met at the expense of other people's needs.
- » Take their feelings out on others.
- » Can sound and act like a bully.
- » May not listen and yell, threaten, scare others.
- » Say things like, "You'll do it my way"; "Listen or else"; or become generally uncooperative or upset when things don't go their way.

#### **Passive-Aggressive**

- » Avoid or deny feeling by pretending to go along with others.
- » Let their feelings out behind someone's back.
- » Can sound sarcastic, snobby and manipulative.
- » May gossip.
- » Say things like, "Of course!" and later say to others, "Can you believe it?"

#### **Assertive**

- » Find a way to balance their needs with others.
- » Is open about their feelings and able to listen.
- » Can sound sincere and caring.
- » Is able to negotiate and compromise.
- » Say things like, "What about..?"; "This time we.. and next time we.."; "Is it fair?"

### ***Communication Scenarios***

**Match the response with passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive communication style.**

**Siri and Ray are at the store. Ray stuffs pants in their bag and doesn't know Siri saw. Siri responds by:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Pretends not to notice and gets very quiet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "No way! Are you stupid?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Can you put that back? I don't want us to get into trouble for stealing."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smiles at Ray and then tells security that their friend is stealing.

**Pat and Jay are playing video games at Jay's house. Pat takes a beer from Jay's fridge. Jay responds by:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ "Sure I guess, it's no big deal."
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Get out of my house."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Goes along with it then tells the family that it's all Pat's fault.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "I know we've snuck beer before, but I don't want to get in trouble again."

**Terry and Kris went on a date. Terry likes Kris as a friend. Kris asks if Terry's free Friday. Terry responds by:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ "I'm happy to hang out as friends not more."
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Maybe another time."
- \_\_\_\_\_ "I've got better things to do."
- \_\_\_\_\_ "I would like to hang out." Then doesn't show up on Friday.

## ***Difficult Conversations***

Some conversations are really hard. You might have to say something that embarrasses you or hurts someone else. You may need to say something, but every time you think about it, you worry about how to say it, or how the person will react, or how things will change once you say what you have to say.

One thing to remember is that the clearer you are with yourself about what you want/need from the conversation, the easier it will be. By asking yourself a few questions beforehand, you can be better prepared. To remember, we are going to use the 5W's (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How).

### **Who?**

Who are you needing to speak to? How well do you know them? What do you think they are thinking/feeling about the situation? (Don't assume they see the situation the same way you do.)

### **What?**

What am I bringing to the conversation? Have I made assumptions that may not be true? Am I angry or have another challenging emotion that will affect the conversation? Do I have other intentions, like do I want to manipulate someone or something unfairly?

### **When?**

When are you planning to have this conversation? Make sure it is a good time for yourself and the other person. Make sure you're not overtired or stressed or busy. Make sure you have enough time to say what you want to say. Make sure you allow enough time for the other person to say what they need to say – sometimes you or they will need to go away and sort things out before finishing the conversation. Prepare for this as well.

### **Where?**

Where are you going to have the conversation? Where is a place that's comfortable/convenient for both of you like in a quiet place or a crowded room/hallway? Try to make sure it's not in a place that might trigger thoughts or emotions that don't belong in the conversation.

### **Why?**

Why do you want to have the conversation? What are you hoping to have resolved? What is an ideal outcome? What has been your part in creating the situation?

### **How?**

How will you approach the conversation? Make sure you are not bullying or manipulative. Try to stay level headed and calm. Try to bring forward the issue without an overwhelming amount of emotions attached. Try to admit your part in the problem.



### ***Difficult Conversation Tips***

**Be clear**

Know what the issue is and how it affects you and stick to these facts.

**Be open**

Simply ask questions about an issue and see what comes up.

**Listen**

Let the other person have their say. You might be surprised.

**Try to remain as calm as possible**

When challenging emotions get in the way, a conversation can quickly get sidetracked.

**Allow for silence**

Sometimes a hard conversation can be softened with silence. Given room to breathe, both people can stay calmer.

**Sum it up**

Make sure the conversation ends with you both having a clear idea of what comes next. If you need to verbally recap, then do so.

### ***Difficult Conversation Practice***

**Practice: At home you would like... How will you talk about this with your family? What will you say?** (Create a dialogue and then share with the class by reading it aloud or acting it out.)

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**Practice: It bothers you that a friend is... How do you bring this up with them and set boundaries?** (Create a dialogue and then share with the class by reading it aloud or acting it out.)

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## Consent and Sexual Assault

### Consent and Sexual Assault Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Consent and Consent FRIES acronym
- » Understanding Consent Video
- » Age of Consent
- » Consent Wheel Activity
- » Sexual Assault and Support
- » Tobacco Teaching: Consent
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Define and explore consent and sexual assault.
- » Unpack consent messaging.
- » Explore the role abuse of power plays in sexual assault.
- » Provide sexual assault resources.

### Note to Educators<sup>vii</sup>

If youth disclose sexual abuse/assault we should respond with care and provide appropriate support. Let youth know the abuse was/is not their fault. Talking about abuse can be very hard and it may be the first time they are reaching out for help.

*Responding to Sexual Assault Disclosures, Practice Tips for Support Workers* by Klinic provides tips using a trauma-informed approach and helps survivors feel empowered by identifying options and resources. *You have Options: Help After Sexual Assault* is a resource on next steps for anyone who has been sexually assaulted. Review your school's policies to know what to do and where you can refer youth in the event of disclosures. For reporting protocols in Manitoba, see *Reporting of Child Protection and Child Abuse: Handbook and Protocols for Manitoba Service Providers*.

The Families Affected by Sexual Assault at New Directions (FASA) has been working in Winnipeg with families offering two programs: one for Families Affected by Sexual Assault and therapy for children under the age of 18 who have been sexually assaulted by someone who is not a caregiver or sibling, and the other for children under the age of 12 with sexual behaviour problems. For more information, call 204.786.7051, ex. 5262.

## 1. Check-in

**One activity I like to do with others is..**

**Resources:**

- » [amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org)
- » Klinic Sexual Assault Line is open for information, support, and for anyone who wants to talk about an experience, 24/7, 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631.

## 2. Introduction to Consent and Consent FRIES Acronym<sup>viii</sup>

We are talking about consent and sexual assault today. If some difficult feelings come up, please talk to a trusting adult in your life. If you need to put your head down, it's okay as long as you don't interrupt other people from learning. One big piece of all relationships beyond the one with ourselves is consent.

**What does that word mean?** Permission.

**What does sexual consent mean?** Sexual consent is agreeing to do something with someone else's body which includes activities like kissing, hugging, cuddling, touching someone's body.

**Consent is (FRIES)<sup>ix</sup>:**

- » Freely given - no pressure or manipulation
- » Reversible - can change their mind at any time. Check in if they do not seem into it anymore.
- » Informed - understand what they agree to
- » Enthusiastic - excited
- » Specific - clear about what exactly they agree to

## 3. Understanding Consent Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raxPKkIDF2k>

Let's watch this video to get a deeper understanding of consent.

## 4. Age of Consent in Canada

- » 16: They can say "yes" to sex with almost anyone 16 years or older.
- » 14-15: They can say "yes" to sex with someone less than five years older than them.
- » 12-13: They can say "yes" to sex with someone less than two years older than them.
- » Even then, a youth can't legally have sex with a person in a position of trust/authority i.e. like a coach, EA, supervisor because they have the power to affect their life.

This is to help prevent youth from being taken advantage of or exploited.

**However, being close to someone is about more than just age and what it means to be ready will be discussed in another session.**

## 5. Consent Wheel Activity

### Consent Activity or Wheel

**Consent Activity Part One** - Pass out 2 scraps of paper to participants and ask them to write two consent questions. It can be something like, "Want to chat/hang out later?"; "play video games?"; to anything romantic/sexual like kissing. It can be any activity two people can do together. Then fold them and put them in the envelope.

**Consent Activity Part Two** – Use the Teen Talk wheel to go through the responses as a large group having the participants figure out whether the phrase may communicate consent. [Let's play a game to practice consent \(teentalk.ca\)](https://teentalk.ca).

Debrief the activity and discuss any questions. Be sure to stress that there is no middle ground or "maybe" sign before we can act. Consent requires a clear and active agreement. In addition, communication involves much more than just words like a person's tone, facial expressions, body language and it's important to pay attention to those as well to be sure if the person is really saying yes.

## 6. Sexual Assault and Support

If someone doesn't say "yes," coercing them (pressuring them to turn their "no" into a "yes") is not OK. Just because people are in a relationship does not mean that they have the right to touch the other person.

- » No consent, sexual coercion and harassment are sexual assault.
- » Any time a person deals with a sexual assault, it's never their fault.
- » Talk to a trusted adult and know you are not alone.
- » People can and do heal from being assaulted.
- » The Klinik Sexual Assault Line is open for information, support, for anyone who wants to talk, 24/7 at no charge anywhere in Manitoba 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631.

## 7. Tobacco Teaching: Consent

Here's an Indigenous worldview of Consent. For the Anishinaabe, consent is foundational in the culture. Tobacco is used whenever asking for something of someone whether it's from a human or nonhuman being.

### Tobacco Teaching: Consent\*

Contributed by Vanessa AnakwudwabisayQuay, Peguis First Nation

In everything we do, we first ask using the gift of Tobacco. This form of consent is ancient knowledge and one of the first teachings of Anishinaabe (The People). Tobacco as a Sacred Medicine to be used throughout our lives. Tobacco is the first Medicine put here on Mother Earth for The People to use. It is made up and comes directly from Chi-Manitou's Odhay (Creator's Heart).

It is a great gift, a connection from the Great Spirit to us ensuring we have everything we need. We ask for something by putting our prayer and gratefulness in the Tobacco “making spirit” then offering it. Offering it means giving it back to the Earth by placing the Tobacco in Fire, in Water, to the Wind or by the Bush, Plant, Animal, Tree or Rock of which we are asking. When we ask we are showing respect for All Our Relations and humbling ourselves before Our Original Family showing that we understand our connection to All Life. Every Nation has their own way of teaching consent. Tobacco has infinite teachings.

### ***8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms***

- » Consent is a key aspect of relationships.
- » Sexual consent is very important and we all can practice it.
- » If a person has been sexually assaulted, it is not their fault and they are not alone; support and resources are available.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Consent and Sexual Assault***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.3.S1.B.5a Analyze issues related to violence prevention in a variety of contexts.
- » K.3.S1.B.6a Differentiate among the terms associated with abusive situations.
- » K.3.S1.B.6b Identify skills and community resources for addressing problems associated with sexually abusive behaviours.
- » K.4.S1.B.1a Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.2a Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.3b & K.5.S2.E.3b Examine the influences on making decisions for responsible sexual behaviour.
- » K.5.S1.E.3c & K.5.S2.E.3c Review personal responsibilities and sources of support with regard to sex-related health issues.
- » K.5.S2.E.2 Analyze the components in different case scenarios for building and maintaining healthy relationships.
- » S.4.S1.A.3 Apply interpersonal skills in case scenarios related to developing close, meaningful relationships.
- » 12.HR.1 Demonstrate understanding of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy, relationships, and discuss factors that might influence their development.
- » 12.HR.4 Apply problem-solving and decision-making strategies to identify and prevent the development of abusive relationships and/or to end unwanted relationships.
- » 12.HR.5 Apply problem-solving and decision-making strategies to recognize unhealthy relationships, and identify community supports and services to assist in the healthy resolution of relationship issues.

## Emotional Well-Being

### Emotional Well-Being Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Emotional Well-Being
- » Wellness Bingo
- » List of Feelings Relay Race
- » Emotional Body Activity
- » Emotional Response Scenarios
- » Pathways to Health
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Normalize and validate a range of feelings.
- » Discuss how and where feelings manifest for each of us in our bodies.
- » Explore wellness activities.
- » Discuss emotional response, coping and encourage use of healthy coping skills.

### Note to Educators

Many emotional and social concerns arise in youth and young adults. Even very young children can feel anxious and may have had overwhelming negative experiences. Consequently, by middle school, some youth are searching for support, a need which has only been amplified during the pandemic and COVID lockdowns.

For youth, naming and validating the distress they may be feeling and exploring ways to make it through challenging experiences helps enhance and build their coping skills. Also note, using the term emotional well-being is more accurate as all emotions are valuable and tell us something about ourselves.

## 1. Check-in

### One feeling you have and where you feel it in your body?

#### Resources:

- » **Kid's Help Phone & Text Line** - Confidential Support and Open 24/7, 1 800.668.6868 Text Line text "connect" to 686868, Online Chat 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- » **Hope For Wellness Line for Indigenous People** - Confidential Support and Open 24/7, 1.855.242.3310 and Online Chat

## 2. Introduction to Emotional Well-Being

Our emotional well-being is about being able to cope with ups and downs of our daily emotions. Our emotional well-being is tied to other aspects of our health like our physical and spiritual health. Going through big life changes like puberty, can greatly affect our feelings and emotional well-being.

Well-being and feelings can be hard to talk about especially when struggling. Participate in a way that feels OK but don't distract others. Put your head down if you need to. Talk to someone you trust if anything feels overwhelming. (Note: During this session, take note of who is having difficulty completing the activities and may need extra support.)

## 3. Wellness Bingo<sup>xi</sup> (see handout)

Hand out the Bingo. Have students go around and find \_\_\_ people to fill \_\_\_ lines. They can put their own name once. The first one to complete the task is the bingo winner.

### Debrief

**What do each of these activities have in common? Each square is an example of a wellness activity. We all have different activities that make us feel good and our wellness activities may change throughout our life.** There may be activities that you do for your wellness that aren't on this list. Especially when we are going through a hard time, it can help to think of what makes us feel good. Playing this bingo helps connect us to each other and learn things about each other which can also be a part of our wellness.

## 4. List of Feelings Relay Race

Explore a large range of feelings by having a 3 minute relay race with each group writing as many feelings as they can on a flipchart.

### Debrief

- » Go over the lists with the entire group acknowledging the large range of feelings we can have even though we often limit ourselves by using only a handful.
- » Often we use only sad, mad, OK, happy and homeostatic emotions such as tired and hungry when there's just so many more words to describe the many feelings we can have.



### ***5. Emotional Body Activity***

Hand out a piece of paper to each youth. Individually, on a piece of paper, draw a general outline/drawing/stick figure of yourself. Think of 5 recent feelings you had and where you felt them in your body. (Optional) Colour in the areas where you feel them on your body. For example, when I'm stressed my neck feels stiff so I'll color my neck orange.

#### **Debrief**

- » Sharing our drawing/feelings individually or as a group showcase should be optional.
- » Notice our feelings and how each of us experiences our feelings in different places.

### ***6. Emotional Response Scenarios***

In small groups, have youth answer the questions followed by a group discussion.

How do you feel and what is a helpful way to deal with it?

**Scenario 1: You're blamed for something you didn't do.**

**Scenario 2: Your good friend is happy to see you.**

**Scenario 3: You don't know why but you feel sad and others don't understand.**

**Scenario 4: You are jealous because your friend has something you don't.**

**Scenario 5: You want to hang out with your friends, but because of COVID you can't.**

**Scenario 6: Someone realizes how hard you worked on something.**

#### **Debrief**

It is important for everyone to recognize their feelings and figure out how to deal with them in a helpful way. When we are feeling overwhelmed there are three quick regulators that can help.

- » Splash very cold water on your face and the cold will shift your emotional state.
- » Get outside if you can and run as fast as you can as this should tire you out.
- » Taking six deep slow breaths in and out can have a calming effect.

## 7. Pathways to Health<sup>xii</sup> (see handout)

Have each youth fill out their own pathways then debrief as a group. Sharing with the class should be optional.

### Debrief

Hard times are a part of life, so it's important to find and enhance healthy ways to cope. It can take some time and work to develop, but can really help. When going through a tough time, it can be difficult to think of the coping skills we already have and use. **Let's think about what can help you get through a hard time.**

**Who do you like to talk to? (Validate anyone that the youth say, but also include the following resources).**

- » Talking to someone you trust: a friend, family member, Elder, teacher, counsellor, etc.
- » Call a phone line (Kids Help Phone: 1.800.668.6868: Hope For Wellness Line for Indigenous People 1.855.242.3310 and online chat. Clinic Crisis Line: 204.786.8686/1.888.322.3019 (24/7); Mention wait times and being on hold.
- » Manitoba Suicide Prevention and Support Line: 1.877.435.7170 (24/7).
- » Teen Clinics (see [teenclinic.ca](https://teenclinic.ca))
- » Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program (through referral by a teacher, counsellor, or yourself without a doctor's note with wait times)

### What activities do you like to do?

Some ways of coping allow us to reflect and/or release our feelings (e.g. talking, journaling, making music, art), and others help us to distract, numb, or avoid feelings (e.g. shopping, watching television, playing sports, etc.). Ideally, we do reflective and engaging as well as distancing or distracting activities when dealing with difficult or stressful times.

It is helpful to have a variety of coping skills. It can be good to think about activities that you can do by yourself, that you can do with other people, activities that are free and some that cost money, activities that take some time and some that are quick, things that take effort and things that are easy. That way, we have a mix of things to draw from.

### Note to Educators

If youth bring up substance use do not write it down but debrief: some people may have substance use on their list. It may be helpful in the short term to avoid challenging feelings but can sometimes lead to problems in the long run such as addictions. It's important to know that substances and self-medicating can numb all feelings, both "negative" (i.e., shame, guilt) and "positive" (i.e. joy, hope).

If youth bring up self-harm do not write it down, note that if we are self-harming one of the most important things we can do is try and add in healthier ways of coping. Finding new ways to get through difficult times can help people reduce risks and may be more useful in the long run.

**What are things you like about yourselves?**

It can be good to think about some things that are connected to our personalities and our skills. This can be hard to do because often people focus on the negative, are hard on themselves or haven't discovered all the amazing aspects of themselves. (Validate what youth say.)

It is important to know and explore the good things inside us so we can take care of ourselves and work at mental wellness. Plus, when we show that we like who we are and believe in ourselves, it gives other's permission to feel good about themselves too!

**What gives you strength?**

In the box, write or draw something(s) in your life that gives you strength. It can be a person, idea, activity, place, animal, plant etc.

***8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms***

- » We all have a range of feelings and paying attention to them is important.
- » We all need to find healthy ways to express our feelings.
- » Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.

## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Emotional Well-Being***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.
- » S1 6.1.3 Discuss relationship of adults and youth in the community.
- » S1 6.1.1 Discuss cultural components of near environment, e.g., church, community club, school.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.4.7.B.1a Identify socially acceptable behaviours for dealing with new situations and/or change.
- » K.4.7.B.3b Describe how conflict situations affect personal behaviour and development.
- » K.4.8.C.2 Explain how stress may have positive or negative consequences.
- » K.4.8.C.4a List healthy and unhealthy strategies for dealing with stress and/or anxiety.
- » K.4.S1.B.2a Identify communication skills and strategies that promote team/group dynamics.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.4.S2.A.1 Assess personal attributes and talents across a variety of domains, and assess how each contributes to self-esteem/self-confidence.
- » K.4.S2.C.4a Examine the stress management strategies and defense mechanisms that can be healthy or unhealthy ways of managing stress.
- » K.5.7.E.2b Identify positive ways for coping with daily moods and emotions associated with puberty.
- » K.5.S2.A.2 Demonstrate knowledge of healthy lifestyle practices that contribute to disease/ illness prevention, including mental illness/ disorders.
- » S.4.8.A.5 Apply stress management strategies in case scenarios related to stressful situations.
- » S.4.S1.A.3 Apply interpersonal skills in case scenarios related to developing close, meaningful relationships.
- » 11.MH.1 Identify and apply positive health strategies to deal with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.
- » 11.MH.5 Identify community service agencies that support individuals concerned about mental-emotional health issues.

## Emotional Well-Being Handouts

### Wellness Bingo

Make a themed playlist	Make your own square! _____	 Be affectionate with someone	Sit by a stream, river, lake or waterfall	Volunteer for an event
 Smudge	Spend time with Elders or spiritual leaders	Ask for help from someone you trust	Take a break from social media	Breathe deeply three times in a row
Express your feelings through art	Learn or speak a language that is not English	Ask Grandparents about their childhood	 Play with animals	Call a free helpline
Watch movies with friends	 Listen or make music	Journal your thoughts	Belly laugh	Believe a compliment about yourself
Video games	Play sports	Spend time in nature	Go to ceremonies	 cook or bake

Here's what you do:

1. Walk around the room & find people who would like to do the things in the squares.
2. Get them to sign the square if it applies to them.
3. You can only get someone to sign your sheet once, so talk to different people.
4. Once you have \_\_\_ full lines across or down, yell "BINGO!" Claim the prize!
5. If that was too easy, see if you can fill all your squares today. Good luck!

<p><i>Pathways to Health</i></p> <p><b>People I can talk to:</b></p>  <p><b>Things I like to do:</b></p>  <p><b>Things I like about myself:</b></p>	<p>Draw or write something that gives you strength:</p>
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<p><i>Pathways to Health</i></p> <p><b>People I can talk to:</b></p>  <p><b>Things I like to do:</b></p>  <p><b>Things I like about myself:</b></p>	<p>Draw or write something that gives you strength:</p>
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## Gender Literacy

### Gender Literacy Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Gender Literacy
- » Gender Identity Definitions Activity
- » Gender Roles Activity
- » Brainstorming:
  - a) One thing (or more) that I do to challenge gender roles.
  - b) What can I do if I'm feeling targeted or invisible for my gender?
  - c) How can everyone be more inclusive of all genders?
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Explore the language of gender and diversity of genders and gender expression.
- » Reinforce the notion that each person knows themselves best when it comes to their gender identity.
- » Discuss gender roles and stereotypes and the limitations and discrimination created by this.
- » Action plan how we can support each other and create a more inclusive, supportive world.

### Note to Educators

"There is a generational divide in how we think about gender. In order to bridge this gap, those of us who were raised with a more limited view of gender can take this as an opportunity to explore gender with new eyes, to read and ask question to better understand gender's complexity. As with any learning experience, you'll learn more about the world around you and about yourself in the process.

Gender diversity has existed throughout history and all over the world. As one of the most fundamental aspects of a person's identity, gender deeply influences every part of one's life. Where this critical aspect of self is narrowly defined and rigidly enforced, individuals who exist outside of its norms face innumerable challenges. Even those who vary only slightly from norms can become targets of disapproval, discrimination, and even violence. This does not have to be the case. Through a thoughtful consideration of the uniqueness and validity of every person's experience of self, we can develop greater acceptance for all. Not only will this create greater inclusion for individuals who challenge the norms of gender, it will create space for all individuals to more fully explore and express who they are.<sup>xiii</sup>

## 1. Check-in

What's one of your favorite pieces of clothing or accessories?

### Resources:

- » [amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org)
- » [genderspectrum.org](https://www.genderspectrum.org)
- » The Trevor Project 24/7 1.866.488.7386 Text 'start' to 678-678 Chat at [thetrevorproject.org/get-help](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help)

## 2. Introduction to Gender Literacy

Our gender identities are personal so participate in a way you feel comfortable just don't distract others. Take a break if you need to and talk to someone you trust if anything feels overwhelming. Gender diversity has existed throughout history and all over the world however, we are often not taught about it directly even though our gender affects many parts of our lives. Because of this, many people are put down and hurt. While society is evolving unfortunately, we live in a gender binary, a society that mainly recognizes two genders, men and women.

Gender literacy means having information to discuss gender and gender related topics, and recognizing that gender is complex and that each person knows themselves best when it comes to their own gender identity. **We don't have to know everything to honor and respect other's understanding of themselves, and bullying won't be tolerated.** In doing so, we will create more inclusion for those who challenge the norms of gender and create space for everyone to fully explore and express who they are and be celebrated for it!



[Beyond the Basics Sneak Peek: The Gender Galaxy!](https://www.actioncanadashr.org)  
[Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights \(actioncanadashr.org\)](https://www.actioncanadashr.org)



### **3. Gender Identity Definitions Activity (20)**

Post up the gender terms on the wall.

