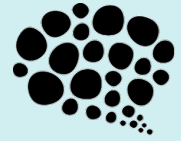


Lesson 5: Boundaries, Personal Space and Consent



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Define healthy boundaries
- Identify OK, not OK and confusing touch
- Develop rules for personal safety
- Discuss the importance of consent in relationships and interactions with others

These outcomes are related to the Alberta curriculum sexuality outcomes and **require parental notification**.

This lesson is related to the PE&W Learning Outcome

Grade 6: Students investigate human reproduction from fertilization to birth.

and is related to the Health and Life Skills Learning Outcome

W-8.7 Determine the signs, methods and consequences of various types of abuse; e.g., neglect, physical, emotional, sexual abuse.

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 Boundaries
- C. Personal Space and Touch
- D. OK, Not OK and Confusing Touch
- E. Rules for Staying Safe
- F. What is Consent?
- G. Dating, Private Touch and Consent
- H. Question Box
- I. Closure

Required Materials

OK/Not OK/Confusing cards

Blank index cards

[Consent for Kids video](#)

[Understanding Consent video](#)

Background Information for Teachers

If you have access and interest, you can use activities and lessons from the CIRCLES® education program as part of this topic.

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

- build knowledge, skills, and attitudes to lead sexually healthy youth and adult lives.
- develop 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

Consent

Students practice asking for consent, answering, and respecting the answer, in many non-sexual situations every day. For example, asking for permission to use a friend's pencil in class, to give a hug or high five, or join a game are all familiar situations where consent is practiced.

Talking about consent and being open about your wishes and boundaries can be a fun, positive, and fulfilling part of any relationship, including friendships and romantic or sexual relationships.

Language and messages about consent and sexual assault have changed as we have developed a greater understanding of the rights and the laws around these issues. Here are some key points about consent:

- Consent is voluntary, affirmative, freely given and part of an ongoing conversation about mutual agreement to do something.
- Consent cannot be assumed or implied by silence, previous sexual history, or clothing.
- Permission to do any type of sexual activity needs to be asked for and clearly given before proceeding.
- Any sexual activity without consent is sexual assault.
- A person can only consent to activities if they are aware of the risks. If the risks are hidden, a person cannot consent as they don't have all the information.
- People who are drunk, high, sleeping or unconscious can't give consent, either legally or practically. To have clear communication about consent, both people should be sober and alert.
- Sexual assault can happen to anyone of any gender or age and be committed by anyone of any gender or age.
- Using gendered language when talking about consent and sexual assault reinforces unhealthy stereotypes, discourages men and boys who have been sexually assaulted from accessing services, and inaccurately suggests that women do not commit sexual assault.
- It is important not to use messaging about how to avoid being sexually assaulted. Such messages do not reduce instances of sexual assault. Instead they increase shame in the person who was assaulted, reduce the likelihood of the survivor accessing services, and provide excuses to perpetrators who commit this crime.
- Learning about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, developing healthy relationship skills, encouraging bystander interventions, promoting healthy sexuality, and empowering girls, women and 2SLGBTQI+ people are other ways to reduce the incidence of sexual assault.

[According to Canadian law](#), the age of consent is 16. This is the age when a person can legally agree to sexual activity. Age of consent laws apply to all forms of sexual activity, ranging from kissing and fondling to sexual intercourse. There are "close in age" exceptions to this law.

- 14- and 15-year-olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 5 years older.

- 12- and 13-year-olds can consent to sexual activity if the partner is less than 2 years older.

Consent cannot be given by anyone under 18 if the:

- other person is in a position of authority (e.g., teacher, coach, or employer)
- sexual activity is exploitative (e.g., pornography, prostitution, or trading sex for safety)

Children younger than 12 cannot consent to any type of sexual activity. Having sex or sexual activities with a child younger than 12 is against the law and is sexual abuse.

A child who is abused or assaulted is never at fault nor the one who has done something illegal.

