

Lesson 4:

Private & Public



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Review private body parts
- Understand the difference between private and public places
- Identify private and public behaviours

These outcomes are not specifically related to the Alberta curriculum sexuality outcomes. Students who have been opted out of sexuality education would still participate in this lesson. This lesson provides skills and information important to student safety.

How To Use

Teachers and staff know their students best: before teaching this lesson, consider the individual goals of each student. The overall aim is for students to be healthy and safe while having the best personal and social experiences possible. Avoid assuming that a student doesn't need or want this information.

All the Differing Abilities (DA) lesson plans can be adapted to the needs of individual students and groups. The lessons are scripted, meaning there are answers and explanations for every question asked. The questions, answers and discussion points are prepared for you using plain and simple language at a level best suited to students with DA.

Text in italics is the script designed to be read directly to students. Possible answers to questions, activity instructions and other teacher information, are not in italics.

Classroom Activities

- A. Group Agreements and Check-in
- B. Introduction to Private and Public
- C. Bodies, Places and Behaviours

- D. Private or Public Card Sort
- E. Question Box
- F. Closure

Required Materials

Private or Public cards

Background Information for Teachers

The [goal of sexuality education](#) is to support students to:

- build knowledge, skills, and attitudes to lead sexually healthy lives.
- explore values consistent with physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- identify strategies to talk about sexuality and access natural supports (e.g., parents) and community supports (e.g., healthcare providers) as needed.

Language and terms

Talking about anatomy, physiology, and sexual development in terms of people, parts and processes is more accurate than talking about it in terms of assigned sex (female and male) or gender identity (girl and boy). For example, not everyone who gets periods is a girl, so saying “when someone gets their period” is more accurate than saying “when a girl gets her period.” This also helps make sure that everyone is included in the discussion, including trans, nonbinary and intersex youth.

However, some students may find this language confusing and will benefit from using gendered terms more frequently e.g., “when a girl gets her period, she may choose to use period underwear.” It’s important for students to be clear about what may happen to them, and saying people who get periods may be too abstract, resulting in confusion. Terms can be used together when explaining concepts e.g., “when someone is first starting to get their period, it may be irregular. Not all girls have a regular period at first.”

Students may have questions about their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Teachers play an important role in helping students feel seen and affirmed when they come to school so that they feel good about their gender expression and identities. These lessons use inclusive language and acknowledge different identities and relationships to acknowledge all students as they develop their sexuality. Learn more about [gender identity and expression](#).

For more on teaching sexual health education, see [Teaching Human Sexuality to Students with Differing Abilities](#).

A. Group Agreements and Check-in

Ensure [group agreements](#) (ground rules) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established group agreements, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

Start with a check-in activity as appropriate for the group. You may want to answer the question box questions from the last class as part of the check-in.

B. Introduction to Private and Public

Introduce the ideas of private and public spaces by leading this group discussion with your students.

- We've talked about our bodies, growing up and hygiene. As we grow up, we also need to think more about privacy. In the group agreements we talked about privacy and not sharing things that are very personal with the class and not sharing other people's personal information. Today, we are going to learn about private and public places, behaviours, and information.*
- Let's list some of the activities you have done today.*
brush teeth, take a shower, ride the bus, use the school washroom, post on Instagram
- Some of these activities are public, and some are private. What do you think public means?*
Public means something that can be shared with others
- What do you think private means?*
Private means something that is not for sharing
- On the board or flipchart, write PUBLIC and PRIVATE in big letters. Ask students to place some of the activities they did this morning under the headings.
Public – ride the bus, wave to my neighbour, use the school bathrooms, post on Instagram
Private – use the bathroom at home, take a shower, get dressed, talk on the phone.

C. Bodies, Places and Behaviours

Consent means giving permission, or saying, “yes, its ok” to do something. It’s important to teach students about who to tell if someone touches their private parts without consent or in a way unrelated to personal care and hygiene. This topic is also explored in the boundaries lesson.

