

# MY BOUNDARIES: PERSONAL SPACE AND TOUCH Lesson 6

DIFFERING ABILITIES

## LEARNER OUTCOME

Define and describe healthy boundaries by examining appropriate touch and personal space.



### MATERIALS:

1. **HANDOUT 1: Boundaries Circle Chart**
2. **HANDOUT 2: Boundaries Circle Chart – Example**
3. **HANDOUT 3: Appropriate/Inappropriate Assessment**
4. **Hula Hoop or Masking Tape**



### INTRODUCTION:

Learning about personal boundaries helps children and teens to develop a sense of individual responsibility and control. Developing a sense of personal autonomy and respect for self and others leads to increased self-esteem.<sup>1</sup> In this lesson students will learn about physical space and touch and the personal safety rules to maintain healthy boundaries.



Some students with differing abilities may require help with daily living tasks that require personal care and touch. They may not feel that they have much control over who touches them and when. Students can learn when certain touch is necessary and when touch is not appropriate and can be refused.



## APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

### A. GROUND RULES

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.



Sexual health education occurs most effectively in a classroom where there is a mutual feeling of trust, safety and comfort. Having Ground Rules in place can be a very successful way to facilitate a positive classroom environment. Click [here](#) for more information on how to set up ground rules.

### B. UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL SPACE AND TOUCH DISCUSSION

This discussion will help students to understand privacy and respect for the body. Learning about the concept of privacy becomes more important as children enter puberty. Understanding that “My body is private” can help students develop skills that keep them and others safe.

1. Ask your students:

- Who is the owner of your body? – you own your body! Your body is unique and special and every body is different.
- What can you do with your body? – run, jump, dance, clap, laugh, eat
- How do you take care of your body? – eat healthy foods, hygiene, and exercise.

Taking care of your body includes saying who can touch you and come into your personal space. Every body deserves to be treated with respect.

Your body is private and some parts are more private than others.

#### Private Body Parts

- These are parts that are covered by a bathing suit or underwear.
- Private parts should be covered when you are in public places.
- If you want to touch or scratch your private parts you should wait until you are in a private place.
- No one can touch your body without your permission.
- No one can see your body without your permission.
- Your body should not be shown to anyone who does not want to see it.



If you would like to explore the topic of privacy further with your students see Lesson 3 My Private Body.

### C. APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

Touch provides us with a method of communication and is important for our well-being. Learning about inappropriate touch can help children learn strategies to help them stay safe including when to ask an adult for help.

1. Write “Appropriate Touches” on the board. Ask your students to describe what appropriate touching means to them. (The term appropriate can be difficult to understand so you may want to describe appropriate touches as respectful, kind and caring. They are “thumbs up” touches – use your hand to gesture thumbs up.)
2. Then write “Inappropriate Touches” on the board and ask your students to describe what inappropriate touching means to them. (Inappropriate touches are disrespectful, confusing, scary, and / or hurtful. They are “thumbs down” touches – use your hand to gesture thumbs down.)
3. Draw a chart with two columns to discuss examples of appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Appropriate touch	Inappropriate touch
Hugs and cuddles	Hitting
Holding hands	Kicking
Giving a back rub	Biting
High five	Pushing
Shaking hands	Slapping
Gentle pat on the shoulder	Pinching
Receiving help with hygiene when needed	Unwanted touch that starts as fun e.g., play fighting/rough housing, tickling
Visit to a health care professional	Being forced to touch someone
	Touching of private body area – breasts, buttocks, vulva, penis, testicles that is not for hygiene or examination by a health care professional

4. Ask your students to explain what 'trusting their instincts' means to them.
5. Talk about the tickles and fluttery feelings they get in their stomach whenever they know that something is wrong or out of place (the oh-oh). To help further explain the concept of 'trusting your instincts' you may want to read aloud to students 'My Mom Says: A Safety Book for Kids' by D. Middleton Hope.
6. Are all scary or hurtful touches inappropriate? (Yes, unless it's to keep you healthy like when a doctor or nurse gives you a shot.)
7. Have your students make a list of the different ways in which someone might try to pressure them into inappropriate touching. (Bribing, tricking, embarrassing, and forcing.)
8. What can you do when someone inappropriately touches you? Tell students that there are 3 safety rules that they can follow.<sup>2</sup>
  - **Say no** – practice with your students saying NO in a big voice. Some students may need help learning how to be assertive
  - **Get away** – walk or run away or get out of the situation. Go to a safe place e.g., home, neighbour's house, school.
  - **Tell someone you trust** – ask students to think of all the people who they could tell e.g., parent, teacher, aunt, grandparent.



