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INCLUSIVE SEX-ED THROUGH CREATIVE METHODS



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INCLUSIVE SEX-ED THROUGH CREATIVE METHODS

While the benefit of Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) has been widely demonstrated, according to UNESCO there is limited information on the impact of CSE curricula on already marginalised groups, including young people with physical and/or cognitive disabilities, and suitable and effective methodologies for this target group should be further investigated.

The outbreak of COVID-19 impacted the sexual education of intellectually disabled teenagers in a variety of ways, making this project particularly timely: on one hand, by closing schools, sexuality education is receiving less or no attention throughout the world. If there is an opportunity to take classes online at home, sexual education is often not a priority.

INCLUDED project aims to design and implement an inclusive sexual education curriculum for high-school students and a model to foster a whole-school approach to sexual education, both based on student-friendly theatrical techniques.

Indeed, the use of creative methods such as role-playing and theatre games have proven to be effective in educating young people and even more with young people with intellectual disabilities, while critical pedagogy and pedagogy of the oppressed approaches can be effectively used in fostering dialogical relationships within groups.

On the other hand, the INCLUDED project, being mostly focused on providing teachers the instruments, tools and skills to deliver the sexual education curriculum will also contribute to upskill them and expand their knowledge and capacity in relation to this topic.

This curricular training programme for students, aims to support teen-age students, including those with intellectual disabilities, to effectively achieve the core learning-outcomes of sexual education, according to WHO standards.





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1



BODY, ANATOMY & REPRODUCTION

1

BODY, ANATOMY & REPRODUCTION

THEORETICAL DEPTH OF CONTENTS

ANATOMY OF FEMALE AND MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

Learning about differences between female and male reproductive organs, and everyone getting to know their own body is important to develop a sense of identity and ownership of bodily sensations. The teacher explains that in case of any uncomfortable feelings or pain, everyone has to have enough knowledge to distinguish their own problems and know when and where to ask for help.

➤➤ FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

This reproductive system consists of several organs and tissues inside the body and some that are visible outside the body. The internal organs include:

- ovaries
- fallopian tubes
- uterus
- cervix
- vagina

The external female sex organ is called *vulva*. The vulva is the part between the tops of the legs. The vulva is made up of two large and two small lips of skin. These lips are called the labia. The labia cover two holes, or openings, called the vagina and the urethra. Above the vagina and the urethra there is a bump called the clitoris. It has a hood of skin that covers it: the foreskin. The clitoris has a much bigger internal part too: four 'arms' extend inward, two on each side of the vagina. These arms can swell up with blood and fluids, for instance when aroused, making the clitoris erect.

Some vaginal openings are partly covered by a thin piece of mucosal tissue (the same type of skin that for example covers the inside of the mouth and vagina) that varies in size for different people. This is called the *hymen*. This piece of skin can tear the first time someone engages in sexual intercourse, but also when inserting a tampon, or riding a bike or horse, or doing other forms of exercise that can strain the groin area. If the hymen tears during first time intercourse, there may be some blood, but not necessarily if the hymen is elastic enough and the vulva is sufficiently lubricated. All vulvas look a bit different, they come in different colours, shapes and sizes. Some people have bigger labia (*lips*) than other. No matter what a vulva looks like, it can still do and feel the same things as any other vulva can.

The article [A guide to female anatomy](#) it can be used for further questions and doubts raised by students.

Many people consider *breasts* “accessory organs” to the female reproductive system, as they are responsible for supplying milk to an infant after childbirth.

The major external components of the breasts include the:

- *Nipple*. The nipple is the rounded area on the breast where a baby can latch on to drink milk from. The nipples have many nerve endings that can make them an area of sexual stimulation. Nipples do not always protrude; some people have flat or inverted nipples.
- *Areola*. The areola is the pigmented area that surrounds the nipple. It is circular and varies in size from person to person. It contains small glands, called Montgomery glands, that secrete lubrication to keep the nipple from drying out, especially when nursing.
- *Breast tissue*. The breast itself is composed of fat, muscle, and ligament tissue, as well as an intricate network of blood vessels and glands. They are specialised for breastfeeding. Breast tissue size varies greatly from person to person, often due to a combination of individual genetics and body mass.

Internally, the breasts are primarily composed of fat. The amount of body fat can therefore influence breast size. Breast size has no bearing on the amount of milk someone is able to produce.

➤➤➤ MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

The external parts of the male reproductive system are the *penis and the scrotum*. At the end of the penis there is a small hole, which is the end of the urethra, where urine and semen exit.

Part of the internal reproductive organs are the testes (balls) and epididymides (singular; epididymis). These structures inside the scrotum respectively produce and store sperm cells. The scrotum is hanging below the body to lower the temperature of the testes with 2.5-3 degrees Celsius, which is better for sperm production. When sperm is ejaculated, it goes through the vasa deferentia (one vas deferens, or seminal duct, from each testis), and is supplied with fluids from the prostate and seminal vesicles along the way, the last parts of the internal reproductive organs. These fluids contain nutrients for the sperm cells, so that the cells can stay alive for up to five days when ejaculated into a vagina. After the prostate, the vasa deferentia are joined with the urethra, which is where semen exits during ejaculation.

All penises look a bit different. A penis might be short or long, fat or thin, straight or bent. It may have the same colour as the rest of the body, or it may differ. The penis has a piece of skin called a foreskin that covers the end of the penis. Some people have had their foreskin cut away when they were younger. This is called circumcision.

No matter what a penis looks like, it can still do and feel the same things as any other penis can.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



If questions arise after activities, the teacher can refer to the theoretical contents here, or can guide them to read further in reliable resources on the internet or in books. In case the target group has any intellectual disability or language barriers, the following link may help to understand how to use simplified and non-abstract form of language to teach about body, anatomy and reproduction.

PUBERTY

Topic to be addressed in relation to puberty:

- Stages of puberty and the first signs of puberty, for typically male and female bodies.
- Changes that occur the next few years after puberty.

➤➤➤ GIRLS

First signs of puberty in girls

The first sign of puberty in girls is usually that their breasts begin to develop. It's normal for breast buds to sometimes be very tender or for one breast to start to develop several months before the other one. Pubic hair also starts to grow, and some girls may notice more hair on their legs and arms.

After a year or so of puberty beginning, and for the next few years:

- breasts start to grow and become fuller
- around two years after the onset of puberty, the first menstruation (period) happens
- pubic hair grows in and becomes coarser and curlier
- underarm hair begins to grow – some girls also have hair in other parts of their body, such as their top lip, and this is completely normal
- sweat starts to become more and will smell different
- the skin of the face starts to produce more (natural) oil. This can trap bacteria and dirt in the pores, which can lead to different types of spots, including whiteheads and blackheads. In some people, it can lead to a skin condition called acne, where spots get infected more easily and become pus-filled spots called pustules
- vaginal discharge will start to show up. The colour and consistency can change depending on the phase of the menstrual cycle
- a growth spurt will happen – from the time their periods start, girls grow 5 to 7.5cm (2 to 3 inches) annually over the next year or two, then reach their adult height
- most girls gain weight (which is normal) as they grow and their body shape changes – girls develop more body fat as the storage of subcutaneous fat along their upper arms, hips, thighs and belly increase. As the pelvis (the large bone across the hips) grows, the hips wider; and the waist relatively narrower.

➤➤➤ BOYS

First signs of puberty in boys

The first sign of puberty in boys is usually that their testicles get bigger and the scrotum begins to thin and redden; pubic hair also starts to appear at the base of the penis.

After a year or so of puberty starting, and for the next couple of years:

- the penis and testicles grow and the scrotum gradually becomes darker (read more about penis health)
- pubic hair becomes thicker and curlier
- underarm hair starts to grow
- sweat starts to become more and will smell different
- breasts tissues can slightly swell temporarily – this is normal and is not because of fat, but because of fluids or “water” under the skin around the nipples
- boys may have “wet dreams” (involuntary ejaculations of semen as they sleep)

- the vocal cords start growing and the voice gets permanently deeper – for a while, a boy might find his voice goes very deep one minute and very high the next, the voice “breaks”
- the skin of the face starts to produce more (natural) oil. This can trap bacteria and dirt in the pores, which can lead to different types of spots, including whiteheads and blackheads. In some people, it can lead to a skin condition called acne, where spots get infected more easily and become pus-filled spots called pustules
- boys go through a growth spurt and become taller by an average of 7 to 8cm (3 inches) a year, and more muscular



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



A. For many girls having their period is seen as a sign of growing up and changing into a young woman. While some girls may see this as a rite of passage, something to be excited about, others may feel anxious. Students with differing abilities may need extra time to learn how to take care of themselves when menstruating. Often girls will have their first period and then not have another period for a few months. This can be challenging as these students will have to relearn how to manage. Learning how to cope with menstruation is a skill just like other hygiene routines such as skincare or shaving. As teacher you can:

- Acknowledge that changes will occur during menstruation and puberty
- Support in accepting that change is part of puberty
- Demonstrate appropriate listening and speaking during class discussion
- Support them in the development of positive coping strategies, essential to adolescent growth.
- It's important for people of all genders to learn about menstruation. So, try to include all the genders in this exercise.

B. Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.

You should be prepared for giggles in your class. Try to acknowledge students' reactions to the subject by saying that puberty and body parts can be difficult to talk about and it's okay to feel a bit uncomfortable. Remind them that they are all going through these changes, and everyone else has/does too. Sexual health education occurs most effectively in a classroom where there is a mutual feeling of trust, safety and comfort. Having Ground Rules in place can be a very successful way to facilitate a positive classroom environment.

C. Keep in mind that some people are intersex (a biological sex) or transgender (a gender identity), and might experience their puberty differently from the norm. Remind students that all changes differ for everyone, and it's okay to feel uncomfortable in your body when things are changing. If this discomfort is something that impacts their life heavily, and is leaning more toward gender incongruence, it may be a good idea to look for help or resources specifically aimed at transgender youth.

PERIODS

How do periods work?

The biological term for periods is called menstruation, which is part of the menstrual cycle. The menstrual cycle is the time it takes for an egg cell to be released and at the same time the uterus to prepare itself to receive the egg cell if it gets fertilised. If an egg cell is not fertilised, the uterus sheds its lining, made of mucosal tissue (internal skin), mucus (slime), and blood. This is what we call the “period”. You can count the days in your cycle to help you know when to expect your next period - for most people the cycle takes around 28 days, but it can be shorter or longer. Counting is useful so that you can prepare for your period e.g., have some pads or tampons in your backpack/locker.

Counting the days

Take a calendar and circle the first day of your period; you can bleed for about two to seven days. In the early years of your puberty, your menstruation cycle might not be regular yet, and it can show up unexpectedly.

How long is the cycle?

The next time you get your period, circle the first day of your period again. Count the number of days from the first circled date to the second circled date. Be sure to include the circled dates when counting. Example: your bleeding starts September 2nd, your next period starts September 30th. Your cycle length is 29 days. It may be as short as 21 days or as long as 36 days.

Is my cycle always the same?

Your cycle may be the same every month or it may change. The number of days may be shorter or longer. Stress, illness and medications can all change the number of days. If you do not get your period and you are sexually active, you may be pregnant. If you are ever worried about your period, talk to a doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



When someone first starts to have their period, they may not experience regular monthly bleeding. It can take up to two years for periods to be regular. For people with disabilities this can be challenging as they learn hygiene and coping skills and then may have to relearn the skills after a few months once again. Just like any new skill, practice and patience is required. If irregular bleeding becomes problematic visiting a doctor to talk about the issue may be helpful.

Growing up and changing can be exciting and scary at the same time. Encourage students to talk about concerns they may have about menstruation with a trusted adult. Ask students to give examples of people in their lives who they can talk through things that are bothering them or if they need to ask for hygiene items discussed in this lesson. Some may say their parents or guardians but they may also include teachers or school staff.

To end the societal stigma placed on menstruation, which often leads to taboos, shame, and occurrences of sexism, boys need to learn about the menstrual cycle too. Talk to them too about menstruation and menstrual hygiene as if it were like brushing teeth: a very normal part of life that is in no way dirt or bad. This will help make boys and girls more equal.



SUMMARY

Knowing what will happen during puberty is the first step towards adapting well to adolescence. Learning facts about bodies and growing up can help us to stay healthy, take good care of ourselves, and make good decisions.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexual Infections or diseases are often acquired by sexual contacts. Through intimate relations, viruses, bacteria and parasites may be transferred from person to person by skin-to-skin contact or the exchange of bodily fluids such as saliva, vaginal fluid, semen or blood. The most common types of sexually transmitted infections include chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis, genital herpes, pubic lice, scabies, syphilis and human papillomavirus (HPV, can lead to genital warts or cervical cancer).

The only perfectly secure way to protect yourself and others against STIs is by not having any sexual contact. Condoms and other barrier methods work very well, but aren't 100% safe against all types of STI.

Some of these infections have very light or even no symptoms, therefore periodical check-ups can be convenient to avoid contracting and spreading any infection. Not all STIs can be diagnosed or detected in the same way. You can get a quick swab for most, but for some you need to have a blood test or other specific test done. Not all STIs develop symptoms, so regular checkups (if you're sexually active with multiple partners or do not use STI protection) are recommended. The most known STI symptoms include:

- an unusual discharge from the vagina, penis, or anus
- itch genitals or anus, or general pubic area
- lumps or skin growths around the genitals or anus
- a rash
- irregular vaginal bleeding
- vaginal or anal blisters and sores
- blisters or sores in the mouth and/or throat
- warts surrounding your genitals or anus
- warts in the mouth or throat (quite uncommon)

If affected by one or more of these symptoms, it is suggested to talk to the family doctor, gynaecologist, or a sexual health clinic. The clinics will offer comfort to their patients who can comfortably tell the doctors about their sexual behaviours and orientation. All treatments are done following the privacy rules and no information regarding the visit to the clinic will be shared with the family doctor or anyone else outside the clinic. Furthermore, the clinics can offer patients a choice a female or male doctor or nurse per their request.

In 2021, the World Health Organisation published "[*Guidelines for the management of symptomatic sexually transmitted infections*](#)" in order to provide updated, evidence-based clinical and practical advice for treating persons with STI symptoms, as well as to assist nations in revising existing national guidelines for treating people with STI symptoms. The treatment of symptomatic infections is included in these guidelines. The guidelines are designed for national STI prevention and control programme managers as well as frontline health-care practitioners in primary, secondary, and tertiary care.

PREGNANCY, CONTRACEPTIVES and HUMAN SEXUAL RIGHTS

Pregnancy, also known as gestation, is the time during which one or more offspring develops inside the uterus. It is possible for more than one baby to develop at once: this is called a multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets, etc.). Pregnancy is usually the result of sexual intercourse without use of contraceptives, but can also occur through assisted reproductive technology procedures. A pregnancy may end in a live birth, a spontaneous miscarriage, an induced abortion, or a stillbirth. Childbirth typically occurs around 40 weeks from the start of the last menstruation.

Prevention of pregnancy is possible if it is not desired: there are different methods of contraceptive options.

When you are choosing the method of contraception that is right for you, it is important to have accurate information and to talk openly about your options. It is also important to think about how well each method works, the possible side effects, how easy it is to use and how much it costs, or if your insurance will (partly) pay for it.

The method you choose will depend on a range of factors, such as your general health, lifestyle and relationships, your risk of getting a sexually transmissible infection (STI) and how important it is for you not to get pregnant.

- Daily combination pills contain oestrogen and progestin, two synthetic hormones similar to the ones made by your ovaries.
- Daily minipills contain only progestin.
- Skin patches contain oestrogen and progestin, and are worn (like a bandaid) for 21 days. They're removed for seven days before switching to a new patch.
- Vaginal rings are another hormonal option. They're also worn for 21 days and removed for seven days before being replaced.
- Intrauterine devices (IUDs) can be hormonal or nonhormonal. Depending on the device and brand, they can be worn for 3 to 10 years.
- Condom (internal and external condoms)



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Whether or not students are sexually active now or will be at some point in the future, it's important to know how to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and STIs. Contraception enables couples to choose if, when, and how many children to have. It's important to know about birth control so that they can prevent STIs and plan for their future.

Some methods of contraception are less widely used in certain countries. Find up to date information for your area to share with your students.

REFERENCES:

World Health Organisation, Guidelines for the management of symptomatic sexually transmitted infections, 2021.

National Health Service, [Sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\)](#), 2021

International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections, [Treatment Pocket European guidelines](#), 2019

Pregnancy, birth, baby, [Contraceptions](#)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TARGET GROUP

14-20 years old including people with social and/or intellectual disabilities

 **DURATION OF THE MODULE** 90 - 100 minutes (reserve 30 - 40 minutes for the Theatre of the Oppressed)

LEARNING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Anatomy, puberty and body changes (mindful of trans and intersex youth)
- Menstruation (also important for those who don't menstruate)
- Reproduction & pregnancy, contraception
- Human sexual rights
- Virginity as a social construct
- STIs
- That you should experience no (unwanted) pain during sex
- That there is endless diversity in bodies, experiences, needs, and wishes (normally doesn't exist, therefore communication is necessary)
- Vulva and penis diversity (e.g. size, shape and colour of clitoris/labia/penis/testicles, circumcised or not)
- The role of religion (also an individual matter, in countries I have to match with expectations of the religion etc.)