[Show Range of Gender Identities - YouTube by Amaze.org](#). It provides some definitions for some of the gender terms which will help the class with the activity.

Hand out the definitions and have the group work together to match the definitions with the terms on the wall. Assist them if needed.

Debrief the definitions as a group.

#### **Sex Assigned at Birth**

- » Assigned male, female, or intersex mainly based on the baby's genitals.

#### **Male/Female**

- » People who have chromosomes, genitals, hormones that fit the two main categories of sex assigned at birth.

#### **Intersex**

- » People who have chromosomes, genitals, hormones that don't fit the categories of sex assigned as male/female.

#### **Gender**

- » Is made up of our body, identity and social gender (how we present our gender to the world and how we, society, culture and community see, and interact with and try to shape our gender). Each part is separate but interrelated.

#### **Gender Identity**

- » Person's inner understanding of their gender; who they know they are in their heart.

#### **Gender Binary**

- » A gender system that only has two options.

#### **Cisgender**

- » Describes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth match in the most "common" way, for e.g. female assigned at birth identifying as a girl.

#### **Transgender or Trans**

- » Describes a range of identities and experiences when a person's gender identity and sex assigned match differently.

#### **Non-binary (enby)**

- » Different identities outside of the gender binary, can be related to, or separate from male/female.

#### **Genderqueer**

- » An umbrella term (can be part of non-binary) for someone who doesn't identify with "typical" gender identities, roles, and expression.

#### **Agender**

- » Gender neutral, genderless, a part of nonbinary.

#### **Indigiqueer**

- » An umbrella term used by Indigenous People to identify an aspect of their identity or identify as being outside colonial sexuality systems or labels that colonialism has created re: sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Two-Spirit**

- » An English word for gender inclusiveness in many Indigenous cultures that refers to walking between or transcending genders or balance of feminine and masculine spirit.

**Transphobia**

- » A type of discrimination that makes fun of someone's pronouns and does not respect who they are.

**Cissexism**

- » Believing people can - and should - only be cisgender (cis).

**Gender Roles**

- » Based mainly on stereotypes which are taught to us by society including the media.

**Gender Expression**

- » The ways that a person shows others aspects of their gender including clothes, appearance, walk, talk, etc.

**Gender Dysphoria**

- » When someone feels very unhappy, uneasy or dissatisfied in relation to their gender.

**Genderfluid**

- » Has a gender identity that changes over time.

**Gender Non-conforming**

- » A gender expression (clothes, appearance) that doesn't conform to gender norms like a boy wearing makeup.

**BlaQ/BlaQueer**

- » a Black queer person who recognizes their queer identity as intrinsic to their Blackness and vice versa

**Word (an open spot for the youth to add gender related terms not included here)**

**Definition:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Gender Roles Activity<sup>xiv</sup>**

- » Create two lists on board ("guy stereotypes" and "girl stereotypes").
- » Brainstorm how we challenge these gender roles.
- » Hand out a half a page of scrap paper. Instruct students to write 1-6. Ask them the following questions and tell them to write the first few things that come to mind.
- » After you finish debriefing the exercise, erase the lists and get them to crumple up their paper and toss it in the recycling bin.

A role is something that you play. Just like characters in a show or movie, gender roles or scripts tell us how we are supposed to act in the gender binary. Gender roles are based primarily on stereotypes which are taught to us society including the media. We know that in reality there are many ways to express our genders and it goes way beyond just boy and girl. Regardless of how we identify this system affects all of us.

**Gender Roles: Stereotypical Guy and Stereotypical Girl (side by side lists)**

- » So what is the stereotype of what guys/men (girls/women) are supposed to look like?
- » Toys they are supposed to like?
- » Jobs they are supposed to have?
- » What feelings are they supposed to show?
- » Who they are supposed to date?
- » How are they supposed to communicate?

Remember many of us may have some of these qualities and that's fine, it's more a problem when people are limited to what's in these boxes.

**Sample Responses:**

**Men/Guys**

- » White, tall
- » Very muscular
- » Cars and trucks
- » In construction, boss, doctor, athlete, \$\$
- » Angry and horny, don't cry
- » Date women
- » Aggressive

**Women/Girls**

- » White, thin with breasts/butt
- » Long hair and focus on looks
- » Dolls
- » Nurse, teacher, mother, cook
- » Emotional and helpless
- » Date men
- » Passive "nice"

**Debrief**

**So by a show of hands how many people had this or something similar? Why do you think so many of us have come up with the same answers?**

**What if these two were in a relationship? What kind of relationship would it be?**

Unhealthy even abusive. The guy would not talk about their fears and is taught to communicate aggressively to fit the male gender role. Girls are told that their voices don't matter and that they should put other people ahead of themselves. This often leads to unhealthy or even abusive relationships.

**These roles are very racist (European defined beauty standards), classist, sexist, ableist, homophobic and transphobic etc.** They do not help us meet our needs because they exclude many and limit us to playing a role instead of being all that we are. Any gender identity that's not boy/girl such as nonbinary, trans, Indigiqueer identity defy these gender roles by being who they are. We can see in this example that everyone loses out.

Put a big X across the columns and erase the board,

Have students crumple up and throw the stereotypes paper in the recycling bin.

**Brainstorming:**

- » a) One thing (or more) that I do to challenge gender roles.
- » b) What can I do if I'm feeling targeted or invisible for my gender?
- » c) How can everyone be more inclusive of all genders?

Hand out three pieces of paper and have each student write one or more things on each one. Tell them, they don't need to put their name on them but they do need to number them as you will be reading them aloud. Once they are done writing, collect them and read them aloud. You may want to give them a few examples to start.

**Sample Responses:**

- » a) One thing (or more) that I do to challenge gender roles:
  - I wear what I want and wear all colors.
  - I do many chores like clean, dishes and cook.
  - I do whatever I want not thinking of what gender norms say I'm supposed to do.
  - Don't wear makeup, have short hair and wear masculine clothes.
  - I cry and show lots of feelings.
  - I have a non-feminine attitude.
  - I have long hair and don't care if my family thinks I look like a mop.
  - I'm trans. :)
  - I'm non binary.
  - I play video games.
  - I sit in a way that's comfortable.
  - I play sports.
  - Help with car stuff.
  - I pick a job I want to do.
  - I'm bisexual.
  - Be myself.
  - Show many feelings.
  
- » b) What can we do when they are feeling bullied or invisible for our gender?
  - Find your supports.
  - Talk to a trusted adult about how you are being treated.
  - Be confident in yourself and who you are.
  - I make myself happy and think positive.
  - Stand up for yourself by telling them to stop.
  - Ridicule them in your head.
  - Stay calm.
  - Educate them explaining that you don't fit into one category.
  - Ignore them as it's that's more their issue than yours.
  - Tell them people can act how they want.
  - Leave or try not to be around them more than necessary.

- Realize you are amazing just the way you are.
- Love yourself.
- Listen/support each other.
- Do things you love like listen to music, draw etc...

### **Some Support and Info Lines**

- » Trans Lifeline 1.877.330.6366
- » Rainbow Resource Centre (in Winnipeg) 204-474-0212
- » The Trevor Project 24/7 1.866.488.7386 Text 'start' to 678-678 Chat at [thetrevorproject.org/get-help](http://thetrevorproject.org/get-help)
- » Hope for Wellness Line For Indigenous Youth 24/7 1-855-242-3310 Chat at [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca) 24/7
- » [Amaze.org](http://Amaze.org) and [genderspectrum.org](http://genderspectrum.org)
- » c) How can everyone be more inclusive of all genders?
  - Embrace and respect a range of genders.
  - Appreciate how others feel about themselves.
  - Educate yourself on different genders and gender related topics.
  - Use "they""them" when you don't know someone's pronouns.
  - We all should come together and accept one another.
  - Degender the world! Realize there are no "boy""girl" clothing, toys, behaviors, jobs, cars.
  - Make a larger range of clothing including more gender-neutral clothing.
  - Get rid of "pink tax."
  - Support and defend each other.
  - Include everyone in activities.
  - Don't harass, judge or tell others what they are supposed to be. Accept and let others be.
  - Be our true selves when it comes to clothing, jobs, behaviors, dating.
  - Show all our emotions.
  - Don't assume gender (who a person is) or who they like.
  - Respect pronouns.

### **5. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » Gender is as vast and diverse as the universe.
- » Gender identity and expression are fluid and ever changing.
- » Everyone has unique story when it comes to exploring assigned sex, gender identity, and gender expression.
- » Everyone should be celebrated.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Gender Literacy***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.3.S1.B.5a Analyze issues related to violence prevention in a variety of contexts.
- » K.4.S1.B.1a Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.7.E.3b Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles.
- » K.5.S1.E.2a Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships.
- » 11.MH.5 Identify community service agencies that support individuals concerned about mental-emotional health issues.



women's  
health clinic

**COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION**  
JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

# Gender Literacy Activity

# Gender Binary

# Gender Roles



**A gender system  
that only has two  
options.**



**Mainly based  
on stereotypes  
which are taught  
to us by society  
including the  
media.**

# Sex Assigned at Birth

# Intersex



**Assigned male,  
female, or  
intersex mainly  
based on the  
baby's genitals.**



**People who have  
chromosomes,  
genitals,  
hormones that  
don't fit the  
categories of sex  
assigned at birth  
male/female.**



**People who have  
chromosomes,  
genitals,  
hormones that  
fit the two main  
categories of sex  
assigned at birth.**



**Is made up of our body, identity and social gender (how we present our gender to the world and how we, society, culture and community see, and interact with and try to shape our gender). Each part is separate but interrelated.**

# Gender Identity

## Gender



**Person's inner  
understanding of  
their gender; who  
they know they  
are in their heart.**

# Transgender or trans

# Cisgender



**Describes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth match in the most “common” way. For e.g. - female assigned at birth identifying as a girl.**

**Describes a range of identities and experiences when a person's gender identity and sex assigned match differently.**

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**An umbrella term used by Indigenous People to identify an aspect of their identity or identify as being outside colonial sexuality systems or labels that colonialism has created re: sexual orientation or gender identity.**



# Indigiqueer

# Two-Spirit

**An English word for gender inclusiveness in many Indigenous cultures that refers to walking between or transcending genders or balance of feminine and masculine spirit.**



**A type of  
discrimination  
that makes fun  
of someone's  
pronouns and  
doesn't respect  
who they are.**

# Transphobia

# Cissexism

**Believing all  
people can - and  
should - only be  
cisgender (cis).**

**The ways that  
a person shows  
others aspects  
of their gender  
including clothes,  
appearance, walk,  
talk, etc.**

# Gender Expression

# Gender Dysphoria

**When someone  
feels very  
unhappy, uneasy  
or dissatisfied in  
relation to their  
gender.**



# Gender Nonconforming

# Genderfluid

**Has a gender  
identity that  
changes over time.**

**A gender expression (clothes, appearance) that doesn't conform to gender norms like a boy wearing makeup.**



**Can be a part of  
non-binary for  
someone who  
doesn't identify  
with "typical"  
gender identities,  
roles, and  
expression.**

# Genderqueer

# Male/Female

# BlaQ/BlaQueer



**a Black queer  
person who  
recognizes  
their queer  
identity as  
intrinsic  
to their  
Blackness and  
vice versa**

## Healthy Relationships

### Healthy Relationships Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Relationships
- » Qualities of Relationships Activity
- » Relationship Spectrum Activity
- » Dealing with Rejection Video
- » Healthy Relationship with Self
- » An Anishinaabe Worldview of our Relationship with Ourselves
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Explore qualities of relationships recognizing that this helps us determine what we are looking for in our interpersonal relationships.
- » Develop a basic understanding of what healthy, unhealthy and abusive behaviors are in relationships.
- » Normalize rejection.
- » Explore how we build a healthy relationship with ourselves.



## 1. Check-in

**One quality I have is...**

**One quality I look for is...**

**Resources:**

- » [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)
- » [amaze.org](http://amaze.org) and Amaze International

## 2. Introduction to Relationships

We are talking about relationships today. If some difficult feelings come up about a relationship, please talk to a supportive adult in your life. Relationships are one of the most important aspects of our lives. We have many different types of relationships, including; relationships with friends, family, teachers and peers, romantic or dating relationships (some people are not interested in at all), as well as a relationship with ourselves, our ancestors, pets or animals and the Earth as the Earth provides all we need; everything we breathe, eat and use to live. Relationships can help people feel connected.

## 3. Qualities of Relationships Activity

**Post each quality from the handout written on a single piece of paper on the wall or on a desk and have one that's blank as an option for them to write their own quality.**

**Give each student five post-its/stickers and have them all go around and pick their top five qualities.**

Reflect on and explore which qualities you want from people close to you? What are qualities you don't want from those close to you? **Also, think about qualities you have and are able to give others.**

### Debrief

Read each of the quality cards and the count the number of votes given by the group.

Attractive includes everyone as we are all beautiful on our own way and there are people who find us attractive. Media unfortunately portrays a very narrow definition of beauty which makes many people feel like they are not beautiful.

Affection is hugging, kissing and can be more and consent is required which will be discussed more in depth in another session.

Some qualities we want are specific to us, there's no wrong answers and their importance can change throughout our lives. However, notice that many people are also looking for some similar qualities such as loyalty and respect and some very different ones. It is helpful to reflect on what qualities we would like as it helps us figure out what kinds of people we want close to us and how close we'd like some people to be. We can also work on having those qualities ourselves.

Pass out the **Qualities you want in a Relationship Handout**.

#### **4. Relationship Spectrum Activity<sup>xv</sup>**

Post up “it depends,” “healthy,” “unhealthy” and “abusive.”

Pass out the statement cards after explaining the activity and encourage them to talk to each other to figure out which cards belong under which category.

Relationships exist on a spectrum that range from healthy to abusive with unhealthy being in between where there's no fear or control involved. There is also an “it depends” card if you feel comfortable explaining what your card may depend on. Abusive relationships differ from unhealthy in that people feel scared, controlled and powerless. If you are being hurt by someone, it's important to talk to an adult you trust.

In this activity we are going to look at the difference between healthy, unhealthy and abusive situation. If it's an unhealthy/abusive situation you can also mention what a person would do differently to make the behavior healthy.

#### **Relationships Statements**

##### **I have a good time with my family even if I miss my friends. (healthy)**

Having a good time in different relationships is an okay thing to do. It can also mean you have lots more to share with others in your life.

##### **I don't share my personal texts with other people. (healthy)**

- » We all have the right to our personal boundaries and unless it's hurting someone or a problem, the texts between two people don't need to be shared with others. Usually people are assuming that you aren't sharing the texts with others.

##### **My partner has a different religion/spirituality. (healthy)**

- » Everyone has a right to their own spirituality. In some relationships, partners practice different religions or spiritualities and are comfortable with that. That also means that no one should be forced to participate in a religion or spirituality. Also, others prefer having or looking for a partner with the same religion and that's ok too.

##### **Our relationship is equal. (healthy)**

- » Each of you feeling like you bring things to the relationship and valuing, supporting and respecting each other are all key aspects of healthy relationships.

##### **I don't know where my partner is all the time. (healthy)**

- » Trusting each other, recognizing that you don't own each other and having boundaries where you feel comfortable doing your own thing and that you don't have to check in with them are all a part of a healthy relationship.

**I expect my good friends to share everything with me. (unhealthy)**

- » Expecting someone to share everything means some boundaries are missing. You should have enough respect for each other to understand what information should be shared like hobbies and mutual interests and what should not be shared like passwords to social media sites and cellphones.

**When they make fun of me, I tell them to stop. They say they are just joking. (unhealthy)**

- » You aren't being respected by the other person especially if they continue to make fun of something you have told them you don't think is funny and makes you feel bad. In a respectful relationship they will stop when you ask and will care if your feelings are hurt. Even if they were joking, someone who cares will apologize and not do it again. If it continues this is emotional/spiritual/mental abuse.

**My best friend made me mad, so I told others. (unhealthy)**

- » If you are having a disagreement with each other, it's ok to talk or vent about it to someone else. However, it's not ok to turn others against them or tell everyone about your argument or share personal info about them.

**I know I send too many texts but do it anyway. (unhealthy)**

- » When you know that you are doing something that isn't wanted, it's not ok you need to stop. Everyone deserves space and to have their boundaries respected. If you are all comfortable with sending lots of texts back and forth then it's not a problem.

**I try to make my partner jealous. (unhealthy even abusive)**

- » Jealousy is not a good way to tell how much someone cares for us. Jealousy is a complicated emotion that is about self-esteem, past experiences, and fear of losing someone. There are healthier ways to ask for support, affection and attention from a partner. Trying to make someone jealous is not part of a healthy relationship and talk to someone about other ways to get their attention.

**I feel pressured to send pictures of myself. (unhealthy even abusive)**

- » No one should be pressured into sending, receiving or having their pictures shared without consent. If consent is happening then sharing pics is okay with the understanding that they are not to be shared with others. Also remember, consent can be withdrawn at any time including if the relationship ends. **It is not your fault if someone is sharing your pictures. Talk to an adult you trust if your pics are being seen without your consent or refer to [www.needhelpnow.ca](http://www.needhelpnow.ca).**

**They bug me for money and tell me they will pay me back but don't. (unhealthy even abusive)**

- » Not returning the money that has been lent is financial abuse. You have no obligation to lend or give money to anyone if you don't want to. In healthy relationships people understand their money is their own and don't feel guilt or pressure to "share" it.

**When there is a disagreement, you get blocked on social media. (abusive)**

- » The silent treatment sends the message that you aren't even worth talking to (dehumanizing) and leaves no option of a solution. It is used as a method of control and for one person to have power over their partner. In a healthy relationship if there is a disagreement people often let their partner know they need to "take time" or take a break to cool down and that way they are more able to find solutions.

**Debrief**

Trusting ourselves, our instincts and feelings can help us figure out where many of our behaviors are on the relationship spectrum. We can all work at building healthier relationships. Abuse is a choice and sometimes ending relationships is the healthiest choice we can make. If people recognize they are using abuse they can choose to change their behaviour and learn to become supportive. We are all deserving of having healthy boundaries, support and respect in our relationships.

**5. Dealing with Rejection Video****Dealing with Rejection: What's the best way?**

Dealing with rejection is a part of relationships and often we aren't taught that rejection is just a normal part of life and how to deal with it in a healthy way even when it really hurts.

**Debrief****What's the main message?**

- » First, accept that the person doesn't want to be with you. Yes it can really hurt; feel like your heart is being ripped out.
- » Then thank yourself for taking a chance. If you're feeling angry or sad, talk about it with someone you trust. What are some other ways we can deal with difficult feelings? Taking care of those feelings is very important and sometimes people get stuck and need help.
- » Then, focus on you and think about all your great qualities and move on. Moving on isn't always easy so take the time to process.

## **6. Healthy Relationship with Yourself<sup>xvi</sup> (see handout)**

The first and most important relationship we have is with ourselves. We will have a relationship with ourselves throughout our whole lives, so it can be helpful to work towards making it a positive and healthy relationship. Some ways to work towards this could be speaking kindly to ourselves and challenging negative or critical thoughts and self-talk. It could also include taking care of your body, mind and spirit by making sure your basic needs are met, doing things that nourish you such as hobbies/activities you enjoy, setting boundaries for yourself and with others or asking for help.

Using the **Relationship with Self Handout**, in the person outline after tailoring it to your outfit, look and style, write about things you do to take care of the different aspects of yourself. Feel free to include things from the wellness handout that you do.

All of the different parts of ourselves connect and can affect each other. For example, getting regular sleep and exercise (moving our bodies in ways that we enjoy) is good for our physical health, but it also nourishes our emotional health and our spirit. On the gingerbread picture write the things you do in these areas to take care/nourish yourself.

- » **The head:** represents your mental health.
- » **The heart area:** represents your emotional health.
- » **The rest of the body:** represents your physical health.
- » **The space around you:** represents your spiritual health. Spiritual health is connected to special qualities of life - wisdom, compassion, and experience of wonder. It has 4 parts - connection to others, to self, to nature and to a larger meaning of life.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **Debrief**

When we have a healthy relationship to ourselves, know what we like and want, know how to regulate and take care of our feelings, then we are much more likely to have healthy relationships with other people. Relationship to self and Earth are the relationship we will have for our entire life so it makes sense to prioritize these relationships.

## **7. An Anishinaabe Worldview of our Relationship with Ourselves**

### **Original Attachment: Relationship with Ourselves<sup>xviii</sup>**

Contributed by Vanessa AnakwudwabisayQuay, Peguis First Nation

The most important relationship is the one we have with ourselves and our Creator or higher power. The more we learn about our own connections, strengths and challenges the better able we are to understand ourselves, then other people and the world around us. The healthier we are as a person the more likely we'll have healthy relationships with other people too. A good place to start understanding ourselves is to look at our place in the universe. Within an Indigenous worldview we all have Original Attachment and are connected to all forms of life.

We, Anishinaabe, (The People) or the Two-Leggeds were made last and are therefore the most dependent Children in all of Creation. We rely on All Our Relations to feed, shelter, clothe and teach us how to live. So we watch and we pay attention to Our Relations knowing we are One Family and that we are loved. Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon take turns watching over us every day and night. We have Grandmother and Grandfather rocks and stones to use. Trees, bushes, grasses, roots and their Medicines grow all around us to feed, protect and teach us. The Winged Ones, the Four Leggeds, the Crawlers, those that Slither and the Swimmers all have gifts and messages for us. The Stars, the Winds, the Water, Fire, Mother Earth and Father Sky all take care of us and love us every day of our life. They are our siblings, aunties, uncles, and cousins!

If we look through these eyes, the Eyes of our Ancestors, we will see Our Family everywhere and that we are never alone. Even in the biggest, most hectic city with no one around us, in this day and age, we have Family with us every moment. There is a lot we can see like plants, trees, animals and other people. There is a lot we cannot see like our personal spirit helpers and Grandmothers and Grandfathers who are with each of us. No matter where we are, what has happened to us or what we are going through we are connect to a Great Family. We Belong. We are Loved.

### ***8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms***

- » Our relationship with ourselves is very important and we can do things to nurture it.
- » Recognizing healthy, unhealthy and abusive behaviors can help us understand relationships.
- » Others' unhealthy behavior or abusive behavior is not our fault and reaching out to someone we trust is important.
- » Everyone can work towards healthy behavior.

## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Healthy Relationships***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.3.S1.B.5a Analyze issues related to violence prevention in a variety of contexts.
- » K.3.S1.B.6a Differentiate among the terms associated with abusive situations.
- » K.3.S1.B.6b Identify skills and community resources for addressing problems associated with sexually abusive behaviours.
- » K.4.S1.B.1a Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.2a Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.3b & K.5.S2.E.3b Examine the influences on making decisions for responsible sexual behaviour.
- » K.5.S1.E.3c & K.5.S2.E.3c Review personal responsibilities and sources of support with regard to sex-related health issues.
- » K.5.S2.E.2 Analyze the components in different case scenarios for building and maintaining healthy relationships.
- » S.4.S1.A.3 Apply interpersonal skills in case scenarios related to developing close, meaningful relationships.
- » 12.HR.1 Demonstrate understanding of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy, relationships, and discuss factors that might influence their development.
- » 12.HR.4 Apply problem-solving and decision-making strategies to identify and prevent the development of abusive relationships and/or to end unwanted relationships.
- » 12.HR.5 Apply problem-solving and decision-making strategies to recognize unhealthy relationships, and identify community supports and services to assist in the healthy resolution of relationship issues.

