

SPIILT MILK

THE IMPROV TOOL FOR HANDLING BIG FEELINGS!

Lesson Four: Public & Private



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What is Public & Private?

You may have heard these words, but what do they mean?

PRIVATE things are meant for only one person. They are places that only you are allowed to go (unless another person gets your permission!), they are things only you know about, and they are things that no one else can watch.

PUBLIC things are meant for everybody. They are places that anyone can go, they are things that we can all know about, and things that anyone can watch.

In other words, we keep private things just to ourselves - public things are for everyone!

And why are some things kept private and other things can be public?
Because of what is *appropriate*.

APPROPRIATE means ok! When we are behaving in an appropriate way, people are fine around us, happy to see what we are doing, and do not get upset by our actions. When we are behaving in an *inappropriate* way (that is, not appropriate), people might get upset or offended by what we are doing or saying.

Because we live among other people in this world, we want to remain appropriate when we are in public places! (See how we worked in all these new phrases?)

And why should we care if we are appropriate?

First, we want to make sure other people feel safe around us.

Second, we want to make sure that we feel safe around other people.

Third, different places have different rules, and if we behave in a way that a place says is inappropriate, we might find ourselves in trouble!

So, we want to keep private things to ourselves. (Public things are all ok!)

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What are public places?

Public places are places that anyone can go - they are rooms where other people can walk into without knocking or getting permission, they are buildings that anyone can enter, they are areas that don't belong to just one person or family.

Some examples of public places are:

School

Offices

Mall

The park (yes, outdoor places can also be public or private!)

Rock concert

Private places are those places where other people cannot just come in, and where others cannot see or hear what we are doing - they are our bedrooms (knock first! Wait for the "come in!"; keep shades closed), they are houses that belong to a family, they are areas that we are not allowed into unless we get permission.

Some examples of private places are:

Bedroom or home bathroom (not just ours! Always knock first!)

School/public bathroom stall (the whole bathroom is public, the stall is private)

Home where you live alone

There are also places that are *sort of* private; you can be alone there, but others might come in or look in. We call these places, "semi-private."

Think about your living room - it belongs to you and you might be the only person sitting in it, but anyone who lives in the house can walk right in!

Or your backyard - it belongs to you and there is a fence around it, but someone could always peek over that fence! So you want to be appropriate in these spaces.

Just treat a semi-private place like it's public!

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What else can be public or private?

Things like body parts are public or private!

As we know, it's not appropriate to show certain parts of our body in public places. So, how do we know which parts are appropriate in public (and semi-private)?

Here's a good rule:

If your bathing suit covers it, don't show it!

You can also think about the parts you use to go to the bathroom - those are for you and you alone! (And no one else should show you theirs without permission from you!)

Speaking of bathing suits, those are an example of appropriate clothing!

A bathing suit is appropriate at a pool, lake, the beach, or suntanning in your backyard (don't forget your sunscreen!).

A bathing suit is not appropriate at school, work (unless you are a lifeguard), or a place of worship, like a church, temple, or mosque.

If you don't know if a body part or piece of clothing is appropriate for a public place (or you aren't sure if a place is actually a public place), ask a trusted adult! We all need wardrobe advice, anyway - why not use it to follow the rules and look fabulous?

There is also public and private behavior!

Have you ever been told, "Keep your pants on here" or "Don't blow your nose at the dinner table" or "Don't brush your teeth in the middle of the train station?" That's because certain behaviors are meant for private places only!

A good rule is to think of where you usually perform these behaviors.

If it is in your bedroom, the bathroom, or only around family members or close friends, it's probably private behavior and should be kept out of public places!

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And why does it matter?

There are two main reasons to understand and remember public and private.

First, we want to stay safe and have other people stay safe!

When we see other people's private body parts (and haven't given them permission to show them to us), we can feel upset or like we might be harmed. And when others see our private body parts without permission (remember, these are the ones our bathing suits cover!), they might feel unsafe, too.

That's not a good way to behave around other people and it's not the right way for them to behave around us. Everyone has the right to decide whether or not they want to see certain things - or hear certain things, or participate in certain activities! - and we have to give each other the opportunity to say "yes" or "no."

Second, we want to obey the rules!