TARGET EXECUTORS: Teachers

ACTIVITY 1 - GETTING STARTED: WARM UP ACTIVITY

 **DURATION** 10 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Introduce oneself, introduce the lesson and topic, agree on what is needed for this lesson to be a success and for everyone to feel safe.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Have your students participate in one of the warm-up activities below. Say:

Today we are talking about puberty.

- *During puberty most people's bodies change and grow faster than at any other time in life; except when they are a baby.*
- *During this time, you will also have more responsibilities and learn many new things about yourself and your relationships with family and friends.*
- *Before we get into the specifics of puberty, we're going to start with a fun activity called "Do you? Have you? Are you?"*

The activity is called *Do you? Have you? Are you?* Designate areas of the room where students can stand or gather as you read the following statements. Adjust according to your classroom space and number of students.

Say:

I am going to read a statement. If you can answer with a yes, I will ask you to go to one side of the room; if you are answering no, you will go to the other side of the room. If you don't know, don't want

to share, or are in between, you can stand in the middle.

Select and read aloud several statements from the list provided; add or change as needed for your group of students. Move through the statements quickly.

Do you... Are you... Have you...

- have more than one pet?
- like to sleep late on weekends?
- hope to be famous one day?
- have rules in your house about using electronic devices?
- like to tease your friends or family members?
- have curly hair?
- have a favourite place to go when you want to be alone?
- someone who cries at sad movies?
- taller than most of your classmates?
- on a team (could be sports or another team)?
- someone who likes to sing?
- an artist?
- mostly left-handed?
- ever had a secret you didn't want to share?
- talked with someone about the changes your body is going through?

When finished, ask students to sit down. Ask the following processing questions:

- How did it feel when you were on one side with a number of your friends?
- What was it like when you were by yourself or with just a few others?
- Did anyone wish that they could change places once they had chosen a place to stand? Did you wish you could move to be with your friends or with a bigger group of people?

Explain to the class that the statements you read may have seemed silly or unimportant. Ask them to think about what it would feel like to not be able to be with your group of friends just because they didn't have a pet or curly hair.

Finish by saying,

Sometimes when you are going through puberty, you may feel left out. It's important to remember that everyone goes through the changes of puberty at different times. We should avoid situations where we cause someone to feel hurt, left out or alone. We need to be understanding of other people's feelings and value our differences.

Source: [Puberty changes - Maine family planning](#). (n.d.). Retrieved December 1, 2021.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Starting with a warm-up activity (or icebreaker) sets the stage and helps students feel more comfortable with each other before launching into the curriculum contents. Students may have different expectations about what will be discussed in puberty class. The warm-up is an opportunity to promote the concept that it is normal for students to have both similarities and differences and that each person develops in different ways, pace, and time frame.

ACTIVITY 2 - DRAWING OUR BODIES



DURATION 45-60 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

This activity allows students to explore, visualise and value the diversity present in the class, while exploring their own bodies and others.

Objectives:

- Question and reflect about our bodies.
- Question and reflect about our tastes and appearances.
- Explore how we feel in relation to our gender/body expression and put the diversity of tastes and different ways of expressing into value.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spacious room.
- Roll of paper so that all groups have one piece of paper 1 metre wide and 2 metres long.
- Enough markers so that each youngster has one.
- A suitcase with a lot of clothes and accessories (hats, necklaces, dresses, shirts, shorts, etc.).
- Blue tack or paper tape.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

For this activity we suggest that there are at least two facilitators. This can be one male and one female teacher, or two teachers of the same gender, with differing gender expressions (different in clothing style and what they like). If there are gender diverse adults in your school, they could also be a perfect role model for this exercise. If there isn't a colleague available, you can also ask another adult male or female to volunteer to help out during the session.

- Divide the class into groups - minimum of 3 groups of 4-5 participants maximum.
- Give each group a piece of paper of at least 1 metre wide and up to 2 metres long.
- Give each group marker of different colours, one colour for each participant. Tell them that they will draw each other's silhouette with the marker. You can illustrate the instructions with an example: ask a participant to lay on the piece of paper and follow around the shape of his/her/their body with the marker. In their groups, they take turns lying down while another participant draws their silhouette. The silhouettes will all overlap each other, with different colour markers.

Please make sure for this activity to be inclusive. If you have participants who cannot lay on the paper sheets due to physical conditions (i.e. they use wheelchairs), the activity should be adapted for example drawing just the upper part of the body or possibly just hands. When they continue with the exercise, they will still be able to answer the further questions and build a character and their story by using their imagination and creativity.

- Once they are done, ask them to put their paper on the wall (help them if needed).
- Now ask each group to define the character of the silhouette they have drawn.

You can help them with a set of questions:

- What is the gender of your silhouette?
- What is the name of your silhouette?
- What is the age of your silhouette?
- Does the character have a romantic relationship?
- What is his/her/their story?
- Once the characters and their stories have been created, ask the participants to sit in a semi-circle around the suitcase and take the clothes and accessories that they need to dress up their character.
- Once they have assigned all of the clothes and accessories in the suitcase, invite the students to take a look at the papers and ask them to share what is the identity and the story of their character and what elements of the body shape or the clothes/accessories that they

assigned to the character suggest them.

While they share, bring attention to the body characteristics and those elements that are commonly assigned to a certain gender, ask them to question these assigned roles. Be sure to not get stuck too long on repeating stereotypes! Even if you refute a stereotype, the more is talked about the stereotype itself is the thing that sticks, not the refutation.

You can ask the following questions to discuss the silhouettes (plenary)

- What makes a female body different from a male body? Is there any other kind of body? Are those elements visible?
- You have chosen certain characteristics for your silhouette. Can these characteristics also fit another gender?
- And the clothes you have chosen for your silhouette, can they also fit another gender?
- Is it always possible to wear whatever you want to wear?
- Can you fully express yourself at school? Is it different when you are at home or just chilling with friends?
- When do you feel most like yourself?
- What role do other people play in your self-expression? How can they help you with your self-expression?

The activity could end here if you or the class do not feel comfortable with what follows or you prefer investigating body and anatomy through discussion or other activities. In case you decide to continue, the second part of the activity can be useful to create a link with the gender module.

PART TWO

This part of the exercise deepens the conversation around our cultural 'rules' for people of different sexes and genders. It therefore creates a good bridge to the next module, that is about gender.

To broaden their view on the unspoken social rules around gender, and to let the students question these rules, you can ask the students questions like the following:

- Do clothes and accessories have a gender?
- Why are there rules for who can wear what?
- Can women wear men's clothes?
- → Here, a female facilitator can put on some "boy clothes and accessories" and you can ask the students how she looks and what they think: Is she allowed to wear men's clothes, e.g. a suit and tie? What happens to how we see her if she wears this? Has anyone ever seen a woman wear this before?
- Can man wear women's clothes? A male facilitator, if present, can now put on a skirt or a dress and a female accessory (necklace, hat, etc.). Ask the students the same questions as you asked just before.
- → Note that some students might find this uncomfortable or laugh. This is the perfect time to compare this reaction to their reaction to a woman in men's clothes: why is that so different? While these reactions and emotions are valid and you can use them to ask further questions, you must beware of this teaching moment becoming a joke, or something the students can laugh about without being asked why they are laughing, or have them question their ideas about gender roles. Treating men in dresses as a joke is something that can normalise and perpetuate the dangerous transphobic idea that trans women are "just men in dresses". Transphobic ideas lead to discrimination and violence.

This is also a good moment to address other physical aspects such as: long hair, painted nails, pierced ears, etc. Address any concerns, questions or contradictions they might express. (For example: they might say it's okay for boys to wear a skirt, but when they actually see a boy wearing a skirt they make fun of him. As a teacher, you may know your students well enough to distinguish between socially acceptable answers and answers that the students really believe in themselves).

- Some example questions to further explore the concept of gender expression and diversity: Do clothes have a gender? Do "men's clothes" and "women's clothes" really exist? Are thoughts about that the same in every country, culture, or religion? What if someone wears a mix of men's and women's clothes, does that immediately say something about their gender? What if someone doesn't identify as a woman or a man/a girl or a boy, what clothes would

they wear?

→ The answer to all of these questions is generally the same idea: The ideas about which clothes are for which gender are different in different cultures and for different people. Technically, everyone should be able to wear whatever they want to wear, but social and cultural norms sometimes make that hard for people.

