

Lesson 5

Sexual Feelings, Attraction, and Acts (A positive and respectful approach to sexuality)



Contents

1. Recognizing sexual feelings
2. Touching ourselves
3. Talking about sexual feelings
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5. Sexual feelings and relationships
(hello, again, boundaries!)
6. Sexual decision-making
7. Communicating and accepting
sexual consent and non-consent
8. Standing up to sexual pressure

- The World Health Organization defines sexual health as “a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality.”
- All sexual orientations are natural and normal; science shows that!
- Sexuality is part of the human experience, but that doesn't mean we have to have sex - it is each individual's choice that must be respected.

How do we know if we are feeling fondness for someone or if it is sexual attraction? And how do we know if we want to act on those feelings?

We've already learned about consequences; now it is time to consider them. How will sex change me? And how will it change my relationship with my partner?

There is so much more to sex than something done with the body - it affects our emotions, too. Both of these things should be considered before we act.

This unit will explore sexual feelings, attraction to others, and how we choose to act on these feelings (while respecting our partner's feelings, too!).

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 4 of this lesson discusses sexual orientation, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and asexuality. If this conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs and you wish to skip this section, simply move ahead to section 5.

You can find a short list of support resources for LGBTQIA people on page 8.

Note to teachers:

From this lesson onward, we will openly discuss sexuality and sexual activity. We know this can be intimidating, but the more your student knows, the more empowered they will be to make safe, healthy sexual choices. Remember: ignoring sexual feelings does not make them go away, and if your student doesn't understand how to respond to these feelings in a safe and appropriate way, it can lead to frustration, aggression, and even leave them vulnerable to exploitation. Knowledge is power.

Please begin by telling your student:

“You can tell me anything and you can ask me anything. I am here to listen without getting upset or judging you. This is a safe space.”



"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 SEXUAL FEELINGS, ATTRACTION, AND ACTS.

Let's explore how we feel and if we want to act on it!

Topics will include:

Recognizing sexual feelings

Sexual orientation

Sexual decision-making

Communicating and accepting consent and non-consent

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.

Learning objectives for this lesson:

- Understanding the concept of sexuality
- Recognizing sexual feelings
- Becoming comfortable with self-touch
- Identifying attraction to others
- Becoming proficient at appropriate expressions of attraction and sexuality
- Understanding various sexual orientations
- Becoming familiar with appropriate ways to behave within romantic relationships
- Becoming comfortable with sexual decision-making
- Becoming proficient at giving and receiving consent and non-consent

You will need:

- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Sheet of paper
- Worksheets 13b-13d, 28, 45 - 53

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: Recognizing sexual feelings ★

You may have heard the word "sexuality" before, but what does it actually mean?

SEXUALITY is the combination of feelings and behaviors related to how we feel about the people to whom we are attracted.

It is also about how we connect with our *bodies*; how we understand *relationships* (remember, relationships are connections, usually with other people); and our *desires* (what we want), *values* (what matters most to us), and *feelings* (what makes us feel good and what doesn't).

There are so many different ways to feel and express our sexuality, and every person is different. How we choose to express it is up to us alone or with a consenting romantic partner (one who agrees to or gives permission for an activity).

We know what it feels like to like someone: we enjoy being with them, we look forward to spending time together, and time spent together includes laughter and closeness, feeling heard, and feeling appreciated. That is a great basis for friendship!

Sometimes, we find that those feelings come with other sensations - thinking about the other person when they are not with us, a warm feeling when we are together, and a fluttering in the stomach known as "butterflies." These might be *romantic feelings*!



ROMANTIC FEELINGS are the desire for romantic contact or interaction with another person. Romance may include kissing, hugging, discussing love, commitment, or passion.

Romantic feelings sometimes come with *sexual feelings*, too.

SEXUAL FEELINGS are the desire to have sex or sexual contact. While romantic feelings seem to take place in the heart and feel like love, sexual desire has more to do with the body. When we have sexual feelings, the penis may become hard, there may be wetness in the vagina, and we often feel tingly and excited. They make us want to kiss, touch our private parts, or touch another person's private parts. Again, these feelings are all normal and healthy.

