

Lesson 3

Decision-making and Communication (Expressing what you do (and don't!) want)



Contents

1. Self-esteem
2. Feelings and emotions
3. Communicating your feelings
4. Personal values
5. What are consequences?
6. Consent
7. Decision-making
8. Communicating wants and needs
9. Responding to pressure

- Just because someone else wants to do something, doesn't mean you want to do it, too. It is important to stop and figure out what is good for you before you decide to participate.
- Letting others know what we do and don't want brings us closer to them.
- Good communication does not always mean you have to use words; a firm nod or a "thumbs-up" with a smile can also let someone know you mean "yes!" Shaking your head while maintaining eye contact conveys a clear "no!"

There are some things that we might not want to do but have to because they are important to our health and safety: going to the doctor, wearing a seatbelt, eating vegetables. Other things we decide to do or not do based on whether or not they will feel good: petting a dog, petting a snake, petting a porcupine, Each of these requires thought beforehand so we can figure out if it is a good choice for us.

This unit will explore how to choose what we want to do and figure out what we don't. It will also help us learn how to let others know our decisions without any doubt. There will be plenty of opportunities to figure out our best communication style, so you can practice, practice, practice!

A person's cognitive age is not always the same as their chronological age. However, while everybody and each body is different, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities physically mature at the same rate as people without disabilities, and should therefore receive age-appropriate sex health information. This curriculum is intended for *all* transition students ages 14-21.

*Section 8 of this lesson discusses different types of communication, both verbal and nonverbal. Please feel free to skip this section, other sections, and/or role play activities that are not appropriate for your student, or adjust them as needed.



"Regarding sex education: no secrets!" - Albert Einstein

According to the Public Library of Science, comprehensive sex education helps students "feel more informed, make safer choices, and have healthier outcomes."

This is exactly what we want!

Our purpose is to guide you through a comprehensive and accurate home-based sex education curriculum, ensuring that you have all the information you need to teach effectively.

For Parent/Caregiver/Teacher to **read to yourself:**

You may be uncomfortable with some of this material, and that's okay. Our kit is designed so that if any of the topics is in conflict with your religious or moral beliefs, you may simply skip over those parts and pick up at a place at which you are more comfortable. You may also want to adapt or adjust certain lessons, and that's okay too.

As for the parts that are simply embarrassing, uncomfortable, or feel icky, we ask you to keep pushing through! It is important that your student/loved one gain all the knowledge they need to make safe, healthy, informed decisions as they become more independent. And that means, well, talking about stuff that we don't feel great talking about.

Just remember: The more you talk about it, the easier it gets.

For Parent/Caregiver/Teacher to **read aloud before each session:**

We are going to talk openly here, ask questions, and allow each other to express ourselves without judgement. There are no silly questions and no wrong feelings. This is a safe space. This is a learning space. If you hear something that you do not understand or that upsets you, please speak up. You can take breaks or leave the room for a while if you need to. We are going to learn together.

This unit is about DECISION-MAKING AND COMMUNICATION.

You have a voice and a right to use it!

Topics will include:

What are consequences?

Communicating feelings

Consent

Responding to pressure

If any of these topics is a trigger for anxiety or negative feelings, please speak up so we can skip those areas or talk through what bothers you.

You will need:

- Pen or pencil
- Magazines
- Worksheets 8, 19-35b

Learning objectives for this lesson:

- Recognizing what makes us uniquely wonderful
- Distinguishing important emotions and feelings
- Defining and identifying personal values
- Effectively expressing wants, needs, and emotions
- Predicting consequences
- Understanding, communicating, and accepting consent and non-consent
- Appropriately and confidently responding to pressure

You may read this lesson as it is written or use your own words.

And because everyone's abilities are different, you may choose to skip some worksheets.

Section 1: Self-esteem ★

In our first lesson, we learned about self-compassion (kindness toward yourself). It is a practice which helps us feel better when we get things wrong or can't do something. It is the same as comforting someone else who feels sad or disappointed, except we are comforting ourselves!

We also learned about something like self-compassion which doesn't just make us feel better about things we do wrong, but celebrates the things that are great about us! It is recognizing the ways in which we are special, important, and - above all - wonderful. It is *self-esteem*, a way to measure how we feel about who we are. Remember:

SELF-ESTEEM is how we value and think about ourselves; our opinion of ourselves.

Just like you may admire a friend for how they draw, or respect a teacher for their kindness, we need to recognize what is great about ourselves to develop high self-esteem.



Take out **WORKSHEET 19, "What's Great About Me."** Cut out pictures from magazines of things that you enjoy, that you care about, and that you are good at! Do you like reading or being told stories? Cut out a picture of a book! Do you love your bright eyes? Cut out a picture of eyes! Then glue in the frame. Include all different parts of yourself - not just what you can do, but what matters to you, like nature or animals. You can look at it every day and remind yourself of all the things that make you wonderful.



Take turns giving each other compliments about each other's physical attributes, attitudes, talents, and character. See how long you can go back and forth without repeating a compliment. Get creative - have you ever admired someone's eyebrows? Loved another's limbo skills? Now is a great time for that!

BONUS: Take turns complimenting yourselves for a while. Begin to recognize what you like about yourself, and raise that self-esteem!

Why does healthy self-esteem matter? First of all, it makes living in your own body a whole lot nicer. Also, the better you feel about yourself, the better decisions you will make - it's a fact! Being happy with who you are makes you want to treat yourself (and have others treat you) better. And making healthy decisions about our behavior is one way to do that.

Some ways to increase and maintain self-esteem include: participating in activities we enjoy doing, reminding ourselves about our great qualities, taking care of our body with healthy food and exercise, staying clean and wearing clothes that make us feel good, and spending time with friends and family who support us.



Take out **WORKSHEET 20, "Giving My Self-Esteem a Boost."** Know what a "boost" is? It is help in making something better. We want to work on our self-esteem every day so we always know how great we are. Fill in the blanks with the things that you like about yourself and the things you want to do more often. Include how you plan to take care of these things that you love. Have fun!