Some activities in this lesson plan refer to teaching materials contained in the Circles I: Intimacy and Relationships Revised Edition teaching kit. <sup>1</sup> You may consider checking to see if this teaching kit is available through your local professional resource library or public health centre. For those who do not have access to a kit, they may use the adapted activities outlined in the lesson.

## D. MY PERSONAL BOUNDARIES <sup>1</sup>

Using **Handout 1: Boundaries Circles Chart** colour the circles following the guideline below.

1. The **Private Purple Circle** is the **inner most circle**. It includes only one person, oneself. It recognizes that the student is the most important person in their world. No one can touch the student unless they want to be touched. It conveys the uniqueness of the person.
2. Lay a hula hoop on the floor or make a circle with masking tape for your students to stand in to help explain the concept of personal and private space. (For some students creating a larger version of the boundaries circles chart to lie on the floor may help in developing a more concrete understanding of their personal boundaries.)

3. Explain to your students that this is our private space. We do not have to let anyone in if we do not want to.
  4. Then have each student come and stand in the “purple” circle to emphasize his / her private space. Encourage your students to make a positive self-statement while in the circle e.g., “I am a good friend”.
  5. Discuss with your students the factors they would consider before letting a person in their private space:
    - a. Who would you let in your private space? (Use examples such as parents, siblings, close friends, doctors, etc.)
    - b. Where can they touch you?
    - c. What kind of touch would you accept?
    - d. When can they touch you?
    - e. Why can they touch you?
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Then discuss the **second concentric circle** that surrounds the purple circle:

1. Tell your students that there are very few people who belong in the **Blue Circle**. People who belong in the blue circle are people who are closest to them. They share a close, loving relationship. This usually includes their immediate family members such as their moms, dads, brothers and sisters.
  2. Ask your students to label the blue circle with immediate family members, who they share close, loving relationships with.
  3. Inform your students that appropriate touches may include kisses, cuddles, and hugs.
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Next, discuss the **third concentric circle** that surrounds the blue circle:

1. Tell your students that there are a few more people in the **Green Circle**. People who belong in the green circle are usually extended family members and close friends.
  2. Define who belongs as close friends and extended families. It may be necessary to distinguish between close friends and other friends.
  3. Have your students label the green circle with their extended family members and close / best friends. (Note: For some students with social difficulties, they may not have a close friend.)
  4. Let your students know that appropriate touches may include a one-arm hug, or even a pat on the back or shoulder. These actions are less intimate and include less physical contact than the blue circle.
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Next, discuss the **fourth concentric circle** that surrounds the green circle:

1. Tell your students that the people in the **Yellow Circle** include friends and adults whose names are known to them. These are people who have been introduced to them, but do not know well.
2. Differentiate between friends and acquaintances.
3. Have your students label the yellow circle with their other friends and acquaintances (to a maximum of 5).
4. Let your students know that appropriate touches include handshakes. Touch is only limited to hands.

Then, discuss the **fifth concentric circle** that surrounds the yellow circle:

1. Tell your students that the people in the **Orange Circle** include people they occasionally see around their neighbourhood. These are people who have very little in common with them.
2. Explain who their community helpers are. They include their store clerks, postal workers, restaurant waiters, etc. Ask you students how they would recognize their community helpers.
3. Have your students label the orange circle with their neighbours' names and their community helpers (to a maximum of 5).
4. Let your students know that appropriate touches include simply waving and nodding to people with familiar faces.

Finally, discuss the **last concentric circle** that surrounds the orange circle:

1. Tell your students that the people in the **Red Circle** are people they do not know. They do not know their names and recognize their faces. These are people who have nothing in common with them.
2. Review with your students how they would know a person is a stranger.
3. Have your students label the red circle with the word, "stranger."
4. Let your students know that touching does not happen.
5. Remind your students that they cannot tell if a stranger is good or bad because they do not know anything about the stranger. However, it is important to be safe.
6. If possible, your students can bring photographs of specific people and actions for the appropriate circles. These visual aids help guide discussion on the appropriate social codes for the various levels of boundaries.