While some people can feel romantic feelings from the time they are young (often known as a "crush"), sexual feelings usually appear around puberty (when the body changes into adulthood). These feelings don't always come together: we can have romantic feelings for someone but not feel sexual with them, or we can have strong sexual feelings for someone we do not love or like romantically. We may even have sexual feelings about someone we don't even know, like a person we see at school or a celebrity from TV!

Section 2: Touching ourselves ★

We can't always have *sexual contact* with someone just because we want to.

SEXUAL CONTACT is the intentional (meaning, you meant to do it) touching of sexual parts like the breasts, penis, or vagina, whether over clothing, under clothing, or without clothing.

We may have a strong desire to kiss someone or touch them, but we can *never* have sexual contact with them without their consent. (Remember: consent is agreement to do something, or permission for something to happen.) And we cannot ask just anyone to have sexual contact; it is never appropriate (acceptable) to ask someone we don't know or don't know well to have sexual contact. It can upset them or make them angry!

It is just as inappropriate for someone you do not know to ask you to have sexual contact, and you have the right to give your non-consent and say "no!"

But it can be frustrating to have sexual feelings and not being able to have sexual contact with someone. That is why most people *masturbate*.

MASTURBATING, or MASTURBATION is the act of touching our private parts to feel good.

This is a great way to relieve the frustration of sexual feelings without asking someone else to have sexual contact with us.



It is extremely important to masturbate only in a private place, where no one can see you.



Take out **WORKSHEETS 13b, 13c, and 13d, "Public or Private?"** again. Look at each of these places and decide which ones are appropriate for masturbating, and which ones are not. Remember: there are also "semi-private" places which seem private but where others can walk in. Be sure to keep an eye out for those!

There are times when we want privacy for masturbating, but find that there are too many people around! Even in places that can be private, like our bedroom or bathroom, and especially if a place is semi-private.

These are the times when we can use the wall hangers we made from Worksheets 14a, 14b, and 14c. This will let others know that they are not welcome to enter the room. If we don't have the wall hangers handy, we can just ask others for privacy, reminding our caregivers of the agreement to respect each other's personal space. Everyone needs time alone - whether for masturbation or just quiet time - so remember to ask for it.

For the times when we are in public and cannot ask for privacy (it is everyone's right to be in a public place), it is not ok to masturbate, even where we think people won't see, like under a desk or standing behind a tree. People can always tell, and it is upsetting to see someone masturbating. It can even get you into a lot of trouble. So make sure you get to a *private* place before you masturbate!

Perhaps you have never masturbated before and don't know what to expect. There are certain things that you will probably feel and that will probably happen. They are:

You will begin by having sexual thoughts and feeling excited, your muscles will tense and your heart will beat faster.

You will begin to touch yourself and keep the good feeling going.

Do not be too rough - you don't want to hurt yourself, you want to feel good!

When completing masturbation, you will probably have an *orgasm*.

ORGASM is when the tension you have built up during sexual contact or masturbation ends in muscle spasms that feel very good. People with a penis will often release *semen*.

SEMEN is the sticky fluid that comes out of the penis during orgasm.

People with vaginas have the same experience, but without releasing semen.

Once orgasm is over, your muscles will relax, your heart rate will slow, and you may feel tired, calm, and peaceful. You should wash your hands afterward, and those with a penis will have to clean up the semen with a wet cloth or soap and water (hello again, hygiene!).



Section 3: Talking about sexual feelings ★

If you find you do have romantic or sexual feelings for someone, you may feel you want to talk about them; after all, one of the best ways to deal with feelings is to let them out!

But remember how we talked about private body parts and private places?

There are also *private feelings*, and because everyone has boundaries (those invisible fences around us), some people may not want to hear about these very private romantic and sexual feelings.

So, we should only talk to the appropriate people (those feel ok hearing about these feelings) with appropriate words, and in an appropriate place (in private, where others can't hear you).

Which are the most appropriate people, words, and places? Here are some suggestions:

People:

Those with whom you feel safe.

This may include some family members and best friends.

Doctors, counsellors, and your sex ed. teacher are also great choices.

And always remember to ask for *consent* to talk about it first!

Words:

Try not to talk about details - like exactly what you want to do - or about body parts.

Keep the conversation about your feelings, not actions.

And always remember to ask for *consent* to talk about it first!

Places:

Private places where you feel comfortable are best for talking about romantic and sexual feelings.