Section 2: Feelings and emotions ★

What are *feelings*?

FEELINGS are emotional experiences, they are the reason we smile and cry and get a shaky stomach when we are afraid. We often think of feelings and emotions together, so for this lesson, we will use both words to mean the same thing. Some common feelings/emotions are:

- Happiness
- Anger
- Sadness
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Surprise

Feelings are important, too!

They protect us:

For instance, our bodies tighten up and our hearts pound when a tiger chases us, which is how we know we should run away; if we didn't feel scared, we would just stand there and get gobbled up!



And we wrinkle our noses and pull away when we are near a pile of garbage; if we didn't feel disgust, we might hang out in a dirty trash heap!

They affect our relationships:

Our bodies feel warm and tingly when wonderful people are around us; if we didn't feel love, we might not spend time with these special friends and family!

And we feel uncomfortable when we show our private parts to people who don't want to see them; if we didn't feel embarrassed, we wouldn't know we should keep our clothes on in public!

Most important, feelings help us make smarter decisions about how to live our lives every day:

Our feelings - whether fear or excitement or happiness - help us figure out what we should do and what we shouldn't do. And everybody's feelings are different.

Let's think about this:

Some people think about zip lining over a jungle and feel excited. Their heart pounds and they begin to smile. Their body is telling them that riding the zip line might be a good decision for them! Other people will look at that big zip line and feel fear. Their heart pounds - just like with excitement - except they also frown, shake, and maybe get a stomachache! This is a hint from their body that maybe zip lining isn't a good activity for them! Perhaps staying closer to the ground would be smarter.

So not only are our feelings important, listening to those feelings and letting them help you decide what you do and don't want to do is even more important!

Remember to notice your feelings throughout the day. They tell you a lot about yourself!



Take out **WORKSHEETS 21a and 21b, "My Emotions Game."**

Close your eyes and hold your finger over the pictures on **20b**, (no peeking!). Wave your hand around in circles, then drop your fingertip onto the sheet. Open your eyes and see what picture/emotion your finger landed on. Think of a time when you felt this feeling; tell the story of what happened and why it made you feel the way you did.

BONUS: Use the script provided on **21a** to help you tell your story!

As we know, everybody has feelings and emotions. But we don't always feel them at the same time or for the same reason. Someone who loves roller coasters will feel joy and excitement as they fly down the track; someone who is afraid of heights will feel fear. And neither person is wrong - feelings are just part of who we are.



Take out **WORKSHEET 22, “How Do I Feel? How Do Others Feel?”** Look at the kids in each of these activities. What do you think they are each feeling? How can you tell? What would you feel doing these activities? And can you remember times when you felt each of the feelings listed on the worksheet? Talk with your caregiver/teacher about the feelings you have felt so far in your life. How have they affected your behavior?

Everybody has the right to their own feelings and we all have the right to express them. We can show them on our faces - smiling, frowning, scowling - or we can express them with words. If we don't, those feelings will begin to fill us up until we can no longer express them calmly! This is especially true with anger (which can build and feel worse if we don't express it) and sadness (which can leave us feeling alone if we don't share it). Just the act of letting our emotions out with words or laughter or tears helps us manage them and keep them small - and it makes us feel so much better!

It's also important to let others know what we're feeling because that is how relationships grow. The person you talk to can better understand you and what you might be going through, and support you! Sometimes knowing that someone you care about is there for you can make feelings less intense.

Section 3: Communicating your feelings ★

Letting others know what we think and feel is a great way to *communicate*.

COMMUNICATE means to share information or ideas. When we tell our caregiver that we are a little cold, we are communicating how our body feels; when we tell others that they have hurt our feelings, we are communicating how their behavior has affected us. Not only does this help you let out some of that emotion, it also helps the other person understand what they should do differently in the future.

However, some ways of communicating our emotions are more effective than others, meaning some are able to get the result we want better than others. If the result we want is for other people to listen to us, we have to communicate in a way that makes them want to listen.

Think about this: if someone is screaming very loudly, does it make you hear more or not listen at all? Most of us stop listening when someone is shouting, or we just walk away! Screaming and making noise is not an effective way to calm down and express feelings. But there are ways that work.

One way to get calm is by breathing: Take a deep breath, then blow it out as if through a straw (you can even use a straw if you like!). Slowing down your exhale (breathing out) will relax you and slow your heart rate. Or, if you have a lot of energy, you can choose to exercise or sing a song in the shower! You can also write down your feelings in a journal or call a friend. Most important, take care of yourself and know that it is perfectly normal to have feelings. It's what makes us human.



Take out **WORKSHEET 23, "How I Can Handle My Emotions."** Look at the list and decide if you need to get calm or release your strong emotions! The column on the left gives suggestions for cooling down; the column on the right has great ideas about how to let that fire out of your belly!



Take turns expressing different feelings without words. Use facial expressions and body language only! What does hurt look like? Annoyance? Pleasure? Try to guess what the other person is feeling.

Now try expressing your feelings with words! How many different ways can you think of to let someone know you are angry with them? Discuss which phrases are more successful than others!



Take out **WORKSHEET 24, "My Feelings Script."** For this activity, you will become a (pretend) Hollywood screenwriter! Choose the phrases you like the best from the role play above and write them on the clapperboard. (If you don't have a white or silver pen, you can write them on regular paper and glue them onto the clapperboard.) Practice using these phrases so they come easily to you when you are feeling strong emotions.
Repetition helps us remember things!

Now, remember how we talked about boundaries? They are limits, like a fence that we can't see but we can feel. We can form boundaries around our bodies ("You can touch my hand, but please don't touch my hair," or "I don't like when people hug me") and our time ("Three hours is too long a visit, but we can hang out for one!"), but did you know there are even *emotional boundaries*?

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES are limits to what feelings or emotions you want to share with others.

All people have their own personal emotional boundaries; sometimes there are feelings and emotions that we do not want shared with us, especially if they are not from a member of our family or a close friend. Others feel that way, too. So, we should find one or two people in our life who we trust and who feels close to us, so we can talk to them when we need to express or communicate our emotions. A caregiver, sibling, good friend, trusted teacher, or doctor is a great choice!