Technology and the use of social media can open up an exciting world but can also present boundary issues for children and teens. There can be a sense that information shared is private when in fact the information is much more available and public. Take time to remind students of the rules about online safety. How do you know if the person you are playing a multi player computer game with is a safe person to interact with? For more information see

<http://www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca/app/en/teacher>



Make time to use the social circles model to practice personal space and boundaries with your students. It is important that as a class you have boundaries rules in place. Teacher and students generally fall into the yellow circle where touching is limited to a hand shake, high five or taking someone's hand or arm to direct them. Students can practice personal space rules when moving around the school, sitting in a shared space or working in small groups.

## E. STRANGER: GOOD OR BAD? <sup>1</sup>

1. Ask your students:
    - Is a stranger a good or bad person? Encourage your students to think about this question before answering. It's a trick question.
  2. Many of your students will think that strangers are bad. Remind them that they cannot tell whether a stranger is good or bad by looking at them. A stranger is a person they do not know and thus, cannot tell whether they are good or bad.
  3. Reinforce with your students that they need to be cautious of strangers because they cannot tell if they are good or bad, rather than "all strangers are bad."
  4. Ask your students how they would know a person is a stranger.
    - May never have seen the stranger before.
    - May never see the stranger again.
    - Do not know anything personal about the stranger.
  5. Ask your students where they see strangers.
  6. Brainstorm with your students what would they do if:
    - A stranger offers to drive them home.
    - A stranger falls near them.
    - A stranger asks them to go to the movies with her.
    - A stranger asks for the time.
    - A stranger asks them for money.
    - They fell down and a stranger tries to help them get up.
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## F. APPROPRIATE TOUCH SCENARIOS

Read the following scenarios to your students and debrief with the questions that follow the scenario. As a concluding activity you may choose to complete **HANDOUT 3: Appropriate / Inappropriate Assessment** with your students.

1. Uncle Jack and Auntie Joan arrive for a visit at Taylor and Sam's home. Taylor and Sam are very excited to see them because their uncle and aunt are very close to them. Taylor gives Auntie Joan a big hug while Sam gives Uncle Jack one too.
  - a. How can you tell these are appropriate touches? (The touches are respectful and caring.)
  - b. How do you think Taylor and Sam would have felt if it wasn't their aunt and uncle? It was someone they did not know who wanted to hug them? (Uncomfortable, etc.)
  - c. Is it ok for you not to hug someone, even if you know the person very well? (It is ok to not hug someone, even if it's someone you know very well. Your body is your own!)
2. Mandeep and Luke are very close friends. One day they are play fighting and Mandeep starts tickling Luke. Mandeep does not stop tickling Luke even though Luke begs Mandeep to stop.
  - a. How can you tell if a touch is appropriate? (The touches are respectful, kind, safe and caring.)

- b. When do you think the play fighting between Mandeep and Luke became inappropriate? (When the touching changed from respectful and caring to disrespectful and hurtful.)
  - c. What can you do in this situation?
  
3. Jan's mom has a new friend named Sal who often comes to visit. Jan likes Sal because Sal reads stories, tells jokes, and spends time with Jan. One day, Sal wants to play a touching game. Sal tries to get Jan to touch a private body part but Jan does not want to play the game. Sal will give Jan candy if Jan plays the touching game. Jan is confused.
  - a. What does Sal want Jan to do to get the candy? (Sal wants Jan to play the touching game.)
  - b. What do you think of the touching game? Is it a game with respectful, caring, and appropriate touches?
  - c. Why might Jan be confused about getting the candy? (Jan wants the candy but does not want to play the touching game.)
  - d. Why is it inappropriate for Sal to ask Jan to play the touching game and offer candy for Jan to play? (No one should try to bribe you into touching their private parts or your private parts.)
  - e. What can you do in this situation?
  
- 4..Ali likes spending time on the computer, playing games and e-mailing friends. Some of Ali's friends are people Ali has never met. Ali only knows them through e-mail. One of the people Ali has never met asks for Ali's address and phone number so they can meet at a mall near Ali's home.
  - a. What can Ali do when an e-mail friend asks for Ali's address and phone number? (Ali could say Ali is not allowed to give any personal information through the computer. Personal information includes phone numbers, addresses, age, etc.)
  - b. Should Ali meet the e-mail friend?
  - c. How can you tell if what you read or hear through the computer is true? (your parents or guardian.)
  