## Healthy Relationships Handouts

### Qualities you want in Relationships

<b>Trustworthy</b>	<b>Loud</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Kind</b>	<b>Respectful</b>
<b>Same interests (such as _____ )</b>	<b>Fun to be with</b>	<b>Good relationship with family</b>	<b>Good listener</b>	<b>Gives me space</b>
<b>Affectionate</b>	<b>Funny</b>	<b>Different Interests</b>	<b>Works hard at school</b>	<b>Friendly and outgoing</b>
<b>Good boundaries</b>	<b>Doesn't gossip</b>	<b>Honest</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Loyal</b>
<b>Supportive</b>	<b>Shares my religious beliefs</b>	<b>Messy</b>	<b>Values around sexual activity are _____</b>	<b>Attractive</b>
<b>Good at sports</b>	<b>Wants to be in a serious relationship</b>	<b>Spends money freely</b>	<b>Relationship with drugs and alcohol is _____</b>	<b>Artistic</b>
<b>Is good at money management</b>	<b>Has big dreams</b>	<b>Interested in world issues</b>	<b>Same beliefs about wanting a family or not</b>	_____ _____

Good Friends must have/be \_\_\_\_\_

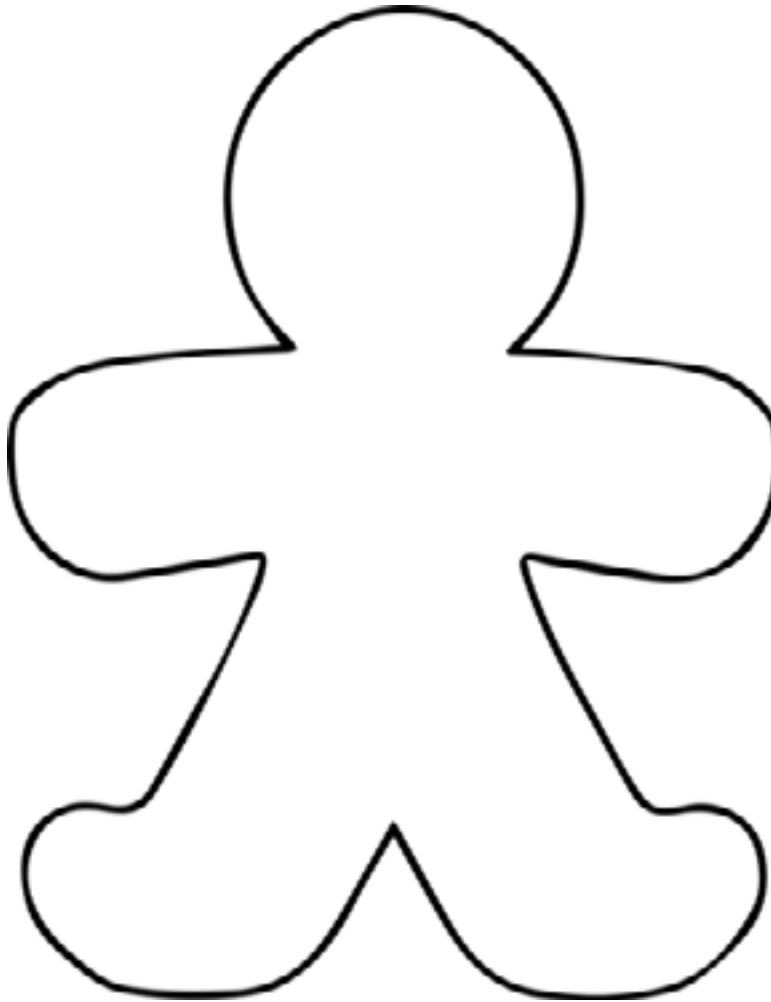
Good Friends must not have/be \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Romantic Partner must have/be \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Romantic Partner must not have/be \_\_\_\_\_



## Healthy Relationship with Self



In the outline, write about things you do to take care of and nourish the different aspects of yourself.

- » **The head:** represents your mental health.
- » **The heart area:** represents your emotional health.
- » **The rest of the body:** represents your physical health.
- » **The space around you:** represents your spiritual health.

All of the different parts of ourselves connect and can affect each other. For example, getting regular sleep and moving our bodies in ways that we enjoy like dancing or sports is good for our physical health but also helps us emotionally.

# Healthy Relationships Activity

**I have a good  
time with my  
family even  
if I miss my  
friends.**

**I expect my  
good friends  
to share  
everything  
with me.**

**I try to make  
my partner  
jealous.**

**I know I send  
too many  
texts, but do it  
anyway.**

**I feel  
pressured to  
send pictures  
of myself.**

**I don't share  
my personal  
texts with  
other people.**



**When they  
make fun of  
me, I tell them  
to stop.**

**They say  
they're just  
joking.**

**My partner  
has a different  
religion /  
spirituality.**

**My best friend  
made me  
mad, so I told  
others.**

**I don't know  
where my  
partner is all  
the time.**

**They bug me  
for money and  
tell me they  
will pay me  
back, but they  
don't.**

**When  
there is a  
disagreement,  
you get  
blocked on  
social media.**

# Our relationship is equal.

# HEALTHY



# UNHEALTHY

# ABUSIVE

# IT DEPENDS

## **Media and Digital Literacy: Bodies, Relationships, Sexuality, and Youth**

### **Media and Digital Literacy Outline**

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Media and Digital Literacy
- » Videos
  - Being Safe on the Internet
  - Porn Isn't Sex Ed
- » Bodies, Relationships, and Sexuality
- » Youth & Media Creation
  - Examples By WASAC and N'we Jinan Artists
  - Creating Our Own Media
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### **Session Goals**

- » Introduce key points of media and digital literacy.
- » Discuss internet safety.
- » Explore the realities of sexuality explicit media.
- » Explore media's harmful messaging around bodies, relationships and sexuality.
- » Explore the idea of youth creating their own media.

## 1. Check-in

**If I could be in any show/movie, it would be? And I would play?**

### Resources:

- » [mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca) and [amaze.org](http://amaze.org)
- » [needhelpnow.ca](http://needhelpnow.ca) is a resource that provides support and stops the spread of sexual pictures of videos

## 2. Introduction to Media and Digital Literacy

**What is media?** (Books, internet, news, shows, movies, commercials, social media) Media literacy teaches us how to look at media and their messages in different ways and ask questions about it. Digital literacy also teaches us how analyze and use digital media in wise, safe and appropriate ways. Today is about bodies, relationships and sexuality in TV shows, movies, being safe, and making our own media etc. These topics can be hard to think about especially if you have been cyberbullied, so talk to someone you trust if anything feels overwhelming.

### Media Literacy Key Points<sup>xix</sup>

Media Literacy 101 Video Clips<sup>xx</sup>: <https://mediasmarts.ca/media-literacy-101>

#### In summary:

- » media is made
- » we, the viewers, create the meaning
- » media is big business
- » media impacts our society
- » each kind of media is unique in how it shares information

### Digital Media Literacy Key Points<sup>xxi</sup>

- » ALL media literacy points above, plus digital media
- » are networked
- » searchable, sharable and persistent
- » have unknown and unexpected viewers
- » experiences are real but don't always feel real

## 3. Videos

### Being Safe on the Internet

#### Debrief

**What are some ways to stay safer on the internet?** Don't post things that could embarrass you later in life. Don't share private info with people you don't know. Do not meet in person if you have only meet online, and if you do, meet them in a public place, take a friend and let someone else know, cyberbullying is still bullying. Block or delete bullying messages and tell an adult you trust if there are threats. Keep your personal info private. Don't share passwords with anyone.

## Porn Isn't Sex Ed

### Debrief

It's normal to be curious about puberty, bodies and sex. In sexually explicit material there's mostly white actors with large breasts and penises who have had their body hair removed. Special effects are used that exaggerate things and create fantasy for the viewer like length of sex activity, semen shots, multiple partners with no mention of protection or consent. People with vulvas are seen as sex toys and often the plot is with strangers with no relationship nor emotional intimacy. **What are some signs that sexually explicit media is affecting someone negatively?** It's stopping them from doing other things, they can't stop thinking about it, it's changing how they see themselves and other people etc. **So, it's important to take a break if that's happening to you and talking to someone you trust about it.**

Look for accurate, nonjudgmental youth friendly websites from health organizations that discuss these topics when you want correct information.

## *4. Bodies, Relationships, and Sexuality (see handout)*

**Pick a movie or TV show with real people in it that you enjoy.**

- » Name and describe the main characters. What do they look like?
- » How do they compare to others of the same age in real life?
- » How do the main characters treat other people?
- » What relationships do the main characters have in the show? Family? Friends? Romantic?
- » If there are romantic relationships, how did they start and how do the characters act?
- » If the main characters have sexual relationships, what do they talk about beforehand? What's important to the main characters?
- » What gender(s) are the characters that are in charge? How do you know they are in charge?
- » How many different cultures and ethnicities do you see?
- » How many people with different genders and sexual orientations do you see?
- » How many people with disabilities are there?
- » How many people of different sized bodies? (Not just thin people and people with defined muscles.)
- » How many people with little money?
- » If you do see a range of people, are they seen as stereotypes or have real personalities?
- » What is the main message of the tv show/movie and do you think it's a good message?
- » If you created your own show/movie who would the main characters be and how would they act?
- » If you created a show/movie, what would the story be about?

## Debrief

Review the responses on the handout. Notice the lack of representation in many shows and can mention the Bechdel and the Race Bechdel Test. Highlight some shows that do have a range of representation such as Modern Family, The Fosters etc..

## 5. *Creating our own Media*

**Example: WASAC in Winnipeg Make the World Change Video 2018**

**Example: “When the Dust Settles” by N’we Jinan Artists in Bunibonibee Cree Nation (Oxford House) (Note: N’we Jinan is a non-profit organization that create artistic and educational programs in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and school across Canada. They enhance the voice of Northern youth.)**

**Example: “Home to Me” by N’we Jinan Artists, Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation (Grassy Narrows)**

These youth were seeking justice for a community that has been exposed to mercury poisoning for five decades. In the 1960s and 1970s, a pulp mill dumped 10 tonnes of mercury into the English-Wabigoon River system upstream from Grassy Narrows (2019).

Today, the waterways and fish are still contaminated, and people are still living with the devastating effects such as health problems, the erosion of cultural traditions. In 2019 they were part of Amnesty International’s letter-writing campaign. The same year the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that two forest-product companies are responsible for mercury clean up. In 2020 the federal government signed an agreement for a mercury poisoning treatment center in Grassy Narrows First Nation.

**Think about something you really care about. It could be family, books, sports, video games, sleeping, anything and a message. Then, create a drawing, song/music, poster, photo, video clip, or story/poem, Tik Tok video etc. (Sharing with the group is optional.)**

## 6. *Key Messages and Feedback Forms*

- » Being able to critically analyze media and digital media is an important skill to have.
- » Often there’s unrealistic and unhealthy portrayals of bodies, relationships and sexualities in media.
- » Being curious about sex and bodies is a common part of growing up so finding accurate health sources can help.
- » Realizing that media is not real and making our own media can help.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Media and Digital Literacy***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.4.7.A.3 Explain the benefits of using the decision-making/problem solving process for making responsible and health-enhancing personal decisions.
- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » 11.MH.2 Examine media influence(s) on self-image and behaviour.
- » K.4.S1.A.1 Examine personal strengths, values, and strategies for achieving individual success and a positive self-image.
- » 11.MH.2 Examine media influence(s) on self-image and behaviour.
- » K.4.S2.A.3 Analyze factors that influence personal and or group decisions for action, healthy lifestyles.
- » K.4.S2.A.1 Assess personal attributes and talents across a variety of domains, and assess how each contributes to self-esteem/self-confidence.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.7.E.3b Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles.
- » S1 5.1.1 Discuss factors that influence self-concept.
- » S1 5.1.7 Define and discuss perception and its influence on oneself and others.
- » S1 5.2.1 Analyze information from several sources to determine society's changing perception of beauty.
- » S1 5.2.2 Describe unhealthy eating patterns and body-altering substance abuse, e.g., fad dieting, compulsive eating, anorexia and bulimia, steroids.
- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.



## Media and Digital Literacy Handout

### Media and Digital Literacy: Bodies, Relationships & Sexuality

Pick a movie or TV show with real people in it. \_\_\_\_\_

Name and describe the main characters. What do they look like?

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How do they compare to others of the same age in real life?

---

---

How do the main characters treat other people?

---

---

What relationships do the main characters have in the show? Family? Friends? Romantic?

---

---

If there are romantic relationships, how did they start and how do the characters act?

---

---

If the characters have sexual relationships, what did they talk about beforehand?

---

---

What's important to the main character?

---

---

What gender(s) are the characters that are in charge? How do you know they are in charge?

---

---

How many different cultures and ethnicities do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people with different genders and sexual orientations do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

---

How many people with disabilities are there? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people of different sized bodies? (Not just thin people and people with defined muscles.)

---

How many people with very little money? \_\_\_\_\_

If you do see a range of people, are they seen as stereotypes or have real personalities?

---

What is the main message of the tv show/movie and do you think it's a good message?

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---

---

If you created your own show/movie who would the main characters be and how would they act?

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---

If you created a show/movie, what would the story be about?

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## Puberty

### Puberty Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Puberty
- » Earth is Body Visualization
- » Puberty Changes Activity
- » Introduction to Anatomy in the Middle Area of the Body
- » Puberty Products
- » Anonymous Question Box
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Introduce youth to an Indigenous worldview of body connection to the Earth.
- » Normalize puberty highlighting that everyone experiences some physical and emotional changes while some of the changes are unique.
- » Destigmatize, label and discuss functions of body parts specifically genitals.
- » Normalize menstruation.
- » Discuss some products that are useful during puberty and beyond.

## 1. Check-in

**Name a part of the body, you think is interesting/like?**

**Resources:**

- » [Everybodycurious.com](http://Everybodycurious.com)
- » [So what is a vulva anyway?](#) (online zine)
- » [Teenclinic.ca](http://Teenclinic.ca) **Teen clinics are special clinic times only for young people.** (Locate the one closest to your location.) No appointment or adult permission is necessary and youth can get things like information about your body, free or low-cost birth control and condoms, testing for STIs, HIV, and pregnancy. There are counselors available to talk about any issue. Arrive an hour before the clinic closes to be seen.
- » Provide an Indigenous resource for youth to learn more about Indigenous perspectives of the body, Earth connection.

## 2. Introduction to Puberty

Today we will talk about puberty and changes that can happen. Generally, puberty starts between the ages of 9-14 and lasts a few years and our brains aren't fully developed until 25. Some may be excited, nervous, shy, embarrassed to talk about puberty and all feelings are common and OK. If for any reason you are having a hard time it's okay to do what you need to take care of yourself; draw, tune out, talk to your guidance counselor/resource, drink some water. Also, we won't be sharing any personal stories as each of our experiences are different and you will have a chance to ask questions anonymously near the end of the session.

## 3. Earth is Body Visualization<sup>xxii</sup>

Sitting in a circle, have youth get comfortable and read the visualization.

Alternatively, the facilitator can name the waters, earth, air and fire elements with examples and ask youth "where are these in our bodies?" then give examples and lead youth into a discussion. [Check out the Earth breathing: NASA Satellites Watch Earth 'Breathe' in Awesome Time-Lapse Video | Space](#)

**This visualization is a glimpse into an Anishinaabe worldview. It was gifted by an Anishinaabe Ikwe from Peguis First Nation, a health educator named Vanessa Cook. It is one of many Indigenous understandings of the land we are living on. I'm going to ask you to go into your body, to think a little deeply about it for a few minutes so if you don't want to for any reason, you don't have to. We only ask that the room is quiet while we do this first part.**

**I want you to picture some Land you know. Could be anywhere, some piece of Earth you like. Now go inside your body, and we will see that your body is the same as the Earth. Let's explore this idea...**

**Water goes first.. Where is the water in your body? The steams, currents and gushing. Think of your veins, your genitals, your bladder and how much you've peed? Think of your tears. Are they a stream of happy or sad tears flowing down?**

**Now think of the Earth – The rocks, the grasses and the mosses. Where in your body are these? They're in your bones, and the different places your hair grows. See the hills, plains, caves and crevices. Where in your body are your hills, your flat places, your caves and crevices. When has your body felt tectonic plates move? Have you ever felt your body quake and tremble like the earth?**

**Now to the Winds – See it blow across the Earth. Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly making wind. Think of other places your body uses wind. Have you ever farted so loud you woke yourself up or laughed so much you are out of breath? Sometimes as loud as thunderstorms on the earth, we laugh. There is thunder in our body.**

**Now locate the Fire in your body. Picture a volcano. There is fire and lightning in the body. Ever had heartburn? Think of all of our brain cells that are firing away right now telling each cell what to do.**

**Now go back to that Land you started with knowing we are one and the same so what happens to the Earth, also happens to our body. Now think of your body as your territory. Know it in your veins and in your bones. It's my body, it's my territory. Now if you were to make Treaty with someone, to invite them into or onto your territory what does that mean? It's your body, your territory. Miigwetch**

### **Debrief**

**How was that? What was the main message? How we are all a part of the Earth and what happens within ourselves happens on the Earth. Was there anything that stands out to you? Have you thought about your body in this way before?**

**What is "your body, your territory" really talking about? Consent.**

**How was sexuality a part of the visualization? Bodies and the Earth have sexuality in their forms and their functions. Also, how we feel when we think about those forms and functions is part of our sexuality. Sexuality is a natural part of all living things. How it comes out of each of us is unique and special based on who we are and the choices we make. **Sexuality is as diverse as the Lands on the Earth.****

When we know and accept that we are part of the Land and that it is part of us, it can connect us to deeper understandings. It can also give us a sense of connection and belonging to something more powerful than ourselves. It can help us develop and maintain responsibility for taking care of ourselves, the environment and each other.

**(Optional: For more in depth discussions:** how was sexual pleasure represented in the visualization? Words like floods and gushing. Speaking of tectonic plates shifting, earthquakes and trembling refer to arousal and orgasms. The beauty of the Land and body in their various forms can be a source of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is naturally occurring and meant to be healthy.

With Indigenous perspectives as the foundation of discussions, the importance of honouring Treaties in Canada can be made as we link it to consent. Coercion and the original intention of Treaties should be central to the discussion.<sup>xxx</sup> Connection to Land protection and violence against Indigenous people can be explored.<sup>xxxi)</sup>

### **Note to Educators**

For a non-Indigenous person, it is essential to remain culturally humble (i.e. respectful and reflective) when sharing knowledge from a culture that is not our own. This means sharing where the knowledge comes from, acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge of that worldview, continuously listening and learning, apologizing when misunderstanding, and prioritizing Indigenous presence and voices. This includes recognizing that we are relatives, have responsibilities and should be respectful of this worldview.

### **4. Puberty Changes Activity<sup>xxiii</sup>**

Draw one large outline of a body on the board.

Optional: Have the youth tape the body parts and the matching changes on the outline or start at the top of the outline and cover changes going down the body. For the middle section write person with a vulva/vagina and person with a penis on either side of the body. (Note: To be inclusive of all gender identities, do not gender the anatomy.)

Then once you have covered the changes use the anatomy pictures of the middle area to cover those parts and clarify internal organs, their functions and a few ways of reproduction.

**Let's explore the changes that happen during puberty. While most people go through puberty on its own time, when people need to control their body changes for their gender identity development, a doctor may be involved and it's good to have extra supports.** (The Gender Dysphoria Assessment and Action for Youth (GDAAY) team work with youth along the spectrum of gender dysphoria providing assessment and treatment. Self-refer to the Pediatric Endocrine Nurse Clinician at 204-787-2490)

- » Brain - new thoughts & feelings maybe "horny"
- » Hair - Begins to grow on some faces, in armpits & pubic areas
- » Voice - Sounds deeper < use a word bubble
- » Skin - More sweaty, oily & pimples may appear < draw a sweat drop
- » Chest - Grows Bigger
- » Shoulders - Grow wider < use arrows
- » Hips - Grow wider < use arrows
- » Height – Grow taller < use an arrow

On one side of the pic do the person with penis and other side person with vulva changes.

- » Testicles - Begins to make sperm
- » Penis - More erections (boners) & ejaculations (cum) & wet dreams

- » Uterus - Begins menstruating (period)
- » Clitoris - Becomes erect (hard); pleasure center
- » Vagina - Makes more fluid when aroused (horny) & wet dreams
- » Ovaries - Begins to release eggs
- » Vulva - Includes two sets of labia (skin folds or lips) that grow larger

### 5. Introduction to Anatomy in the Middle Area of the Body<sup>xxiv</sup>

Using the anatomy pictures give the medical name for all the parts, discuss their functions and some ways pregnancy occurs.

The anatomy pictures that are shown are pencil crayon drawings of the middle areas of our body without clothes on. Feel free to put your head down if you'd like if you're more comfortable. **We know our bodies come in all shades, shapes and sizes and our genitals are as unique as our faces, so these pictures are used as a teaching tool not a standard to compare you body to. Feel free to call your body parts whatever you'd like, they are your body parts, and it is also important to know the medical words that a health care provider will use as well. Also know, these anatomy pictures do not include some intersex people who have differing genitals or internal sex organs and that there's also a large range in our gender identities.**

#### Body with a Penis

- » **Anus** - is where gas/farts and feces/poop come out and almost every body has these functions. Some people of all bodies and gender identities choose to use their anus as a sex organ. It's important to use lube and all openings require consent.
- » **Penis** - this picture shows a non-circumcised penis (foreskin intact), they can also be circumcised (foreskin removed, usually as an infant). The urethra opening, is at the tip of the penis. Ejaculate (cum), pre-cum (pre-ejaculate), and pee/urine all come out of here.
- » **Testicles Inside Scrotum** - are behind the penis and they begin to make sperm during puberty, like a sperm factory.

During puberty, more erections (boners) happen from sexy thoughts or no reason at all. This is a normal and healthy thing for the body to do. When the penis becomes erect which happens more during puberty, blood rushes to the area and makes the penis hard and pre-cum comes out (that has some sperm in it and any type of infection). This is why a condom needs to be put on **before** the penis goes near any opening.

When an erection occurs, sperm in the testicles can start to move up a tube called the vas deferens. The sperm pass through three glands, (the two seminal vesicles and the prostate gland) which add fluid and more energy becoming semen. The penis may ejaculate by releasing the semen from the tip. Also, note the prostate can be stimulated through the anus which can feel good for people with this kind of body.

- » **FYI:** Pre-ejaculate is created by the Cowper's gland to lubricate the urethra, neutralize



acidity so that sperm can survive and to facilitate the flow of semen during ejaculation. Sperm and STIs/HIV may exist in pre-ejaculate due to having been left in the urethra from prior ejaculation.<sup>xxv</sup>

- » **FYI:** Semen is different from sperm, in that it consists of protein that allows sperm to live longer and travel faster and further. Semen can have millions of sperm in it.
- » **FYI:** “Morning wood” or morning erections are technically night time erections which happen three to five times per night. They are part of the body’s natural cycle during sleep.

### Body with a Vulva

- » **Anus** - same anus as other body, is where gas/farts and feces/poop come out and almost every body has these functions. Some people of all bodies and gender identities choose to use their anus as a sex organ and if you do, it’s important to use lube.
- » **Vaginal Opening** - has period/blood (the blood that nourishes all human life) and vaginal fluids (which is a way to clean itself and stay healthy) come out. If a person chooses to carry a pregnancy to term and gives birth vaginally a baby can come out. If a penis or a syringe lets out semen near or in the vagina, this person can get pregnant. (**Note:** Clarify if youth say pee/urine, that pee comes out of the urethra.) The term Moon Time refers to traditional Indigenous teachings of womanhood and often particularly refers to the menstruation cycle as it coincides with rhythms of the earth and cycles of the Moon.) **FYI:** Changes in vaginal discharge can also indicate where in the menstrual cycle this person is.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- » **Hymen** - is a fringe of tissue/thin membrane of skin around the opening of a vagina. **FYI:** How much of the vagina it covers or how thick it is will be different for everyone i.e. some hymens cover most of the opening, some don’t cover very much at all, and some people with this body are born without a hymen.
- » **Urethral Opening** (or pee-hole) - is where pee/urine comes out. **FYI:** As part of arousal, some people with this body may ejaculate sex fluid near the urethra (called the skene’s gland).
- » **Clitoris** - is the small nub of flesh like a tip of an iceberg as most of this organ is located under the skin and is solely for pleasure, including orgasm. A person can touch themselves or give consent to someone else to touch their clitoris for pleasure. **FYI:** The clitoris has twice the number of sensory nerve endings the penis does and it also interacts with over 15,000 nerve endings throughout the whole pelvic area. It is created of the same sort of erectile tissue, called corpus spongiosum, which the head of a penis has. During sexual arousal the clitoris swells with blood and becomes slightly larger and usually more sensitive.<sup>xxvii</sup>
- » **Vulva** - includes clitoris, vaginal opening, the pee hole and the has two large “lips” called the labia. Everyone’s vulva and labia are unique, and come in different colours, lengths and sizes.