In the United States, there are laws - rules - that tell us what we can and cannot do. Showing our private body parts or performing private behaviors in front of others without their permission breaks some of these laws. We have the police to make sure that everyone feels safe and is not made to see these body parts or hear certain talk or participate in activities they don't want to participate in. So we have to keep in mind what is appropriate in public and private so we don't break the rules!

Sometimes it's difficult to remember what is ok and what's not, so remember to check in with your trusted adult if you have any questions!

But, to make it easier, let's do some public and private talking/improv exercises to help us remember what is and isn't appropriate!

Because *repetition helps us remember things!*

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Discussion questions and exercises:

1. Think of a place, either public or private.
 - a. What are some appropriate things to do there?
 - b. What behaviors are inappropriate in these places? Clothing? Body parts to show?
 - c. What might happen if you did something private in a public place?

get up
ON YOUR FEET

Ask a volunteer to stand up and perform any behavior (not too private, please!). Have the class try to guess if the behavior should be done in public or private. As an added challenge, see if you can name the place they should be doing it - get really specific! (For example, if you guess they are in a school, are they in a classroom or the cafeteria? If you guess they are at home, is it in the kitchen or the shower?) Discuss why the behavior is appropriate for public or private!

2. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with someone doing something or saying something or showing you something that you felt like you shouldn't be seeing or hearing? Think about if you felt uneasy because it was a private thing that you didn't agree to! Discuss ways to ask someone if it's ok for you to do, say, or show something before you do it!

get up
ON YOUR FEET

Invite two volunteers to stand. One is Doer, the other is Watcher. Have Doer do or say something silly that we will pretend is inappropriate (think: jumping jacks, a silly dance, saying nonsense words). Watcher should portray being very offended. Have Watcher explain (in the assertive voice we learned in the last lesson) to Doer why it is inappropriate and where this behavior would be more appropriate!

BONUS: Have Doer think of a way to ask for permission to do or say something inappropriate. When they are told "no," they must accept that answer. Help them improv ways to accept the "no!"

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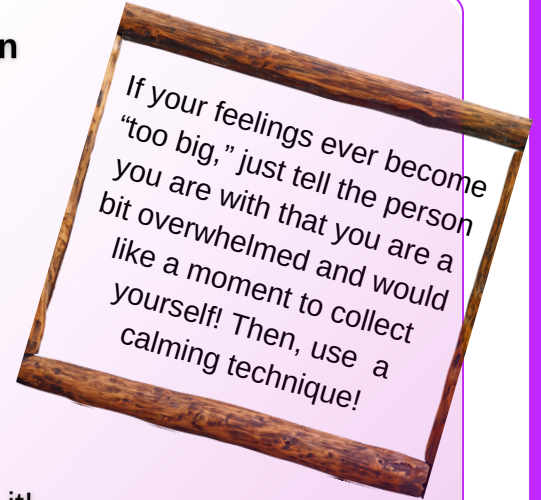
Calming technique spotlight: **Body Scan**

It sounds like something done in *Alien*, but body scanning is actually just a way to calm ourselves down and relax our bodies when we are stressed. It is quiet (so, great for public places!) and effective!

★ Just make sure to let the other person know that you are overwhelmed and need to take a minute before you do it! Otherwise, they may think you are ignoring them, and might not like that!

How do we do it?

1. Begin by bringing your attention into your body. Notice all your different parts.
2. You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.
3. You can notice your feet on the ground or, if you are seated, feel the weight of your body on the chair.
4. Take a few deep breaths.
5. And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen. Feel the energy. And as you slowly let out the breath, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.
6. Notice your feet on the ground again, notice the feeling of your feet touching the floor - the weight and pressure, vibration, heat.
7. You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.



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8. Notice your back against the chair.
9. Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.
10. Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight. See if you can allow them to soften.
11. Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.
12. Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
13. Relax your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.
14. Then notice your whole body. Take one more deep breath.
15. Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath.
16. And then when you're ready, you can open your eyes. You are safe.

The C-A-L-M method:

When you don't have time to do a whole body scan, think CALM.

C: Chest. Feel your chest raise and lower with every breath. Relax.

A: Arms. Drop your shoulders, unclench your fists. Relax.

L: Legs. Wiggle your toes, then release; tighten your knees, release. Relax.

M: Mouth: Lower your tongue from the roof of your mouth, soften your jaw, let your lips part. Relax.

Now, give yourselves a big round of applause and go do some improv!