1. *Some activities and behaviours are just for you and are not shared with other people. If private behaviours are shared, it can make you or other people embarrassed or put you in danger.*
2. *We have laws about privacy to protect us all, e.g., we can’t look through someone’s window and watch them dress – it’s against the law.*
3. *We also have rules about personal space. What is personal space?*
The space around our body that helps us feel safe.
It is different for everybody. You don’t go into someone else’s personal space unless they say it’s ok. Some people will show how big their space is – they may block the space with chairs or use their arms or hands to show their space. It might be important to ask someone if it’s OK to get closer to them to learn about their personal space rules.
4. Create a chart as below on the board. You can ask the class the following questions to gather examples to fill in the chart (examples provided in the sample chart). In many DA classes, the teacher and support staff will need to suggest many of the examples.
 - *What are some public body parts? What are some public ways of sharing your body?*
 - *What body parts are private? What things do you do with your body that are private?*
 - *What spaces are public? What ones are private?*
 - *What are some public activities? What ones are private?*
 - *What kind of information is public? What kind of information is private?*

Some students may need help from caregivers with personal care for hygiene. However, it is also important to acknowledge their need for privacy and help them practice ways to ask for it. Use professional judgement to determine if this is a conversation to have with an individual student rather than the group.

Acknowledge some people have personal care aides that help with private activities, such as toileting or showering.

	Public	Private
Bodies and Personal Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaking hands, high fives, fist bumps • Hugs for people identified as safe and who have given consent • Touch for sports and games (e.g., football tackle) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mouth • Parts of the body covered by underwear/bathing suit • Touching your own private parts • Kissing, making out
Spaces and Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public bathrooms (e.g., school, mall, pool) • Shared bedrooms • Family room, kitchen etc. at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathroom at home with the door closed • Private bathroom stalls • Bedroom at home with the door closed
Behaviors and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waving • Playing catch • Sitting beside someone with some space in between • Talking about the weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undressing • Using the washroom • Taking a shower • Adjusting underwear • Personal care
Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone number, email address only if you've been given permission to share (e.g., to sign up for a class) • Social media posts (may seem private but can be looked at and shared) • Playing online multiplayer games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer passwords and pin numbers • Personal body information e.g., sharing information about menstruation • Private family information

D. Private or Public Card Sort

This activity can be done as a teacher-led group activity, in pairs or in small groups. The **Private or Public cards** are at the end of this lesson plan.

Be clear that anything posted online or on social media (e.g., information, photos, memes) is public. It can be seen and shared by others. It's also permanent even if it seems like it goes away or is deleted.

1. Before class, print, laminate and cut the **Private or Public cards**. Consider adding additional cards to the set to meet the needs of your class.
2. *These cards show some things people might do. Sort them into two groups, public and private.*
3. *What other activities would you add to each set of cards?*
4. *Why are some activities private only? To keep us and others safe*
5. *Why are washrooms at school and in the community public? They are shared with others; you go to do personal hygiene, but it is in a public space. It is not OK to look under the door of a stall, or over the top.*

E. Question Box

Answer any questions from [question box](#) in the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class.

- Some students may need assistance from staff, either during the class or in between classes, to record their questions.
 - Hand out paper to each student.
 - Students who don't have a question can write something else on the piece of paper, such as something they learned or just a comment about their day.
- When everyone writes something down, the people with questions feel safer writing them.
- Use a box or bag to collect the papers.
- Answer the questions during the **next class**. This allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

F. Closure

- *Today, we talked about private parts, places, and behaviours. What is one thing you learned? How do you feel after talking about privacy?*
- *Who can you talk to about what you learned today?*
- *In another class, we'll talk more about privacy and boundaries – the rules we have about our bodies, behaviours, and information.*