If you can't find a private place, try a semi-private place (where you are alone but can stop talking if someone walks in).

If you have to talk in public, use a quiet voice. No one should be able to overhear, because you don't know if they have a boundary around hearing about romantic and sexual feelings.

Never talk about sexual feelings at work or in the classroom.

And always remember (say it with me...) to ask for *consent* to talk about it first!



Take out **WORKSHEET 45, "Talking About Sexual Feelings."** Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate (acceptable) examples. List all the people, ways to express yourself, and places you can think of. Keep the worksheet nearby for reminders when you need them!



Take turns being the appropriate listener.

Choose an appropriate place to talk about sexual feelings (you don't actually have to go anywhere - this is role play!). Have the discussion in quiet voices and with appropriate words.

The more you do it, the easier it will become!

Section 4: Sexual orientation ★

Remember how we talked about human development, how we grow from the time we are born? One part of human development is *sexual orientation*.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION is who you are sexually attracted to, may fall in love with, or may have sexual contact with.

When we read fairy tales, the prince and the princess usually fall in love at the end. But in real life, the prince sometimes falls in love with another prince, a princess is attracted to another princess, or the prince and princess don't have romantic feelings and decide just to be friends!

There is no right or wrong kind of person to like or love. And there is no right or wrong way to love them. Our sexual orientation is not up to us - it just happens, like our eye color or shoe size.

There are many different kinds of sexual orientation. Here are just a few:

HETEROSEXUAL are people who are attracted to the opposite gender (boys who are attracted to girls, and girls who are attracted to boys).

HOMOSEXUAL are people who are attracted to the same gender (boys who are attracted to boys (also known as "gay"), and girls who are attracted to girls (also known as "gay" or "lesbian")).

BISEXUAL are people who are attracted to both boys and girls.

PANSEXUAL are people who are attracted to all genders; the gender of the other person does not matter.

QUESTIONING are people who are unsure of their sexual orientation

ASEXUAL (ay-SECK-tual), or ACE are people who do not experience sexual attraction.

AROMANTIC (AY-ro-MAN-tic) are people who do not experience romantic love or attraction.

LGBTQIA/QUEER* are people who are not heterosexual. It also refers to the entire non-heterosexual community.

*Queer was once an inappropriate word, but is now used by the LGBTQ+ community to mean "not heterosexual."



Take out **WORKSHEET 46, "Sexual Orientation."** Draw a line from each person standing under the blue arrow to the word that describes their sexuality (base their sexuality on the person or people they are standing with). How many words describe each person? Think about your own sexuality when you have a quiet moment - you don't have to discuss it or tell anybody, it's for you and you alone!

These different orientations can become confusing, especially with different gender identities; you might wonder, "If I have a vagina and identify as a boy, am I heterosexual if I am attracted to a person with a penis who identifies as a girl?" or "If I am gender fluid, does that mean I am heterosexual one day and homosexual another, depending on the gender I feel on a given day?"

The answer is, it depends on how you want to look at it.

Your sexual orientation (and gender identity!) are yours, and no one else has to understand it. Labels don't have to fit.

There is a saying, "love is love," meaning it doesn't matter who you love or your gender when you love them. It is all good - it's just love!

Not everyone believes this, though, and telling others is sometimes difficult because we don't know how they will react. It is often stressful to *come out*.

COMING OUT is when people come to understand their sexuality as LGBTQIA, and discuss it with other people; being open about one's sexuality.

Coming out to ourselves can feel strange, because sometimes we believe we *should* be one type of person (for example, a person who is heterosexual, liking people of the opposite gender), but find that we are something else (like queer). It can take time to think about who we are and what we want, then loving ourselves for it. There is nothing wrong with taking time to figure things out.

If you do realize that you are gay, know that you are not alone. There are so many amazing people just like you. And know that you are the same person you were before you thought about your sexuality. Realizing you are homo-, bi-, pan-, asexual, or any other orientation does not change who you are on the inside; in fact, it is who you have always been!

But learning to love ourselves as gay or queer is different from others loving us.

That is another way coming out can be hard. We often do not know how others feel about LGBTQIA people until we tell them that we belong to that community.

There may be people who don't understand.

There may be people who believe it is wrong.

There may be people who do not want to be in your life anymore because of it.