Being Prepared for Disclosures and Distress

Addressing the topic of abusive relationships may cause some students to be distressed or show other signs that they are or have somehow been involved in or witnessed an abusive situation. Dealing with controversial issues encourages students to examine their own beliefs and experiences. Teachers need to act with sensitivity and discretion when handling sensitive student information that could cause embarrassment or distress to the student or family.

To maintain both student safety and engagement, it is helpful to be familiar with [trauma informed practice](#), to use inclusive language and to acknowledge feelings and stories. It is also important to strongly emphasize a respect for confidentiality among all class members.

- Respect and reinforce confidentiality and sensitivity in the classroom.
- Anticipate where discussions will lead to protect students from revealing inappropriate personal information.
- Before starting these lessons, talk to the school counsellors so they are aware there may be disclosures of abuse.
- Ensure your students understand that disclosures of abuse cannot be kept confidential. Disclosures are the first step to getting help for a student who is experiencing abuse.
- Share with students what they can expect if they disclose abuse, e.g., acknowledgement, honouring their disclosure, redirection to discuss further outside of class and assurance of connecting them with support.
- The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act requires you to report the abuse of a young person to Child and Family Services or Delegated First Nation Agencies. You can locate your local office by visiting <https://www.alberta.ca/childrens-services-offices.aspx>

For more information, review [Responding to Child Abuse: A Handbook](#), published by the Government of Alberta or visit [How to Help and Report Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Exploitation](#)

Refer to your school division's guidelines about disclosures and reporting.

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](#).

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 Boundaries

Students are more likely to display socially appropriate behaviours when they develop skills to know when touch is safe and healthy, maintain boundaries, and respond when boundaries have been challenged. The word boundaries may not be easy to understand. It is important to give students clear examples of boundaries and what to do (including rules) if they or others overstep them.

1. *Today, we are talking about boundaries. What is a boundary?*
 - A boundary is a limit about how you want to be treated and what's OK and not OK in a relationship. They're an important part of all healthy relationships.
 - They can be lines that separate people. Doors and walls are boundaries. Clothes are a boundary.
 - Boundaries are also limits or rules that someone sets about what is OK and not OK for them. We are going to talk about this kind of boundary today.
 - Boundaries help people stay safe and be responsible.
2. *People, families, communities and society set limits and boundaries. What are some limits or boundaries that you can think of?*
 - Individual – we have personal rules about not sharing private family information.
 - Family and Community – our community might have rules about how old someone should be to date.
 - Society– in Canada, there are laws about sending naked photos to other people.

C. Personal Space and Touch

Students may notice this lesson shares some of the concepts from [Lesson 4: Private and Public](#).

1. *Who is the owner of your body?*
 - YOU own your body! Your body is unique and special and everybody is different.
 - Your body is private and some parts are more private than others.
2. *What are some things you can you do with your body?*
Run, jump, dance, clap, laugh, eat
3. *How do you take care of your body?*
Eat healthy foods, hygiene, and exercise

Remind students that personal space is the space around our body that helps us feel safe.

4. *An important part of taking care of your body is saying who can touch you and come into your personal space. Not going into someone's personal space unless they say it's OK shows respect. Everybody deserves to be treated with respect.*
5. *Private parts are parts that are covered by underwear. What are some boundaries about private body parts?* The teacher and support staff may have to come up with this list or ask leading questions to help students create this list of boundaries.
 - Private parts need to be covered when you are in public places.
 - If you want to touch or scratch your private parts, wait until you are in a private place.
 - No one should touch your body without your permission.
 - You can't touch someone else's body without their permission.
 - No one can see your naked body without your permission.
 - You can't look at someone else's private parts without their permission.
 - Your body should not be shown to anyone who does not want to see it.
 - Listen to your body signals and then take action:
 - If you are hungry, your tummy rumbles – you need to eat
 - If you are tired, you yawn – you may need a nap or to go to bed earlier
 - If someone touches you in a way that is not safe, you may pull away, cry, tremble or get an “uh-oh” feeling. We're going to talk about what to do about that next
 - Don't keep secrets about touching; it is not OK if someone tries to bribe or trick you into keeping a secret; it's not OK if someone asks you to keep secrets about touching.