## Internal Anatomy

- » **Vagina** - is a tunnel of muscle that is collapsed on itself that may be different lengths/widths that can stretch.
- » **Cervix** - is at the end of the vagina; it feels like the tip of your nose. It stops things from going further into the body. The cervix has a small opening that allows sperm and menstrual blood to pass through it. The cervix can also open (dilate to 10 cm) during the birthing process. It is impossible to lose a tampon or condom in the vagina or for a penis or sex toy to go inside the uterus because of the cervix.
- » **Ovaries** - is where eggs are stored and then begin to be released (ovulation) according to the person's cycle during puberty. People with this body are born with a set number of eggs and more than one egg can be released per cycle. Also, if you have ovaries you were also carried by your biological grandmother as the eggs were already developed inside your biological parent's ovaries when they were a fetus.
- » **Fallopian Tubes** - is where the egg travels down the fallopian tubes; if sperm enters this body, they will travel through the cervix to the fallopian tubes. The egg and sperm may hook up creating a fertilized egg that will travel to the uterus.
- » **Uterus** - is shaped like a walnut. The lining of the uterus is made up of blood vessels and tissue which thicken as part of the menstrual cycle. If an egg is fertilized and successfully attaches to this lining (implantation), this is when we would say a person is pregnant. Sometimes people can't get pregnant for different reasons and they use invitro fertilization where a fertilized egg is placed into the uterus by a medical professional. The uterus is where a fetus (some people use the word baby) grows if a person decides to stay pregnant. It's their body and life most impacted, so if this person doesn't want to stay pregnant, they have about 4 months to decide if they want an abortion which is safe and legal.

If someone is having penis-vagina sex, and doesn't want to create a pregnancy, then it is important to use condoms and/or birth control every time. If an egg is not fertilized or the fertilized egg cannot attach to this lining then a pregnancy will not happen and the lining will be shed by the body, becoming period blood, as part of the menstrual cycle.

- » **FYI:** There are more likely days and less likely days, that someone could get pregnant. This is because cycles may vary from month to month making it difficult to know when the ovaries will release an egg, and also because sperm may live in the body for up to five days and when we are young our bodies are very fertile.<sup>xxviii</sup>

## Debrief

Puberty is the process we go through to grow from a child into a young adult. During puberty lots of physical and emotional changes happen. There may also be extra responsibilities and roles that come during puberty. Regardless of your biology, everyone's body goes through changes and this is a part of growing up. Some people have a lot of changes, some may have less, and everyone takes their own amount of time to go through puberty.

Some people/cultures may also have special traditions/rituals or rites of passage when it comes to beginning menstruation such as the Berry Fast for example. Fasting known as vision quests can also be a rite of passage that some young men engage in as they transition into the next life stage in Anishinaabe culture.

Emotional changes (in particular, feeling attraction or horny) may contradict with the other factors (e.g. a youth or other's values about sex), so it can be a confusing time. Mixed feelings around puberty is common. Although puberty can make people feel awkward or self-conscious at times, it can also be an exciting special time where someone might feel happy and proud.

### 6. Puberty Products Activity

Show a bag of puberty related items, explain that they will be seeing items and you will explain the use of products that someone might be using once they start puberty.

Invite youth to or you randomly take one, object out at a time and discuss how it works.

#### What's it used for and where and how on the body can you use it?

- » journaling, information/resources, pic of running shoes, tampons, pads, disposable and cloth ones, (underwear pads if available), facial soap, razor and shaving cream/lather soap (mention hair removal is for aesthetic purposes), deodorant, bra, menstrual cup, soap, pimple cream, meds and hot packs for cramps and growing pains.
- » Can discuss the pink tax<sup>xxix</sup>, the gender-discriminatory pricing practice of charging more for pink products for women than blue products for men.

### 7. Anonymous Question Box

- » Give each youth a piece of paper and pen.
- » Ask them to write down any questions they have about puberty or anything we have discussed and put it in the box without putting their name on it.
- » Tell them you will be reading them out in front of the class and answering them.
- » **FYI:** Guidelines that can help with answering questions are found [HERE](#).
- » **Note:** Some questions might require research or consulting with others. Also, it is possible to turn inappropriate questions into teachable moments.

### 8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms

- » Mixed feelings about puberty are common for example you can feel nervous or stressed and excited at the same time.
- » Know that all feelings are common and valid and that puberty is different for everyone.
- » Some people have a lot of changes, some may have less, and everyone takes their own amount of time to go through puberty.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Puberty***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 2.1.1 Identify and describe the stages of physiological growth and development in adolescents and how each stage can be nurtured.
- » S1 2.1.2 Distinguish between puberty and adolescence.
- » S1, S2, S4 2.3.1 Describe the male and female reproductive systems and the process by which fertilization takes place.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

##### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.5.5.E.1b Identify the physical changes associated with puberty and the importance of personal hygiene practices.
- » K.5.5.E.2 Identify the social emotional changes associated with puberty.
- » K.5.5.E.3c Identify the responsibilities associated with physical, social, and emotional changes during puberty.
- » S.5.5.A.5 Apply a decision-making process in case scenarios related to issues associated with puberty.
- » K.5.7.E.1a Describe the human reproductive systems as they relate to fertilization and fetal development.
- » K.5.7.E.1b Explain the human reproduction process and recognize myths related to fertilization.
- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.5.S1.E.1a and K.5.S2.E.1a Review the anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system of human beings.
- » K.5.7.E.2a Identify the emotional changes at puberty and their effect on personal well being.
- » K.5.7.E.2b Identify positive ways for coping with daily moods and emotions associated with puberty.

# Puberty Activities

## Puberty Changes Activity

**Brain**

**Hair**

**Voice**

**Skin**

**Shoulders Uterus**

**Hips**

**Penis**

**Ovaries**

**Clitoris**

**Vagina**

**Vulva**

**Testicles**

**Height**

**Chest**

**New thoughts and feelings  
maybe horny**

**Grows on some faces,  
armpits, and pubic area**

**Sounds deeper**

**More sweaty, oily & pimples  
may appear**

**Grow wider**

**Grow wider**

**Begins to make sperm**

**More erections (boners) &  
ejaculations (cum) and wet  
dreams**

**Begins menstruating  
(period)**

**Becomes erect (hard);  
pleasure center**

**Makes more fluid when aroused (horny) and wet dreams**

**Begins to release eggs**

**Includes clitoris, vaginal opening, the pee hole, and the two sets of labia (skin folds/lips)**

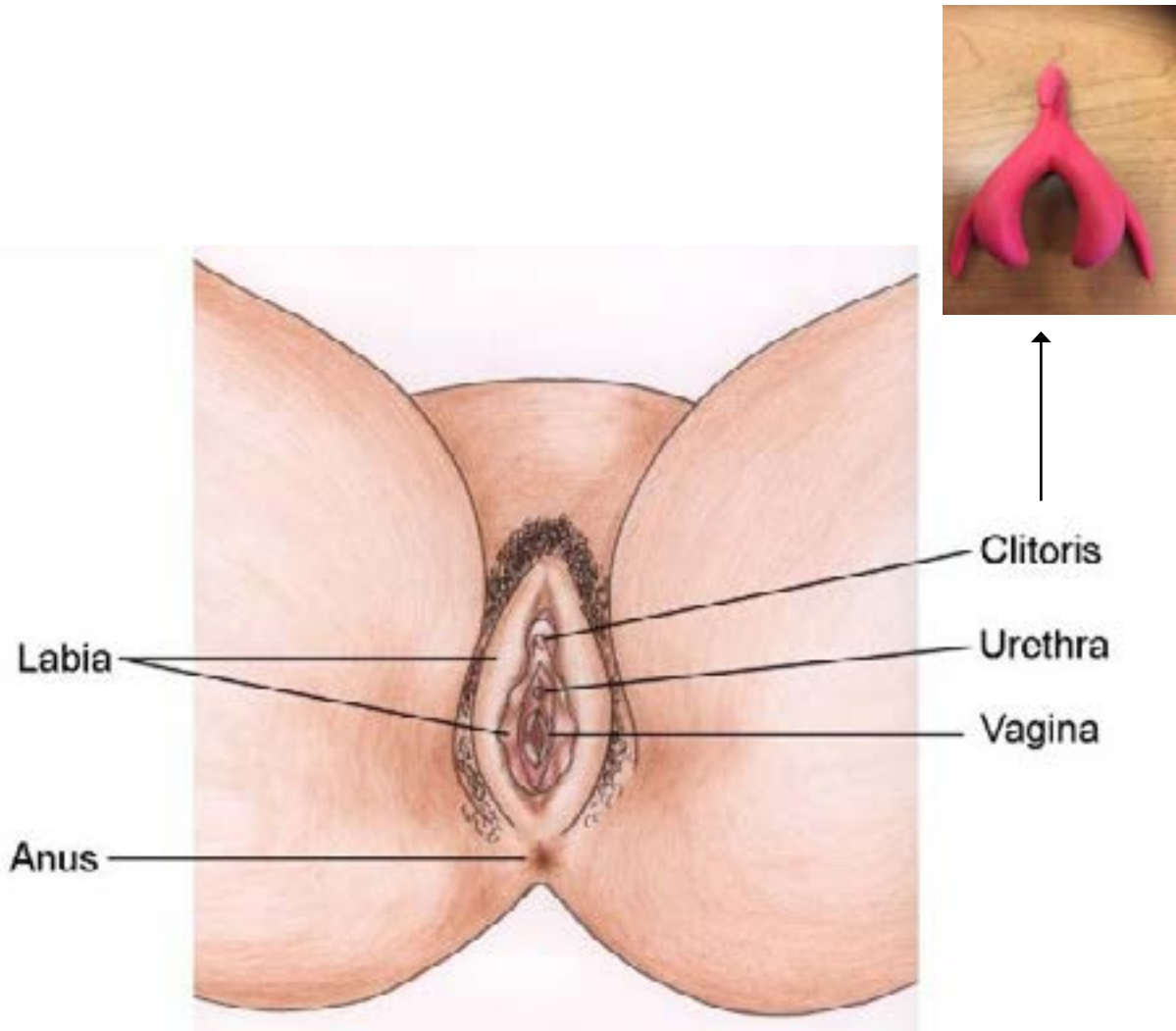
**Grow Bigger**

**Grow Taller**

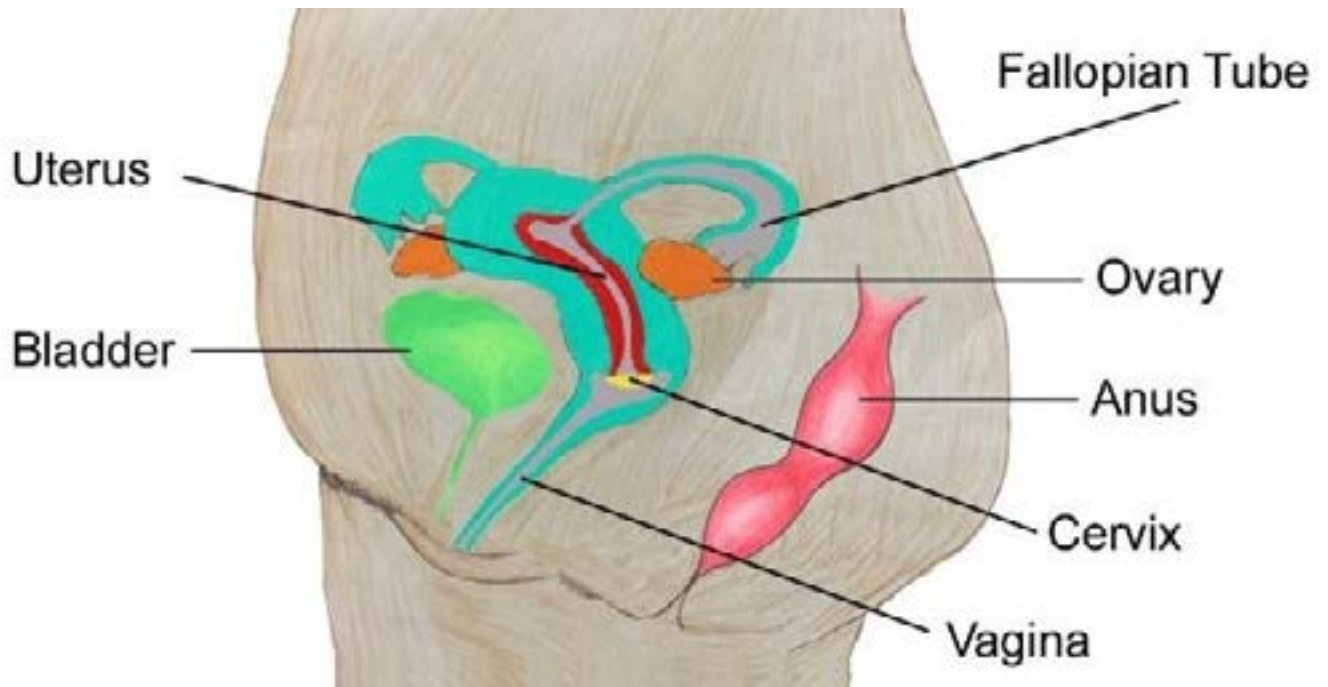


# Middle Body Anatomy<sup>xxxii</sup>

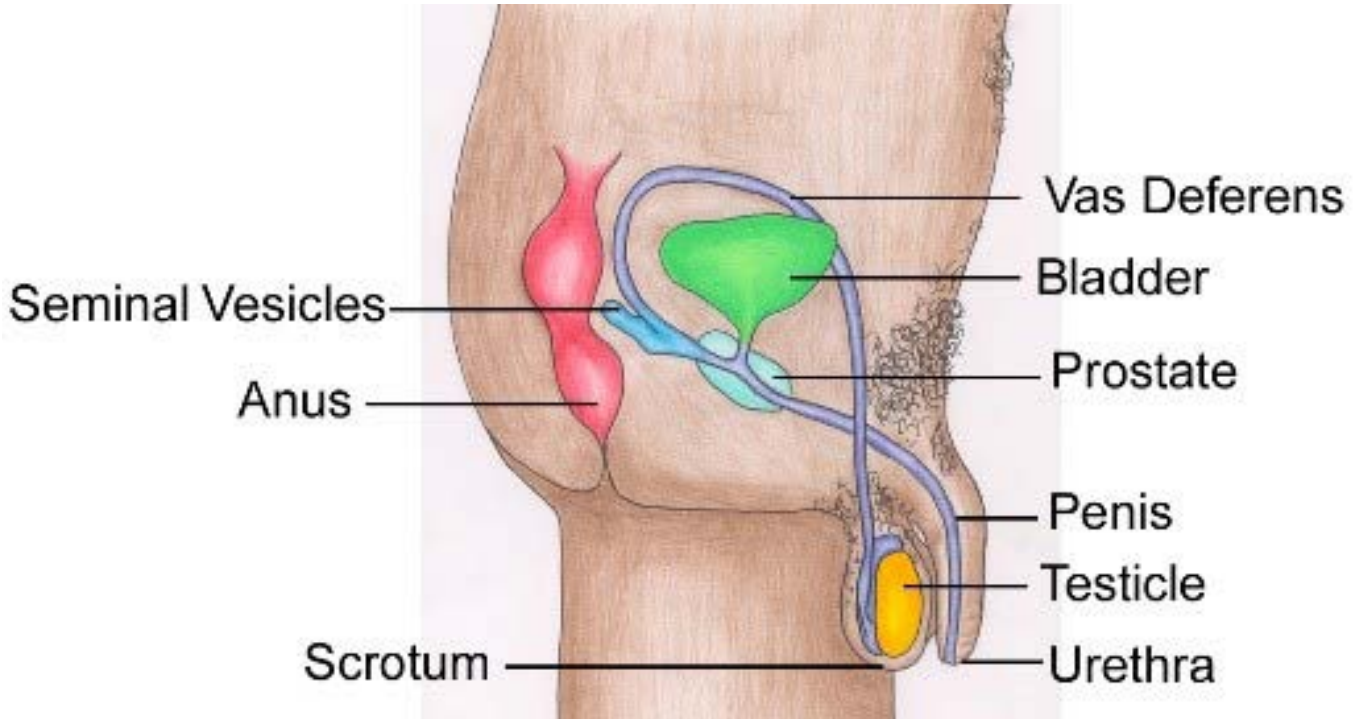
## Person with a Vulva - External



## Person with a Vulva - Internal



## Person with a Penis



## **Readiness and Safer Sex - Grade 7**

### **Readiness and Safer Sex Outline**

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Readiness and Safer Sex
- » "How do you know if you are ready?" Video
- » Reflection: When would I?
- » Consent: Age of Consent
- » Condom Demo
- » Sex Dam Demo
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### **Session Goals**

- » Explore the concept of dating/sexual readiness.
- » Discuss the rights and laws intended to protect youth.
- » Explore the concept of age of consent.
- » Discuss and demonstrate birth control and safer sex practices.

## 1. Check-in

### When making decisions, you...?

- » Rush into things
- » Discuss with others then decide for myself
- » Think about things then take a long time to decide
- » Let others decide for me

### Resources:

- » [everybodycurious.com](http://everybodycurious.com)
- » [teenclinic.ca](http://teenclinic.ca) **Teen clinics are special clinic times only for young people.** (Locate the one closest to your location.) No appointment or adult permission is necessary and youth can get things like information about your body, free or low-cost birth control and condoms, testing for STIs, HIV, and pregnancy. There are counselors available to talk about any issue. Arrive an hour before the clinic closes to be seen.

## 2. Introduction to Readiness and Safer Sex

Today we are going to explore readiness. We are going to look at what it means to be ready or not ready in different personal/romantic/sexual situations. This can be awkward and embarrassing for some people. If you want to draw or put your head down, it's okay as not everyone may be ready to discuss this topic. We are going to start with a short video, leading to a personal reflection, which will be followed by age of consent debrief and some demos.

## 3. "How do you know if you are ready?" Video

### [How do you know if you are ready? Everybody Curious Video](#) - play up to 07:30

- » This video, made for your age, explores readiness focusing on a dating/romantic relationship.

### Debrief

- » **What did you think of the video?**
- » **What was the main message?** That readiness is really specific to each person.
- » **What are some things the students discussed that might be important for them to have people close to them in a romantic way?** Your values, beliefs, trust, information, comfort with themselves, a certain age or a specific goal.

## 4. Reflection: When would I...?<sup>xxxiii</sup>

We are going to talk about some different activities that involve our bodies or other people's bodies. Many people have values or reasons that help them decide whether they would do some of these things. There are many intimate behaviors that people may do with others or with ourselves and we are going to cover some. Know also that some people may never participate in some of these activities.

This is a personal reflection and we encourage you to think about how you feel about the activity. When would you do this? **Now, When I'm Older, Never or It Depends** (Can be written on the board.)

Think about the phrases as they are read aloud. (Can be written on the board.)

**Which of these activities would you feel comfortable doing...**

- » By yourself?
- » With a friend?
- » With a family member?
- » With someone you were dating or with whom you were in a committed relationship?
- » If you chose "it depends," what does it depend on?

**When would you do this...**

- » Hold hands with someone
- » Snuggle with someone
- » Sleep in the same room with someone
- » Sleep in the same bed with someone
- » Let someone see me cry
- » Kiss someone
- » Tell someone something very personal
- » Ask for help with something very personal
- » Let someone see me naked
- » Engage in sexual activity with someone
- » Hug someone

**Debrief**

**Now imagine if you are older, under what circumstances do you think it would be okay or not okay to participate in some of these behaviors?**

**What could you do if someone wanted you to do one of these things but you didn't?**

Set boundaries by saying no. Recognize that your wishes should be respected and pressure is not ok.

**5. Consent**

Consent includes asking first and recognizing that only yes means yes. Consent is ongoing which means you can change your mind at any time. Consent is also why it's important to check in with your partner during sexual activity to make sure they are into what's happening. It's about asking, listening and respect.

## **Age of Consent**

At what age can someone legally say yes to sex? Age of consent in Canada as long as not in a position of power is:

- » 16: They can say “yes” to sexual contact with almost anyone 16 years or older.
- » 14-15: They can say “yes” to sexual contact with someone less than five years older than them.
- » 12-13: They can say “yes” to sexual contact with someone less than two years older than them.

People in a position of trust, power or authority over youth are: Coaches, doctors, teachers, parole officers, counselors, babysitters, case workers, bosses etc. For example, say a youth had a job at a gas station and they were making out with their manager. A manager is in a position of power at a workplace, so how could being in a relationship with a manager affect a youth at work? Give youth crappy shifts, give youth not enough/too many shifts etc. The law is there to protect young people. (Note: With parents/guardians or family, it is always illegal and the adult's fault.)

### **What do you think about the age 16? Does it guarantee that you are ready to have sex?**

These are just the laws around the age of consent but being ready or not for sex can be more complicated.

## **6. Condom Demo (Video and/or Live Demo)<sup>xxxiv</sup>**

### **[Condom Demo on Vimeo](#)**

#### **Note to Educators**

There are a lot of little details in a condom demo, but the most important things to remember are pinching the tip, rolling it all the way down, and telling youth where to get them for free. Use a banana if you don't have a wooden demonstrator.

Putting on a condom is a learned and important skill for making sex safer. Anyone can practice putting on a condom, whether or not they have a penis, because a banana, bingo dabber, sex toy, etc. can work. Practicing can make using condoms seem more natural, which makes people more likely to use them in real life. Condoms are a type of barrier method that physically stops sex fluids from mixing. Condoms reduce the risk of STIs/HIV and can help prevent pregnancy. Condoms can be used on a penis or on a sex toy (depending on its shape). Using condoms on sex toys is recommended if people want to share their sex toys. Make sure to change the condom between bodies. Condoms can break mainly as a result of not leaving room at the tip of the penis and not being stored properly.

Penises come in all sizes, shapes, colours, circumcised or not and the demonstration tool (often a woody) is not what an actual penis should look like. Some have foreskin and some don't (are circumcised), so whatever someone has is fine.

## Checking the Condom

Check the condom for rips, holes, tears, or other damage, the expiry date, and writing that says, **“Helps reduce the risk of STIs.”** **“Where are safe places to store condoms?”** Answers could be anywhere it won't get too hot or squished; drawer, shirt or hoodie pocket, bag, or in lockers at school. Check the type of condom. Lubricated condoms are already slippery. Additional water-based lube can also be added to lubricated condoms. Non-lubricated condoms are dry and mainly used for oral sex. Add water-based lube for insertive sex (penis or sex toy in vagina or anus). Most condoms are made of latex, which some people are allergic to. Non-latex condoms are made from a type of plastic and can be more expensive. Community clinics and nursing stations often have condoms available for free.

## Opening the Condom

Along the top of the condom package are usually ridges. Using your fingers, open the condom package, take out the condom and check to see that the 'ring' is visible on the outside. If not, flip it so that the ring is on the outside. You might show how a condom that is 'inside out' won't roll down. **“If I put the condom on the wrong way on a penis, is it okay to flip the condom around?”** No. The condom won't roll down on the penis or sex toy, and if it's a penis, the pre-cum is now on the outside of the condom, so it's best to use a new condom. Carry more than one condom, just in case a condom needs to be thrown out.