The most important thing is to know your own value and to find others who know it, too.

When coming out to someone else, choose a person you trust, who knows you well, and who wants you to be happy. Perhaps this is a close aunt or a sibling, perhaps it is a loyal friend or your caregiver. Once you become comfortable with yourself and find another person who accepts you, it often becomes easier to know who else you can trust. There are so many people in so many communities who know that love is love. You are not alone!

*****IMPORTANT RESOURCES*****

If you are struggling with understanding your sexuality, there are websites that can help.

These sites support all members of the LGBTQIA community as well as people with disabilities.

For those with a smartphone, simply open the camera, hold it up to the barcode (as if taking a picture), and tap the link that pops up. If the link does not pop up, try moving your camera closer or farther from the barcode.

The website URL is provided for those using a computer or laptop.

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (glsen.org/)



It Gets Better Project (itgetsbetter.org/)



RespectAbility (respectability.org or [/respectability.org/resources/lgbtq/](http://respectability.org/resources/lgbtq/))

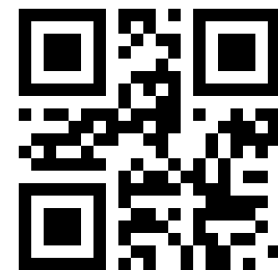




The Trevor Project (thetrevorproject.org/)



Pflag (pflag.org)



Students who are questioning or exploring their sexual orientation can browse these sites for information, advice, and support.

It is also helpful for caregivers, friends, and family members to browse along with students or on their own. Support is so important for promoting mental and emotional health in people in the LGBTQIA community.

Section 5: Sexual feelings and relationships (hello, again, boundaries!) ★

Once we develop romantic and sexual feelings, we may want to act on that attraction and *date* someone.

A DATE is a social meeting, often with people with whom we have or might want a romantic relationship. It can include going out to eat, seeing a movie, going for a walk or some coffee, or other ways of spending time together. Being in a romantic relationship is also called *dating*.

Sometimes a date looks just like a couple of friends going out alone, with another couple, or in a group of people.

If the date costs money, the person who did the asking is usually the one who pays, but both people may decide to split the cost.

*Remember: paying for a date does not mean that the other person must be romantic or sexual with us. No one ever *owes* someone sexual contact.

(And if someone pays for your date, you don't owe them, either! Your body, your choice.)



You may ask yourself: who should I date?

The answer is: most anyone who you think is nice and attractive!

...Almost anyone, that is.

There many people we can date, but some people we cannot.

Some parents do not want their children dating until a certain age.

We must respect that.

Some cultures or religions do not allow dating without the parents' approval.

We must respect that.

It is inappropriate to ask someone who already has a romantic partner for a date.

And we should never, ever date or be romantic or sexual with anyone in our family. Even if we love them and they love us, and even if they ask nicely.

It is never ok to be romantic or sexual with people in your family.

You can also choose not to date anyone!

There is no right or wrong, no age when you are supposed to be interested in dating.

As we've learned, some people never have romantic or sexual feelings. So only do what you want to do, and don't let what other people are choosing decide what you will do!

If you do want to go on a date, how do we ask someone?

It can feel scary, but there are some ways to make it easier:

- Talk to the person before asking them out and pay attention to their body language (remember, body language is communicating without words, but with facial expressions and gestures). If they are looking you in the eyes, smiling, and interested in what you have to say, they might want to go on a date! If they will not look you in the eyes and do not look very excited, they probably are not interested. (But you can always ask anyway!)
- If they seem interested, ask them out. Make sure they know it is a date, and not just hanging out as friends.
- Be straightforward. You might ask, "Would you be interested in going out sometime?" or "Do you want to have dinner with me?" If you are talking about favorite movies, you might want to say, "A great movie is in the theaters right now. Do you wanna go with me?"
- If they want to go out with you, be sure to get their phone number so you can make plans.
- If they do not want to go out with you, that's ok! (Remember the lesson on rejection (saying "no" to an idea or suggestion)? It is important to accept their "no" and move on. There is someone out there who would love to go out with you!)



Take out **WORKSHEET 28, "The Rejection Files,"** again. Review the things you should and should not do when you reject someone. Then look at all the ways you should and should not react to rejection, and remember that you will say "no" to some people, too!