- Invite the class to reflect on how we react when we see a boy or a girl who is not wearing what is expected of them. If the class laughed when one of the facilitators wore clothes that aren't the norm for their gender, you could ask: "Is it okay to make fun of them? Why not? How do we feel when people make fun of us? How do we feel when they make us wear/do something we don't like just because it's for boys/girls? How does our body feel in your clothes? What makes us feel most comfortable?"
- Invite the class to try on the different clothes! To have fun, reminding them that they are free to wear whatever they wish!
- Once they have played for a while with the different clothes, it is time to tidy. They must carefully fold the clothes and in a neat manner put it back in the suitcase. This is part of the learning activity in the sense that you can see if there are students who treat certain clothing items with less care or respect than others (e.g. a boy doesn't want to fold a dress). Here you will let them know and experience that clothes are just clothes, and they need to treat them as such, no matter what the clothing item may be.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



When you create the groups, make sure that they are mixed ones in terms of gender.

During the activity, underline how appearances do not always correspond with reality.

The activity may vary depending on the target groups' characteristics like age, disability level, language comprehension, religion, the cultural context of the country etc.

ACTIVITY 3 - PRIVATE PARTS



DURATION 45-60 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Objectives:

- Introduce the concept of “private parts” as the genitals, breasts, butt and their real names in order to make participants feel comfortable talking about their bodies.
- Encourage students to disclose to you in private when something worrisome or uncomfortable is happening to them concerning their “private parts”.
- Make students aware that what is considered acceptable/unacceptable in relation to how we cover our bodies and especially private parts varies amongst cultures (what is considered obvious for one person might not be the same for another person).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Big room
- Images of people wearing different outfits: choose pictures which show diversity regarding how private parts are covered
- Genitalia template printed in an A3 format or drawn in a big cardboard (provided at the end of the activity)
- Private part flashcards
- “Person with vulva” and “Person with penis” template (provided at the end of the activity) – print out enough so that about half the students in class have one type and half of the class the other. Hand these out randomly when specified in the exercise.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Ask the participants to sit in a circle, to listen to a story. Start reading the story of “A and Z, the Aliens”.

Once upon a time on a very distant planet lived two small children called A and Z. One evening, A was looking at the stars with Z, when a very bright light flashed in the sky. They closed their eyes because the light was so bright, and in a second all became dark. A and Z opened their eyes. They looked around and realised they were in a very different and strange place. A and Z had arrived on the Earth, and they were standing in Jo’s room. They were very confused. They heard a voice. They looked around to see where the voice was coming from. They saw someone approaching.

“Who are you?” said Jo.

“Our names are A and Z, and I think we are lost”, replied Z.

Suddenly, Jo realised that A and Z were naked!

“Oh, no!” she said, “Why don’t you have clothes on?”

A and Z looked very confused. “What do you mean?” they said.

“You know...” said Jo, “something to cover your private parts.”

“What are private parts?” said A.

Ask the participants:

“What are private parts? How can we help A and Z who are now on Earth?”

Let them comment on what private parts are and on how they can cover up. Also tell the students that we mean genitalia, butt and breasts if we are talking about private parts in this context. After they have commented, take out the Genital Template and show it:

Some girls (but not all girls) are born with a vulva. Some boys (but not all boys) are born with a penis. All of us have an anus. These are our private parts. In some places, our breasts and other parts of our body are also considered private parts. Private parts are not the same as genitalia. Genitalia are the vulva and penis (they are the external reproductive organs). For example, the anus, the breasts,

and the butt are not part of the genitalia. However, in most cultures it is the cultural norm to cover them with clothes. What does it mean that some parts are private? What are our private parts?

Optional questions that can lead to the Sex and Sexuality module:

Can we touch them?

What happens if somebody else wants to touch them?

What happens if we want to touch other people's private parts?

Tell the participants that they will see pictures to see how different people cover their private parts differently depending on where they are, their religions, their traditions, etc. Show them the different images and ask them to describe what they see, where the people are (on the beach, in the street, etc.), and what (private) parts they are covering (for example: the head, the nipples, the penis/vulva, the butt etc.). Address any question or concern they might have.

Ask them about how they like to dress and cover their private parts. Tell them that now they will get the chance to dress A and Z so that they can cover up their private parts. Go back to the story about A and Z.

Now A and Z know that in order to leave Jo's room to meet her family and friends and discover more about the Earth they need to cover their private parts.

"Jo, can you help us?"

"Yes, of course! I can lend you my clothes so that you can cover up! You can choose anything you like from the closet" replied Jo.

OPTIONAL

The storytelling could end here if you do not feel comfortable with what follows or you prefer exploring body and anatomy through discussion or other activities. In case you decide to continue, this part can be useful to start working on gender, as all modules of the proposed workshop are interconnected.

A and Z opened the closet and there were all kinds of clothes! Bikinis, scarfs, coats and hats, socks, and boots and shirts, and dresses and skirts, and pants and tennis shoes and all the kinds of clothes you can think of.

Z picked a shiny dress and was about to put it on when Jo told him, "What are you doing! You cannot wear a dress! Dresses are for girls, and you have a penis, so you are a boy."

Z was very confused. "What do you mean?" Z asked Jo. "On the planet where we come from it does not matter if you have a penis or a vulva, you can still feel like a girl or a boy, and you can wear anything that makes you happy."

Tell the students we are going to help A and Z put on some clothes to cover up. Randomly give each participant a "Person" template so that about half the class has a "person with vulva" template and the other half "person with penis" template. *Take the chance to ask what participants know about genitals and reproductive organs, and make clarifications.

Tell them that A is the child with a vulva, and Z is the child with the penis, but that they can be both a boy or a girl or neither, and of course, they can wear any clothes they want. Ask them to draw and colour clothes on their person and also to draw where they are (at the beach, at the house, etc.).

Conclusion/Debriefing

When they are finished, ask them to sit in a circle and present their alien person to the rest of the group explaining what they are wearing and where they are. Note at the end of sharing that everyone has designed something else, just like all people on Earth like to wear different clothes at different times, or in different cultures/places.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



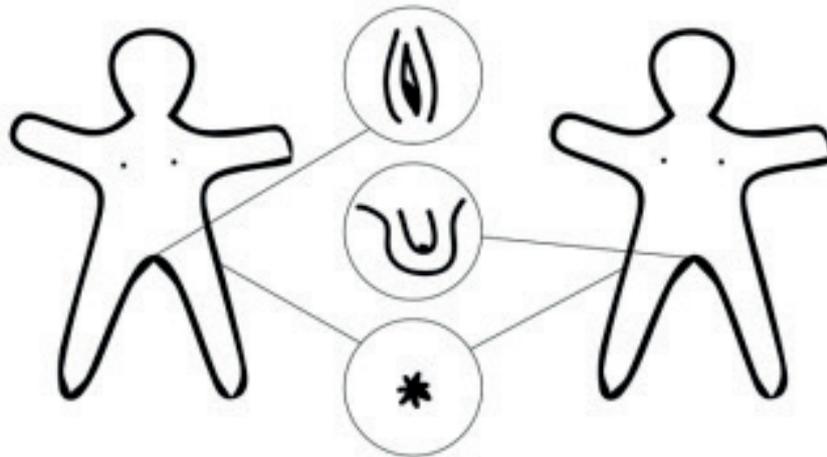
In the part where A and Z say that on their home planet, having a vulva or a penis doesn't matter for your gender, it is important to phrase this correctly. Gender identity is not choosing to be something, it is what you feel you are. Gender expression (and to express yourself as a different gender than your biological sex, for instance) is a choice.

It is important to consider that family interactions vary and are particularly dependant on cultural norms. Physical contact among family members, sleeping arrangements and co-bathing, for example, are practices that might vary among ethnic groups (i.e. for a Korean couple it might be a sign of affection and care to co-bed with their child until the child is about 4 or 5 years of age, but consider absolutely inappropriate to kiss in front of their children; for a European family it might be absolutely inappropriate to co-bed with children that age, but it is okay to display affection such as kissing in front of their child). The activity may vary depending on the target groups' characteristics like age, disability level, language comprehension, religion, the cultural context of the country etc.

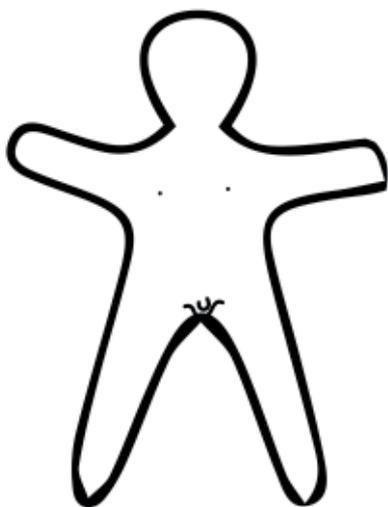
Source: Helen Noh Ahn and Neil Gilbert, "Cultural Diversity and Sexual Abuse Prevention," *Social Service Review* 66, no. 3 (Sep., 1992): 410-427.)