## Putting the Condom On

If using on a penis, pinch the tip of the condom to leave room for the ejaculate (cum). (Demonstrate a three-finger pinch.) **“Why do you need to pinch the tip?”** To get the air out, so there is room for the semen. One of the main reasons why condoms break is from not pinching the tip. Pinch a full inch of the tip of the condom. Hold the pinch to keep the air out and roll the condom down to the base. (If it's going on an uncircumcised penis, the foreskin would be pulled back a little before rolling the condom down.) If a condom is put on a penis correctly, the tip should look like a baggy toque or hat. (On a sex toy, pinching at the tip is not required.) Only use one condom at a time. Once sex is done for whatever reason, remove the penis or sex toy while holding the condom by the elastic ring. This helps to stop the condom from rolling off. Remember, the penis will begin to soften and the condom will be looser after ejaculation, so it is important to remove soon after ejaculation. Throw used condoms in the garbage and use a new condom every time.

## Debrief

- » Note: Remind students where they can get free condoms and safer sex supplies. Let youth know about the “morning after pill” or Emergency Contraception Pill (ECP).
- » If a condom broke, there was no protection, or there was a sexual assault, the emergency contraceptive pill, ECP, or Plan B, is a form of birth control that can be taken after unprotected penis-vagina sex. ECP is very effective birth control if used within the first 72 hours. It can be taken up to 5 days after unprotected penis-vagina sex, but becomes less effective as time passes.



## **7. Sex Dam Demo<sup>xxxv</sup>**

- » A sex dam is a sheet of latex/polyurethane that can be made from a condom or bought ready-made. Dams are used for making oral sex safer from the risk of STIs.
- » Dams are typically used on the vulva (the outside of the vagina), anus, or scrotum. (All parts except the penis.)

### **Instructions**

To make a sex dam without scissors, take a condom out of the package and unroll the condom all the way down. Pull the ring off the condom. Rip the condom down one side to the tip of the condom. Open up the condom; it should now be one sheet. (Note: To make a sex dam with scissors, take a condom out of the package. Using scissors, cut off the tip of the condom, then cut the ring and unroll.)

The dam can be held in place by either partner. The dam is to keep sex fluids separate, so don't flip it over during oral sex and apply lube for extra pleasure.

## **8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » What it means to be ready for certain life experiences is different for everyone.
- » There is no certain age that will make you ready and it is not OK for someone to pressure you into anything.
- » Have accurate information and find someone you trust to answer your questions.

## Readiness and Safer Sex - Grade 8

### Readiness and Safer Sex Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Readiness and Safer Sex
- » Brainstorm four flipcharts:
  - “Why Do/Don’t Teens Have Sex”
  - “Fun and Safe Activities”
  - “What does it mean to be ready for sex?”
  - “Things to talk about before sex?”
  - (Optional: Additional blank flipchart for doodling.)
- » Age of Consent
- » Hormonal Birth Control
- » Emergency Contraceptive Pill
- » Condom Demo
- » Sex Dam Demo
- » Internal Condom Demo
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Validate a person’s right to determine sexual readiness with support.
- » Give youth an opportunity to brainstorm why teens may or may not have sex, how to know if you are ready for sex, negotiate when people have decided to have sex, and create a list of safe activities that are no risk of pregnancy and STIs/HIV.
- » Highlight abstinence activities as fun and safe choices.
- » Highlight the rights, responsibilities, and risks involved with having sex.
- » Discuss and demonstrate hormonal birth control and safer sex practices.

## 1. Check-in

### When making decisions, you...?

- » Rush into things
- » Discuss with others then decide for myself
- » Think about things then take a long time to decide
- » Let others decide for me

### Resources:

- » [everybodycurious.com](http://everybodycurious.com)
- » [teenclinic.ca](http://teenclinic.ca) **Teen clinics are special clinic times only for young people.** (Locate the one closest to your location.) No appointment or adult permission is necessary and youth can get things like information about your body, free or low-cost birth control and condoms, testing for STIs, HIV, and pregnancy. There are counselors available to talk about any issue. Arrive an hour before the clinic closes to be seen.

## 2. Introduction to Readiness and Safer Sex

Today we are going to explore readiness. We are going to look at what it means to be ready or not ready in different personal/romantic/sexual situations. This can be awkward and embarrassing for some people. If you want to draw or put your head down, it's okay as not everyone may be ready to discuss this topic. We are going to start with a short video, leading to a personal reflection, which will be followed by age of consent debrief and some demos.

## 3. Brainstorm Exercise<sup>xxxvi</sup>

### Create 4-5 flipcharts:

- » "Why Do/Don't Youth Have Sex",
- » "How do you know if you're ready for sex?" and
- » "Fun & Safe Activities."
- » "Things to talk about before sex?"
- » Optional: Additional blank flipchart for doodling.

**Tape the various flipcharts around the classroom and have youth write under each heading in pairs.**

**What do we mean by "Fun & Safe Activities"? (STIs/HIV & pregnancy).**

**Write down as many answers as you can think of for each flipchart.**

**Sample Responses - Why do teens have sex?**

- » they want to
- » feels good
- » drugs/alcohol
- » pressure
- » are ready
- » horny
- » in love
- » to keep their partner
- » their friends are having sex
- » to rebel against parents/authority
- » want to be pregnant
- » to attain status

**Note to Educators**

Youth may write sexual assault or forced. Explain that this is not considered sex because it is an assault and reiterate sexual assault resources.

**Sample Responses - Why don't teens have sex?**

- » don't want to/not interested
- » they are too busy/no time
- » not ready
- » scared of pregnancy/STI
- » past experience
- » sexual identity
- » values and beliefs
- » religion/culture/spirituality
- » sexual assault (is not sex)
- » partner doesn't want to
- » doesn't have a partner
- » afraid of parents finding out
- » poor body/self-image
- » rumors/reputation
- » focused on other goals

**There are many reasons why people choose to have or not have sex.** By the end of high school many youth have had sex and many haven't, so whichever side of the fence you are on, you aren't alone. Also, if there is anything you want to talk about, find an adult you trust.

**Sample Responses - How do you know if you're ready for sex?**

- » You have a sense of what it means for you and your values.
- » You just know.
- » You are emotionally ready.
- » You are in love.
- » You want to.
- » You're thinking about it a lot.
- » You can talk about it.
- » You feel horny.
- » You're married.
- » You know how to use protection.
- » You know how to use consent.
- » You know about STIs and Testing.
- » You can talk about birth control (for penis-vagina sex).
- » You can talk about pregnancy options (for penis-vagina sex).
- » You feel comfortable with your body.

**Note to Educators**

This flipchart is an opportunity for youth to reflect on readiness and has no right answers. These are some of the more common answers youth may write.

If marriage comes up, debrief that this is a value, and that consent still needs to happen in marriage. If horny is written, debrief that it may be a physical sign in the body, but may not reflect if we feel emotionally ready.

**There isn't a checklist that we can give you that guarantees you're ready for sex. We would say that some signs might be that you are comfortable talking with partners about sex, consent, STIs, condoms and, if it's penis-vagina sex, pregnancy and birth control. Then again, you may feel comfortable talking about all these things and still not feel ready for sex. Ultimately, we'd say to trust what is in your heart and in your mind. You know what is right for you.**

**Sample Responses** - Fun and safe activities

- » kissing
- » holding hands
- » hugging
- » dry humping with clothes on
- » talking
- » masturbating
- » massage
- » hanging out with friends
- » watching movies
- » going for coffee
- » playing games
- » going for walks
- » taking a bath or shower
- » sports
- » texting/phone sex/sexting

**Note to Educators**

Youth may write oral sex. Explain that while this is safe if you do not want to create a pregnancy, it still has a risk of transmitting STIs, so condoms and sex dams are important.

**These activities can be fun, enjoyable, and are lower/no risk for STIs and pregnancy. Sexual activity is not limited to "doing it" or "not doing it," all these other fun and safe activities are ways of expressing our sexuality.**

**Sample Responses** - Things to talk about before having sex

- » **Comforts and Boundaries** - Sex can mean different things to different people. What do you want the boundaries of your sexual activity to be and what would feel good to you?
- » **Expectations** - What will sex mean for everyone involved? For some people, sex means being in a committed relationship together, while for other people it is more casual.
- » **Birth Control** - If you're interested in having penis-vagina sex you might want to talk about pregnancy and whether or not to use birth control. Do you want to create a pregnancy or not? If not, what type of birth control are you going to use to help prevent one?
- » **Pregnancy Options** - Birth control isn't 100% effective. Talk about what you would do if an unplanned pregnancy happens. In Canada, we have 3 safe and legal options: abortion, adoption and parenting. We all have our own values about which option we would choose. It may be an easier conversation to have before a pregnancy happens. Sometimes if people find their values don't match up, they choose to not have sex, have a different type of sex, or be really mindful to use birth control and condoms properly. Ultimately, if a pregnancy does happen, it is the final decision of the person carrying the pregnancy as it is their body and their life most affected.



- » **STIs Testing** - STIs can happen with all types of sex. You can't always tell just by looking at someone's genitals if they have one or not, or by asking as they may not know themselves. The only way to know for sure is by getting tested. Asking someone when the last time they were tested and offering to go together can be a great way to talk about STIs without sounding judgmental.
- » **Condoms or Sex Dams** - Barriers like condoms or sex dams help reduce the risk of getting STIs.
- » **Pleasure** - Checking in before and during sex (consent) is also part of pleasure and making sure that everyone is having a good time.
- » **Consent** - Short version: Ask first, and only yes means yes. Consent is ongoing which means you can change your mind anytime and is also why it's important to check in with your partner during sexual activity to make sure they are into what's happening. It's about asking, listening, and respect.

The more comfortable we get at having these conversations, the better equipped we'll be to have them. Also, it doesn't guarantee that our partners will be a perfect match, but it can help us decide if we want to be sexually active with someone.

#### 4. Age of Consent (if not covered already)

At what age can someone legally say yes to sex? Age of consent in Canada as long as not in a position of power is:

- » 16: They can say "yes" to sexual contact with almost anyone 16 years or older.
- » 14-15: They can say "yes" to sexual contact with someone less than five years older than them.
- » 12-13: They can say "yes" to sexual contact with someone less than two years older than them.

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#### What do you think about the age 16? Does it guarantee that you are ready to have sex?

These are just the laws around the age of consent but being ready or not for sex can be more complicated.

#### 5. Hormonal Birth Control<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**Under "Hormonal" flipchart:** Follow Directions; Other Meds; Side Effects; No protection from STIs or HIV. If possible, demonstrate versions of the pill, Depo Provera, the patch, the Implant, NuvaRing, ECP, and IUD/S. If unavailable, you could also use images.

**"What types of hormonal birth control have you heard of?"** Explain that these birth control methods contain synthetic lab made hormones (versions of estrogen and/or

progesterone) that someone who can get pregnant would put into their body. If someone with a vulva chooses to take hormonal birth control, it increases the amount of hormones in the body, which stops the egg from being released (ovulation).

**No ovulation means no pregnancy.** (Note: Hormonal birth control is very effective at preventing pregnancy, 91-94% for a typical user. If pregnancy does occur with hormonal birth control, it is usually due to incorrect use.)

### **Important things to remember about hormonal birth control:**

#### **Follow Directions**

The pill is taken at the same time every day for three weeks out of four. If a pill is missed, or taken at a different time of day, then hormone levels may drop, causing the ovaries to release an egg. In the fourth week, no hormones are taken and this is when someone's period would usually occur. The four-week pack has the same pills for the first three weeks, and for the last week has a 'reminder' pill that does not contain any hormones. (FYI: The pill becomes effective after the first month of use.)

The patch is worn on the body for a week at a time, for three weeks. The hormones are slowly released through the skin. It's very sticky and should not fall off in the shower or while swimming. It's important that the patch not be worn on the breasts or forehead, as this is too close to vital organs (heart and brain). The patch is only available in this one colour, but we know that not everyone in the world is this colour. This is an example of racism because they do not make a clear patch. That being said, the patch is still an effective birth control option.

The NuvaRing is worn inside the vulva/vagina for three weeks. At the end of three weeks, the person would remove the ring and go a week without using it. This is usually when their period would occur. Then they would start a new ring for another three weeks.

Depo is a shot/needle given by a health care provider. It lasts for 84 days. It's important to go for your next shot by the end of the 84 days to keep the hormone levels up.

Birth Control Implant (Nexplanon) is the size of a matchstick and a small flexible rod that is inserted just under the skin of your upper arm. It contains the hormone progestin and stays in place for three years.

IUD/S, an intrauterine device or system, is a small device that is inserted into the uterus by a health care provider to prevent pregnancy. It has two horizontal arms which are folded during insertion, and then unfold into a T-shape. Some are made with hormones (IUS), and some are made with copper (IUD). Copper IUDs work by affecting the way sperm moves, so sperm cannot meet up with the egg. Depending on the type, IUDs can be effective for 2-5 years. There is a higher upfront cost to IUDs, but they do last longer than other types of birth control. Most health plans, social assistance programs, and Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) will reimburse the cost of an IUD. Women's Health Clinic also has a program to help reduce the cost of an IUD.

## **Other Medications Can Reduce Effectiveness**

Certain medications, both prescribed and over-the-counter, can reduce the effectiveness of hormonal birth control. Call a pharmacy at any time to ask how medication can affect different types of birth control. If medication does affect the birth control, it is important to use a back-up method. Drugs and alcohol do not interfere with birth control, unless a person forgets to take/use it or the pill is thrown up.

## **Side Effects**

Hormonal birth control can have side effects. These can include regulating periods, lighter periods (people who have painful menstrual cramps are often given the pill to ease this), no periods at all (common with Depo), spotting (bleeding other times than period days), weight change (loss/gain) (Note: If it comes up, you may want to briefly address how pressure from the media to be thin can affect our reproductive rights and choices), tender breasts, more/less acne, migraines, mood swings, decreased sex drive, and a risk of (increased) depression. Tell your health care provider if you have a history of depression, because estrogen can make depression worse. Although less common, some may experience more serious side effects. Go to the emergency department if you feel suddenly hot or cold, have shortness of breath, blurred vision, dizziness, etc., as these are serious side effects.

Depo has also been linked to a decrease in bone density, so you might consider taking calcium and vitamin D, using weights to strengthen your body, and quitting or reducing smoking, alcohol use, and caffeine intake. You should talk with your health care provider if you have any concerns. (Note: Weight gain can be from a normal growing and changing body. If there are sudden weight increases or decreases, speak to a health care practitioner. Depo can lead to some weight gain, since progesterone can stimulate the appetite.) If someone has bothersome side effects, encourage them to go back to their health care provider or a teen clinic for advice and/or another brand of pills/hormonal birth control, or try a non-hormonal method of birth control. With Depo, they will have to wait out the 84 days, as it is already in their body. (Note: People who smoke should mention this to their health care provider if discussing birth control options.)

## **6. Emergency Contraceptive Pill<sup>xxxviii</sup>**

Emergency Contraception, or ECP for short (Plan B or other brands), is the only birth control you can take after unprotected sex. If you did not use protection for whatever reason, you can try to prevent a pregnancy with ECP. ECP stops ovulation or slows the egg's travel down the fallopian tube, making the lining of the uterus slippery and creating a thick mucus plug. ECP may be used up to 5 days after unprotected penis-vagina sex, however, the sooner it is taken, the more effective it is. "It is most effective when used within 24 hours. Plan B is recommended for up to 72 hours, but can sometimes still be effective up to the fifth day." If someone is already pregnant, ECP will not harm the pregnancy. (Note: Plan B is 95% effective when started within 24 hours of unprotected sex. The effectiveness decreases with each subsequent 24 hours, going down to 61% effectiveness if taken within 48-72 hours.) Some of the potential side effects are nausea and spotting. Explain that some people feel nauseous



after taking ECP because of the high hormone dosages, while others are not affected. If the pills are thrown up or diarrhea occurs within two hours of taking ECP, the pills will need to be taken again. ECP will not cause abortion and does not prevent sexually transmitted infections.

If youth want to access ECP, encourage them to call the health centre or hospital ahead of going. Where there are teen clinics, teens can access ECP even on non-teen clinic days. (FYI: In Winnipeg, Plan B is also available at the pharmacy without a prescription, but costs anywhere from \$25 (Superstore) to \$42 (Shoppers Drug Mart). Note: Plan B is less effective in people weighing 165 lbs (75 kg) or more and may not be effective in people weighing more than 176 lbs (80 kg). If your weight is 165 lbs (75 kg) or more, talk with a health care provider about your options.) Within 3-4 weeks of taking ECP, a period should occur. A pregnancy test should be done if this doesn't happen. The sooner someone finds out they are pregnant, the better, as they can have access to all three pregnancy options.

## **7. Condom Demo (Video and/or Live Demo)<sup>xxxix</sup>**

### **Condom Demo on Vimeo**

#### **Note to Educators**

There are a lot of little details in a condom demo, but the most important things to remember are pinching the tip, rolling it all the way down, and telling youth where to get them for free. Use a banana if you don't have a wooden demonstrator.

Putting on a condom is a learned and important skill for making sex safer. Anyone can practice putting on a condom, whether or not they have a penis, because a banana, bingo dabber, sex toy, etc. can work. Practicing can make using condoms seem more natural, which makes people more likely to use them in real life. Condoms are a type of barrier method that physically stops sex fluids from mixing. Condoms reduce the risk of STIs/HIV and can help prevent pregnancy. Condoms can be used on a penis or on a sex toy (depending on its shape). Using condoms on sex toys is recommended if people want to share their sex toys. Make sure to change the condom between bodies. Condoms can break mainly as a result of not leaving room at the tip of the penis and not being stored properly.

Penises come in all sizes, shapes, colours, circumcised or not and the demonstration tool (often a woody) is not what an actual penis should look like. Some have foreskin and some don't (are circumcised), so whatever someone has is fine.

#### **Checking the Condom**

Check the condom for rips, holes, tears, or other damage, the expiry date, and writing that says, **"Helps reduce the risk of STIs."** **"Where are safe places to store condoms?"** Answers could be anywhere it won't get too hot or squished; drawer, shirt or hoodie pocket, bag, or in lockers at school. Check the type of condom. Lubricated condoms are already slippery. Additional water-based lube can also be added to lubricated condoms. Non-lubricated condoms are dry and mainly used for oral sex. Add water-based lube for insertive sex (penis or sex toy in vagina or anus). Most condoms are made of latex, which some people are allergic to. Non-latex condoms are made from a type of plastic and can be more expensive. Community

clinics and nursing stations often have condoms available for free.

### **Opening the Condom**

Along the top of the condom package are usually ridges. Using your fingers, open the condom package, take out the condom and check to see that the 'ring' is visible on the outside. If not, flip it so that the ring is on the outside. You might show how a condom that is 'inside out' won't roll down. **"If I put the condom on the wrong way on a penis, is it okay to flip the condom around?"** No. The condom won't roll down on the penis or sex toy, and if it's on a penis, the pre-cum is now on the outside of the condom, so it's best to use a new condom. Carry more than one condom, just in case a condom needs to be thrown out.

### **Putting the Condom On**

If using on a penis, pinch the tip of the condom to leave room for the ejaculate (cum). (Demonstrate a three-finger pinch.) **"Why do you need to pinch the tip?"** To get the air out, so there is room for the semen. One of the main reasons why condoms break is from not pinching the tip. Pinch a full inch of the tip of the condom. Hold the pinch to keep the air out and roll the condom down to the base. (If it's going on an uncircumcised penis, the foreskin would be pulled back a little before rolling the condom down.) If a condom is put on a penis correctly, the tip should look like a baggy toque or hat. (On a sex toy, pinching at the tip is not required.) Only use one condom at a time. Once sex is done for whatever reason, remove the penis or sex toy while holding the condom by the elastic ring. This helps to stop the condom from rolling off. Remember, the penis will begin to soften and the condom will be looser after ejaculation, so it is important to remove soon after ejaculation. Throw used condoms in the garbage and use a new condom every time.

After the demonstration, give the youth the option to practice putting on a condom with a woody.

## **8. Sex Dam Demo<sup>x1</sup>**

### **Note to Educators**

- » A sex dam is a sheet of latex/polyurethane that can be made from a condom or bought ready-made. Dams are used for making oral sex safer from the risk of STIs.
- » Dams are typically used on the vulva (the outside of the vagina), anus, or scrotum. (All parts except the penis.)

### **Instructions**

To make a sex dam without scissors, take a condom out of the package and unroll the condom all the way down. Pull the ring off the condom. Rip the condom down one side to the tip of the condom. Open up the condom; it should now be one sheet. (Note: To make a sex dam with scissors, take a condom out of the package. Using scissors, cut off the tip of the condom, then cut the ring and unroll.)

The dam can be held in place by either partner. The dam is to keep sex fluids separate, so don't flip it over during oral sex and apply lube for extra pleasure.

## **9. Internal Condom Demo<sup>xli</sup>**

Internal condoms protect against STIs, HIV, and pregnancy. They can be used internally, either in the vagina or anus. If using with a vagina, an internal condom can be inserted up to 8 hours before sex happens. Internal condoms are available at some nursing stations, health centres, and most drugstores. Most are made from plastic (non-latex) and come lubricated.

### **Using an Internal Condom**

Check the expiry date on the package and make sure there are no rips, tears, or holes in the condom. Take out the condom as it will already be lubricated. If inserting into the vagina, make sure the inner ring is at the closed end, squeeze the inner ring and gently guide it up into the vagina. If inserting into the anus, just remove the inner ring.

Insert a finger inside the condom and push the inner ring up as far as it will go (this also ensures the condom is not twisted). The outer ring should remain on the outside of the body. (You can show how the condom is inserted by 'inserting' one into a closed hand.) Insert a woody into the condom to show that it's important to make sure the penis or sex toy goes into the condom.

### **Taking Out the Condom**

When sex is done or if there is ejaculate in the condom, remove it by twisting the ring on the outside and gently pulling it out. The twisting prevents sex fluids from leaking out when the condom is removed. All condoms should be disposed of in the garbage. All condoms are made to be used once only. Using two condoms at the same time causes friction and can reduce effectiveness.

## **10. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » What it means to be ready for certain life experiences is different for everyone.
- » There is no certain age that will make you ready.
- » Safer sex supplies (condoms, sex dams, gloves) and STI testing can help us stay safer.
- » It is not OK for anyone to pressure you.
- » Have accurate information and find someone you trust to answer your questions.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Readiness and Safer Sex***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.5.7.E.3a. Recognize the importance of sexual abstinence as a responsible decision for the adolescent male and female.
- » K.5.7.E.3c Identify responsibilities (e.g., respect, abstinence...) and sources of support (e.g., parents, nurses, doctors, counsellors, helplines, community health services, religious leaders, recommended books...) with regard to sex-related health issues.
- » S.5.7.A.5 Apply a decision-making/problem-solving process in case scenarios for making informed decisions regarding responsible sexual behaviours (e.g., abstinence, pregnancy prevention, safer sex practices...).
- » K.4.7.A.3 Explain the benefits of using the decision-making/problem solving process for making responsible and health-enhancing personal decisions.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.2b Examine the psychological implications of sexual activity and teenage pregnancy, and responsibilities regarding prevention.
- » K.5.S1.E.3b Examine the influences on making decisions for responsible sexual behaviour.
- » K.5.S1.E.3c & K.5.S2.E.3c Review personal responsibilities and sources of support with regard to sex-related health issues.
- » K.5.S1.E.1b Describe the potential consequences and risks associated with sexual behavior and different types of contraceptive methods.
- » K.5.S2.E.1b Identify and assess the advantages and/or disadvantages of different contraceptive methods.
- » S1, S2, S4 2.3.2 evaluate the role of abstinence in relationships, e.g., mental health, pregnancy prevention, physical health—STIs, emotional health.
- » S1, S2, S4 2.4.1 differentiate between various contraceptive options.