Practice the rejection role play again! Using the suggestions on Worksheet 28, take turns giving and receiving rejection. Imagine different situations, from easy to what might feel painful. Concentrate on practicing what you should do, rather than what you shouldn't. The more you practice, the easier it will get!

- If they say "yes," make sure to shower or bathe with soap and water and brush your teeth before your date. Make sure your clothes are clean and neat. Grooming and hygiene are especially important when you are in a romantic situation.
- If you feel nervous, plan some topics to talk about or questions to ask your date. This will keep the conversation going and help you get to know each other better. Asking questions also lets the other person know that you care about what they have to say.
- Be on time! People find it rude when others are late.
- Always keep in mind your date's boundaries. They may not want to hold hands with you; they may be ok holding hands, but not want to kiss; or they might be ok kissing, but not want you to eat their french fries! Always ask before doing something that might disrespect their boundaries.
- Try to find a compliment - a nice comment about them - to say on the date. People like hearing that their hair looks nice or they sing well.
- Make sure to be on your best behavior and use your best manners on the date. Telling gross jokes or stories, making noises with your body, talking too loudly, being rude, and insulting your date or others is not the way to make a good impression.
- At the end of the date, make sure to tell the other person what a good time you had, or that you enjoyed their company.
- Some people like to shake hands, hug, or kiss goodbye. If you would like to, remember to ask for consent first! If they say "yes," then feel free to shake, hug, or kiss! If they do not want to, accept the rejection with an "I understand" or "no problem" or "ok." They may want to shake, hug, or kiss after the next date! (But you'll have to ask first then, too.)
- Before ending the date, you may want to ask the person on another date. Or you may call or text them to ask for another date a day or two later. The same rules apply this time around for a "yes" (go through the previous list again!) or a "no" (see The Rejection Files if you need to!). If they are not interested in another date, it is best not to ask if you can kiss or hug them when you do say goodbye - they probably won't want to. And you probably should not ask them out again. Accept the rejection and move on.

Let's
role
play

Practice the date! Role play being the person who did the asking and the one who was asked, then switch. Practice giving a compliment, starting a conversation and following up with questions, and saying goodnight.

BONUS: Try out bathing, brushing your hair, and dressing neatly for this "date."

EXTRA BONUS: Take this exercise "on the road" and go out with your role play partner to dinner or a movie. It is a good way to try out your new skills!

Take out **WORKSHEET 47a and 47b, "The Dating Game."** Read the descriptions of each person and decide if they are appropriate or not appropriate to date. Of the ones who are appropriate, who would you *like* to date? What makes them attractive to you?



BONUS: Think about where you might take the appropriate dates, according to their descriptions!

While a date can feel like the beginning of a beautiful relationship (and it may be!), it may also just be a date. Romantic relationships take time to develop.

Remember talking about how relationships can change? For instance, if you spend time together, acquaintances become friends; if your cousin marries your doctor, your doctor then becomes part of your family, etc. Like those examples, many people like to start out as friends before becoming romantic partners!

That's because what we do as friends - spending time together, getting to know each other, making each other feel special - is exactly what happens in a romantic relationship; however, the things that make a relationship romantic (like kissing and touching) can often feel uncomfortable until we really know each other. So beginning with a friendship and taking time before becoming romantic is a great way to make sure that both people in the relationship are ready for romance.

(And how do we know if they want romance? We ask for consent!)

Sometimes, even when we feel we have done everything right...

- Respected boundaries

- Been polite and gave compliments

- Paid attention to our grooming and hygiene

- Asked for consent before any kind of touching or private talk

...the other person still may not want the friendship to change into a romantic relationship.

That can feel difficult and might even hurt our feelings, but we have to accept when someone does not want to enter a romantic relationship, even if they are a close friend and we care about them.

Spotlight



Jeff Belmonte

Leon Harrop is an actor who stars on the British series, "Ralph & Katie," a TV show about the lives of a married couple with Down syndrome. The show explores the challenges of this **romantic relationship**, and performing on it has only made Leon more excited about what's to come. "The series is uplifting and shows just because you have Down syndrome or any other disability," he says, "it doesn't stop you having a fabulous life - either on TV or in real life."

Section 6: Sexual decision-making ★

Once dating and romance grows, there may come a time for a new kind of decision-making.