Handout materials:

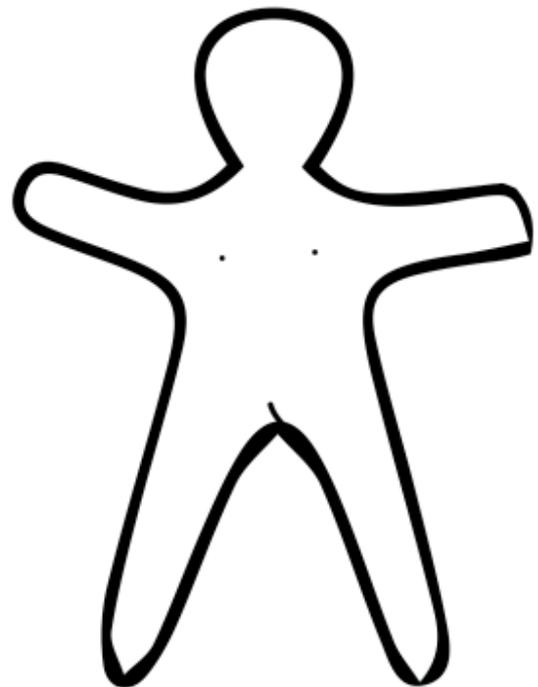
Genitalia Template



Child with penis template



Child with vulva template



Private Parts Flashcards



ACTIVITY 4 - SHAPING OUR IMAGINATION

 **DURATION** 25 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Every organ is different; you can be born with organs of different sizes, shapes, colours. One's body must be accepted as it is. Any body is normal, and valid to exist in the world.

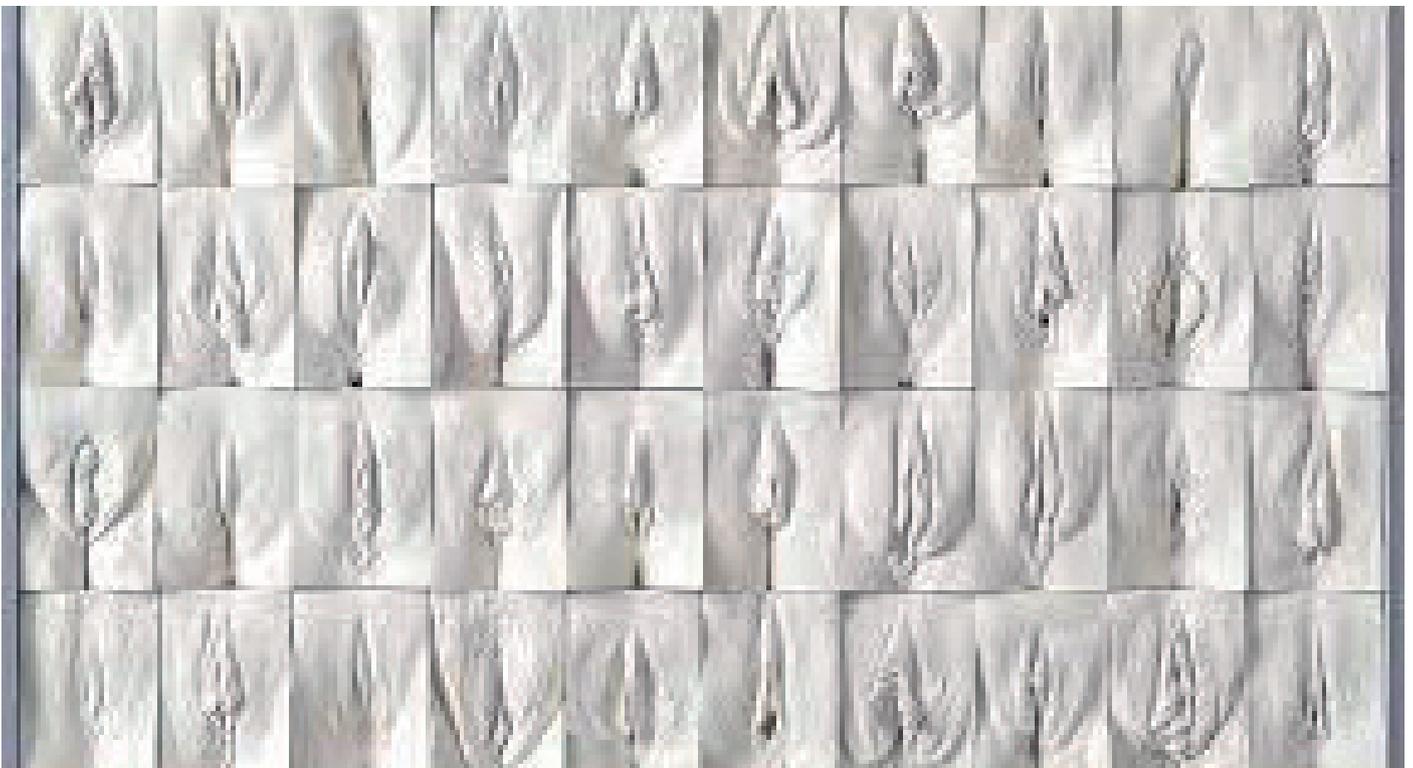
ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

It will be an individual creative artwork. Everyone will have their own piece of playdough, drawing with paper and pen, drawing or 3D image shaping on the computer, or collage of some images.

Everyone will be asked to shape a vulva however they want, how they imagine or, how they guess vulvas look. The goal of this exercise is to raise awareness and improve knowledge of the vulva and its function. The vulva is a more hidden part of the body than for instance a penis is, which, in addition to (medical) sexism, may be the reason why many people know/talk/joke a lot about the penis, but not a lot about the vulva.

The teacher will then let students show their artworks to the class and asks some questions. “*What do you see in your artworks?*” “*Are they all similar?*” “*How was this experience for you?*” to facilitate thought to show that all vulvas are different from each other. They are not the same and this is “normal”. The mainstream media we consume influences our beauty standards. And the same thing happens to our genitalia. In porn you will most likely see one specific type of vulva being represented. Porn actors are being cast for a part because their vulva looks a certain way. Just like Hollywood movies people are also cast for their looks.

The teacher will finish the activity by displaying artwork on the board. The [artwork made by Jamie McCartney](#) “Women from all over the world, aged 18 to 76. Included mothers, daughters, identical twins, transgendered men and women as well as pre- and post- natal women, and pre- and post-labiaplasty”



Jamie McCartney, The Great Wall of Vagina (2008). Detail.



SUMMARY

Students will use their imagination and creativity, they will have enjoyed doing this activity. The teacher will encourage all students to make it in any shape or form they want. Students might feel shy to do it, the teacher will not force them to do it. At the end of the activity, the artwork from an artist aims to show that their work was meaningful.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Students may feel uncomfortable creating a 3D vulva. It is important to let students think about the different shapes and sizes of the vulva. Feeling uncomfortable is very normal. Students would take different times to finish this activity but it is important to encourage them to be creative and open-minded about differences. The reason we suggested this activity but not to shape a penis is that differences about penis is already a topic of some taboos and jokes in many societies. The vulva is an organ that is underrepresented, partly internal and not discussed explicitly as often as the penis is.

Additional source: [Family Planning NSW All About Sex fact sheet](#)

ACTIVITY 5 - ANATOMY PUBERTY AND BODY CHANGES

 **DURATION** 15-40 minutes. There are several options for this exercise, so it can take anywhere between 15 minutes (short brainstorm, short time for group work, no presentations, plenary debrief) to 30-40 minutes (brainstorm followed by research and presentations by each group).

LEARNING GOAL

After completing the Anatomy Puberty and Body Changes unit, students are able to:

- Reproduce knowledge about what changes during puberty in different people's bodies (knowledge)
- Feel more comfortable learning about and discussing puberty topics (attitude)
- Identify the physical, social and emotional changes of puberty (knowledge)
- Identify ways to handle the challenges of puberty (skills)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whiteboard
- Printed cards
- Paper
- Pen
- Pencils
- Markers

- Coloured pencils/markers

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

- Brainstorm: What have you heard about puberty? (5-10min)

Ask students to share what they know about puberty in an online tool, on the whiteboard, or have a group discussion. Support interesting and innovative ways of describing their experiences and understanding of puberty. Possible prompts:

- Can you name some of the changes that commonly happen during puberty?
- What changes have you seen in friends or family members who have gone through puberty?

Acknowledge students' responses, then say:

Puberty is a time when many changes happen to most people. During puberty, a person's body starts changing and growing from a child into an adult. These changes take place over several years and each person has their own unique timeline. Let's talk about some of the changes that most people will experience.

Explain that the changes experienced during puberty include:

- Physical changes, i.e. changes to a person's body
"Can someone tell me what physical means?"
- Emotional changes, i.e. changes in the way someone thinks and feels
"What do you think emotional means?"
- Social changes, i.e. changes in a person's relationships with family and friends
"What do we mean by social?"



