

Lesson 9:

Decision Making



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Examine influences on personal decision making for responsible sexual behavior
- Practice skills to deal with pressure and establish boundaries
- Explore decisions about social media use

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

This lesson is related to the Health and Life Skills Learning Outcomes

Grade 7: Examine the influences on personal decision making for responsible sexual behaviour.

Grade 7: Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles and equity; e.g., media, culture.

and is related to the CALM Learning Outcome

P12 Examine aspects of healthy sexuality and responsible sexual behaviour

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 Decision Making
- C. Decision Making Process
- D. Pressure and Decision Making
- E. Pushing Boundaries
- F. Think Before You Send
- G. Question Box
- H. Closure

Required Materials

Boundaries Scenarios cards

Social Media cards

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down cards

Background Information for Teachers

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 Decision Making

To make healthy decisions, everyone, including youth with diverse abilities, needs the opportunity to explore their values, understand their boundaries and consider their attitudes to dating and having sex. Decision making is a high-level skill requiring executive functioning. Consider how to make this lesson applicable to all your students, including those with executive function differences.

1. *We've talked a lot about growing up. Part of growing up and taking responsibility for yourself is learning about how to deal with situations when you need to make personal choices. This is called decision making.*
2. *What kinds of decisions do we make every day?*
 - What to eat, what to wear, what show to watch, who to reply to on social media
3. *Some decisions are just for us, like what colour of socks to wear. Other decisions can affect other people, like if we take up the whole seat on the school bus, instead of saving space for someone else. Some decisions we make are important to our health. What decisions are important to our health?*
 - When to go to bed, if we wash our hands after using the toilet, if we should eat something we know we are allergic to, telling an adult when we are sick or hurt.
4. *Some decisions are important because what we choose to do can help or hurt others. These are decisions like taking someone's*

pencil without asking or saying a mean thing behind someone's back. What other examples can you think of?

C. Decision Making Process

1. *Some decisions are important because we are deciding what is right and what is wrong. Things you know are right are called your values. When you do what you think is right and fits with your values, it is good for you. When you do what you think is wrong, it is bad for you. How do you know if something is the right thing to do?*
 - It follows the rules.
 - If it helps others or shows love for others.
 - If it will help me now and later.
 - Talking to parents, teachers, friends, faith leaders can help you decide if something is the right thing or not.
2. Write these questions on the board.
 - ***What is the question?***
 - ***What are my choices?***
 - ***What is good and bad about each choice?***
 - ***Make a choice and do the right thing.***
3. Put up a blank chart like the one below on the board.
4. *When we need to make a decision, we can follow these steps. Let's imagine that your friend offers you a whole box of smarties. You know you get sick if you eat too much candy. Let's practice making a decision:*
5. Ask the class these questions and fill in the answers on the chart together.
 - ***What is the question? Do I take the smarties?***
 - ***What are my choices?*** (See chart below for examples)
 - ***What is good and bad about each choice?*** (See chart below for examples)
 - ***Make a choice and do the right thing – what choice would you make?***

Students may need reminded that just because something feels good right now (e.g., eating candy) it doesn't mean it's the right decision.

What are my choices	Good things about this choice ☺	Bad things about this choice ☹
Take and eat the smarties	It's nice to get gifts and eat candy	It will make me sick later
Don't accept the smarties	I won't get sick	It might make them sad I want to eat candy
Say thank you and take only one candy	I won't get sick I still get a candy	I want all the candy

6. *Now let's imagine that your friend asks you to steal a box of smarties for them at the store. Let's practice making a decision about what to do. This time, let's remember to think about our values.*
7. Ask the class the questions and fill in the answers together.