Remember when we discussed the importance of our boundaries, values, and consequences in decision-making? Let's have a quick refresher:

BOUNDARIES are the invisible fences around us that protect us from what we don't want.

VALUES are the things we care about that guide our attitudes and actions. They are the things that matter most to us.

CONSEQUENCES are the results of an action. They are the things that happen because we did something (like a window breaking because we threw a ball at it).

These three factors are also what we must think about when *sexual decision-making*.

SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING is choosing whether or not to have sexual contact.

When figuring out if you are ready to have sexual contact, you need to think about what you do and don't want done to you (boundaries), what you care about (values), and what might happen if you do have sexual contact (consequences).

Boundaries are very important to consider before having sexual contact. It's important to communicate (give and get information) with your romantic partner before you decide.

Talk to them about what kind of touch you would like, what you would not like, and ask them what they would and wouldn't like. This includes touch, words, lighting, whatever your boundaries are.

Remember - you can also change your mind at any time, even if you have already started!



Take out **WORKSHEET 48, "My Sexual Boundaries."** Think about your boundaries and what you think you might want and what you do not want. Fill in the blanks under each heading. (You can ask for privacy while you fill it out and keep it to yourself - or work with a person you trust - if you prefer not to work on this with your caregiver/teacher.)

Sometimes families share *values* about sexual contact. Perhaps your caregiver has a strong value regarding sexual contact before marriage or until a certain age; perhaps your faith has its own guidelines.

Those are important to think about, but so are your own values!



Take out **WORKSHEET 49, "My Sexual Values."** Look at all the parts of your life that can influence (help you make) decisions about sexual contact. How much does each of them matter in your decisions? Which is most important to you? Do you think these influences will change as you get older?

While boundaries and values come from you, sexual contact can have *consequences* - both for your body (which we'll talk about in later lessons) and your feelings - which you cannot control. You won't know which feelings will come over you until you actually have sex. Having sexual contact before you are ready or waiting longer than you want can have effects on our emotions. Some may be good, like happiness or love; some may feel bad, like guilt (feeling like you deserve blame) or regret (wishing you hadn't done it at all). But good, bad, or somewhere in between, all of these feelings are normal. The most important thing is that you do not do anything unless you want to. Doing something (like having sexual contact) just because someone continually asked you or made you feel like you *had* to is not consent!

There are other consequences to sex that we will talk about in upcoming lessons, so don't make any decisions yet! For now, we are just talking about *how* to make the decision.



Take out **WORKSHEET 50, "How Might I Feel?"** Glance over all the different emotions you might feel if you decide a) to have sexual contact, or b) to wait to have sexual contact. Circle the good feelings that you would most like to feel and the bad feelings you would least like to feel.

BONUS: Ask someone you trust to talk about their opinions and the decisions they have made.

Once we have considered our boundaries, values, and consequences, making a sexual decision will be a lot easier. We are also much less likely to feel the negative (bad) emotions if we have really thought about things before we make any decisions! We are also better able to communicate with our partner when we know what we do and do not want. But there is still a little more thinking to do...



Take out **WORKSHEET 51, "Am I Ready to Have Sexual Contact?"** Go through the questions and check off the answer that best fits each. When you are done, make sure to discuss your answers with someone you trust; talk about how your answers might help you make your decisions.

Section 7: Communicating and accepting sexual consent and non-consent

Now that you have figured out your boundaries, thought about your values, considered the consequences, answered the questions on the worksheet, and discussed your answers with someone you trust, you may have a better idea if you are ready for sexual contact or not (and if you still are not sure, you definitely need to take more time).

If you do decide that you are ready for sexual contact - and all of your thinking and considering has helped you realize how you feel - then there is one more step to take: giving and getting consent (agreement to do something, or permission for something to happen)!

Remember, **both you and your partner** must consent to sexual contact if you are going to have it.

For there to be consent, you *both* must:

1. Be aware of your feelings
2. Know what you are saying "yes" to. No surprises - you need to know what you will be doing!
3. Be awake and alert (no drugs or alcohol)
4. Recognize non-verbal signs of non-consent
5. Be over the age of 16 (by law, in New Jersey)

And what is the best way for our partner to know we consent (and for us to know that they consent)?