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



During puberty, many students may feel uncomfortable with the changes their bodies are going through. This may be especially true if their gender is incongruent (doesn't match) with the sex of their body. For this reason, we have separated the changes by physical, emotional and social rather than changes experienced by boys vs. girls. Since many physical changes are specific to male or female bodies, try saying "most boys" or "most girls" to be inclusive of all identities along the gender spectrum.

Depending of the group of students and their level of communication and interaction the facilitator can use different approaches to implement the activity.



Printed cards

Pass out a few cards with physical, emotional and social changes evenly among the small groups. Have students spend a few minutes discussing the changes written on their cards and deciding what changes fit under physical, emotional or social. You can also have them put the card under *I don't know* or *unsure* if they can't decide. Encourage them to guess if they don't know. We're all learning together and it's okay if they don't know the answers yet.



Working in groups

Divide the participants in three different groups (physical, emotional and social changes group), or six groups if there are too many students. Have the students spend a few minutes in the group discussing the changes and choose one change (physical, emotional or social) that they will later present to the others in the group. Possible adjustment is to give a written card with one change to each group and ask them to think of a way how they will explain and present it to the others in the group.

Instruct students to use (one of) the following methods for presentation:

- acting
- drawing
- writing on paper
- using their body or other objects around them etc.

When each group makes their presentation, make sure to also describe other changes that are experienced in puberty.

Examples of changes in puberty (that can be used in printed cards and working in groups work):

PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
Breasts develop	Sudden mood changes	Argue more with siblings
Start growing hair in the pubic area and armpits	More concerned about physical appearance	Take on more responsibility at school and home
Genitals start to grow and change	More aware of what others might think	Disagree more with your parents or guardians
Grow taller	Have a crush or experience physical/romantic attraction	Want to fit in with friends
Pimples or acne may start to appear	Feel more stress or anxiety	Have to do more school work
Sweat more and have body odour	Want to try new activities	Hang out with different people
Muscles develop	Start to wonder “who am I?” or “what do I like to do?”	Question the rules at school or home
Voice changes		Want more freedom to make decisions

Whichever approach is applied for this activity, the educator can walk around to see how the conversations are going. If students are having difficulty, give them clues. For instance:

Does the change relate specifically to their body (physical)?

Does it relate to how someone might think or feel (emotional)?

Does it include other people (social)?

Does everyone have the same experience and manifest the changes in the same way?

How do you interpret this particular change? And the others?

Encourage them to make interesting interpretations, guess if they don't know, or if they're really stuck.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



The purpose of this activity is to introduce the changes of puberty. Students may not understand all the terms they see and it may be helpful to write some of these unfamiliar words on the board.

This unit introduces the range of changes most people will go through during puberty. These concepts may be new to some students while others may have talked about puberty at home. Some students may already be experiencing these changes while others have not. In all cases, there are likely many students who have questions or concerns about the changes that accompany puberty. Since your students may have varying levels of knowledge and comfort about puberty, it's important to first set a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Puberty education can be an awkward topic for students as well as their teachers and parents or guardians. Learning about the common physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty in a non-judgemental environment and taboo-free way helps young people improve their self-confidence and enhances their ability to make healthy decisions. During the Puberty Changes unit, students will also learn that each person's body changes in different ways and at its own pace.



SUMMARY

Students can learn about the changes experienced during puberty such as the physical changes, emotional and social changes. They will discuss the difference which most girls and most boys experience by each person having their own unique time line.

Additional sources: [Puberty changes - Maine family planning](#). (n.d.). Retrieved December 1, 2021.

ACTIVITY 6 - MY PERIOD: STATEMENTS ABOUT MENSTRUATION



DURATION 15 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Objectives:

- Designate areas of the room where students can stand or gather as you read the following statements. Adjust according to your classroom space and number of students.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the topic of menstruation. They will also have an opportunity to share why this topic is important to them by sharing their choices for particular statements. Students will know that participating in this activity is free of choice.

Gauge students' maturity level, responses, and the classroom climate before engaging in this activity. If students are mature and possess the ability to engage in critical, honest self-reflection, proceed with the following exercise.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Explain to students that they are allowed to stop participating from the exercise at any time. However, if they choose to participate, they must respect the opinion and presence of others. If necessary, stress that a student's religious/cultural/ethnic background will not be used as grounds to disqualify them for participating in the exercise

Prior to engaging in this activity, create a path or open space that spans from one side of the room to another that is free of chairs, desks, and any other type of furniture. This is needed so that students may form a line. On one side of the room place an "Agree" sign in large, legible print and on the opposite side of the room place the sign "Disagree." Explain to students that they may choose to stand on either side of the room based on how they feel about the topic/sentence that is read aloud. If they neither "Agree" nor "Disagree," explain that they may stand in the middle of the room and to indicate that they are "undecided."

To help students understand that they are expected to take some type of stance, have them practice choosing sides or taking a stance based on sample questions. For example, "public schooling should be mandatory for all students." Ask students to choose "agree," "disagree" or "neutral." Afterwards, ask some students why they chose a particular side or are "undecided." It may work best to have a few people with differing opinions to share. Explain that students are free to change the minds and move to another side of the room at any time.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



If students are not able to stand/walk, you could also give the whole class red/green cards that they can hold up to indicate disagreement/agreement.

There are sample statements listed below to help you conduct the exercise. Please feel free to modify the statement or make your own. It may help to start with a less emotionally charged and/or heated statement and gradually move to more difficult ones as the exercise progresses.

Read the following statements to start the activity.

STATEMENTS	ANSWER
<p>A woman cannot get pregnant if it is her first sexual experience.</p>	<p> FALSE</p> <p>A woman CAN get pregnant if it is her first sexual experience. Anytime a man and woman have vaginal intercourse, pregnancy is possible. If a couple do not want to have a child, they should always use a form of protection to prevent pregnancy (condoms, birth control).</p>
<p>The length the menstruation cycle differs per person</p>	<p> TRUE</p> <p>The average cycle length is 28 days, but it could be anywhere between 21-35 days. The first years of your period could be way more irregular, so the cycle length can also vary month to month.</p>
<p>A woman cannot get pregnant if she has not experienced menstruation.</p>	<p> FALSE</p> <p>A woman <u>can</u> get pregnant if she has not had menstruation, or her period yet. Getting pregnant is related to ovulation, the release of the ovum from the ovary. Because a woman can ovulate before her first period, it is possible to become pregnant.</p>
<p>When a girl is menstruating, she cannot play sports.</p>	<p> FALSE</p> <p>Participating in sports while you are on your period can be an added challenge but it is different for everyone. The period may come with bloating, cramps, and low energy. Period pain is very common: most girls and women have pain of varying intensity at some point during their period. In 10 out of 100 women the pain is so bad that they're unable to carry out their usual daily activities on one to three days every month.</p> <p>But if you feel fine to play sports and know how to use menstrual hygiene products, playing sports while menstruating is no problem at all.</p>
<p>You don't have to wash your vulva with soap</p>	<p> TRUE</p> <p>The inside of the vagina is self-cleaning. For the outside (your labia for example) you can use lukewarm water to clean it. If you clean the inside of your vagina with soaps or feminine hygiene washes you could potentially create an imbalance of the PH of your vagina. Which could lead to yeast infections or bacterial vaginosis. Bacterial vaginosis is one of the most common causes of a smelly vagina, affecting 15% to 50% of women of reproductive age. 'It's a condition where there's an imbalance in the vaginal flora,' Dr Rosén explains. 'The first symptom is often a fishy smell, which can progress to a frothy, grey or green-ish discharge.'</p> <p>Yeast infections can also occur because of an imbalance in the vaginal flora. Symptoms are, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Itchiness <input type="radio"/> Red/swollen vulva <input type="radio"/> Thich creamy white discharge <input type="radio"/> Pain during sex <p>If you experience any of these symptoms, seek help from a healthcare provider. It's nothing to be ashamed about and most people with vulva's experience these infections at least once in their lifetime.</p>



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Once students have lined themselves up, ask them in turn to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are standing. Encourage students to refer to evidence and examples they know when defending their stance. It is probably best to alternate from one end, to the middle, to the other end, rather than allowing too many voices from one stance to dominate. After about three or four viewpoints are heard, ask if anyone wishes to move. Encourage students to keep an open mind; they are allowed to move if someone presents an argument that alters where they want to stand on the line. Run the activity until you think that most or all voices have been heard, making sure that no one person dominates.

There are many ways you can debrief this exercise. You can have students reflect in their journals about how the activity changed or reinforced their original opinion. Or you can chart the main “for” and “against” arguments on the board as a whole-class activity.

Depending on the group of students and their level of communication and interaction, the facilitator can use different approaches to implement the activity.