And don't forget to find a private place (remember private places? Those are places where no one else can see or hear us, like a room with a closed door) for sharing these feelings. Having privacy will allow you to speak honestly without worrying that someone else will overhear.

Where would you go to talk about your feelings in private with your caregiver? With your teacher? With your best friend?

Section 4: Personal values ★

Before we learn about personal values, let's read a story. (Everybody loves a story.)

Jerome, Zahra, Clementine, and Buster were all friends who live in a city full of glamorous famous people. They all had other jobs - Jerome was a writer, Zahra was a carpenter, Clementine cooked burgers at a drive-thru restaurant, and Buster was a babysitter - but they all wanted to be famous, too. Somehow. One day, Jerome came up with the idea to start a band. They all got excited by the idea of performing in a stadium to screaming fans and becoming famous rock stars!

Jerome figured there were three things they needed to do to become rock stars: first they had to write a song, then they had to practice the song, and - finally - they needed to record the song.

He asked who would help him write the song.

"Nah," said Zahra.

"Not me," said Clementine.

"Sounds a little tiring to me," said Buster.

Jerome shrugged.

"The song has to be written for us to get famous, so I'll write it myself," he said.

And he did.

Jerome spent many hours writing the song, throwing crumpled paper across the room and into his wastebasket with every mistake. But after a week, he thought he had a pretty good tune!

He asked his friends who would practice it with him.

"Forget that," said Zahra.

"It's too much work," said Clementine.

"Sounds a little tiring to me," said Buster.

Jerome frowned; he was clearly disappointed.

"The song has to be practiced for it to sound good, so I'll practice myself," he said.

And he did.

Jerome played the guitar until his fingers hurt, and sang until his voice got weak. But after a week, he thought it sounded pretty good! He asked his friends who would record the song.

"Too boring," said Zahra.

"I don't like that idea," said Clementine.

"Still sounds tiring to me," said Buster.

Jerome wanted to scream, but instead he took a deep breath and blew out the air slowly.

"Well, the only way anyone will hear the song is if we record it, so I'll record it myself," he said.

And he did.

Jerome went into the studio and played his guitar and sang that song over and over again.



He slept very little, came home very late, and didn't wash his hair for six days! (He did not smell good.) But at the end of the week, he came home and that song was finished.

One year later, after the song got more streams on Spotify than Taylor Swift, and "Jerome" hoodies were selling out of all the best stores, he got a call from his agent. He was invited to play at the largest stadium in the entire city! He told his friends.

"I can't wait to perform!" yelled Zahra.

"I'm going to wear my pink leather boots!" hollered Clementine.

"We are going to be stars!!!" screamed Buster.

But Jerome simply stared at them.

He said, "When I needed to write the song, none of you would help me and I had to do it myself.

When I had to practice the song, none of you would help me and I had to do it myself. And when it was time to record the song, none of you would help me and I had to do it myself.

"Therefore," he continued, "when it is time to perform on stage and stand in the spotlight and make enough money to one day BUY the stadium..."

They all leaned forward, waiting.

"...I will do it myself."

And he did.

...So what does that have to do with *values*? (Remember, we were introducing values!)

VALUES are the things we care about that help us decide what to do.

Jerome showed everybody that he values hard work by spending so much time on the song, using so much energy, and giving up things like showers and relaxation.

Zahra, Clementine, and Buster showed Jerome that they do not value teamwork, responsibility, or respect by refusing to help create the song.

Even though our parents, our culture, and our religion will teach us certain values, we are all allowed to decide what really matters to us. Everyone has the right to their own personal values.

How do we figure out what our values are?

One way is to list the things you love and love to do. It can give you an idea of what matters to you.

If you love spending time with your caregiver and the people you live with, you probably value family and friendship.

If you love going to art museums, you probably value beauty and creativity.

If you love eating healthy foods and working out, you probably value health and well-being.

Pay attention to the things you choose to do every day - what values do they represent?



Take out **WORKSHEET 25, "What's the Value?"** Look at each pair of pictures and which half represents the value written below it. How do you know who has this value and who doesn't? Can you think of other examples of values, or things that matter to you that help you decide what to do?

Section 5: What are consequences? ★

You may have heard the word "consequences" before, as in, "if you don't do your homework, there will be consequences!!!" The word often comes along with a warning that we have to do the right thing and stay away from trouble. But what are these *consequences*?

CONSEQUENCES are the results of an action.

Whenever we do something, another thing happens because of it. Some examples are:

Action: Throw your phone on the ground. —————> Consequence: Your phone breaks.

Action: Leave a chicken in the oven too long. —————> Consequence: The chicken burns.

Action: Study hard for a test. —————> Consequence: Know the right answers to the test.

Sometimes, the consequence is how someone else reacts to what we have done, whether it is a punishment or a compliment.

Action: Throw your phone on the ground. —————> Consequence: Have your phone taken away.

Action: Leave a chicken in the oven too long. —————> Consequence: Lose your cooking privileges.

Action: Study hard for a test. —————> Consequence: Get a big hug of congratulations.



Take out **WORKSHEET 26, "Consequences."** Look at each pair of pictures and circle the one that represents the value written below it. How do you know who has this value and who doesn't? Can you think of other examples of values that help you make decisions?

Everything we do has a consequence, whether good or bad. Sometimes, we can control what happens (hold tightly to the phone so it won't drop to the ground) and sometimes we can't control it (hold tightly to the phone, but a dog jumps up on us and knocks it to the ground). However, we can usually predict what will happen as a consequence to our actions.

Remember how we talked about private and public body parts and private and public places? Doing private things or showing *private* body parts in *public* places can have consequences we don't want. Showing a private body part in public can get you arrested; so can touching your private body parts in public. That is because other people have their own boundaries (remember boundaries? They are limits!), and they do not want to see someone else touching or showing their private body parts.