What are my choices	Good things about this choice ☺	Bad things about this choice ☹
Say yes and steal the smarties	I like candy I want to do what my friend says	I know it is wrong to steal It will hurt the storekeeper I may get arrested
Say no and don't steal the smarties	My friend might get mad No candy	It feels like the right thing I don't get arrested
If I have money, buy the smarties instead	We still get candy We don't break the law	I want all the candy
Share my other snacks	Friend gets food No stealing	My friend might not like it

8. *Now let's imagine that your friend asks you to send you a naked picture/nude. Let's practice making a decision about what to do. This time let's remember to think about our values.*
- **What is the question?** Do I send a nude?
 - **What are my choices?** Say yes and send the nude; say not and don't send the nude, delete their text, don't answer their text, show an adult, send a picture of a cat
 - **What is good and bad about each choice?** – teacher-led discussion
 - **Make a choice and do the right thing** – what choice would you make?

D. Pressure and Decision Making

Students consider reasons why teens may become sexually active by exploring different sources of pressure, including peer pressure.

1. *Now that you are getting older, some of the decisions you make might be about if you are going to date, if you are going to kiss or hug a boyfriend/girlfriend/date or if and when to have sex.*
2. *We talked about sex when we talked about reproduction. We said that sex was when people get very close, and the penis goes into the vagina.*

It can be helpful to highlight that it's a myth that all teens smoke, drink, do drugs or have sex. The truth is that most teens are not sexually active. For more details, see [Youth Sexuality: Stats and Trends](#)

3. *Anytime one person touches another person's genital area with any part of their body, unless it is for hygiene or health care, it's called sex. This includes hands, mouths, or other private parts. Sexual intercourse is another word for some types of sex.*
4. *Sometimes, people feel pressured to do things that might not feel right for us to do. Sometimes, we call this peer pressure. What kinds of things might people try to pressure you to do?*
 - Smoke or vape
 - Drink alcohol or use drugs
 - Skip school
 - Say mean things on social media
 - Have sex
5. *How might they pressure you?*
 - Trick, bribe, tease, pester, ask you over and over again.
6. *If you do these things, what could go wrong?*
 - You could get sick, break the law, do things that don't follow your values, do things that hurt you or others, you might get in trouble with your parents.
7. *Not all pressure is peer pressure. Other things might make us feel pressured to do things. What else might feel like pressure for teens to have sex?*
 - Alcohol and drugs – sometimes, people make decisions when they are drunk or high that they wouldn't make sober. People can't consent to sex if they are drunk or high because they don't have a clear head to make good decisions.
 - Partner pressure – a boyfriend/girlfriend/person you're dating may say things like "If you loved me, you'd have sex with me".
 - Parents and teachers – parents and teachers aren't pressuring students to have sex on purpose, but when they talk as if all teens have sex, it can make some teens think they should have sex!
 - Movies and social media – these often show teens in sexual relationships. Some movies show people having sex. Remember, these are made up stories and not real life.
 - A person's own curiosity – being curious about sex is normal, but it doesn't mean people should feel they have to have sex or do sexual things.
 - A person's own sexual feelings – getting sexual thoughts and feelings is normal – many people get them. Someone should not feel that they have to act on their sexual feelings. A person can have feelings and not act on them.

8. *Knowing what to do when you are feeling pressured to do something can be hard. That is what our next activity will be about.*

E. Pushing Boundaries

1. *When we make a decision, it sometimes means we set a boundary – a boundary is our limit or rule about what we will and won't do. Sometimes, people might not like our boundaries and might try to make us change them. Sometimes, this is called 'pushing our boundaries'.*
2. *When people push your boundaries, it's important to think about your values, your needs, and your reasons for making your decision. It can help to fill out the decision-making chart on paper or in your head. We also need to practice how to respond when someone is trying to push your boundaries so we can stick with our decisions. This is especially important if someone is pressuring you to do kissing, hugging, touching and sex.*
3. Print the **Pushing Boundaries Cards**. Place on the table.
4. *Each of these cards shows an example of someone trying to push someone's boundaries. We are going to take turns picking up a card and reading it to the class. Then, as a class, we will think of what to say if someone tries to push our boundaries this way.*
Example responses:
 - "It's hard for me to say no, but I'm practicing being brave and honest, so I'm going to say no for now".
 - "No thank you."
 - "That doesn't work for me. My boundaries are very important to me."
 - "I need to think about it, but please don't bug me about it."
 - "Can we do something else instead?"
 - Help students find ways to say or show "no" like holding up hands or head shaking.
5. *The cards use the word "partner" to mean your boyfriend, girlfriend, or the person you are dating.*

F. Think Before You Send

This activity is useful if your students have access to social media. Not all students will have their own devices, but may still have access to the home computer or devices of friends and siblings. It's helpful to stay current about the apps and platforms students are using.