Well, we already talked before about assertive communication with *non-consent*, which is clear, firm, and includes eye contact so our partner understands that we mean what we say.

There is also a way to assertively communicate our consent: it is called the "*enthusiastic yes!*"

An ENTHUSIASTIC YES is a clear, excited YES!, with words, facial expressions, gestures, or a combination of all. It is not enough that someone has not said "no;" we want to know that the person saying "yes" really, really wants to say "yes!" (Silence doesn't count as a "yes!")

So, we will add to the list...

6. An enthusiastic yes!

It is as important to be assertive (clear and firm) when you give consent, like it is when you are giving non-consent.

In both cases, we must communicate assertively. Again, that means with very clear words, facial expressions, or gestures; a firm voice or movements; and eye contact. It may be hard to do at first, but it is so important to let the other person know exactly how you feel.

Take out **WORKSHEETS 52a, 52b, 52c, 52d, 52e, and 52f, "Consent and Non-Consent Bingo."**

Cut out the pieces on Worksheet 52b and drop them in a hat or bowl, or lay them on a flat surface with the blank side up, so you can't see the words. Mix them around.

Cut out the game boards on Worksheets 52c, 52d, and 52e.

Each person should take a pen, pencil or marker and a game board.

Draw an **X** in the center of your board (that's a freebie!).

One person will either pick out a piece from the hat, or else turn it over on the flat surface, then call out what it says.



Search your board - if you have that word or phrase, put an **X** over it. Continue picking up pieces and calling out the phrases until someone gets 5 in a row up-and-down, across, or diagonally.

The winner shouts, "BINGO!"

Cover each board with clear tape so it doesn't tear. Then use dry erase markers so you can just wipe away the marks and reuse them!

****Worksheet 52f** is for non-readers. Find a picture that represents the phrase. (It is not important that you find a picture that *exactly* represents the phrase - we just want you to recognize what looks like a clear "no" or an enthusiastic "yes!") Look at each picture before playing and figure out what the people are feeling. Are they giving consent or not? Why do you think that?

Sometimes, we make decisions and then change our minds, like cooking an egg and then deciding we are not hungry after all.

The best part of consent is that you can change your mind and take it back at any time!

Even when it comes to sexual contact.

Especially when it comes to sexual contact.

You can say "yes," and then say "never mind, no" right away.

You can say "yes," lean in to kiss, and then say "never mind, no."

You can say "yes," kiss for a while, and then say "never mind, no."

You can say "yes" or nod or smile and opens your arms, and at any point during your sexual contact say "no," back away, hold your hands in front of you (or some other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) to take away your consent.

You can take away your consent at any time.

You never have to do or continue to do anything sexual if you do not want to.

And even if you have had sexual contact before (even one hundred times!) you don't have to do it again if you decide it is not right for you. That's how consent works. Isn't that great?

Saying "no" isn't always easy. We have been practicing, though, and it has probably started to feel easier. Let's do some more! (Remember, *repetition helps us remember things!*)



Take out a pen or pencil and a sheet of paper. The teacher or caregiver will sit across from the student at a table. The teacher/caregiver will slowly reach for the pen or pencil, then begin to draw on the paper. At some point (whether before picking up the pencil, before touching the pencil to paper, or at any point during the drawing), the student will assertively (clearly, strongly, with eye contact) stop them. Make sure they know you have taken away your consent! The teacher/caregiver should model good acceptance of non-consent in different ways! Then switch roles. Repeat as often as you want, stopping the teacher/caregiver at different stages of drawing.

Even though saying "no" can feel uncomfortable, know that you are allowed to have boundaries and give non-consent to anyone, in any relationship, even if it is your best friend or your doctor. Your body will let you know when something feels wrong or uncomfortable - trust that feeling! (And remember that you should *never* give consent or allow a family member to touch your private parts - unless it is for bathroom help - or in a way that feels wrong.)

It can also feel uncomfortable to be told "no;" it might make us feel rejected, sad, or angry. It's ok to feel whatever you feel, but you must accept their "no." (Take a look at Worksheet 27, "The Rejection Files," to remind yourself how to handle rejection.)

Section 8: Standing up to sexual pressure ★

When we are romantically or sexually rejected, we must never try to get the other person to change their mind with *coercion*.

COERCION is the use of force or threats to make some do something they don't want to.