Spotlight



Greta Thunberg is a climate activist with autism who works with world leaders to keep our earth, air, and water clean. Some people do not have the same **values** about our world, and they argue with her. This is one of the **consequences** of speaking out about what matters to her. Another consequence of speaking out, however, is that people becoming inspired to care more about our earth, air, and water - and that is a very good consequence!

Section 6: Consent ★

You may be wondering why we have spent so much time learning about boundaries, values, and consequences - that is because they all make up the most important topic of all: *consent*.

CONSENT is agreement to do something, or permission for something to happen.

Like boundaries, consent is extremely important in keeping ourselves and others safe. We are going to be talking about it over and over again throughout the rest of this curriculum; if you only remember one thing from everything we learn, it should be consent. So keep talking about it, keep practicing (we'll talk about how to do that!), and continue to remind each other of it. You can even teach others about consent! Remember: *repetition helps us remember things!*

Have you ever had to choose what movie to watch with a friend? You have to come to an agreement about what to watch before you do it. One person suggests something they that want, and the other person will agree ("Yes, I want that movie, too!") or disagree ("No, I don't want that one."). If you both want a certain movie, you can go ahead and watch it. If only one of you wants a certain movie but the other does not, then you do not choose that one to watch.

This is a lot like consent.

Both people have to want to do something, or else you should not do it. So, we have to make sure to give consent if we want to say "yes," and give non-consent (another way of saying not giving consent) if we want to say "no." We have to ask the other person for their consent, too.

This will become much more important as we continue with our lessons and talk about consent in other situations, but for now, let's get very clear about what it is and why we need it!

How do we know if the other person gives consent? WE ASK!



Take out **WORKSHEET 27, "Mother, May I?"** One person is "Mother," or the leader; they invite the other person to do something, like tickling them. The person who was invited then must ask for consent, asking, "Mother, May I?" The leader then says, "Yes, you may" or "No, you may not." Take turns being the leader and see how many different ways you can give consent and non-consent!

So why is consent so important? The answer has to do with boundaries.

While there are things we *have* to do in life - going to the doctor, going to the dentist, doing our work - there are other things that we have the right to say "no" to; we decide about consent!

Example #1 - without asking for consent

Abdul does not like being hugged. He doesn't like the feeling, and he has a boundary around it. One day, his cousin Hamza comes over to his house, walks right up to Abdul, and gives him a big, long hug. Abdul feels terrible, like his feelings don't matter. He gets very angry at Hamza.

Example #1 - with asking for consent

Abdul does not like being hugged. He doesn't like the feeling, and he has a boundary around it. One day, his cousin Hamza comes over to his house, walks right up to Abdul, and stops to think. Hamza wonders if Abdul has any boundaries around hugging. So he asks, "Can I hug you?" Abdul also stops to think about his own boundaries. He considers allowing the hug, pays attention to how he feels about the idea, and tells Hamza that, yes, he is ok with a hug.

Consent helps us figure out each other's boundaries so we don't disrespect them, like Abdul's cousin did in the first part of the example. But when Abdul's cousin stopped to *ask* if he could give a hug, it gave Abdul the opportunity to think about what he wants, what he doesn't want, and if he will give permission. We all deserve to decide who touches us, where, and if we want them to at all.

Example #2 - without asking for consent

Nia invites JD over to hang out by her pool. Even though JD doesn't like to swim - doesn't like to get wet at all, really - he *does* like sitting in the sun. Nia always serves the best lemonade, so he agrees to go. After lunch, Nia and JD reapply their sunscreen and toss a beach ball back and forth. When the ball sails into the pool, Nia jokes, "Go get it!" and pushes JD into the water. JD gets angry, climbs out of the pool, and tries to dry off as quickly as he can. He decides he will never hang out with Nia again, and immediately goes home.



Example #2 - with asking for consent

Nia invites JD over to hang out by her pool. Even though JD doesn't like to swim - doesn't like to get wet at all, really - he *does* like sitting in the sun. Nia always serves the best lemonade, so he agrees to go. After lunch, Nia and JD reapply their sunscreen and toss a beach ball back and forth. When the ball sails into the pool, Nia almost pushes JD into the water to get the ball, but stops to think about whether or not he would want that to happen. So she asks, "Want to go in the water and get the ball for me?" JD thinks about it. He hates being wet, but he does value helping other people. He thinks about what is more important to him, then tells Nia that no, he does not want to. And what does Nia do? She jumps in instead!

Here, JD thought about his boundaries and considered his values. He decided what was stronger: his boundary around getting wet or his value of helping friends. These are the kinds of things we need to think about before we give consent or non-consent. We need to figure out what is more important to us in that moment. Let's see how values might affect consent in a different way...

Example #3 - without asking for consent

Greta and Marcy were good friends; they ate lunch together, played on the same soccer team, and spent time at the mall on weekends. One Saturday, they walked into a store and admired some sunglasses that they both thought looked cool. They took turns trying them on and posing like supermodels. Then Marcy looked around the store, found no one was watching, and stuffed the sunglasses into Greta's pocket. Marcy began to walk out, waving to Greta to follow her with the sunglasses they hadn't paid for. Marcy was nervous, her heart was pounding, her palms were sweating, and just as she was about to walk out, a security guard appeared behind her, saying, "Miss, I know you are stealing those sunglasses. Come with me." He called the police and Marcy's parents, and Marcy was in big trouble.

Example #3 - with asking for consent

Greta and Marcy were good friends; they ate lunch together, played on the same soccer team, and spent time at the mall on weekends. One Saturday, they walked into a store and admired some sunglasses that they both thought looked cool. They took turns trying them on and posing like supermodels. Then Marcy looked around the store, found no one was watching, and stopped. She wasn't sure if Greta was ok with taking the sunglasses. So she leaned over and whispered, "You wanna steal these?" Greta thought about it. She really liked Marcy and she really, really liked the sunglasses. But one of her most important values was honesty, and stealing isn't honest. She also knew that there would be bad consequences to stealing - getting in trouble with her mother and the police. So she shook her head and said, "Nah. Let's do a photo shoot instead." They took out their phones and did just that.