5. Avery's grandpa likes to give Avery a kiss and hug whenever he comes by to visit. Avery does not like the way he pats Avery's buttocks when he hugs Avery. It makes Avery feel uncomfortable. Avery nicely tells Grandpa, "I don't like you patting my buttocks when you hug me". Avery's grandfather is hurt and asks, "What's the matter, don't you love me anymore?" Avery feels guilty and does not want to hurt grandpa's feelings.
  - a. Why was the touching inappropriate? (It made Avery feel uncomfortable. No one should make you feel guilty into inappropriate touching.)
  - b. Would it make a difference if anyone else patted Avery on the buttocks in a way that was uncomfortable?
  - c. What did Avery do to try to stop the touching? (Avery told Grandpa)
  - d. What else can Avery do about the touching?
  - e. List some other ways in which someone can bribe, embarrass, or trick you into inappropriate touching?



## G. IN MY WORLD ACTIVITY<sup>1</sup>

Have your students write on a piece of paper (or tell you) who the most important person is in their world of Circles. Reinforce with your students that each of them is the most important person in their world and only they can decide who will be close and who will be far away.

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## QUESTION BOX

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



The process of asking questions is an important learning activity that helps students clarify and validate information being presented. Question Box is a method of individualized instruction which has been proven to enhance learning. Click [here](#) for more information on how to use the question box.

## SELF REFLECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

### Knowledge:

- Identify appropriate touch and private space using a personal boundaries chart?

### Skills:

- Demonstrate personal safety rules to use when personal space and touch boundaries are challenged?
- Demonstrate appropriate listening and speaking skills during class discussion?

### Attitudes:

- Develop understanding that 'My body is private'?

<sup>1</sup> Champagne, M.P. and Walker-Hirsch, L. (1993). *Circles I: Intimacy & Relationships Revised Edition*. James Stanfield Company, Inc.

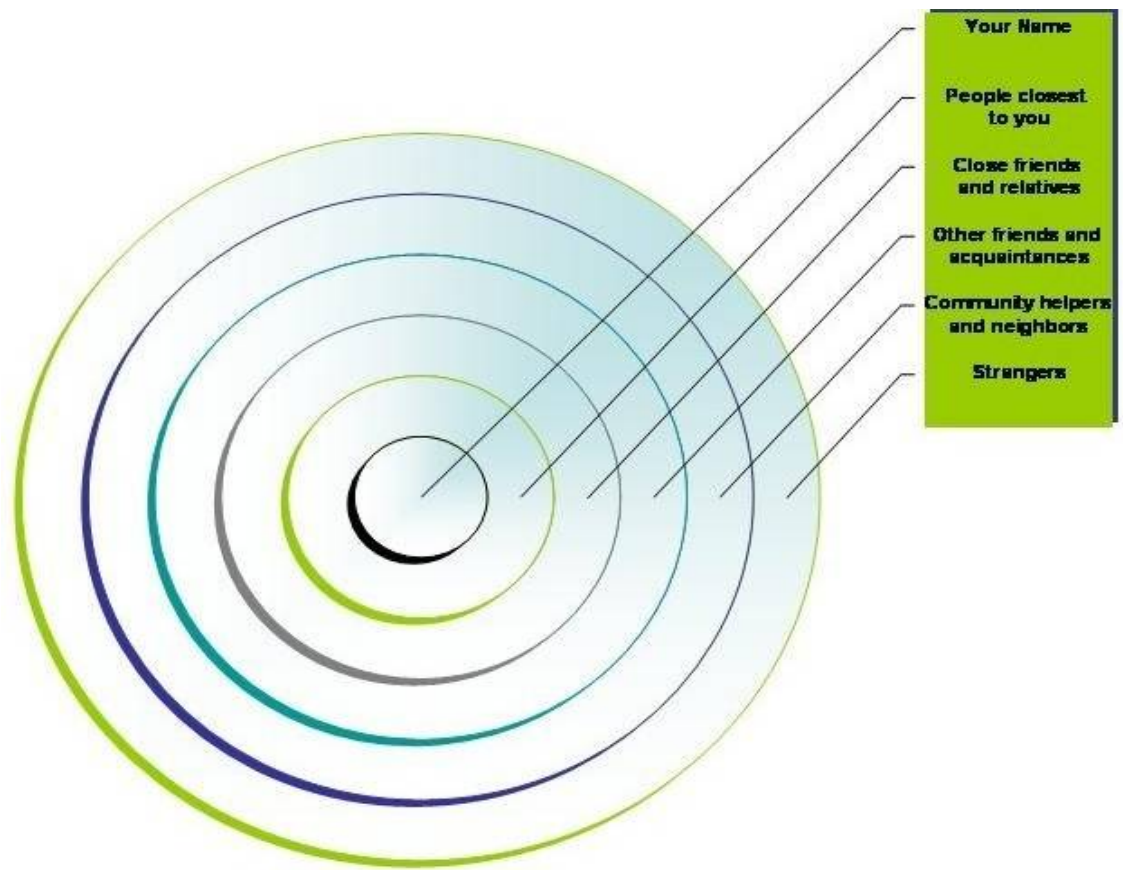
<sup>2</sup> Canadian Red Cross. (2002). *Challenge Abuse Through Respect Education (c.a.r.e.)*.