D. OK, Not OK, and Confusing Touch

Students explore types of touch and what to do if they experience touch that makes them uncomfortable.

1. Before class, print and cut the **OK/Not OK/Confusing Touch cards** (in the handouts section at the end of this lesson plan)
2. Post the following titles on the board:
 - **OK Touch**
 - **Not OK Touch**
 - **Confusing Touch**

- Using the notes provided, explain what each heading means

OK Touch

- OK touch makes us feel good.*
- It helps show affection (E.g., hugs, high fives).*
- It helps with hygiene (E.g., help washing our hair).*
- It helps with our health (E.g., a doctor giving us a shot even if it doesn't feel good).*
- Sometimes, we want safe touch like a hug- we can ask for it.*

Not OK/ Unwanted Touch

- Unwanted or not OK touch makes us feel unsafe, sad or bad.*
- It can hurt someone.*
- Not OK touch is anything that makes us feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, angry or upset.*
- Some examples of not OK touch are hitting, kicking, slapping, biting, poking, asking to see private body parts, any touch to the private parts, pulling down someone's pants, or giving a "wedgie."*

Confusing Touch

- We don't want to do it or think it's not OK, but someone we trust is telling us to or that it's OK.*
- It feels bad, but someone is pressuring us to do it or say it feels good.*
- It's touching private parts and it feels nice, but it also feels bad or wrong or past our limits.*
- We want attention, but it feels like the wrong kind of attention or can lead to bad feelings.*
- We are told to keep it a secret and we are not supposed to keep secrets about touch.*

- Hand the cards out to students or read each card out loud to the class.
- Is this an example of OK, not OK, or confusing touch?* Put each card under the heading where it fits best.
- If time permits, consider talking about additional examples of confusing touch with students, and add them to the board.
- Review the answers with explanations (in the handout section at the end of this lesson plan).

E. Rules for Staying Safe

Students plan and practice what to do if they experience touch that makes them uncomfortable. Remember that sometimes resistance or leaving are not possible or safe in the moment.

1. *Remember boundaries are rules about limits. We can also have rules about what to do if touch is not safe or is confusing.*
2. *There are three rules about what to do if touch is not safe:*
 1. **Say NO, STOP or I DON'T LIKE THAT** in a loud voice or with body language.
 2. **Move away from the situation**
e.g., if someone is pushing in the hallway, move away
 3. **Tell an adult you trust and keep on telling until an adult helps.** You might need to choose another adult if the first one doesn't help.
3. *It's the adults' job to help children and youth be safe. Who can you trust as a safe adult? This person should be someone you can tell anything to. Parent, grandparent, older sibling, teacher, coach*
4. Hand out a blank index card to each student.
5. *Let's each make a card to remind us of the three rules and who our safe adults are.*
 - Review the rules by having students write them on the card. See the example below. Consider whether you need to give some students a pre-made version that they can fill in.
 - At the bottom of the card, have students write the names of the safe adults they trust.
 - Students can keep this card with them in their backpack or you can bring them out for review regularly.

Demonstrate how to show "NO," with body language (e.g., put your hands up in front of you as if to send someone away). Practice saying NO often. Find ways for each student to say or show NO.

My Staying Safe Rules

1. Say NO, STOP in a loud voice
2. Move away
3. Tell an adult I trust

My safe adults who I trust are

F. What is Consent?

This discussion will expand the students' understanding of consent and sexual consent by linking them to everyday situations.

Consider working through many everyday examples of talking about consent to reinforce this key message. Model consent conversations in your daily interactions.