This is also known as "pressure," and no one has the right to pressure anyone else into having sexual contact.

There are many different ways to pressure people, and none of them are ok.

Some might make you feel sorry for them; some might make you feel like you owe them something; some might make you feel afraid; some might make you feel nervous.



Take out **WORKSHEET 53, "Coercion is Not Consent."** Look at the different types of coercion. What do you notice about their faces? How do these behaviors make you feel? How would you respond to what each person is saying?



Always remember, "no" means no.

It means "you may not do that," "I do not consent," "you must stop."

And we are not allowed to try to turn that "no" into a "yes" with coercion.

No one else is allowed to, either.

Here are some ways to respond to coercion:

- Use assertive communication - clear words, firm voice, eye contact.
- Do not apologize. You have nothing to be sorry for!
- Do not discuss it - if they want to talk about it more (why you don't want you, when you might want to, how they can convince you to), simply end the conversation or leave the room. There is no need for a discussion, because (say it with me...) "no" means no!
- Remember that your feelings, boundaries, and values matter. You have a right to say "no."
- Do not accept money or gifts for changing your answer to "yes." A present is not worth doing something you truly do not want to do.
- If someone threatens you with taking away their love if you don't have sexual contact with them, let them go. They do not respect how you feel and are not treating you how you deserve to be treated. This can be difficult, but talking to a friend or someone else you trust can help you through it. There are people out there who will respect you!
- If someone threatens to harm you, to take away something you need (like medication or communication tools), or refuses to give you help you need (with feeding, walking, etc.), tell someone you trust! No one should threaten your health or safety in return for sexual contact.

And never try to coerce someone else to say "yes."

Always respond with a smile and an "ok," "no problem," or "I understand."

Everyone has the right to say "no."



Take turns saying "no" to holding hands (or giving high-fives, or handing over your pencil, or whatever you are comfortable doing!)

while the other person uses coercion to try to change your mind!

Use an assertive voice and remain firm. Then switch roles.

Which types of coercion are hardest to say "no" to? Why?

Practice giving non-consent to these hardest types and accepting the non-consent!

END OF LESSON 5 ★

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!

AROMANTIC (AY-ro-MAN-tic) are people who do not experience romantic love or attraction.

ASEXUAL (ay-SECK-tual), or ACE are people who do not experience sexual attraction.

BISEXUALS are people who are attracted to both boys and girls.

BOUNDARIES are the invisible fences around us that protect us from what we don't want.

COERCION is the use of force or threats to make some do something they don't want to.

COMING OUT is when people come to understand their sexuality as LGBTQIA, and discuss it with other people; being open about one's sexuality.

CONSEQUENCES are the results of an action.

DATES are social meetings, often with people with whom we have or might want a romantic relationship.

ENTHUSIASTIC YES is a clear, excited YES!, with words, facial expressions, gestures, or a combination of all.

HETEROSEXUAL are people who are attracted to the opposite gender (boys who are attracted to girls, and girls who are attracted to boys).

HOMOSEXUAL are people who are attracted to the same gender (boys who are attracted to boys (also known as "gay"), and girls who are attracted to girls (also known as "gay" or "lesbian")).

LGBTQIA/QUEER are people who are not heterosexual. It also refers to the entire non-heterosexual community.

MASTURBATION is the act of touching our private parts to feel good.

ORGASM is when the tension you have built up during sexual contact or masturbation ends in muscle spasms that feel very good.



PANSEXUAL are people who are attracted to all genders; the gender of the other person does not matter.

QUESTIONING are people who are unsure of their sexual orientation.

ROMANTIC FEELINGS are the desire for romantic contact or interaction with another person.

SEMEN is the sticky fluid that comes out of the penis during orgasm.

SEXUAL CONTACT is the intentional (meaning, you meant to do it) touching of sexual parts like the breasts, penis, or vagina, whether over clothing, under clothing, or without clothing.

SEXUAL DECISION-MAKING is choosing whether or not to have sexual contact.

SEXUAL FEELINGS are the desire to have sex or sexual contact.

SEXUALITY is the combination of feelings and behaviors related to how we feel about the people to whom we are attracted.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION is who you are sexually attracted to, may fall in love with, or may have sexual contact with.

VALUES are the things we care about that guide our attitudes and actions.