

Boundaries

Rationale/Overview: This interactive activity is an opportunity to explore and experience how our bodies might respond to our boundaries being approached or crossed.

Grade Level: 4 (can be adapted for use in other grade levels)

Subject Area: Physical and Health Education

Big Ideas:

- Understanding ourselves and the various aspects of health helps us develop a balanced lifestyle.
- Personal choices and social and environmental factors influence our health and well-being.
- Developing healthy relationships helps us feel connected, supported, and valued.

Competencies:

- Identify and describe avoidance or assertiveness strategies to use in unsafe and/or uncomfortable situations
- Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining positive relationships
- Describe and apply strategies that promote a safe and caring environment
- Explore and describe strategies for managing physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty

Content:

- Strategies and skills to use in potentially hazardous, unsafe or abusive situations
- Physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, including those involving sexuality and sexual identity

Core Competencies:

- Communication: Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments
- Critical Thinking: Analyze and Critique
- Personal and Cultural Identity: Personal values and choices
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Self-determination
- Social Responsibility: Building relationships

First Peoples' Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning Activity

Time: 10-15 mins

Pre- activity questions/discussion:

Part of sexual well-being is becoming aware of our boundaries and limits, knowing that they are worth respecting, and communicating them to others.

- What is a boundary?
 - Guidelines that shape how we want other people to interact with us
 - Often, boundaries are dependent on the kind of relationship we have with a person – for example, you may have different boundaries in your relationship with your teacher than your best friend.
- What might be some examples of personal boundaries?
 - Emotional boundaries – what we share about personal parts of ourselves (e.g. only talking about people we like or don't like, our sexuality, or health with certain people)
 - Physical boundaries – giving hugs, kisses, high fives, etc.
 - Sexual boundaries – what we are and are not comfortable with when it comes to sex
- Do we all have the same boundaries?
 - We all have boundaries and we all have different boundaries and that is ok
 - There is nothing wrong with having boundaries or limits when it comes to anything, including sex
- How do we set these boundaries for ourselves?
 - Our boundaries can be influenced by lots of things from our families to the media. We all have boundaries and we all have different boundaries and that is ok.
 - As our relationships evolve, our boundaries may change. For example, if we meet someone for the first time, we might not share a lot about ourselves with them. If over time, they become our best friend or someone we want to date,

our boundaries will be different. At the same time, if our friendship changes or we break up with a person, that may be a time that our boundaries with them change.

- Sometimes, we may not know we have a boundary until it is crossed. If this happens, we can share that we're feeling uncomfortable. We'll get to explore that in the next activity.

- What does it feel like when our boundaries get crossed? *Prompt for what it feels like in our bodies...Sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach, etc.*
- Our bodies give us signals when our boundaries are being approached or crossed. It's important that we listen to our bodies and pay attention to other peoples' bodies
- If we feel that our boundary is being crossed we are probably right. And we have the right to say "I don't feel comfortable with this right now"
- **How do we know what our own boundaries are and what other peoples' boundaries are?** Our next activity explores this...

Setup:

- 1.) Have everyone stand in two lines facing a partner
- 2.) Take turns having partners in one line walk slowly toward the other
- 3.) They'll usually let you get too close, so point out anything you see (giggling, smiling, tension in their shoulders) that means you've already crossed their boundary. Back up, and then ask if you can walk forward again to solidify the boundary.

OR:

- 1.) Have a volunteer come up from the group.
- 2.) Stand a few feet away. Explain that you'll slowly take steps towards them and that you want them to tell you to stop when you're as close as they want you to be.
- 3.) Assure them that you won't take it personally and that you know it's not about you.
- 4.) They'll usually let you get too close, so point out anything you see (giggling, smiling, tension in their shoulders) that means you've already crossed their boundary. Back up, and then ask if you can walk forward again to solidify the boundary.

Debrief:

- Ask students/volunteer to explain how that felt and where they felt it in their bodies. Ask them if their boundary might change if it was a different circumstance.
- Ask the group if they noticed any changes in the partner's/volunteer's body language. Be specific.

- Was it easy to tell their boundary was being crossed?
- What changes in body language did you notice that let you know their boundary was being crossed?
- How would this activity be different if we were doing it with our best friend? A complete stranger?

Conclusion:

- It is important to know where your boundaries are in your body and to listen to them, and it is just as important to pay attention and tune into when we think we may be crossing someone else's boundary.
- If we are having a hard time reading someone's body language, the only way to know for sure is to ask! This has to do with consent!

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YouthCO is a youth-led, [values-based](#), HIV and Hep C organization that seeks to reduce stigma related to HIV and Hep C throughout BC. We've been around since 1994 providing peer education and support to communities most affected by HIV and Hep C. We offer peer-facilitated workshops on a variety of topics, including sexual wellbeing, HIV, and Hep C. To book a workshop, visit us online at www.youthco.org.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Education Resources

- **Websites/Phonelines**

The following websites and phonelines provide information and resources on various sexual and reproductive health topics:

- <http://teachers.teachingsexualhealth.ca/>
- <http://www.sexualityandu.ca>
- <http://www.scarleteen.com/>
- Sex Sense Line #1-800-SEX-SENSE
- Kids Help Phone #1-800-668-6868 (KidsHelpPhone.ca)

- **Services**

The following organizations/individuals provide sexual and reproductive health education and other supports for teachers and/or parents:

- [Native Youth Sexual Health Network](#)

- [Options for Sexual Health](#)
- [Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators](#)
- [Sexplainer](#)
- [YouthCO](#)

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Resources

- ***Websites & Tools***

The following websites and tools provide information and resources on various sexual orientation and gender identity topics:

- [Pride Education Network](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Gender Identity in Schools](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Sexual Orientation in Schools](#)

- ***Services***

The following organizations provide supports for teachers, parents and/or students:

- [C.A.L.L. Out!](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)