1. *When we talk about touch and space, we use the word **consent**. What does consent mean?*
 - Giving permission or saying “yes, it’s OK” to do something
2. *We need to get and give consent for everyday things. We ask for permission.*
3. *What do we do if we want to borrow a pen?*
 - We ask “can I please borrow your pen?”
 - We wait for the response
4. *What do we do if someone says no?*
 - We wouldn’t take their pen
 - If someone says no, that means we don’t have permission. Taking the pen would not be OK because we don’t have consent.
5. *What do we do if someone says yes?*
 - We would say thank you and borrow their pen. We would give it back afterwards.
6. *Everyone needs to give and get consent for any touch e.g., pat on the back, holding hands or hugging*
7. Show the **Consent for Kids video**: <https://youtu.be/h3nhM9UJJc>
Although this video was made for younger children, you can introduce it to help older students understand the messages.
8. You can also show the **Consent and Communication Video**: <https://youtu.be/1wOqcU79Rh8>
9. Talk about other real-life examples where consent is needed, and reinforce the skills students already have regarding these important conversations.

G. Dating, Private Touch and Consent

This is an optional discussion for older students. These key consent rules about having a dating relationship with someone may not be a good fit for all students but are very important for students who are dating or thinking about dating.

1. *Sometimes when people date, they want to kiss or touch the person's private parts, or have sex. This does not mean it's the right thing to do.*
2. *Before any kind of touch (casual like patting someone on the back or intimate like touching someone's private parts), it's important to make sure that the other person also wants to.*
3. *People say "No" in words or body language. How can you tell if someone does not want to do something? Shake their head, push someone away, pull away, cry, tremble*
4. *These actions mean that the person is not giving consent. They are saying "no" without words. What do we do when someone says No to us?*
 - You stop! Always accept their answer and do not try to pressure them to change their mind.
 - It's OK if someone says or shows no.
 - It can feel embarrassing, frustrating, or painful if someone says or shows no. These are common feelings and if you need help dealing with them, you can talk to an adult you trust.
 - If someone says or shows no, stay calm, look at the person and say OK. Be sure not to try to talk them into it or do it anyway.
5. Show the **Understanding Consent Video**:
<https://youtu.be/raxPKkIDF2k>
6. Review these elements of consent:
 - If you're drunk or high, you CAN NOT give your consent
 - If you've been forced, threatened, tricked or rewarded for touch, you CAN NOT give consent
 - Even if someone said yes before, a person can change their mind and stop giving consent.
 - People under 18 CAN NOT consent to sexual touch with people like teachers, coaches or family

- Any touching of someone's private parts without consent is against the law.
 - Sexual touch with anyone under the age of 12 is against the law.
7. *If you did not give consent to kiss, hug or have any kind of touch tell a safe adult you trust.* Remind students of the safe adults they named in the **Rules for Staying Safe activity**.

H. 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.

I. Closure

- *Today we talked about boundaries and consent. What is one thing you learned? How do you feel after talking about boundaries and consent?*
- *Who can you talk to about what you learned today?*
- *In another class, we'll talk more about using what we learned so we can be a good friend.*



You are in line for the cafeteria. Another student pushes in line and knocks you over

You get a good report card and when you get home, your family gives you hugs

Someone pulls your hair on the bus

Someone tries to touch your breasts/chest when you are in the change room getting ready for gym



One of your classmates pinches other students

Your friend wants to get naked when you are listening to music in your room

Your uncle holds hands with you as you dance at a wedding

At summer camp, the counsellor asks to touch your breasts while you are showering



Your uncle wants you to sit on his lap and rubs against your private parts

You visit the doctor for a checkup and the doctor touches your back

Your neighbor says you must kiss them goodbye

Your teacher helps you up from your chair by touching your arm

OK, Not OK or Confusing Touch

Answer Key

You are in line for the cafeteria and another student pushes in line and knocks you over

Not OK touch– getting knocked over can hurt and doesn't show respect for personal space. It can make us feel sad, angry, upset and embarrassed. It's not OK to push in line; waiting your turn shows respect. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.