## **Sexual Orientation: Feelings and Attractions**

### **Sexual Orientation: Feelings and Attractions Outline**

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Sexual Orientation
- » Two-Spirit Video
- » Sexual Orientation Matching Definitions Activity
- » Feelings: What would you do?
- » Brainstorming:
  - a) One thing (or more) that I do if I am being bullied or targeted?
  - b) What can I do to support people of all sexualities?
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### **Session Goals**

- » Explore the language of sexualities.
- » Normalize the large range of sexualities.
- » Reinforce the notion that each person knows themselves best when it comes to their sexual orientation.
- » Discuss what others can do in various scenarios regarding relationships and sexualities.



### 3. *Two-Spirit Video*

#### What Does "Two-Spirit" Mean? | InQueery | them.

This is a 10 min video on what Two-Spirit means. It's got a lot big words in it, so if there's words in it that you don't understand and you'd like to discuss, we can do that after.

#### **Debrief**

**What was the main message?** Two-spirit people have existed since the beginning of time on this Land in many Indigenous Nations. In Winnipeg there's also the Spirited People of Manitoba that provides info and support at [twospiritmanitoba.ca](http://twospiritmanitoba.ca) or 204-330-8671.

### 4. *Sexual Orientation Definitions Activity*

Have the youth match the terms with the correct definitions either by taping on the board or by handing them all out and having them find their match.

#### **Asexual or "ace"**

- » no desire or not sexually attracted to anyone

#### **Bisexual**

- » attracted to more than one gender

#### **Biphobia**

- » telling people they can only love one gender

#### **BlaQ/BlaQueer**

- » a Black queer person who recognizes their queer identity as intrinsic to their Blackness and vice versa

#### **Demi-sexual**

- » between asexual and sexual and requires an emotional connection before being attracted to someone

#### **Gay**

- » attracted to people of the same gender; most often men or nonbinary people attracted to men

#### **Heterosexism**

- » asking a boy if he has a girlfriend without knowing his sexual orientation

#### **Heteronormative**

- » heterosexual relationships are favored and assuming there is only men and women

#### **Homophobia**

- » saying "that's so gay!"

#### **Indigiqueer**

- » an umbrella term used by Indigenous People to identify an aspect of their identity or identify as being outside colonial sexuality systems or labels that colonialism has created re: sexual orientation or gender identity

#### **Lesbian**

- » a woman or nonbinary person attracted to a woman

#### **Pansexual**

- » attraction to people regardless of their gender identities or sexual orientation

**The plus at the end of 2STLGBQINA+**

- » includes identities and sexualities that are not captured by the letters

**Queer**

- » an umbrella term that can describe many different sexual orientations

**Straight**

- » attracted to people of a different gender clinically known as heterosexual

**Two-Spirit**

- » is Anishinaabe-based and was coined in Winnipeg, Manitoba in the early 90's
- » can refer to gender identity and gender roles, is an identity specific to an Indigenous person, can refer to sexual orientation.

**5. Feelings and Attractions: What would you do?<sup>xlii</sup>**

- » Read the statements aloud to the youth once you have explained the activity to them. Then have them decide what they suggest the person does.

I'm going to read some scenarios. These sentences discuss relationships and sexuality. After each statement, you can move to the category that best suits your thoughts and feelings about the situation. The categories are: **do nothing, talk to a friend, talk to an adult, find out more information, reflect or journal/write.**

- » Carlos doesn't think he will ever be attracted to a girl or woman. What should he do?
- » Sam has a huge crush on Alex. They have been best friends forever. What should Sam do?
- » Charlie's not sure what gender they like. What should Charlie do?
- » Kim is being bullied at school and people are calling Kim gay. What should Kim do?
- » Amal likes River but River doesn't seem interested in Amal. What should Amal do?
- » Dillon is frustrated that people assume she likes boys because Dillon likes girls. What should Dillon do?

**Debrief**

You can always talk to your friends about things. Keep in mind you don't have to tell them everything. Some people like to create drama. If that's happening learn to step back when people are trying to get you to do things you don't want to do which can make things worse. Having friends that don't give advice, listen well and are supportive is key. Being that friend for someone else is also important. If you are being bullied for whatever reason or you see bullying happening, talk to an adult you trust, we all have the right to a safe environment.



## 6. Brainstorming

Have the youth either write on two flipcharts or on small pieces of paper for each question. Debrief as a group and add more if there's only a few.

### a) One thing (or more) that I do if I am being bullied or targeted?

#### Sample Responses

- » Talk to other people who have gone through similar situations and ask how they got through it.
- » Spend time with friends who support you.
- » Tell my family.
- » Take care of yourself.
- » Be proud of myself and to not be ashamed about who I am, even though some people might not accept it.
- » Stand up for who I am and not let anyone put me down.
- » Ignore it and not care.
- » Listen to music.
- » Enjoy hobbies.
- » Reassure myself.
- » Know you are not the only one.
- » Focus on other things.
- » Push toxic people away from me.
- » Gain confidence.
- » Walk away.
- » Watch my favorite shows and eat all my favorite snacks to stay calm.

### b) What can I do to support people of all sexualities?

#### Sample Responses

- » If you're someone who is also part of the community you can share your experience to hopefully make someone more confident with their gender or sexual identity.
- » Support people living how they want to; allow everyone to express themselves and have freedom.
- » Avoid assuming anyone's sexual orientation.
- » Take it seriously.
- » I can respect other's sexuality and let everyone have their own experiences and emotions.
- » I can learn more about all the sexualities to deepen my knowledge.
- » Be there for the person and help them.
- » Understand who they are.
- » Stick up for who they are by being a good friend.
- » Just treat them like a human being.

## 7. Key Messages and Feedback Forms

- » Sexuality is as vast and diverse as the universe.
- » Sexual and romantic orientations are fluid and ever changing.
- » We all have the right to a safe, supportive environment filled with acceptance, and free of harassment.

## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Sexual Orientation - Feelings and Attractions***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.3.S1.B.5a Analyze issues related to violence prevention in a variety of contexts.
- » K.4.S1.B.1a Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.7.E.3b Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles.
- » K.5.S1.E.2a Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships.

# Sexual Orientation Activities

**Definitions**

# **Asexual or "ace"**

**no desire or not sexually  
attracted to anyone**

# **Bisexual**

**attracted to more than  
one gender**

# Biphobia

**telling people they can  
only love one gender is**

# Demi-sexual

**between asexual and  
sexual and requires an  
emotional connection  
before being attracted  
to someone**

# Gay

**attracted to people of the same gender; most often men or nonbinary person attracted to men**

# Heterosexism

# Heteronormative

**asking a boy if he has a girlfriend without knowing his sexual orientation**

**an umbrella term used by Indigenous People to identify an aspect of their identity or identify as being outside colonial sexuality systems or labels that colonialism has created re: sexual orientation or gender identity**

# Homophobia

## Indigiqueer

**when heterosexual  
relationships are favored  
and assuming there is  
only men and women**

**saying "that's so gay!"  
a woman or nonbinary  
person attracted to a  
woman**



**attraction to people  
regardless of their  
gender identities or  
sexual orientation**

**Lesbian**

**Pansexual**

**the plus at the end of  
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**includes identities and sexualities that are not captured by the letters**

**BlaQ/BlaQueer**

**a Black queer person who recognizes their queer identity as intrinsic to their Blackness and vice versa**

**an umbrella term  
that can describe  
many different sexual  
orientations**

**Straight**

**attracted to people  
of a different gender  
clinically known as  
heterosexual**

**Two-Spirit**

**is Anishinaabe based  
and was coined in  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
in the early 90's - can  
refer to gender identity  
and gender roles, is  
an identity specific to  
an Indigenous person,  
can refer to sexual  
orientation**

**Queer**

# Talk to a friend

# Talk to an adult



**Find out more  
information**

**Do nothing**

# Reflect

# Journal/Write

## Social Identities: Privilege and Oppression<sup>xliii</sup>

### Social Identities: Privilege and Oppression Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Social Identities
- » Social Identities Activity
- » Personal and Social Identities Wheels
- » Paper Basket Privilege Activity
  - COVID example (optional)
- » Oppression
  - Reclamation: Taking Back Control of Words
- » Sharing Power Activity
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Explore the concept of social identity.
- » Get to know more about ourselves and each other.
- » Understand the basics of power, privilege and oppression.
- » Understand sharing power using an Anishinaabe framework.
- » Encourage positive change towards a more just society.



## 1. Check-in

- » Share something about one of your names that can include sharing your Spirit Name if you have one.<sup>xliv</sup>
- » Share a part of your identity i.e. ethnicity, gender, talent, sport.

### Resources:

- » **This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 lessons on how to wake up, take action and do the work** by Tiffany Jewell & Aurelia Durand
- » **This Book is Feminist: Intersectional primer for next-gen changemakers** by Jamia Wilson & Aurelia Durand
- » **How to Change Everything: The young human's guide to protecting the planet and each other** by Naomi Klein
- » **Me and White Supremacy: How you can fight racism and change the world today** by Layla F. Saad
- » **Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants** by Robin W. Kimmerer

## 2. Introduction to Social Identities

Talking about identities, discrimination, how others and society treat us, is personal and can be very difficult to discuss. Participate in a way that makes you feel comfortable and talk to someone you trust if anything comes up for you. **Our many identities are what makes us the unique person we are as a whole. One part of us alone does not define who we are.**

Our social identities are a part of our identity. Social identity is how we see ourselves, others and how others see us belonging to certain groups. Social identities can connect us and divide us. Some common social identities are age (generation), ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, dis(ability), class SES, first language, family structures. They also help others understand who you are and help you know more about others. **Understanding who you are allows you to grow and know more about yourself.**

### Social identities

- » **have been created and shaped by society i.e. your community, city, country etc., for example, gender, ethnicity while eye color is not a social identity.**
- » **are broken down into groups that we put ourselves into or get put into,** sometimes not by choice. Some are visible, others not. Some of our social identities are stable and others may change throughout your life such as age, some (dis)abilities.
- » **are identities that you can be more or less aware of depending on where you are, who you are with and the experiences you have in life.**
- » **come together in unique ways in each of us and influence our experiences and interactions with others.**

### **3. Social Identities Activity (see handout)**

Have youth go around and get to know each other by finding \_\_\_ people to fill \_\_\_ squares. They can put their own name in \_\_\_ boxes. The first one to complete the task is the winner. (Note: Feel free to participate and clarify any questions or confusion regarding terminology or geography.)

#### **Debrief**

**Are there any questions? Did anything surprise you? What new things did you learn? Which of these may be easier/harder to identify with? Why?**

### **4. Personal and Social Identities Wheels (see handout)**

On the other side of the handout, have youth explore their own identities. Have them share a piece of themselves if they'd like or answer some of the questions in the wheels.

#### **Social Identity Wheel Debrief (written in the middle of the circle)**

- » Which social identities do you think about most often? Least often?
- » Which ones would you like to learn more about?
- » Which ones have a big effect on how you see yourself? (If this is negative, often it's not because of you or your identity. It may be because of the classism, racism, xenophobia, colonization etc. that you may experience. Oppression can be internalized and can largely impact and affect how we might feel about or see ourselves.)
- » Which ones do you think have a big effect on how others see you? Does your answer change depending on where you are (e.g., at school, at home, with your friends)?

#### **Optional Questions**

- » What assumptions do you think other people make about you based on your social identities? What assumptions may you have made about other people based on their social identities?

A social identity that affects all youth are the generations (age). The generations are Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials or Selfie Gen), Gen Z, next Gen Alpha. Generations are about 15 years and can be used to describe an experience of that generation. An example of a shared experience by a generation are smartphones for Gen Y. Technology changed the way that generation related to each other and altered their experience of adolescence in different ways than the older generations.

#### **Personal Identity Wheel Debrief (Written in the middle of the circle.)**

Give the youth the opportunity to share three adjectives to describe themselves.

Along with your personal identity (e.g., personal attributes you use to describe yourself, like being social, your hobbies, being a good friend), social identity influences our values, the stories we tell about ourselves and others, and things that motivate us toward action.

### **5. Paper Basket Privilege Activity<sup>xlv</sup>**

Each youth needs a scrap piece of paper that they crumple into a ball and the recycling bin at the front. We are going to explore further which social identities have power and privilege in our society.

For this activity, all of you represent our society. This recycling bin represents your ability to choose, be successful, and achieve what you want in life. All you have to do is throw your paper in the bin by staying in your seat. At this point, youth in the back may voice concerns over fairness. Make note of who says what, but do not engage or acknowledge youth responses just yet.

Get ready, go. Allow for some fun here, but continue to remind students to remain in their seat. Cheer on the students who make their paper into the recycling bin and you can block a ball destined for the bin.

#### **Debrief**

- » By a show of hands, who made it? Who missed their shot? Do people sometimes get blocked from success?
- » What did you notice about who was successful and who was not?
- » Who was more likely to notice when it was unfair?
- » What are your feelings about the rules of this game and how it was setup?
- » What does this exercise have to do with our society? Those at the front represent identities that have the most power and privilege and are a part of what is known as the dominant culture: What are those identities? What sort of racial, ethnic, economic, sexual, abilities and gender differences might the front row represent? And that also means everyone else is farther back.
- » What is one privilege we all share by being in school? (education)
- » What does our society's definition of success usually include? \$\$ What does a broader definition of success include?
- » Does anyone wonder why our society is set up this way?

Sometimes we don't see the aspects of our identity that we benefit from like a high family income or our society's traditions e.g. the dominant holidays we partake in celebrating. We don't realize how close to the basket we are and we don't always question or challenge the rules or circumstances that privilege some over others. We may just accept that this is the way it is. On the other hand, some of us experience the unfairness but may not fully understand why.

#### **COVID-19 Example (optional)**

COVID really amplifies the inequality in the world even though the general message we keep getting is "we are all in this together." If COVID was an ocean, a few people are in a yacht, some are in a ship, many a boat, and many, many in a canoe with holes in it. There's also issue of the vaccine inequality undermining fair and just health where high-income countries are prioritized over low-income countries. COVID made things worse because people with

less money lost their jobs or had greater-risk jobs like working in essential services and this disproportionately affected women, Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

At the same time while everything now is costing more like food and bills, bank shareholders and the superrich who often don't pay their share of taxes are making record profits. This has led to the increase in the divide between the rich and poor.<sup>xlvi</sup> This has gotten so extreme that there is a group of super rich that are calling on their governments to tax them properly in order to restore equality and the population's trust in politics.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Truthfully, COVID isn't affecting us all in the same way and that message ignores/erases classism and how much many people struggle in our society. Hopefully COVID has opened people's eyes to the inequity and teaches everyone that we are a global community. We should take care of each other and recognize our need for healthy interdependency as now we can see that global rapid change is possible when the world works together.

## 6. Oppression

**The flip side of privilege is oppression or the use of power by one group to dehumanize another group.<sup>xlvi</sup> It is this harmful idea that one group is better than other and this is where social identity groups come into play.** The damage caused by oppression is that people come to have a distorted self-perception that gets internalized and passed onto the next generation. **Oppressed people then believe and subconsciously feel they are less than others and that it is their own fault. They may settle for less because they feel they aren't deserving.**

**Now if we look at the four aspects of oppression starting with interpersonal as this is the one we may be most familiar with, we will see how this plays out in our society.**

Can use an example such as ageism (generation) or racism in media to explain the interconnecting aspects of oppression while explaining them.

**Ageism:** What are the stereotypes about youth in society? Makes it seem that adults "know better than youth, youth aren't taken seriously etc." How are young people discriminated against? Poor media representation, can't vote until 18, paid less for the same job. Then, how are they treated by some adults? Unintelligent, untrustworthy, not competent, followed around in stores. How does this affect how some young people feel about themselves? Less than. It's interesting to note that this is one social identity that we grow in and out of with privilege.

**Racism and classism:** The racist, classist, white western standards of beauty and colorism that says lighter skin is better. Multinational co-operations decide who gets put in magazines and pushes all these unhealthy products that are sold that take away natural beauty. This leads people to make negative comments about someone's darker shade of skin, telling people to straighten or change their hair, etc. Then a person feels bad and uses products that people know are harmful to try to change the way they look, whitening products full of many harmful chemicals are sold, hair straightening chemicals, and surgeries profiting millions/billions, making people believe they don't feel beautiful just the way they are.

## Definitions

**Ideological oppression** - the harmful idea that one group is seen as normal, and superior to others i.e. the dominant group vs other/marginalized group. This leads to discrimination the "isms" racism, sexism, homophobia, classism etc. Examples of this are the beliefs that boys are better than girls, adults than youth, lighter skinned people than darker skinned, cisgender people than nonbinary, transgender people etc.

**Institutional oppression** – led by those beliefs, systems and institutions such as government, laws, schools, healthcare system control education funding, access to health care, media representation. Some examples are:

- » All the racist Canadian government laws from the Indian Act leading to Residential Schools, the 60's scoop, White paper, whose aim was to destroy Indigenous culture, language and People. And all the impacts with over 10,000 unmarked graves of children uncovered recently.
- » Conversion "therapy" which tries to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender that was only criminalized in 2022.
- » The law banning employers from requiring their employees to wear high heels only took effect in 2018. Who did this mainly affect (women and nonbinary people) and what industry? hospitality (bar/restaurant).
- » A trans person going to the doctors and not seeing a space for their identity on the medical forms. Would they then readily go back? Do they get the help they need? Who is most impacted by this?
- » Indigenous, Black, People of Color, IBPOC, rarely seeing people of their skin color positively represented in textbooks, picture books in schools.
- » Note: the equity seeking groups in Canada are People with Disabilities, Women, Indigenous People and IBPOC.

Laws and institutions were created by the dominant culture often lagging behind societal change because they are difficult to alter. Media intentionally discriminates against groups to increase their profits.

**Interpersonal oppression** – the way that people discriminate, use microaggressions, stereotypes, harassment, slurs and the ingroup using lateral violence. Re: sexism catcalling, saying "for a girl." An example of lateral violence is the infighting when women hate on other women by using insults, put downs, gossip, calling each other slurs in order to try to make themselves look superior. Another example is older newcomer group criticizing newer newcomer groups or within ethnic group fighting.

**Reclamation** - Taking back control of words. **Slurs are words used to degrade and make groups of people feel less than human. When someone takes back negative labels/terms used to hurt them and gives these slurs new meanings it is called "reclaiming."**

There is a very important difference between being labeled by others and making a personal choice to reclaim the slurs with people who also are a part of the ingroup. Reclaiming can be

empowering by intentionally taking slurs back and changing their meanings. The words that were originally intended to hurt and marginalize certain groups can in fact reaffirm group identity.

**Your social identity matters. Know that if you aren't from that group, it is disrespectful to use the term (aka not for you to use, no such thing as a pass) and you can't assume that everyone from that group is comfortable with you reclaiming the word.** Absolutists are people of the group that do not agree with reclaiming. They believe the word should be erased because they feel that the word can only be demeaning. Also, a person has to be mindful of their surroundings as others may be triggered hearing the reclaimed word and not realize there's an understanding between the people **so the context matters as well.**

**Internalized** – is the end result that leads to the way people feel “less than” others and due to no fault of their own. The pressure then is self-perpetuating and no longer comes from the outside. Remember if you are experiencing oppression, it's not your fault and it's reinforced this four-layered interlocking system.

**Model Minority Myth**<sup>xlix</sup> – the stereotype of Asian American people being superior at STEM and music feeds into all the systems of oppression. It essentially lumps all Asian people together and does not recognize the diversity within Asian culture, the impact on people's mental health, devaluing themselves and affecting their self-esteem. It's a “divide and conquer” strategy pitting Asian Americans against Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Americans which downplays/ignores the impact of racism and discrimination in society and institutions. This reinforces the inequitable system i.e. if they can do it, why can't others?

### **History of Oppression<sup>l</sup>**

**Now let's take a quick look at how this came to be. The WHY? because it didn't just happen by accident. This is a very short piece and talking to history teachers may help you get a much deeper understanding.**

1. 500 years ago there was a shift in Europe where people no longer saw themselves as part of natural world but above it.
2. This belief made them feel they could own, use and control the environment; the people, the animals and all the resources.
3. England, Spain and Portugal and the Church (Vatican) also made international laws like the racist Doctrine of “Discovery” in the 1400's (which was only revoked by the Pope March 30, 2023) saying that they were better than (superior) to people that weren't Christians; that non-Christians were not human. This legitimized the colonizers to kidnap and enslave other races, take their land (land is power) and resources. This is very ironic since a core element of every religion is love.
4. Now how did England take over? How did England colonize most countries, over 80 percent 170 of 200 in a few hundred years?<sup>li</sup> They wanted power, focused all their efforts on their navy as water was an easier faster way to get around, and transported kidnapped people and furs, and natural resources to England.
5. The profit of those materials built the factories of the Industrial Revolution in the mid 1700's where mass production of textiles for clothing and manufacturing using iron, steel

including weapons took place as society shifted away from agriculture. And the masses started to buy, buy, buy leading to modern capitalism.

With the Doctrine, the European people in power created all these racist systems that say certain people are better/more valuable than others, rather than leaving systems where we are all equal to each other. This only benefited a few and is the underlying foundation of all types of ideological oppression leading to discrimination (racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, xenophobia, white supremacy). These systems are supported by gaining land & making money.

The layers of discrimination known as intersectionality coined by Black scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw is the way in which social identities outside the dominant culture overlap and affect each other putting those of us in these groups at a greater disadvantage. She used it to describe her experience of racism and sexism.<sup>lii</sup>

## 7. Sharing Power Activity

Now let's imagine a society where true power isn't power **over** (dominance, control) but rather power **with** which means collaboration, community action, empathy, listening and freedom including everyone. Imagine us being creators of our own future, resources are justly distributed and people have access to services they need.

On this Land, the Anishinaabe culture has many teachings and one of them is that we are all equal. Now before we start, we will go around and say our names and/or our Spirit names because there is power in acknowledging who we are and drawing on the power within each of us. *Now with everyone having another crumpled piece of paper forming a circle, have them throw it in the recycling bin in the middle.* We are going to take turns, communicate, encourage each other, and when someone misses hand it back to them and give them another chance. We are going to work together until everyone's is in.

### Debrief<sup>liii</sup>

- » **How did it feel to be working in a Circle?** How did we create success for everyone? No time limit, no pressure, took turns, was not a competition, were able to see who wasn't successful and support them in having success.
- » **How can we apply these skills in our life? How can we support ourselves and others and ourselves when struggling?** Help each other out, don't put each other down, stop fighting and see the inequality in the systems.
- » **What are some healthy/unhealthy places to find your Circle/people?**
- » **What about sharing time/space with people? Does that unite us?** Sharing food, having a common goal/project, are community builders. They can also help align our values with each other if we are open to this.
- » **What happens when someone makes a mistake?** Most mistakes aren't major. How should we handle mistakes? (restorative justice; Indigenous community-based justice programs; rebuilding relationships is key) Some people choose to harm, are those considered mistakes?



- » **When can competition be healthy?** for a spot, position, sports, Potlatch and give-away ceremonies.
- » **A classroom fails daily at inclusion because..** it's not a circle, attendance, people at the back, missing people for check-in, not having check-ins or different options of engagement. **How do we share power?** Choice of how to engage, wait for each other's check-ins, let everyone have a turn, flexible deadlines, open ended questions, discussions and feedback, respectfully disagree.

**In closing because this topic can be heavy, everyone think of who you can talk to and one thing that you can do to take care of yourself when others are getting you down.**

### ***8. Key Messages and Feedback Forms***

- » There are so many ways to be a human. All our identities are unique and interconnected.
- » We all should have the right to create our own future.
- » Most of us have some forms of privilege and if we are dealing with oppression, it's not our fault.
- » We can help build a more equitable world and take care of ourselves while dealing with all the inequality.



### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Social Identities***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

##### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.4.7.B.3b Describe how conflict situations affect personal behaviour and development.
- » K.4.8.C.2 Explain how stress may have positive or negative consequences.
- » K.4.S1.B.2a Identify communication skills and strategies that promote team/group dynamics.
- » K.3.S1.B.5a Analyze issues related to violence prevention in a variety of contexts.
- » K.4.S1.B.1a Describe ways to treat others for developing healthy and meaningful relationships.
- » K.4.S1.B.2b Identify appropriate social behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- » K.5.S1.E.2a Identify the components for building and maintaining healthy, close relationships.
- » S.1.6.2.1 Identify issues facing families/self in a multicultural and global society, e.g., sexual tolerance, religious tolerance, racial tolerance.



Some common social identities are age (generation), ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, class (SES), family structure etc.

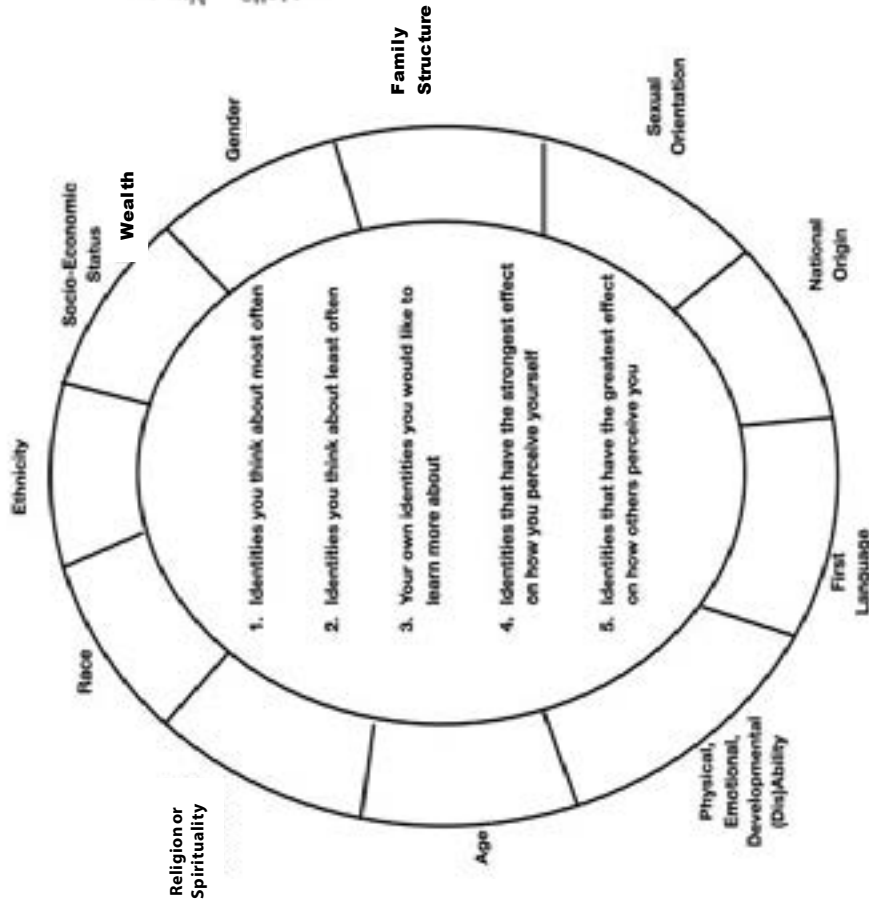
**Social Identities**

I am Anishinaabe.	I am born on this Land.	I have lived in the same home my whole life.	I am Asian.	I am raised by one person.	I am raised or identify as Jewish.
I am Métis.	I am born in another country.	I have moved around.	I am Brown.	I am raised by two people.	I am raised or identify as Christian.
I am Nehiyawak (Cree).	I have lived in a small town/rural area.	I have more than one home.	I am Black.	I am raised by many people.	I am raised or identify as Muslim.
I am Sayisi Dene.	I have lived on a reserve/First Nation.	I am Two-Spirit or Indigiqueer.	I am White.	I am raised with a little money.	I am raised or identify as Hindu.
I am Dakota, Lakota, or Nakota.	I have lived in more than two countries.	I am queer, trans, nonbinary and IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, Person of Colour.)	I am Indigenous.	I am raised with an average amount of money.	I am raised with Indigenous Sacred Ceremonies and/or Teachings.
I am of a First Nation not listed here _____.	I have been forced to move.	I am a guy.	I am Bi/Multiracial.	I am raised with a lot of money.	I am raised without religion.
I am an Inuk.	I have been without a home.	I am a girl.	I am West Asian/North African (Middle Eastern).	I speak one language.	I am raised or identify as Buddhist.
I or my ancestors are from Europe.	I or my ancestors are from a Central or South American Country.	I am nonbinary.	I am Latinx or Hispanic.	I speak two languages.	I am neurotypical.
I or my ancestors are from East, South, West Africa.	I or my ancestors are from South West Asia/North Africa (Middle East.)	I am trans.	I live with a physical disability or chronic condition.	I understand three or more languages.	I identify with a race, an ethnicity or religion/beliefs not listed here _____.
I or my ancestors are from Asia.	I or my ancestors are from the Australia.	I am genderfluid.	I deal with a mental health issue and/or am neurodiverse.	I know ASL. (American Sign Language)	Other identities that are important to me are _____.



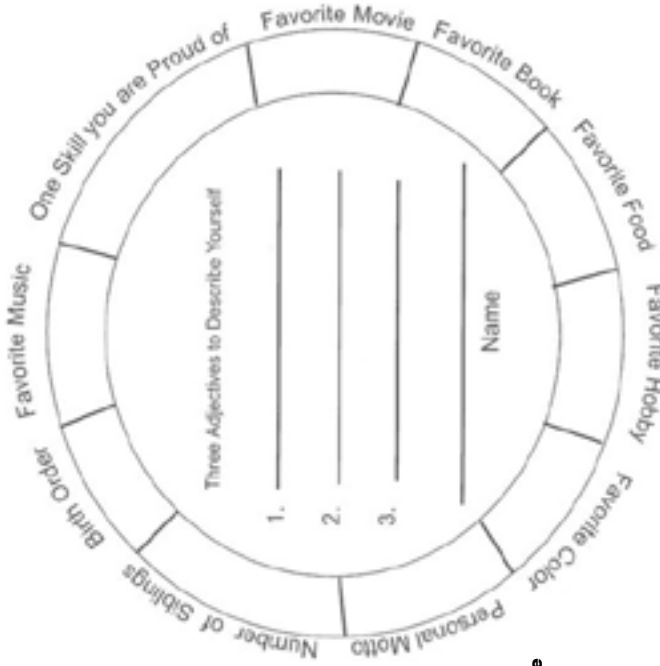
**Social Identities**

Social identity is how we see ourselves, others and how others see us, belonging to certain groups.



**Some of our social identities hold power and privilege and others don't.** (e.g. Age: Adult vs Elderly/Youth/Children) Intersectionality is the way in which social identities outside the dominant culture overlap and affect each other putting those of us in these groups at a greater disadvantage.

**Personal Identities**



Fill out the wheels to describe yourself. What do I have in common with those around me? What might be different?

**Our personal identity and our social identity influence our values, the stories we tell about ourselves and others, and things that motivate us toward action.**

Adapted from "Voices of Discovery," Intergroup Relations Center, Arizona State University.

## Substance Use Information<sup>liv</sup>

### Substance Use Information Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Substance Use Information
- » Substance Use Categories
- » What do/don't people use? Relay Race
- » Brainstorms:
  - a) Refusal Skills: How can we say no?
  - b) Harm Reduction: How can we be safer?
  - c) Signs you may have a problem and where can we go for help?
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms

### Session Goals

- » Provide basic knowledge of how substances affect the body and their potential harms.
- » Explore harm reduction strategies and refusal skills with substance use.
- » Reduce stigma around substance use.

### Note to Educators

While some younger youth are still very black and white thinkers, it is still important to take a harm reduction approach beyond abstinence and discuss how to stay safer if using substances. Not everyone will just say no and there is a lot of pressure to use so providing accurate nonjudgmental info is key. *Talking Pot with Youth: A Cannabis Communication Guide for Youth Allies*, by Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (2020), is a great resource to help you get started.

Some youth have people close to them who are struggling with substance use or are struggling themselves. Having some form of sharing such as Indigenous-led Sharing Circles, separate from the substance use info sessions, that youth can self-select or be encouraged to join, can help support their healing and wellbeing. Having adults in the Circle role model overcoming difficulties and providing extra support to youth who need it, is very beneficial.

## 1. Check-in

**What's something you like to do? Something you enjoy?**

### Resources:

- » **Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Youth Services**
  - Contact: Miles [youth@afm.mb.ca](mailto:youth@afm.mb.ca) 204-944-6274
- » Youth counsellors at various locations.
- » [Talktofrank.com](http://Talktofrank.com)

## 2. Introduction to Substance Use Information

**A substance is anything other than food or water, that affects the way we think, feel or act.** There are many types of substances, some are used for fun or coping, some are used for medicine, and some play an important role in ceremonies. Some people may be affected by their own or other people's substance use, so participate in a way you feel comfortable. We also ask that no one shares personal stories about your own or other people's drug use in this session as one person's reaction may not be another person's experience. In addition, it can be overwhelming to hear about the glamourizing of substances.

All substances have risk and a lot of the time the safer way to be is to not use drugs or alcohol, but that is not a choice everyone can or wants to make. **It is important to reflect on the role substances may play in our life and the lives of those around us.** If people are using, it is important to have accurate information in order to reduce the amount of harm that could happen. This is also good info for those who are not using because you may find yourself in a position where you can help someone else. The more accurate information people have, the safer and healthier people can be.

## 3. Substance Use Categories

**All drugs can be classified into four groups**

- » **Uppers or Stimulants** - increases dopamine in brain, alert, "high," e.g. energy drinks, cocaine, tobacco, coffee, meth
- » **Downers or Depressants** - slow down the body, numb pain e.g. alcohol, sleeping pills, heroin, anti-anxiety meds, Advil
  - Both downers and uppers have a risk of addiction and overdose. Some are used with special drug gear which may have a risk of passing infections such as syphilis, HIV or Hepatitis C if shared.
- » **Hallucinogens** - think, see or hear things, e.g. acid, Ecstasy (E), inhalants

- » **Cannabis** - effects vary for reasons such as levels of THC and CBD, e.g. weed. It's smoked, vaped, eaten, a paste (hash), an oil (hash/Honey Oil) or concentrate (Shatter/Dab).
  - Cannabis has its own category because how it works depends on the person, the strain, level of THC and CBD. Some types work like an upper, others like a downer and it is possible to have some hallucinogenic effects too. It is not possible to overdose on cannabis, but someone may 'green out' which can include feeling paranoia, anxiety, nausea or dizziness. There is growing research that shows starting cannabis at a younger age may affect how the brain develops which doesn't stop growing until age 25.<sup>lv</sup>

**Prescription drugs may fall into any of these categories or even be a mix.** It can be more complicated to stay safe with non-prescribed prescription drugs than with other substances. This is because it can be hard to know how the drug may affect us personally, what dosage the pill is and the right amount for us to take it safely.

#### 4. Why do/don't people use? Relay Race

Divide the group in two and ask the group what some of the reasons why people do/don't use are. Write both headings on each flipchart and have the youth respond relay style for two minutes.

##### Why do people use?

##### Sample Responses

- » To deal with stress, out of curiosity or boredom, due to peer pressure or family pressure, wanting to fit in, to have fun, to forget or avoid problems, to try to cope with trauma, because of an addiction etc.

##### Debrief

Self-medicating, using substances to deal with or avoid pain/depression without a health care provider, is what some people do. Avoid shaming the group, but also acknowledge it can potentially lead to problems like addiction. Substances and self-medicating can numb all feelings, both 'negative' (e.g., shame, guilt) and 'positive' (e.g., joy, hope). Increasing other activities like going for a walk, journaling, sports, hobbies and resources, talking to someone you trust, and phonelines can help someone who is trying to use less substances or less often.

##### Why don't people use?

##### Sample Responses

- » Don't like to lose control, not interested, don't like hangovers, they're looking out for someone else, sports, pregnancy, worried about what others will think like family, worried about addiction, don't have any, scared of effects, financial cost, affected by someone else's use etc.

## Debrief

There are many reasons why people choose to use or not use substances. Get help if you are worried about yourself or someone else's substance use. Everyone deserves respect and support whether they choose to use substances or not.

## 5. Brainstorms

### a) Refusal Skills: how can we say "no"?

#### How can a person say no when they feel pressure to use?

Have youth list ways people can respond if others are trying to pressure them to use a substance like in the following scenarios:

**After school one of Sam's friends offers Sam a weed cookie. How can Sam say no?**

**Kai's offered a beer by a friend's older sibling at their house while they are playing video games. Kai doesn't want it. Kai doesn't want to say no directly, what can Kai say instead?**

#### Sample Responses:

- » I'll get in trouble/grounded.
- » I've got a big test/game tomorrow.
- » I just don't want to.
- » My mom/family will ground me.
- » Nah, I'm cutting down, thanks though!
- » I only drink when I'm out of the community (for dry communities).
- » Whatever! Someone needs to stay sober to watch out for you.
- » I'm hung over from yesterday.
- » I'm babysitting tomorrow.
- » Don't want to kill brain cells.
- » I'm going to/just came from ceremony.

## Debrief

Any reason should be accepted and no one should feel pressured by anyone, but that's not always the case. Sometimes words are not enough. What can sometimes be easier for people is to actually appear to be drinking. Some suggestions for this would be to walk around with a beer bottle filled with water, or drinking pop but telling people that it's mixed with alcohol.

### b) Harm Reduction: How can we be Safer?

**Amari is going to hang out with a bunch of friend and knows they will be partying. How can Amari stay safer if Amari is interested in trying some?**

#### Sample Responses (key points):

- » Start low and go slow. (Set Limits and drink water and eat food helps.)
- » Have a buddy. (Have someone you trust.)
- » Have a plan. (Have a safe way home or place to crash.)
- » Think about when and where. (Be in a safe environment.)

- » Learn about the substance. (For Cannabis, know what strain you're using & its effects (THC vs. CBD levels.)
- » Don't mix substances as it increases the chances of overdose.

**Someone offers them a joint, and they want to try it. How can they stay safer?**

- » If possible, delay use of cannabis until early adulthood as it will lower the chances of negatively affecting brain development.
- » Know family mental health history.
- » Eat edibles or vaporize cannabis instead of smoking it. If you choose to smoke, the longer you hold it in and the deeper the inhalation, the more potential harm to your lungs.

**Some more detailed responses:**

- » Take breaks.
- » Watch your drink and do not put things in people's drinks.
- » Don't share equipment such as straws, bills, needles, cooking gear etc.
- » Carry condoms.
- » Know your dealer.
- » Know the laws for your community.
- » If having a bad trip, try to go to a place that is quiet and ideally with a person that can "talk you down."
- » Injecting drugs:
  - rotate injection sites
  - use new needles every time
  - get new needles from Street Connections
  - Safely dispose of used needles
- » Inhalants
  - Try not to spray directly into your mouth.
  - Try not to light a match or use a lighter because inhalants are highly flammable.
  - Try to use in an open space rather than in a confined space.)

**c) Signs someone may have a problem, and where they can go for help.**

**Signs of a Problem Sample Responses:**

- » they spend a lot of time thinking about it and use even when don't want to
- » more conflicts in their relationships with friends and family
- » they lose interest in things that they love
- » missing school/doing things they used to love
- » a change in their personality and behavior
- » other people are worried about their use



**Where to go for help:**

- » AFM (24 hour phone line and youth programs)
- » Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre (MATC)
- » Marymount (Youth Stabilization Unit for medically assisted detox)
- » Teen clinic
- » Nursing station/health centre
- » Guidance counselor/AFM worker
- » Anyone you trust
  - Teacher/Program staff
  - Family member
  - Elder/spiritual leader

**Basically, substance use is a problem when someone keeps using even though it's negatively affecting their life.** It is a warning sign when substance use habits start developing. People form habits all the time and this makes it easy for us to become dependent on a substance

**Many people have healthy relationships with substances meaning they either don't use or their use isn't negatively impacting their life.** It can help to think of a line with varying levels of use. The line goes from someone who is not using at all to someone who uses regularly without harm to someone who is using to the point where it is a problem for them. It could be said that many people will move around on this line quite a bit throughout their life.

Note: The relationship between alcohol and sexual violence is complex. The association of sex and alcohol consumption is normalized in our dominant culture. Yet harmful use of alcohol is a risk factor for both experiencing and perpetrating sexual violence. It has been estimated that as many as 50-70% of sexual assaults are linked to alcohol use. Most alcohol-related sexual violence occurs between individuals who are known to each other, most often at parties and in bars or in dating relationships. Alcohol (the drink itself) is the number one date rape drug.

## **6. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » Think about how substances are a part of our lives and those close to us.
- » Often not using is the safest. If we are using, it's important to have accurate information to help us stay safer.
- » Get support if you need it.

## ***Education Curriculum Connections - Substance Use Information***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.3 Identify behaviours that promote health and wellness.
- » S1 6.1.3 Discuss relationship of adults and youth in the community.

### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.3.5.B.4 Identify available community supports that promote safety and community health.
- » K.4.S1.B.4 Identify examples of potentially dangerous situations and effective strategies for avoidance/refusal.
- » K.5.S1.D.1 Explain the meaning of addiction and substance dependence and the possible effects on self and/or others.
- » K.5.S1.D.2 Examine the use and abuse of substances and potential consequences on personal health and well-being.
- » K.5.S1.D.3 Identify community agencies and resources available to support the prevention of substance use and abuse.
- » 11.SU.1 Explain ways in which drugs and other substances are classified.
- » 11.SU.4 Use reliable information in making healthy decisions for helping self and/or others regarding substance use and abuse.
- » S.5.S1.A.4 Apply problem solving strategies to respond appropriately to issues related to substance use and/or abuse.
- » S.5.S2.A.4 Analyze effective responses to problems regarding substance use and abuse by self or others.
- » 11.SU.3 Examine factors that influence decisions regarding substance use and abuse.

## Values and Beliefs

### Values and Beliefs Outline

- » Check-in
- » Introduction to Values and Beliefs
- » Values and Beliefs Reflective Activity
- » Value Sources Brainstorm
- » Values Scenarios
- » Key Messages and Feedback Forms
- » Appendix A: Values Statements Background Info

### Session Goals

- » Discuss what values are and where they come from.
- » Demonstrate how values can differ between individuals, emphasizing that no one should impose values on another person and that spreading hate is not ok.
- » Examine how values can change over time and sources may contradict each other.

## 1. Check-in

**What's one thing that's important to me, one thing that I value?**

**Resources:**

» [amaze.org](http://amaze.org) and [teentalk.ca](http://teentalk.ca)

## 2. Introduction to Values and Beliefs<sup>lvi</sup>

A value is what is right or wrong for you. It is what's important to you and what you believe in. Our values and beliefs are personal so participate in a way you feel comfortable as long as you don't distract others.

## 3. Values and Beliefs Reflective Activity

Read the statements to the youth once you have clearly explained the activity to them. Have them first figure out where their agree, neutral, and disagree spot is.

I'm going to read a series of statements. These sentences discuss relationships, friends, sexuality, sexual behavior and health. After each statement, you can move to the spot that feels true to your feelings about that statement, either "agree," "disagree," or "neutral." Standing in your "neutral" spot can mean you are between agree and disagree, are not sure how you feel, and/or you need to think or learn more about that statement before you decide. If you don't understand, please ask for an explanation.

**This is a silent activity since talking, pointing, or laughing during the activity can make others feel self-conscious and isn't always appropriate. This is also an individual activity meaning it's not about what others think, but about reflecting on what you think.**

Everyone is going to pick three spots "Agree," "Disagree" and "Neutral" and only you will know which spot is which for you. This reflective activity is simply to have us give some thought to what choices make sense for our life. This activity works best when people think about what their true feelings and values are for their life and don't worry as much about what other people are doing.

### Values Statements

See Appendix A for background information/debriefs on all the values statements.

1. I believe that the media (Netflix, TV, movies, music, games, social media etc.) accurately shows real life.
2. I believe that 7th and 8th graders should be allowed to have friends at home without adult supervision.
3. I believe it's OK to make comments about people's bodies.
4. I believe that masturbation (touching yourself for sexual pleasure) in private is okay.
5. I would be comfortable going to a health clinic for all my health questions.
6. I believe that it is okay to have romantic relationship with someone of a different culture.
7. I am willing to support someone who is being physically or sexually harassed.

8. I believe that anyone regardless of gender, can make the first move in a relationship.
9. I believe that parents/caregivers should talk to their children about sex.
10. I believe that kids should learn the correct names for all their body parts.
11. I believe a person's gender identity (who they are inside), is for them to develop.
12. I believe that a person in a romantic relationship, does not owe the other person anything such as physical affection.
13. I believe looking at sexy images is okay.
14. It is important to support a friend who is pregnant regardless of what they decide to do (abortion, adoption or parent).
15. I believe who people are like/attracted to is none of my business.
16. I believe young people carrying condoms or other safer sex supplies is a responsible thing to do.
17. I believe sex should be saved for marriage or someone you love.
18. I am confident that I treat other people well even when I disagree with them.

### Debrief

**What did you think of that activity? Have you thought about these issues before? Are there any you would like to discuss?**

### 4. Values Sources Brainstorm

**Where do our values come from?** Family, religion/spirituality, culture(s), self, media, friends, peers, school, past experiences, books, society etc.

### Debrief

**We get different messages from different sources and this can be confusing. What is an example from the statements where you think their family and friend would disagree? Some people have lived in more than one place/country and these experiences can give them a broader way of seeing the world.**

**Our values influence the decisions we make, what we do and how we take care of ourselves. It is important to think about what makes sense and fits for you.** Our values can will change as you meet new people, learn new information or have new experiences in life.

Society's values change over time such as fifty years ago people may have thought a lot different for the statement about dating someone from a different culture. Ten years ago, many people may have had less information about transphobia so they might have stood in a different spot.

**We are all allowed to decide what is right or wrong for us.** Your values are your business and you do not have to share them with others, especially if you feel unsafe. **However, no matter what our values are, no one ever has the right to insult, harass, or physically**

**hurt someone else because of what they believe. Making people feel unsafe because of their values is harassment and we all have the right to live free of harassment. If we see harassment or discrimination happening, we have a responsibility to do something about it. If we let it go on without saying something, it sends the message that we are okay with what is happening.**

**It's important to know your values and beliefs and how they may have changed so that you can make decisions that are right for you. We are living our values when we often show our values in our actions and by the things we do or choose not to do.**

### **5. Living Our Values Scenarios<sup>lvii</sup>**

Read the following scenarios and discuss the values that are being compromised.

#### **Scenario 1**

Pat and Chris met gaming online and soon started texting. They played almost every day and really started connecting. Then one day Pat asked Chris to send a sexy selfie. Chris didn't want to send a pic, so didn't write back and ignored Pat. Pat missed Chris and felt sad about being ignored. So, Pat started texting more and more. Chris didn't know what to do and eventually felt bad and sent Pat a selfie. Pat posts the picture on social media with a bunch of heart emojis. Chris is so embarrassed and feels betrayed. Chris blocks Pat on social media and stops visiting the gaming site where they met.

#### **Debrief**

- » What are the values each person might be breaking in this scenario?
- » What made them go against their own values?

#### **Sample Responses – Scenario 1**

##### **What are the personal values each person might be breaking in this scenario?**

- » Pat: values around sharing another person's images online, respecting people online i.e. being disrespectful.
- » Chris: values around sharing their image online, values around asking for help, values around trusting oneself.

##### **What made them go against their own values?**

- » Fear of insecurity, rejection, neediness, attention seeking and pressure to look cool.