Here, Greta thought about her values and the consequences that would probably happen if she stole the sunglasses.

Example #4 - without asking for consent

Daniel and Kai really liked each other. They texted each other and talked on the phone all the time. Daniel liked Kai's hair and Kai thought Daniel was smart and cute. One day, they got together at Kai's house and sat down to play a card game. Kai was telling a funny story about his dog when Daniel suddenly grabbed him by the shoulders and kissed him. Kai was so surprised that he froze. When Daniel finally pulled away, Kai was extremely angry. It had been his first kiss, and he didn't want it to happen in the middle of the park, in the middle of a dog story, and - most of all - he didn't know if he wanted his first kiss yet. He told Daniel not to call him again, and Kai walked away.

Example #4 - with asking for consent

Daniel and Kai really liked each other. They texted each other and talked on the phone all the time. Daniel liked Kai's hair and Kai thought Daniel was smart and cute. One day, they got together at Kai's house and sat down to play a card game. Kai was telling a funny story about his dog when Daniel suddenly felt the urge to kiss Kai. He interrupted the story and said to Kai, "I really want to kiss you right now. Is it ok if I do?" Kai thought for a moment; he definitely liked Daniel, they shared the same values, and they were in a private space... but he still wasn't sure. He told Daniel, "I don't know if I want to." Daniel understood that this was not consent - Kai hadn't said "no," but he also hadn't said "yes" - so he smiled and said, "I get it. Let me know if you ever change your mind." Kai smiled back and shuffled the cards.

Two important things happened in this story.

Daniel understood that "I don't know if I want to" is not consent. (Only a "yes" is agreeing!) And Daniel accepted the *rejection* in a very understanding way.

REJECTION is saying "no" to an idea or suggestion.

We all get rejected sometime; we invite someone to a party and they decide not to come, we ask someone to a school dance and they say they'd rather not.

And it's a pretty bad feeling to be rejected. Especially with dating. We sometimes feel like maybe we are not good enough for the other person or that they don't like us or that no one will ever want to be with us! But that simply is not true. Everyone gets rejected. And most people reject someone else at some point.

What is important is how we say or react to the rejection.



Take out **WORKSHEET 28, "The Rejection Files."** Look at the list of right and wrong things to say and do when you reject another person or they reject you. Hang this worksheet on your wall to remind yourself of how to respond in these situations. And remember, it happens to everyone. But there is someone out there who will say "yes!"



Using the suggestions on the worksheet, take turns giving and receiving rejection. Imagine different situations, from easy to what might feel uncomfortable. Concentrate on practicing what you *should* do, rather than what you *shouldn't*. The more you practice, the easier it will get!

Now let's go back to example #1, the one where Abdul's cousin Hamza hugs him without asking first. Remember, Abdul does not like to be hugged and never gave Hamza consent.

Example #1 - without consent (continued)

Abdul does not like being hugged. He doesn't like the feeling, and he has a boundary around it. One day, his cousin Hamza comes over to his house, walks right up to Abdul, and gives him a big, long hug. Abdul feels terrible, like his feelings don't matter. He begins to think poorly of his cousin.

When Hamza notices that Abdul is angry, he doesn't understand why. Abdul did not tell him he had a boundary around hugging, Abdul never said, "no, don't do that," and Abdul didn't push Hamza away when they hugged. Hamza said that must mean Abdul wanted a hug, that it was consent!

Abdul disagreed. Again, he never said, "yes, I want a hug" and he didn't open his arms wide for the hug! That means that he didn't want a hug, that it was non-consent!

So who is right?

The answer is: neither one is right!

- To give consent, you must say "yes" or nod your head or give some other clear sign that you want something. Hamza was wrong: Abdul never gave consent, so Hamza should not have touched him.
- To give non-consent, you must say "no" or shake your head or give some other clear sign that you do not want something. Abdul was wrong: he never gave non-consent, so Hamza didn't know that Abdul didn't want the hug.

Remember how we learned earlier that it is important to tell someone your boundaries and to ask them about theirs? The same goes for consent! You must let someone know if you do or do not consent, either with words or actions. If you are planning to do something together - remember choosing that movie? - you *both* have to give your consent or else you cannot do it.

It is not enough to stay silent.

You must let others know if you give consent, and you must ask others for their consent.

Section 7: Decision-making ★

Just like in the examples, we need to think about how we feel, what we want, and what we need from the other person before giving consent.

So how do we figure out what we feel, want, and need?

1. We must take the time to think about it before giving consent or non-consent about the important things, like saying yes to a date or a hug or a kiss. If the person wants to rush you into the decision - if they pressure you - they are probably not the kind of person you want to say "yes" to. Someone who really cares will wait for you to figure out how you really feel!
2. Pay attention to what your body feels like. Our body gives us clues to how we are feeling, like with sweaty palms when we are nervous, fluttering in our stomachs when we are excited, and a smile that stays with us when we are happy!



Take out **WORKSHEET 21b**, the second page of “**My Emotions Game**,” again. Look at the pictures of the person feeling different emotions. Which one do you feel like right now? If you look in the mirror, which face from the worksheet most looks like yours? This can help you figure out what you are feeling.

4. Think about your values. Remember, values are what help us decide what is right and what is not right for us. And just because something is important to one person, doesn't mean it has to be important to us! We are all different, and there is no right or wrong.

A great way to figure out your values is by thinking of the times in your life when you were:

Happiest

Proudest

Inspired (also known as "motivated," interested in doing something)

Angry

Think about why you felt this way in those situations. What made you so happy or proud? Was it because what you were doing meant a lot to you?



Take out **WORKSHEET 29**, “**What Are My Values?**” Think about all of these values and decide which ones matter to you. Values are yours and you can choose any and as many as you want. In the final spot, enter a value that isn't listed. Then try to choose the one most important to you. Discuss why it is important to you!

Look at the values in the pink circles on Worksheet 28. Read a phrase from the list below. Then match the phrases below to the value that matches.