Attwood, T. (1998). *Asperger's Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

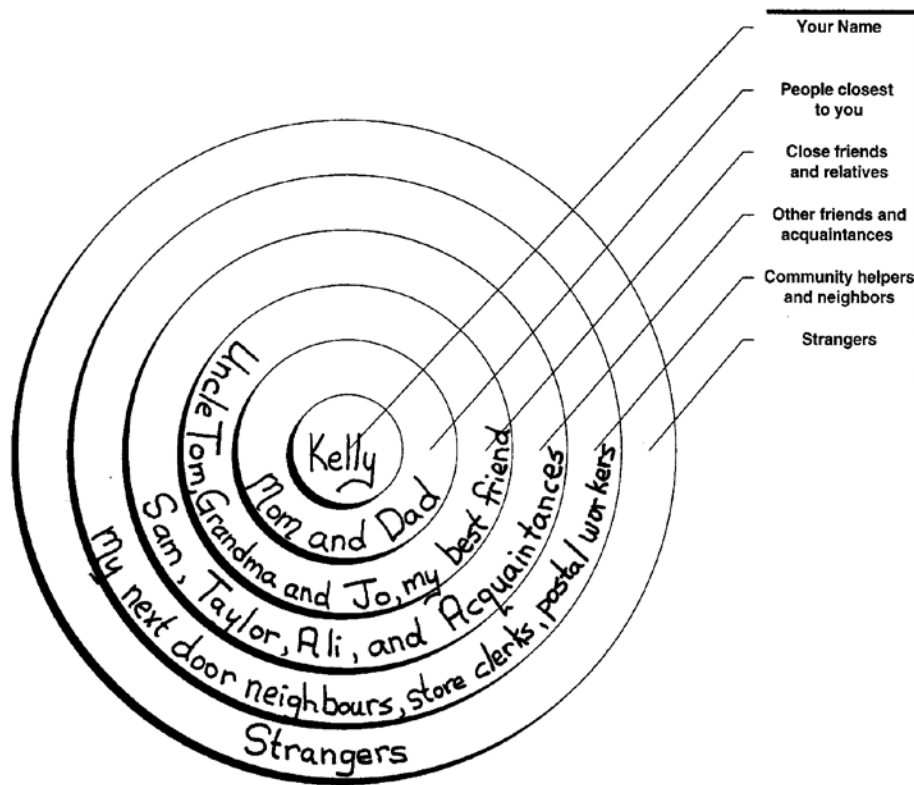
McAfee, J. (2002). *Navigating the Social World*. Future Horizons Inc.

Middleton, D. (2008). *My Mom Says: A Safety Book for Kids*. Debbie Middleton-Hope.

# BOUNDARIES CIRCLE CHART



# BOUNDARIES CIRCLE CHART-EXAMPLE



Adapted from: Circles I: Intimacy & Relationships and Navigating the Social World.

# APPROPRIATE / INAPPROPRIATE

In each box, circle "Appropriate" or "Inappropriate" to describe the touch.

**Hugging Your Uncle**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Hitting Your Brother**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Waving to Your Neighbour**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Nurse Giving You a Needle**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Kissing Your Dentist**



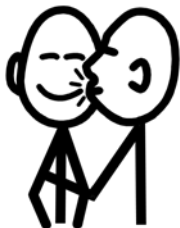
Appropriate Inappropriate

**Hugging Your Mom**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Kissing Your Friend**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Nodding to Your Bus Driver**



Appropriate Inappropriate

**Hugging Your Teacher**



Appropriate Inappropriate