#### **Scenario 2**

TJ and Alex are good friends in different grades. They like the same movies and activities and spend a lot of time together outside of school. At school it's a different story, Alex ignores TJ at school and hangs out with the students in a higher grade. TJ feels rejected and hurt but pretends that everything is fine. TJ pretends to be extra nice to Alex when they are alone, hoping that they will hang at school too. Alex starts to feel like TJ is being fake and doesn't want to spend time together anymore.

### **Debrief**

- » What are the values each person might be breaking in this scenario?
- » What made them go against their own values?

### **Sample Responses – Scenario 2**

#### **What are the personal values each person might be breaking in this scenario?**

- » TJ: values around friendships, honesty with self, boundaries and open communication.
- » Alex: values around respect, empathy, friendships/relationships and communication.

#### **What made them go against their own values?**

- » Peer pressure and perceived social expectations, wanting to be popular, feeling self-conscious, rejection, fear, anger, don't know how to express their feelings.

### **6. Key Messages and Feedback Forms**

- » Reflect on our own values and what's important to you.
- » We have the right to express our values and beliefs as long as they don't interfere with someone else's.
- » We all have the right to a safe environment and can help make the world more accepting.

### ***Education Curriculum Connections - Values and Beliefs***

This outline contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:

#### **Family Studies**

- » S1 5.1.4 Define, classify, and determine personal values and goals.

#### **Guidance Education: GLOs under Personal/Social Component**

#### **Physical Education/Health Education**

- » K.5.S1.E.3a Describe social factors affecting human sexuality.



## Appendix A: Values Statements Background Info

(Note: In brackets is the value based on the organizational values we strive for at Women's Health Clinic, which are feminism, body sovereignty, 2STLGBQINA+ positive, anti-oppressive, healing centered engagement, decolonizing, anti-racist, and harm reduction.)

**I believe that the media (Netflix, TV, movies, music, games, social media etc.) accurately shows real life. (disagree)**

- » The media often shows unrealistic expectations of how people should look and act. Often the relationships we see presented in the media are unhealthy. Many people are underrepresented and may only be shown as a stereotype. We all need to be critical of what we see in most media and challenge what is presented to us as "normal."

**I believe that 7th and 8th graders should be allowed to have friends at home without adult supervision. (neutral)**

- » This often depends not on the age but on how trustworthy and mature they are.

**I believe it's OK to make comments about people's bodies. (disagree)**

- » Many youth agree that it's not OK, however online and internally they often see this as being common. Reminding them to be as respectful online as in person is important.

**I believe that masturbation (touching yourself for sexy pleasure) in private is okay. (agree)**

- » Masturbation can be a safe and healthy part of someone's sexuality. Exploring our bodies can also be a good way to get to know yourself and what you like and don't like. Some youth choose to masturbate, while others do not. We get to choose what is right for our bodies.

**I would be comfortable going to a health clinic for all my health questions. (agree)**

- » Everyone has a right to access information, supplies and services for their health which includes sexual health. Because of stigma around sexuality not every youth feels comfortable getting what they need which is why health centers, nursing stations and especially teen clinics exist so that youth have access.

**I would feel comfortable starting a romantic relationship with a person of a different culture or ethnic background. (agree)**

- » People have a right to love, date, marry or be attracted to whomever they choose. Opinions/values have changed over time/throughout history. At one point in history, interracial marriage was heavily discouraged and the Canadian government used different policies to "regulate" interracial marriage (i.e. Indian Act) and it was even illegal in the United States.<sup>lviii</sup>

**I am willing to support someone who is being physically or sexually harassed. (agree)**

- » We have a right to express ourselves, our identity and sexuality. If someone is being sexually harassed it is not their fault. Helpful things to say: "I believe you. It's not your fault. What they did was wrong. I'm sorry that happened to you. I can listen if you want to share what's going on for you." Tips: Listen. Give them your full attention; Don't blame them. "You are not at fault here," or "They should have asked for your consent." Most importantly, go with them to an adult they trust to get help.



- » **Note:** Sometimes our society excuses or justifies violence based on what someone was wearing, where they were, who they were with etc. This is called victim blaming. In reality, no one ever does anything, says anything or wears anything to deserve to be harassed or sexually assaulted. Things to say to people negatively commenting on other peoples' attire, "Well they have a right to wear that. I'm glad I have the same right." "What you're saying sounds really judgmental."

**I believe that anyone regardless of gender, can make the first move in a relationship. (agree)**

- » The gender script is that a guy is supposed to make the first move. In reality anyone in a relationship can ask the other person for consent.

**I believe that parents/caregivers should talk to their children about sex. (neutral)**

- » This often depends on the family/situation, however, sexuality is something anyone and everyone can learn to discuss.

**I believe that kids should learn the correct names for all their body parts. (agree)**

- » Every person should know the names of all their body parts. Shame and stigma around certain parts of our body isn't helpful.

**I believe a person's gender identity (who they are inside), is for them to develop. (agree)**

- » We each know ourselves best and have our lifetime to discover ourselves.

**I believe that a person in a romantic relationship, does not owe the other person anything such as physical affection. (agree)**

- » No one should ever feel like they owe another person anything as consent is supposed to be freely given.

**I believe looking at sexy images is okay. (neutral)**

- » Sexy images and porn can help people explore their sexuality. Simply watching porn will not cause an STI or pregnancy so it is a safer activity in that regard. Problems arise when youth try to learn from porn and think that what they see is how sex should be in real life. It's important to remember when watching porn is entertainment and meant to please an audience not the people in it. Actors with certain types of bodies are cast then put into makeup and fixed up by stylists. Lighting, scenery, sound and camera people are directed for the best shot and many positions don't feel good in real life. There is lots of editing that goes into it and even in homemade or amateur porn it is very staged and often fake. Mainstream porn is often exploitive of the people in it and stereotyped so us being thoughtful of where we get it from, and who is making the money off it, is important.

**I am willing to support a friend who pregnant regardless of what they decide to do (abortion, adoption or parent). (agree)**

- » Believing someone who is pregnant has the right to choose what happens with their pregnancy is called being pro-choice (not the same thing as the myth of "pro-abortion"). Being pro-choice means that we support people who are pregnant in whatever decision they make. Ways to be supportive are: keep confidentiality, listen to them, go with them to appointments, understand their experience is different

than yours (i.e. this is not the time to share your values, stories or experiences with pregnancy options), believe that they are making the right choice for themselves and respect their decision, ask them what they need and follow through if you are able. Anyone has a right to health information and info on pregnancy options. In Manitoba a teen clinic is a good place to start, ask questions and find support about any pregnancy option.

**I believe who people are like/attracted to is none of my business. (agree)**

- » Who someone likes, is personal and this should be respected.

**I believe young people carrying condoms or other safer sex supplies is a responsible thing to do. (agree)**

- » Carrying safer sex supplies is a good idea because if anyone including you needs some, they will be available.

**I believe sex should be saved for marriage or someone you love. (Disagree)**

- » Everyone has their own beliefs and values surrounding the types of sexual experiences they want.

**I am confident that I treat other people well even when I disagree with them. (agree)**

- » The good thing about our values is we each get to figure out our own. Because we are deserving of respect and the ability to believe in what we want we also must respect others right to their values and what they believe in. There are healthy ways to disagree with each other without hurting or putting each other down. This can make for interesting discussions and can lead to learning from each other. If we are unable to treat people well for what they believe in we need to leave the situation so we don't hurt anyone.

## Endnotes

i Adapted from Teentalk.ca.

ii [Overcoming Gender Barriers to Communication In The Workplace](#) - Harappa, February, 2022.

iii Contributed by Mr. Kubas and Ms. Moustarak, Educators, Elmwood Junior High School, November, 2021.

iv [6 Rules for Being Transparent with Teens: Authentic Relationships Lead to Engagement](#) | Edutopia February, 2022.

v [6 Rules for Being Transparent with Teens: Authentic Relationships Lead to Engagement](#) | Edutopia February, 2022

vi Taken from Teentalk.ca, February 8, 2022.

vii Excerpted from the Teen Talk Service Provider Manual, accessed November 5, 2021.

viii Planned Parenthood, [What Is Sexual Consent? | Facts About Rape & Sexual Assault](#) (plannedparenthood.org), accessed November 5, 2021.

ix Excerpted from Planned Parenthood, accessed November 5, 2021.

x Excerpted from the Teen Talk Service Provider Manual, accessed November 5, 2021.

xi Excerpted from teentalk.ca, accessed September 15, 2021.

xii Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed September 15, 2021.

xiii Gender Spectrum | [Understanding Gender Spectrum](#), accessed November 16, 2021.

xiv Adapted from Teentalk.ca, accessed November 16, 2021.

xv Adapted from loveisrespect.org and teentalk.ca, accessed October 15, 2021.

xvi Excerpted from teentalk.ca, October 15, 2021.

xvii HBSC, accessed October 15, 2021.

xviii Excerpted from the Teen Talk Service Provider Manual, October 15, 2021.

xix Excerpted from mediasmarts.ca. Check it out for more info.

**1. Media are constructions** - Media products are created by individuals who make conscious and unconscious choices about what to include, what to leave out and how to present what is included. These decisions are based on the creators' own point of view, which will have been shaped by their opinions, assumptions and biases – as well as media they have been exposed to. As a result of this, media products are never entirely accurate reflections of the real world – even the most objective documentary filmmaker has to decide what footage to use and what to cut, as well as where to put the camera – but we instinctively view many media products as direct representations of what is real. Ask: Who created this media product? What is its purpose? What assumptions or beliefs do its creators have that are reflected in the content?

**2. Audiences negotiate meaning** - The meaning of any media product is not created solely by its producers but is, instead, a collaboration between them and the audience – which means

that different audiences can take away different meanings from the same product. Media literacy encourages us to understand how individual factors, such as age, gender, race and social status affect our interpretations of media. Ask: How might different people see this media product differently? How does this make you feel, based on how similar or different you are from the people portrayed in the media product?

**3. Media have commercial implications** - Most media production is a business and must, therefore, make a profit. In addition, media industries belong to a powerful network of corporations that exert influence on content and distribution. Questions of ownership and control are central – a relatively small number of individuals control what we watch, read and hear in the media. Even in cases where media content is not made for profit – such as YouTube videos and Facebook posts – the ways in which content is distributed are nearly always run with profit in mind. Ask: What is the commercial purpose of this media product (in other words, how will it help someone make money)? How does this influence the content and how it's communicated? If no commercial purpose can be found, what other purposes might the media product have (for instance, to get attention for its creator or to convince audiences of a particular point of view). How do those purposes influence the content and how it's communicated?

**4. Media have social and political implications** - Media convey ideological messages about values, power and authority. In media literacy, what or who is absent may be more important than what or who is included. These messages may be the result of conscious decisions, but more often they are the result of unconscious biases and unquestioned assumptions – and they can have a significant influence on what we think and believe.

As a result, media have great influence on politics and on forming social change. TV news coverage and advertising can greatly influence the election of a national leader on the basis of image; representations of world issues, both in journalism and fiction, can affect how much attention they receive; and society's views towards different groups can be directly influenced by how – and how often – they appear in media. Ask: Who and what is shown in a positive light? In a negative light? Why might these people and things be shown this way? Who and what is not shown at all? What conclusions might audiences draw based on these facts?

**5. Each medium has a unique aesthetic form** - The content of media depends in part on the nature of the medium. This includes the technical, commercial and storytelling demands of each medium: for instance, the interactive nature of video games leads to different forms of storytelling – and different demands on media creators – that are found in film and TV. Ask: What techniques does the media product use to get your attention and to communicate its message? In what ways are the images in the media product manipulated through various techniques (for example: lighting, makeup, camera angle, photo manipulation)? What are the expectations of the genre (for example: print advertising, TV drama, music video) towards its subject?

xx From [mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca)

xxi Excerpted from [mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca). Check it out for more info.

**1. Digital media are networked.** - Unlike traditional media, there are no one-way connections in digital media. In traditional media, content only flowed one way: producers created it, then sold or licensed it to distributors who then brought it to you. In digital media, by contrast, you're no longer the final link in a distribution chain but a node in the middle of an infinite network. You can share content with other people as easily as a producer or distributor shares it with you. Collaboration and dialogue are the norm, rather than solitary creation and broadcasting.

These links are always at least two-way, even if you're not aware of the ways you're sending data. This means that everyone and everything is linked to everything else. As a result, the barriers to

participation are much lower than in traditional media and anyone can publish content and find an audience. This means that users can interact with peers and celebrities at the same time, and also has important implications when we need to authenticate information or recognize a source's bias and point of view. The networked nature of digital media also makes it possible for formal and informal communities to develop online, whose norms and values are created by their members.

**2. Digital media are persistent, searchable and shareable.** Digital content is permanent: everything that is transmitted is stored somewhere and can be searched for and indexed. When considered together with the concept that digital media are networked, this means that most of this content can also be copied, shared or spread at a trivial cost. Even things that are apparently temporary (like Snapchat photos) can be copied, and are almost always stored on the platform's servers.

Because it's persistent, digital content is mostly consumed asynchronously: we typically react or reply to something at a time other than when it's posted, and reactions to our reaction will also come at a later, usually unpredictable time. This can make digital media hard to turn off, since a reaction – or a chance for us to respond to something – may come at any time.

**3. Digital media have unknown and unexpected audiences.** Because digital media are networked and digital content is shareable, what you share online may be seen by people you didn't intend or expect to see it. Your ability to control who sees what is limited: both content creators and traditional gatekeepers and distributors have much less power to control what happens to it once it's posted. This can make it difficult to manage audiences, and there is always a risk of context collapse when what was intended for one audience is seen by another. As well, you may be sharing content that you're not aware of with audiences you don't know about, such as cookies and other tracking tools that record information about who you are and what you do when you visit a website.

**4. Digital media experiences are real, but don't always feel real.** Being networked means that all digital media are, to at least a certain extent, interactive: we are never just passive viewers but always a part of what's happening. Because it's interactive we often respond to things online as though we are really there, but most of the cues that tell us how we and others feel are absent. One result of this can be "empathy traps," features of networked interaction – such as a feeling of being anonymous, or the absence of cues such as tone of voice or facial expressions in the people we interact with – that prevent us from feeling empathy when we normally would, and these traps can make us forget that what we do online can have real consequences. For the same reasons, it can be very difficult to determine someone's actual meaning and motivation when interacting with them online, a phenomenon popularly known as "Poe's Law."

Partly because of this, and also because of the lack of physical presence online (we may not even entirely feel we're "in" our bodies, as we're usually sitting and immobile when using digital media), it's easy to forget that laws, morals and rights still apply online. The norms and values of the online communities we're part of can also affect our own personal norms and values, as the values of our offline communities do.

Taken together with the lowered barriers to publication discussed above, this can also mean that the people and images we interact with online affect us as much or more than images in traditional media because they are (or seem to be) our peers. The images of ourselves we create online have an extra impact on us because they embody who we imagine (or wish) ourselves to be.

**5. How we respond and behave when using digital media is influenced by the architecture of the platforms, which reflects the biases and assumptions of their creators.** One of the most fundamental insights of media literacy is that the form of a medium influences how we "read" or experience a text. While this remains true in digital media, the network effect means that the architecture of a platform – everything from the user interface we interact with to the algorithms that determine how it delivers content to us – affects not just the meaning and message of digital

media but also our own behaviour when using them. On the most fundamental level, for example, the networked nature of digital media creates a centripetal effect, as hyperlinks encourage us to move to other texts and platforms. danah boyd describes this architecture in terms of “affordances,” which “do not dictate participants’ behavior, but they do configure the environment in a way that shapes participants’ engagement.”[9]

As with traditional media, these influences are not natural or neutral: they reflect the beliefs, unconscious biases and unquestioned assumptions of their creators. Sometimes these values will be consciously applied: if a platform’s designers consider freedom of speech their top priority, then protections from hate speech and harassment will be an afterthought at best – which will influence who feels free to speak and what kinds of conversations happen. But unconscious attitudes can be at play, too, such as an “engineering mindset” that sees no problem with showing different job listings for Black and White users, or with delivering an ever-narrower feed of news that you’re sure to agree with if that’s the most efficient and effective way to advertise to you. As is almost always the case, commercial considerations are also key: a platform that makes money from user engagement will naturally encourage interactions that produce the most intense engagement, no matter the content or tenor of those interactions.

There is often an interplay between the influence of platforms and users’ own needs, as can occur in traditional media as well. Teens may choose to post casual photos on Snapchat and more formal ones on Instagram, for instance, based on how they see the two platforms serving their purposes differently, but they are also being influenced by the structure of those platforms: Snapchat, where photos are temporary by default, creates an expectation of being casual and “fun,” while Instagram’s persistent feed promotes the careful maintenance of a public-facing profile.

xxii Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed February 15, 2021.

xxiii Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed February 15, 2021.

xxiv Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed February 15, 2021.

xxv [http://www.scarleteen.com/article/bodies/anatomy\\_mans\\_best\\_friend\\_male\\_sexual\\_anatomy](http://www.scarleteen.com/article/bodies/anatomy_mans_best_friend_male_sexual_anatomy), accessed September 19, 2017.

xxvi <http://www.pamf.org/teen/health/femalehealth/discharge.html>, accessed July 27, 2015.

xxvii [The Clitoris, Uncovered: An Intimate History - Scientific American](#), accessed February 15, 2021.

xxviii Wilcox, A., Weinberg, C., & Baird D., Timing of Sexual Intercourse in Relation to Ovulation - Effects on the Probability of Conception, Survival of the Pregnancy, and Sex of the Baby. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 1517-1521, 1995.

xxix [Think Pink: Analyzing the history and future of the pink tax](#), accessed March 17, 2022. “Research from Parsehub in 2016 showed that women pay an average of 43 per cent more on hygiene products compared to men. However, the pattern has worsened over the last five years. In 2021, Parsehub found that women in Canada now pay over 50 per cent more on unisex hygiene products than men. Ontario attempted to introduce a bill to stop gender-based price discrimination back in 2005. It aimed to prohibit discriminatory pricing practices since it is against the Human Rights Code. However, the bill was eventually referred to the standing committee and no further action has been documented.”

xxx Untuwe Pi Kin He – Who We Are: Treaty Elders’ Teachings Volume I. Downloaded at [www.trcm.ca/wp-content/uploads/OHP-Vol1-Ch1.pdf](http://www.trcm.ca/wp-content/uploads/OHP-Vol1-Ch1.pdf)

xxxi Indigenous Climate Action [www.indigenousclimateaction.com/single-post/2018/03/19/](http://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/single-post/2018/03/19/)

[Violence-Against-the-Land-is-Violence-Against-Women](#); Honor the Earth [www.honorearth.org/man\\_camps\\_fact\\_sheet](http://www.honorearth.org/man_camps_fact_sheet); Article "Climate justice must include gender justice" By Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Change Fellow [davidsuzuki.org/story/climate-justice-must-include-gender-justice/?utm\\_campaign=stories-womensDay-en-08mar2018&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=page-link](http://davidsuzuki.org/story/climate-justice-must-include-gender-justice/?utm_campaign=stories-womensDay-en-08mar2018&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=page-link).

xxxii Excerpted from Teentalk.ca, accessed September 2021.

xxxiii Adapted from Our Whole Lives Gr 4-6, By Kirsten deFur, Amy Johnson, 2017.

xxxiv Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xxxv Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xxxvi Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xxxvii Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed March 15, 2021.

xxxviii Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed March 15, 2021.

xxxix Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xl Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xli Adapted from teentalk.ca, accessed December 15, 2021.

xliv Adapted from Our Whole Lives Gr 4-6, By Kirsten deFur, Amy Johnson, 2017.

xlvi This labour of love could not have been possible without the support and expertise of anti-oppression facilitators: Vanessa Cook, Sarah Martens, Hema Vyas, and educators Michael Kubas, Jessica Moustarak, Jerome Baseley and Patrick McGuire.

xliv Taken from Teentalk.ca by Vanessa Cook, note to Facilitators: Spirit Names: For a non-Indigenous person, it is essential to remain culturally humble (i.e., respectful and reflective) when sharing knowledge from a culture that is not our own. This means sharing where the knowledge comes from, acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge of that worldview, continuously listening and learning, apologizing when misunderstanding, and prioritizing Indigenous presence and voices. The following information is one understanding of many teachings from diverse populations of Indigenous Nations. With Indigenous youth in particular, a Spirit Name or knowledge of names that are used in Indigenous cultures (sometimes still called an 'Indian name' within Indigenous communities) can be shared. Part of the teaching is every human being has a Spirit Name that tells us a lot about who we are, our Gifts, and the spirit we carry. It is said we all have a Spirit Name that is with us, whether we know it or not. If we wish to learn more about ourselves, it can be helpful to find out the name of the spirit that carries us. A way we may find our name is by using our Tobacco, as the sacred Medicine it is meant for, and offering it directly to Creator either by putting it in a Sacred (blessed) Fire or Water or out on a clean spot on the Earth (usually by a tree is good). Then we ask Creator for our name. Often when we ask directly, our answers come in mysterious ways or through our dreams and we have to be open to receiving our answers this way. A common way to get our name is to offer Tobacco to an Elder or Medicine person who has the Gift to have names revealed to them from the Spirits. Usually, this happens in a ceremony the Medicine person has been given and they can translate our name to us. Often the name our spirit carries has to do with nature and animals, so we watch that animal or specific part of nature to see what it does, how it reacts, and what it goes through. By learning about the name of our spirit, we can learn lots about our own qualities, characteristics, and responsibilities in life. The more we understand our spirit, the better we understand ourselves. This activity can have



many positives by getting youth to explore their identity. Other positives often include being named after or by someone, funny stories, knowing who named you, nicknames, and hopes that were given with the name or even something as simple as a different spelling of a name. This activity can be open and inclusive of naming practices from all cultures and can be an opportunity to introduce Spirit Names for those who have not heard of such teachings.

xlvi Adapted from [27-EE Social-Justice Pt1 3-5.pdf](#) (empoweringeducation.org), accessed January 10, 2022.

xlvi [How should we feel about soaring bank profits during a pandemic?](#) | CBC News, accessed January 15, 2022.

xlvii "As millionaires, we know that the current tax system is not fair," they said in an open letter published on Wednesday. "Most of us can say that, while the world has gone through an immense amount of suffering in the last two years, we have actually seen our wealth rise during the pandemic – yet few if any of us can honestly say that we pay our fair share in taxes." [Millionaires call on governments worldwide to 'tax us now'](#) | Davos | The Guardian, accessed January 24, 2022. Millions and Billions in Time Counting every second the amount of time to reach a million - 11 and a half days and a billion - 11 574 days i.e. 31 and a half years!

xlviii [Legos and the 4 I's of Oppression - YouTube](#), accessed January 15, 2022.

xlix [What Is the Model Minority Myth? | Learning for Justice](#), accessed January 15, 2022.

l How to Change Everything: The young human's guide to protecting the planet and each other, by Naomi Klein 2021.

li All the Countries We've Ever Invaded: And the Few We Never Got Round to, Stuart Laycock, 2012.

lii Recently over 100 wrote an open letter saying that the current tax system is rigged in their favour and needs to be rewritten to make taxation fairer for hard-working people and restore trust in politics. [Understand Social Identity to Lead in a Changing World](#) - CCL, accessed January 10, 2022.

liii Contributed by Michael Kubas, Elmwood Junior High School, January 2022

liv Much of this information is adapted from the teentalk.ca substance use material, laying the foundation for deeper discussions on substance use as youth age, accessed December 2, 2021.

lv Katie Fleming, MA and Anna McKiernan, MA. Talking Pot with Youth: A Cannabis Communication Guide for Youth Allies. Ottawa: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2018.

lvi Adapted from Beyond the Basics, accessed February 21, 2021.

lvii Adapted from Beyond the Basics, accessed February 21, 2021.

lviii *Racial Ideas and Gendered Intimacies: the Regulation of Interracial Relationships in North America.* Social and Legal Studies 18, 3 (2009): 353-371.