Combing your hair



Kissing your boyfriend/girlfriend



Watching a movie



Using school washroom



Adjusting your bra



Looking at social media



Taking off your shirt



Eating lunch



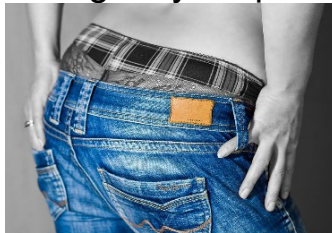
Singing a song



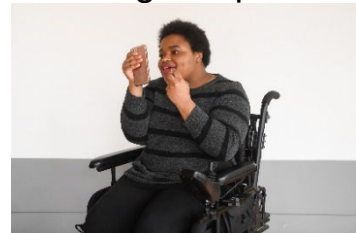
Dancing with a friend



Taking off your pants



Putting on lipstick



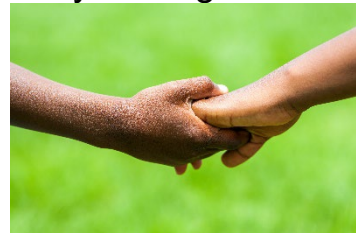
Putting hands down your underwear



Touching your date's bum



Holding hands with boyfriend/girlfriend





Private or Public Sorting Activity Key

Combing your hair – even though hair and brushes are not private, most people prefer if you don't brush your hair in public spaces like classrooms or on the bus. You can brush your hair at home, in public washrooms at the sink or sometimes even at your locker behind the locker door.

Kissing your boyfriend/girlfriend – short, closed mouth kisses on the cheek or even on the mouth are often seen as ok in public, but long kisses or open mouth kisses are mostly seen as a private activity.

Watching a movie – public activity, even if you sometimes do it in private.

Using washrooms at school – even though using the washroom is private, washrooms at school or other public places like the mall are public. This means we use them to go to the toilet and take care of hygiene and then leave the washrooms. We know other people are doing private things like going to the washroom, too, so we don't look under the doors of washrooms.

Adjusting your bra – this is a private activity. If your underwear is uncomfortable, go to a more private place like a bathroom or bedroom to fix it.

Using social media – this is a public activity, even if it seems private and even if you are alone.

Taking off your shirt – usually, this activity is private, unless you have another shirt on underneath. Sometimes you have to change for gym or swimming, so you take off your shirt in a public change room. In our society, *sometimes* it is ok for a boy to take off their shirt in public when they are going swimming or playing sports or for a girl to take off their shirt in public if they are wearing a sports bra underneath and they are playing sports.

Eating lunch – this is a public activity, even if you sometimes do it in private.

Singing a song – this is a public activity, even if you sometimes do it in private. Not everywhere is the right place for singing. For example, even though singing is public, it wouldn't be ok to interrupt a teacher's lesson by singing.

Dancing with a friend – this is a public activity.

Taking off your pants – this is a private activity, even if you need help from a personal aide to do it.



Putting on lipstick – even though this is a public activity, many people do put on lipstick hiding a bit behind a mirror or in a slightly more private place. Most people would not put lipstick on at the table when eating or in class.

Putting your hands down your underwear – this is a private activity. Sometimes, genitals get uncomfortable and might need to be adjusted. If this happens, do it in private.

Touching your date's bum – bums are private, and touching a bum, yours, or someone else's is private.

Holding hands with boyfriend/girlfriend – this is a public activity.



© 2024 Alberta Health Services, Healthy Children & Families, Sexual & Reproductive Health © 2024, Alberta Health Services, Healthy Children & Families, Sexual & Reproductive Health Promotion



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No-Derivative 4.0 International license. To view a copy of this license, see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. You are free to copy and distribute the work including in other media and formats for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to Alberta Health Services, do not adapt the work, and abide by the other license terms. The license does not apply to AHS trademarks, logos or content for which Alberta Health Services is not the copyright owner.

This material is intended for general information only and is provided on an "as is", "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Alberta Health Services does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or fitness for a particular purpose of such information. This material is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional. Alberta Health Services expressly disclaims all liability for the use of these materials, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits arising from such use.