- I will learn to paint.
- I will sit with my sick friend.
- I will try skydiving.
- I will visit my cousin.
- I will wear the same color that all my friends are wearing.
- I will eat more vegetables.
- I will not steal.
- I will not say bad things behind my friend's back.
- I will not ask for help in making decisions. (But it's ok if you do!)

Can you think of others? Is there more than one value that works for each example? Which of these do you agree with and which do you not?

4. Now it's time to revisit the idea of boundaries, those fences around your body and mind that you can't see but you can feel! Your boundaries play a huge part in decision-making.

Let's say someone asks you to dance. Ask yourself:

Do I have boundaries around being touched? (Dancing sometimes involves holding hands or someone putting their hands on your shoulders or waist.)

Do I have boundaries around eye contact? (Someone you dance with might look into your eyes.)

Do I have boundaries around what we might talk about while dancing?

Do I have boundaries around hearing loud music?

Now let's say you are choosing a movie to watch with family or a friend. Ask yourself:

Do I have boundaries around watching romance in a movie?

Do I have boundaries around bad language in a movie?

Do I have boundaries around violence or scary stuff in a movie?

Do I have boundaries around how close we sit to each other?

There are absolutely no wrong or bad boundaries. They are yours, and you have the right to set any boundaries that make sense to you!



Take out **WORKSHEET 30a, "Some of My Boundaries."** Put an **X** or a check mark **✓** next to each of the boundaries that you have or that you might want to adopt. You may also see some that used to be boundaries but that are not important to you anymore - in those cases, don't make any mark next to them.



Now take out **WORKSHEET 30b, "Some More of My Boundaries."** Write in the boundaries that weren't on the first sheet! They can relate to what is said to you, what touches you, when they happen, or how loudly. You can hang it on the refrigerator or a wall so that others in your home can learn what you do and do not want!

Now we know how to think about our feelings, values, and boundaries before we decide to give consent or non-consent. It is so important that we understand all of these parts of ourselves before we make big decisions - that way, we can do what is best for us and only us.

A good way to practice this (remember: repetition helps us remember things!) is by paying attention to TV or movies and notice when someone has given consent and when they haven't. For instance, there are movies where the man or woman is crazy-in-love with someone, and they suddenly grab the other person's face and kiss them! This is supposed to be terrifically romantic, but it is actually non-consensual (without consent). The kisser never asked for permission to touch or kiss the other person. And while everybody enjoys watching true love bloom, it is not good for people to think that this behavior is acceptable.

There are also TV shows where someone has a wild idea, grabs their best friend's hand, and pulls them along toward an adventure. But pulling someone along is not getting consent. And even though they are best friends, it is still non-consensual.

One more time: We must first ask for consent.

We must answer with a clear "yes" (words or gestures) before the other person can do what they would like to do. They must answer with a clear "yes" (words or gestures) before we can do what we would like to do. Every time.

Section 8: Communicating wants and needs ★

Look back at all of our examples of "with consent" on pages 11-14. (You may even reread them. Remember: *repetition helps us remember things!*) What do they all have in common?

In every example, the person first thought about their feelings, their values, and their boundaries, and then clearly let the other person know if they decided to consent or not.

They all used *communication*, the act of communicating.

COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information.

Communication is the *most important* part of staying safe and keeping others safe. It is the only way we can let each other know if we do or do not give consent for something!

Remember: if you or someone else does not let it be known with words or very clear gestures that they consent to something, then it is not consent. The person giving consent must be awake, alert, and know exactly what they are consenting to (so asking your caregiver to give you \$5 while they are asleep doesn't count!).

There are a number of ways we communicate. We can write a text, email, or letter telling someone how we feel; we can draw a picture or take a photo that shows how we feel; we can even let someone know with just our face and body!



Take out **WORKSHEET 8, "Body Language,"** again. See if you can figure out what they are feeling just by looking at their body language.

Think about giving consent with just body language. If someone asks you if you would like a piece of cake, you might nod your head, rub your belly, and even hold out your hands to let them know it is a "yes!" Or you might shake your head, wave your hands up in front of you, even stick your tongue out and cover your belly to let them know it is a "no."

Body language, facial expressions, and pictures are all forms of *nonverbal communication*.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information without words.

But giving consent or non-consent non-verbally means that you have to make it very clear if you mean "yes" or "no!" You may want to use several nonverbal clues together so you are sure the other person understands: use your face, your hands, and even noises (a "blahhh" is a cue that you do not want cake!).



Take out **WORKSHEET 31, "Nonverbal Communication."** Look at the list on the left of the sheet and find the people who are communicating these wants and needs without words!



Take turns "telling" people something without using words. Try to express wants and needs, like wanting to sit together, not wanting a hug, agreeing to shake hands, refusing to be tickled, etc. Get creative!
BONUS: Try to spend an entire meal together without words, just communicating with facial expressions and gestures! (Pass the salt, please!)

VERBAL COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information with words.

Verbal communication simply means talking or writing, using our words. Some might think that using words would be the clearest form of communication, but some ways are better than others. The best way to verbally communicate is to be clear and firm, but kind.



Being clear and firm are most important when it comes to consent; there should be no doubt how you or anyone else feels when you express "yes" or "no." There must be a clear "yes" from both people before you or the other person can do what they would like to do. That is how consent works, and it is how we make sure that everyone's boundaries are respected.

There are three types of verbal communication:

Passive

Aggressive

Assertive (You don't have to remember these words, just what they mean!)

PASSIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is *not* expressing our wants and needs, or expressing them without meaning it. It includes staying quiet, shrugging, not making eye contact, and speaking softly.

When we communicate passively, it is like we are not communicating at all.

The other person can't really know how we feel and may wind up violating - or disrespecting - our boundaries. Then we wind up feeling angry, upset, and sad.

Passive communication is not effective.

AGGRESSIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is expressing our wants and needs, but in a way that disrespects the rights of others. It includes being loud, interrupting others, saying mean or critical things, and get frustrated with others easily.