1. *What is social media?*
Websites and apps like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Snapchat are used to share content and communicate with others.
2. *What are the good things about social media?*
Talk to friends and family, fun, good information
3. *What are some of the bad things that can happen?*
Once you post or send, you can't get it back; people say mean things; people you don't want to might see it; people can lie about who they really are.
4. *Social media isn't private – even if it feels private or you are alone when you do it; it can be seen & shared by others. It isn't permanent even if it seems like it goes away or you delete it.*
5. *What are some social media rules that can help keep us safe?*
 - Ask your parents to help with your “privacy settings” to keep you safe as possible.
 - When you post something, ask yourself, “would it be ok if this was on the front page of a magazine?”
 - Get people's permission before you share photos.
 - Don't send naked photos. Don't ask for naked photos.
 - If you feel bad about something you see or read on social media, talk to an adult you trust, even if you think you shouldn't have done something.
6. Print out the **Social Media Cards** and the **Thumbs Up Thumbs Down cards**.
7. Put the Thumbs Up and Thumbs Down cards on the board. Explain that the Thumbs Up group means this is a good idea. Thumbs Down means it is a bad idea.
8. Pick cards to discuss and sort them into the two groups as a class.

G. 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.

H. Closure

- *Today, we talked about decision making. You can ask an adult you trust if your boundaries are pushed or if you are having a hard time setting boundaries.*
- *What is one thing you learned? How do you feel after talking about decision making?*
- *Who can you talk to about what you learned today?*



Pushing Boundaries Cards

Your classmate keeps hugging you after you asked them not to.

Your roommate at camp is always naked around you. You don't like it.

Your partner asks you to have sex. You don't want to.



A friend asks if you'll have sex but you really like someone else.

You found out your partner is also dating someone else.

Your partner has been telling people very personal things about you.

Your friends keep saying that you should date someone, or people will think you are weird.



Someone at your volunteer job keeps asking for your phone number but you don't want to give it out.

You tell your partner no to sex. They say they will break up with you if you don't do it.

Someone you like keeps asking you out every time you see them. You don't want to go out with them.

Your neighbor keeps coming to your house and tries to touch your hair and rub your back. You don't like it.



You break up with someone and they keep trying to contact you. You have told them to stop.

Your friend keeps teasing you and you don't like it.

Your aunt and uncle are staying at your house. Your aunt asks to come into the bathroom while you are showering.

Your neighbour asks you over to their house and wants to show you photos of naked people on their computer.



Your partner wants to have sex but you don't want to.

You tell your partner that you don't want to touch their private parts. They tell you that they will tell all of your friends.

Your partner is always texting with your friend and does not pay attention to you.

At the movies, your partner starts to kiss you and puts their hand down your pants.



Your friend texts you with a photo of someone else who is only in their underwear.



Social Media Cards

Texting with your friend about your day

**Posting a photo of your penis or breasts
on Instagram**

**Asking someone you trust if they think a
stranger on the internet is telling the truth**



Meeting up with a new friend you met on the internet in a public place and bringing a friend along

Sending a naked photo on Messenger to someone you just met

Sending a photo of yourself naked to your boyfriend/girlfriend/person you're dating

Getting to know a new friend you met at camp by asking them questions online



Meeting up with someone you met on the internet at their house without telling anyone

Posting pictures of other people without their permission

Saying mean things to a stranger online

Sending a photo of your pet to your friend



Re-posting/sharing a photo that your friend says is private

Asking someone you trust what to do if someone online is making you feel uncomfortable

Taking photos in the change room at the pool

Sharing your password with a friend



Telling someone you trust if someone is saying mean things about you online

Spreading rumours about your classmate in your group chat

Sending a photo of your new outfit to your cousin

Looking at photos of naked people online with your neighbour



Good Idea



Bad Idea



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