You get a good report card and when you get home, your family gives you a hug

OK touch – getting a hug from a family when we do well makes us feel good and shows affection. You can ask family members for hugs and they can ask you for hugs too.

Someone pulls your hair on the bus

Not OK touch – getting hair pulled can hurt and doesn't respect personal space. It is not OK to hurt someone. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.

Someone tries to touch your breasts/chest when you are in the change room getting ready for gym

Not OK touch – breasts/chest are private. When someone touches private parts it can make us feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or upset. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult. When people are getting ready for gym, it is important to just get ready for gym and not to touch or try to look at other people's private parts.

One of your class mates pinches other students

Not OK touch – getting pinched hurts and doesn't respect personal space. It's not OK to hurt someone. If you see another student get pinched or you get pinched, you can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.

Your friend wants to get naked when you are listening to music in your room

Confusing or not OK touch – this can be confusing because you like your friend and trust your friend, but you also know about boundaries to not show private parts to friends. It feels bad or you think it might feel bad. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.

Your uncle holds hands with you as you dance at a wedding

OK touch – holding hands when dancing is public. Dancing is one way to have fun and show affection for people you like. You can ask people to dance or to hold hands and they can ask you. Everyone can say or show no if they don't want to dance or hold hands.

At summer camp, the counsellor asks to touch your breasts while you are showering

Confusing or not OK touch – this can be confusing because breasts are private and you know about boundaries to not touch private parts and it feels embarrassing or bad; but you trust your counsellor and are supposed to do what they say. Anytime an adult or counsellor asks to touch your privates but you don't need help with hygiene or health, it is not OK touch. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.
NOTE: If a student needs hygiene assistance from an aide, it's important to discuss the difference between personal care/hygiene assistance and not OK touch

Your uncle wants you to sit on his lap and rubs against your private parts

Not OK touch or confusing touch – sitting on someone's lap is in your personal space and private parts are private. You know there is a boundary about touching private parts and this feels embarrassing or bad; but you like and trust your uncle so it can be confusing. Anytime a family member touches your private parts and it's not for health or hygiene, it is not OK touch. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult.

You visit the doctor for a checkup and the doctor touches your back

OK touch – doctors may need to touch not private parts to check up on your health or to help you feel better. This is safe touch. Most doctors will remember to let you know or ask permission if they will touch your body. If a doctor needs to touch your private parts to check up on your health or help you feel better, your parent or caregiver needs to be in the room with you.

Your neighbor tells you that you must kiss them goodbye

Not OK touch – your body is yours and no one can touch your body without permission. Kissing is a private activity that people do only when everyone involved wants to. It's not OK for a neighbor to tell you that you must kiss them. You can say or show "No, stop, not OK" and talk to a trusted adult. *If you trust and like your neighbor, it can be confusing.

Your teacher helps you up from your chair by touching your arm

OK touch – when a teacher helps you by touching your arm, it is helpful and lets you do what you want to do. Most teachers remember to ask before they touch you, even to help. You can ask for help and you can ask other people if they need help before you touch them to help them.

Type of Touch	Example
OK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You get a good report card and when you get home, your family gives you a hug • Your uncle holds hands with you as you dance at a wedding • You visit the doctor for a checkup and the doctor touches your back • Your teacher helps you up from your chair by touching your arm
Not OK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in line for the cafeteria and another student pushes in line and knocks you over • Someone pulls your hair on the bus • Someone tries to touch your breasts/chest when you are in the change room getting ready for gym • One of your classmates pinches other students • Your friend wants to get naked when you are listening to music in your room • At summer camp, the counsellor asks to touch your breasts while you are showering • Your uncle wants you to sit on his lap and rubs against your private parts • Your neighbor tells you that you must kiss them goodbye
Confusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your friend wants to get naked when you are listening to music in your room • At summer camp, the counsellor asks to touch your breasts while you are showering • Your uncle wants you to sit on his lap and rubs against your private parts

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