Communicating aggressively is not effective because it hurts the other person's feelings, and often bullies them into doing things they do not want to do. Getting someone's consent by being aggressive is not right - if the person said "yes" only because they were afraid or intimidated, then it is not consent. Consent is only consent if the person who gives it, *means* it.

ASSERTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is expressing our wants and needs clearly, firmly, and meaningfully. It includes good eye contact, confidence, a strong voice (without yelling), and standing up for our rights.

When we are assertive, we are saying what we truly believe, what we want, and what we need. We are not afraid to speak up when something is wrong, but we do not shout or use rude language. Assertive communicators want to make sure that others understand what they are saying. Their "yes" means yes, and their "no" clearly means no.



Take out **WORKSHEET 32, "Verbal Communication."**

Study the way these people look, and review the words that describe their communication style. Whom would you trust? What style would you like to use?



The best way to get good at something is by practicing. (And, as we know: *repetition helps us remember things!*) So let's practice verbal communication. First, take turns asking for and giving each other consent in aggressive and passive styles. How does it feel? Do you think you have made yourself understood? Now try the assertive style: confident, with eye contact, clear, and simple. "Can I hug you?" "I'd like to hold your hand - may I?" "No, I don't want to." How does that feel? Good! Now practice, practice, practice!

Assertive verbal communication is about both the way we speak and our body language. Our voice should be firm, our words should express exactly how we feel, and we should make no apologies for feeling the way we do. At the same time, we should maintain eye contact, nod and shake our head so the other person can clearly see what we are doing, and keep our head held high. What we have to say matters - with or without words!

The other part of communication is listening. The only way someone can effectively tell someone else their feelings, wants, and needs is if the other person can actually understand that!

Becoming a good listener is another important part of communication, and it is the most important part of receiving either consent or non-consent. The best way to really hear if others consent to something is with *active listening*.

ACTIVE LISTENING is paying attention to what another person says, responding to what they say, thinking about what they say, and remembering what they have said.

Some ways to practice active listening are:

1. Stop talking. It sounds simple, but you cannot listen if you are talking. So no interrupting!
2. Focus on the other person. The only way to hear what they are saying is to pay attention to their words, what their words mean, and the body language that supports their words. (You can actively listen to nonverbal communication this way, too!)
3. Make eye contact and lean in. Let the other person know you want to hear them.
4. Look pleasant. People feel more comfortable talking when the listener wants to hear them.
5. Put down your phone! Stop daydreaming! Give the other person your total attention.
6. Remember, the other person does not need to use their words or voices to express themselves. Use your active listening skills even when someone is using nonverbal communication (pay attention to their face and body). That way, you will both be communicating effectively.



Take out **WORKSHEET 33, "Active Listening."** Notice what makes these people active listeners. Why is the penguin not a good listener?



For this role play, all you need to do is talk to each other! Practice the skills you see in Worksheet 32 when you listen (and practice the skills from Worksheets 30 and 31 when you express yourself).



This is a game for practicing active listening when people are expressing themselves non-verbally. Sit face-to-face, making good eye contact. One person will be the leader. The leader will very slowly make motions, like raising their arms, twirling a finger, opening their mouth wide and sticking out their tongue (it's not rude if it's role play!). The other person will copy that person, doing what they do, trying to do it at the exact same time, almost like looking in a mirror. Then switch leaders. It is great practice for paying attention to what another person is communicating to you.

Now that we have practiced paying attention, it is time to practice *responding*.

RESPONDING is speaking or behaving in reaction to someone or something.

When our teacher takes attendance, we respond with "Here!"

When the cold air blows on us, we respond by rubbing our arms to get warm.

When someone asks for our consent, we respond with a "yes," a "no," or a clear gesture.

And when someone tells us how they are feeling, we should respond to what they have told us.

Sometimes, responding is simply nodding, saying "uh-huh" or "I hear you" when they finish a thought, or mirroring their facial expressions (like you just did in the role play) with a smile or a frown.

You may want to learn more about what they are saying, or reassure them that you have been listening. In those times, you should respond!

Some good questions are:

"How did you feel about that?" "What happened next?" "What can I do to help?"

Some good phrases are:

"I see" or "I hear you." "That sounds very frustrating (or scary, exciting, difficult, etc.)."

"Thank you for sharing that with me."



Play the active listening game from the top of this page again, but this time respond to what they said. Make sure not to interrupt the person, though - wait until they have finished a story or a thought, then ask your question or respond in some other way!

Another part of active listening is *paraphrasing*.

PARAPHRASING is putting something into your own words.

When someone has told us what they think or feel, we can let them know we have been listening by repeating back what they have said, only using different words. This is effective when it is used only once or twice in a conversation - you do not have to paraphrase every thought they express.



Take out **WORKSHEETS 34a, 34b, and 34c**, "**The Paraphrasing Card Game.**" (These can be completed in order, but played over and over again separately.)
 On **Worksheet 34a**, match each statement on the blue card to one of the paraphrases provided below them. There may be more than one appropriate response to each statement!
 On **Worksheet 34b**, think up your own paraphrase for each statement. If you want help, you can use the examples from 34a.
 On **Worksheet 34c**, write up your own statements! Then add them to the 34b deck and play again and again.
 Remember: *repetition helps us remember things!*

Paraphrasing is another way to show that we understand the other person's feelings in a very clear way. While someone might say, "Those kids are so mean! They never talk to me at school, and they ignored me when I saw them at the mall," we might recognize that what they are really trying to say is, "Those kids hurt my feelings by not including me." When the other person hears us paraphrase their story, they will feel like we've made a real effort to understand them. And being clear is always good (especially with consent!).

The final part of active listening is *memorizing*.

MEMORIZING is learning something so that you remember it exactly.

You may have memorized your birthday so you never have to ask your caregiver when it is. Some people memorize scenes from their favorite TV shows or movies, so they can say it along with the actors on the screen. When we memorize in communication, we are paying so much attention to what the speaker is saying that we can ask them about it days later ("How did that problem work out?"). When we remember what someone has told us, it lets them know that we care.