Question Box about menstruation

The facilitator needs to make small strips of paper. On each strip of paper, the facilitator writes a question from the technical document and puts them in a box. In another box, the facilitator puts separate strips of paper with answers to each question written on each strip. Each participant is asked to pick up one strip from each box. After all the participants have picked up the strips, they are asked to sit in a circle and each participant reads out their question. Other participants have to find out who has the answer to that question and then whoever has it reads it out. Once the corresponding question and answer are found and discussed in the group, it is passed on to another participant. The activity continues till all the question and answers have been read out and discussed.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



The facilitator should encourage a lot of discussion among the participants and all the doubts of the participants regarding menstruation should be clarified.



Myths or Reality about menstruation

The facilitator writes various ideas, beliefs and practices about menstruation on different strips of paper. Hang two sheets of paper on the wall, one that will collect the myths and the other the facts. Each participant reads out the fact-or-myth on their strip and sticks it in the column they think is right (myth or fact). The group then discusses the fact/myth in detail and the reasons for pasting it in either of the columns.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



The facilitator needs to dispel all the myths. It would be great to try to use some of the myths in the local community/culture. The facilitator should also help the participants look at menstruation as any other change in the body and therefore needs to be given the same kind of attention.

Additional sources:

[The puberty session 2](#) "ovulation ..." - Chatham County, NC. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022.

Take a stand: Human barometer activity. [Take a Stand: Human Barometer Activity](#). (n.d.). Retrieved December 10, 2021.

Barometer: Taking a stand on controversial issues. [Facing History and Ourselves](#). (n.d.). Retrieved December 10, 2021.

Teachers - teachers: Teaching sexual health. [Teachers | Teaching Sexual Health](#). (n.d.). Retrieved December 1, 2021.

Alberta Education. (2002). [Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9](#).

Harris, R.H., & Emberley, M. (2009). It's perfectly normal: Changing bodies, growing up, and sexual health (15th Anniversary Edition). Somerville MA: Candlewick Press.

ACTIVITY 7 - REALITIES ABOUT STIS

 **DURATION** 30-60 minutes

There are several options for this exercise, so it can take anywhere between 30 minutes (fewer groups, no real presentations, just filling in the table) and 60 minutes (each group presents one of the 10 STIs).

LEARNING GOAL

Learning about different types of STDs, what the symptoms and signs are, what can be transmitted, how it is diagnosed, possible existing treatments, risky behaviours and possible preventions.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will be divided into smaller groups of 2-3. They will be randomly choosing a folded paper that has one of the STDs written on it. Choose some of the ones that are most common in your country, equal to the number of groups you are making in the class.;

- Chlamydia
- Genital herpes
- Gonorrhoea
- HIV/AIDS
- HPV
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Pubic lice
- Syphilis
- Trichomoniasis

Each group will search the details and answer the questions listed for the STI that they chose. They can use online resources suggested by teachers. Emphasize that they look for correct information about these sexual health issues, on reliable websites. Give them tips for this. The teacher will draw a big table on the board with titles:

Disease Transmission

Risk behaviours for contracting the disease

Common symptoms | Possible complications | Treatment

Each group will come to the board and fill these empty spaces for their own researched STI. Each group of students will give a short presentation to their peers.

When the table is completed for all STIs, the teacher will give a sum up of the general risky behaviours, general misconceptions and most scientific websites to search information for sexual health.



SUMMARY

Students will have an accurate and clear summary of the most common STIs and how to prevent them. In case they experience any of these symptoms, they are now aware of where they can seek help. If they are not sure about STIs anymore, they know how and where to look for reliable information.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Introduce the purpose of this lesson by stating the following, “Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are spread primarily through a person-to-person contact. There are more than 30 different sexually transmittable bacteria, viruses, and parasites (World Health Organization). Young people are one of the highest risk groups for STIs but unfortunately often think they are not at risk and that STIs only happen to ‘others.’ Today’s lesson will cover how you can keep yourself and your partners safe.”

Please before starting this activity, read carefully the theoretical part with references to the guideline of WHO in need of referring your students to the right medical centres.

STIs is a better word to use than STDs: Not all infections lead to diseases (of course the ones that often are without symptoms, but also think of HIV, an infection that doesn’t become a disease until it turns into aids). Not all ST-Infections are diseases, but all ST-Diseases are Infections.

Consider also calling a medical doctor for this module or this specific activity. E.g. the nearest medical centre or the hospital near the school can be contacted for this session. Some sexual health clinics also do guest lessons. It can encourage students to know a doctor they can consult in case they experience any of these symptoms.

Additional source:

[What do you need to know to teach about STIs?](#)

[STDs \(Sexually Transmitted Diseases\)](#)

Advocates for youth, [Lesson Plan – STI Transmission Part I](#)

[5 Things to Include in Your STI/STD Health Lesson](#)

2



GENDER

2

GENDER

THEORETICAL DEPTH OF CONTENTS

TERMINOLOGIES AND MEANINGS

Gender refers to people's/society's perception and experience of masculinity and femininity or maleness and femaleness, and the social construct that assigns certain roles and behaviours to male and female bodies. Gender depends on the feeling of identity, how you know and see yourself to be, and also the expectations and roles society assigns to you based on your sex (or gender expression). Therefore, a person's gender (identity) is not necessarily congruent with their biological sex (and the gender label they were assigned at birth). Gender also influences how we value people. In most societies characteristics, hobby's, jobs, clothes, attributes etc. that are seen as masculine or linked to men are powerful. Whereas characteristics, hobbies, jobs, clothes, attributes etc. that are seen as feminine or linked to women are undervalued or even seen as weak or bad. Valuing certain attributes as powerful or weak ensures that inequality between genders is maintained.

➤➤➤ GENDER BINARY

Gender binary is a system of gender classification in which all people are categorised as being either male or female, that is, into two distinct, opposite forms of masculine and feminine, whether by social system or cultural belief, excluding non-binary gender expressions/identities.

➤➤➤ GENDER EXPRESSION

Gender expression refers to people's manifestation of their gender identity: the way in which people manifest themselves in a gendered way, for example through haircuts, clothing, and also behaviour. Some people present themselves as male, others female, others present as both at the same time or don't want to be seen as male or female at all. This can be but isn't necessarily linked to the person's sex assigned at birth or gender identity.

➤➤➤ GENDER NON-CONFORMITY

Gender non-conformity/ being gender non-conforming involves not conforming to a given culture's gender norms/gender expectations. 'Gender non-conforming' refers to people whose gender expression does not match their society's prescribed gender roles or norms for a given gender identity. Gender non-conformity transgresses societal or psychological expectations of perceived gender assignment, through presentation, behaviour, identity or other means. This is most often about expression, and not about identity.

➤➤➤ GENDER FLUID & GENDER QUEER

Genderfluid people are those who prefer to remain flexible about their gender iden-

tity rather than identifying with a single gender. People who identify as genderfluid may fluctuate between genders or express multiple genders at the same time. **Genderqueer**, if used as an adjective, refers to people who transgress distinctions of gender, regardless of their self-defined gender identity, i.e. those who ‘queer’ gender, expressing it non-normatively, or overall not conforming to the binary genders of man and woman.

➤➤➤ TRANSGENDER

When it comes to gender identity, we often refer to the ‘T’ in the LGBTI+ acronym:

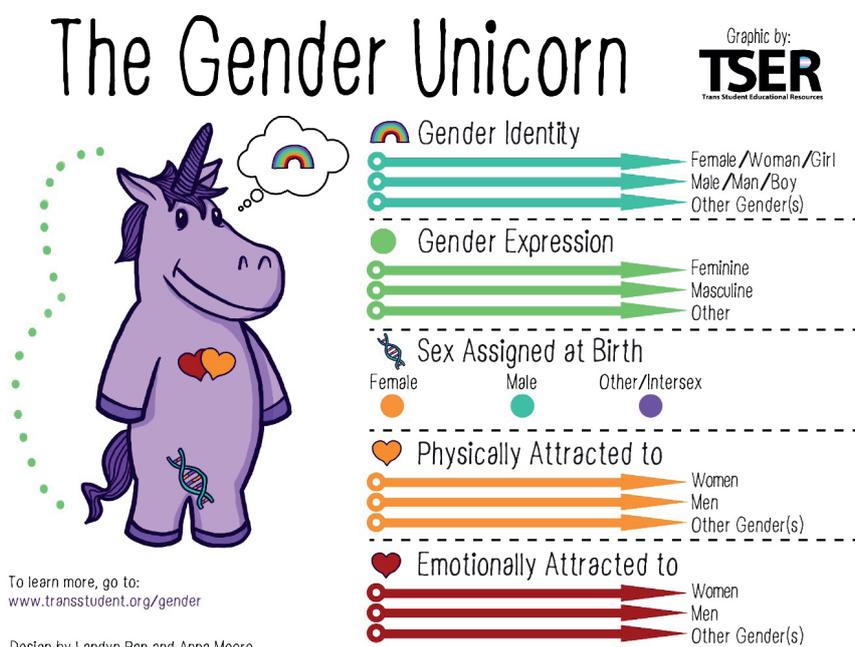
Trans/transgender is an inclusive umbrella term referring to those people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. It includes but is not limited to: men and women who are ‘binary trans’, meaning they identify as either male or female, while at birth they were assigned female or male, respectively. Other people who identify as transgender can have any other gender identity that is not (cisgender) man or woman. Trans people express their gender through their choice of clothes, body modifications (including hormonal treatment or surgical procedures), or other forms of gender presentation.