But remembering things can be hard; our memory is like a muscle - we have to keep working on it to make it strong. Memory games are a great way to keep our memory "muscle" working so we can get even better at active listening.



Take out **WORKSHEETS 35a and 35b, "My Memory Game."** Cut out all pictures, lay them face-down on a table, and mix them up. Players take turns turning any two cards picture-side-up. A player makes a match if those two cards are identical. That player continues until they don't make a match. That player's turn then ends, and the next player tries to remember which cards were turned over. This continues until all cards have been matched. All players then count up their matching pairs. The game can be played over and over - just keep mixing up the cards!

Let's review: communication (giving and receiving information) is so important to make sure people understand our feelings and that we understand theirs. We can communicate verbally (with our words) and non-verbally (using facial expressions and gestures, also known as body language).

Looking at other people's body language will help us learn how they are feeling.

Active listening is another good way to learn other people's feelings; paying attention, not interrupting, paraphrasing, and remembering what others say will let them know that we care.

When telling others what we are thinking and feeling, we should maintain good eye contact, speak clearly and firmly, and be as confident as we can.

These behaviors should be practiced often, and they will become the way we listen and speak!

Remember: repetition helps us remember things!

Now that we have learned so much about communication, it is time to practice! Sit face-to-face and choose who will assertively communicate (Speaker) and who will actively listen (Listener). Use this script - the speaker can use verbal or nonverbal skills and does not have to include all the information:

Speaker: "I am so hungry."

Listener should make a sad facial expression.

Speaker: "My friend said they would bring me lunch, but they forgot! I don't know why they did that!"

Listener: "So they promised to bring lunch and then didn't?"

Speaker: "Yes! And I'm always a good friend to them!"

Listener: "Sounds like you feel let down by them."

Speaker: "I do! And that makes me so upset."

Listener: "I understand why you feel that way."

Then switch roles as many times as you would like.

BONUS: Make up your own script! Get creative!

*Let's
role
play*



Good communication skills are also important so that we can give consent and non-consent without any confusion. When we assertively consent (expressing ourselves clearly, strongly, and meaningfully), the other person knows for certain that we do mean yes! When we do not consent, we should be just as clear about that so the other person knows that they must stop the behavior.

The same is true for receiving consent and non-consent. When the other person assertively consents - with a "yes," or a smile and a thumbs-up - we know that they do consent. If they give a clear "no" or shake their head and frown, they definitely mean no, and we must stop the behavior.

But what if you assertively say "yes" to something and then decide you no longer want to do it? What if you begin holding hands and then suddenly decide you don't want to anymore? What if you want to hug on Saturday, but then don't want to hug again on Sunday? That's ok!

We can take away our consent at any time!

Did you notice how the phrase, "We can take away our consent at any time" is in bold and got its own orange frame? Must be important, huh? Yup!
It's so important that we have to say it twice!

We can take away our consent at any time!

We can always decide to stop something - even after we've started - and the other person must stop. The other person can always decide to stop, and we must stop.
That's the great thing about consent - our feelings can always change and our feelings always matter. The same with the other person - they can decide to stop a behavior or change their minds from a "yes" to a "no," and we have to respect their boundaries. (Remember boundaries? They are the invisible fences around us, like limits!)

And what if we don't know if they consent?

We ask them!

It's always good to ask, "Is this OK?" "Can I do this?" "I'd like to hug you. May I?" Practice!



Section 9: Responding to pressure ★

Just because we have learned about consent, doesn't mean everyone knows about consent. (We can feel free to teach them, though!)

Sometimes a person will not want to accept our non-consent - maybe they think they can change their minds or that they can bully us into saying "yes." They may try to *pressure* us.

PRESSURE is when someone aggressively tries to convince another person to do something.

Pressure is like aggressive communication: it is loud, bullying, intimidating, and does not listen. A person who uses pressure wants to get their own way and doesn't care about our feelings. They may yell at us, threaten us, ask us over and over again to try to get a different answer, or makes us feel guilty for not wanting to do a certain behavior.

It may be difficult to stick with our answer when someone is pressuring us. We may feel a little unsafe, or like we are making a bad decision.

But that's what they want us to feel - they are trying to trick us into changing our mind!

The best way to stand up to pressure is with assertive communication.

Be very clear about what you do and do not want to do.

Be very clear about what you will and will not do.

Look them in the eye and speak confidently.

Even if they yell at you.

Even if they tell you that *they* would do it, that *everyone* else does it, and that they won't like you if you don't do it. (A good friend would never try to get you to do something you don't want to do, so we shouldn't give in to someone who is not a good friend!)

We never want to give in to pressure.

Because we make our own decisions for our own reasons!

Remember: we think about our feelings, our boundaries, and our values before we make a decision, and we should respect those things, even if someone else doesn't.

We have the right to our feelings and our decisions.

END OF LESSON 3 ★

Be sure to check in with your student about how they feel. Hard topics can bring up emotions like sadness or fear - make sure your student is ok, and talk it through if they are not. Then you can see if they have any questions! Great job!

ACTIVE LISTENING is paying attention to what another person says, responding to what they say, thinking about what they say, and remembering what they have said.

AGGRESSIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is expressing our wants and needs, but in a way that disrespects the rights of others.

ASSERTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is expressing our wants and needs clearly, firmly, and meaningfully.

COMMUNICATE/COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information.

CONSENT is agreement to do something, or permission for something to happen.

CONSEQUENCES are the results of an action.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES are limits to what feelings or emotions you want to share with others.

FEELINGS are emotional experiences.

MEMORIZING is learning something so that you remember it exactly.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information without words.

PARAPHRASING is putting something into your own words.

PASSIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION is not expressing our wants and needs, or expressing them without meaning it.

PRESSURE is when someone aggressively tries to convince another person to do something.

REJECTION is saying "no" to an idea or suggestion.

RESPONDING is speaking or behaving in reaction to someone or something.

SELF-ESTEEM is how we value and think about ourselves; our opinion of ourselves.

VALUES are the things we care about that help us decide what to do.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION is giving and getting information with words.