Transition means the process of changing someone’s gender to match the person’s gender identity. This process is not just about medical/physical transition, but also includes some or all of the following social and legal adjustments: coming out to family, friends and colleagues; dressing and acting according to one’s gender; changing one’s name and/or sex marker on legal documents; and meeting other legal or judicial procedures depending on national law.

➤➤➤ GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Gender reassignment surgery is a medical term for what trans people often call gender confirmation surgery: surgery to bring (some of) the primary and secondary sex characteristics of a trans person’s body into alignment with their gender identity. Not all transgender people want surgeries, or have the option to get surgeries. Surgeries also aren’t a prerequisite to be transgender, or identify as a different gender than you were assigned at birth. Gender reassignment surgery is a medical term for what trans people often call gender confirmation surgery: surgery to bring the primary and secondary sex characteristics of a trans person’s body into alignment with their gender identity.

This graphic, which is similar to [The Genderbread Person](#), accurately portray the distinction between gender, sex assigned at birth, and sexuality. It recognizes genders outside of the western gender binary dimensions; the terminologies are described in more detail below.



➤➤➤SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

The assignment and classification of people as male, female or intersex is based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" because of the vagueness of the definition of sex and its place in transphobia. Chromosomes are frequently used to determine sex from prenatal karyotyping (although not as often as genitalia). Chromosomes do not always determine genitalia, sex, or gender.

➤➤➤PHYSICALLY ATTRACTED TO

Sexual orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can depend on a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

➤➤➤EMOTIONALLY ATTRACTED TO

Romantic/emotional orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. There are other types of attraction related to gender such as aesthetical or platonic. These are simply two common forms of attraction.

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[The Genderbread person](#) website

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LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TARGET GROUP

14 to 20 years old including people with social and/or intellectual disabilities

 **DURATION OF THE MODULE** 90 - 100 minutes (reserve 30 - 40 minutes for the theatre of the oppressed)

LEARNING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To understand the difference between gender and sex.
- To identify gender as a social construct.
- To recognize gender diversity and spectrum.
- To examine gender (in)equality and propose ways to improve it.
- To discuss the influence of gender on sexuality and consent (e.g. expectations in relationships, experiences and skills, analysing the social construct).
- To identify the influence of religion, media and role models.
- To understand the social and medical transition for transgender individuals.
- To learn, reflect on and practice using gender neutral pronouns and forms of addressing.

TARGET EXECUTORS

Teachers

GENERAL TIPS FOR THE EDUCATORS

- Make sure you are familiar with the terminology used on this module. Students might not be familiar with some terms and ask for clarifications, or they might have mixed them up.
- To be better prepared, you can provide a Google Form to the students with questions they might have, related to the module, or what they expect to learn from it.
- Make sure you respect each and everyone's pronouns. Find out what gender neutral pronouns (nonbinary) people prefer in your language. Practice using gender neutral pronouns yourself, so you can give examples of how to use them.
- Try to be inclusive to the students with disabilities.

ACTIVITY 1 - GETTING STARTED: WARM UP ACTIVITY

DURATION 10 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Getting to know each other and introduce the subject.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Everybody including the teacher participates. Make a circle of chairs using one chair less, so there is always one person standing. The teacher will start by standing in the middle of the circle and will make the first statement:

"I feel masculine/feminine when..."

Everyone to whom the sentence also applies, will stand up and then will sit down on a different chair. The person that will remain standing will continue the activity by making the same statement

"I feel masculine/feminine when..."

Try to bring up some positive and subtly counter-stereotypical subjects regarding gender and not

just talk about superficial physical characteristics. You could use for example some of the following statements:

- I feel feminine when I play sports.
- I feel masculine when I watch romantic movies.
- I feel feminine when I play electric guitar like I am in Pearl Jam.
- I feel masculine when I do the dishes/tidy my room.
- I feel feminine when I am working in the garden.
- I feel masculine when I hug my friends

Please create a positive social norm setting by statements like:

- I feel masculine/feminine when I stand up against discrimination
- I feel masculine/feminine when I let my friends/strangers be themselves around me
- I feel masculine/feminine when I think we should all accept each other
- I feel masculine/feminine when I say I am looking forward to the rest of this workshop



SUMMARY

Students can see how their identities differ and overlap. They have gotten to know each other and the subject is introduced in a low-key manner. The teacher can set a positive social norm.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



When you begin this activity, you can let the participants use statements they come up with themselves, making sure you end up in the middle sometimes to supply examples like the one given above. Try to guide them towards the counter-stereotypical, but don't push them too much.

You can use an additional energizer from another module, apart from the one proposed, if you think it's essential to strengthen the bond of the participants or if you notice that some participants are not as engaged or relaxed as the others. Note that the 10 minutes set for this part will run long in that case.

ACTIVITY 2 – WHO IS THIS PROFESSIONAL

 **DURATION** 30 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

The socially constructed ideas around professions might influence a teenager's career decisions or their attitude towards someone who defies these notions. The aim of this activity is to reflect on these social constructs, discuss our own stereotypes and hopefully break them.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Divide the students in groups of 5-6, depending on the number of pupils in the classroom. Give a few pieces of paper and some markers to each team. Start by presenting various professions and ask the students to write down who this professional might be according to them. They should at least answer the following questions:

What is the gender of this professional?

What is the name of this professional?

What does this professional do every day?

Allow 3 minutes for the students to decide on each of the professions you presented. Once they are done, ask them to present what they wrote down and ask them follow up questions like:

How did you choose this person for this job?

Do you think a person of another gender could do this job?

Do you think the idea that there are feminine and masculine occupations could influence young people? How?

Do you think that if a man does a 'feminine job' he will be treated differently, or vice versa? Why? How do you feel about this? Do you feel this is fair?

Once the activity is over, discuss with the students about how our perceptions and social constructs around gender preoccupy our expectations on what jobs, roles, characteristics, beliefs and attitudes a person might have.

Emphasise how sad it is that we are missing out on a lot of talented professionals, if only half of the population (either men or women) are 'allowed' to do certain professions.

Emphasise that fortunately, with all these professions, examples can be found of professionals with different genders, so it is very much possible for people with different genders to have these professions.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



We recommend the following professions:

- Nail artist
- Plumber
- Mechanic
- Hairdresser

- Ballet dancer
- Professional footballer
- Doctor
- Physicist

You can use other professions that might be better examples in your country. You could also consider the following famous real-life examples:

- Megan Rapinoe, Professional Footballer
- Lee Stafford, Hairdresser
- Marie Curie, Scientist
- Rudolf Nureyev, Ballet dancer

If a student insists on some stereotypical views (“no way girls can be professional footballers”) try to encourage the student to explore what led them to believe so. Present them with counter stereotypical examples. Use some of the above examples, or try to find some examples from your own cultural context.



SUMMARY

Students will explore and discuss the stereotypes for “female” and “male” jobs.

ALTERATIONS OF THIS ACTIVITY

- You can give a profession to the participants and ask them to draw the professional (physical appearance, clothes etc.). This can let the imagination of the participants take over and see if there are some stereotypes regarding some professions (e.g. how they dress, what they look like, their gender etc.).
- You can create small scenarios or a role play activity (e.g. an interview) and ask them questions. The participants should try and respond as the professionals. Let the participants play out the scenario and see if they adopt characteristics they believe this professional possesses. Try and see if they play out some stereotypes and discuss them. If you use this alteration, try doing warm up exercises with the students, otherwise they might be reluctant to participate.

ACTIVITY 3 – MOVIE TIME



DURATION 35 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

The students learn what gender stereotypes are, some examples of gender identities and that gender differs from sexual orientation. The students will learn to respectfully discuss ideas around gender and identity.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Here are some links to interesting videos to introduce gender identity topics.

- [Range of Gender Identities](#)
- [Gender Identity and Pronouns](#)

After showing one or more of these videos to the classroom, ask questions and give everyone some space to express their ideas. Some questions you could use for the video Range of Gender Identities are:

What is the difference between your sex and your gender?

The person in the video said gender is a spectrum. What does that mean?

(Answer: That gender isn't binary, but many different shades.)

What does transgender mean?

What does non-binary mean?

What does genderqueer/genderfluid mean?

Is being trans similar to being gay, lesbian or bisexual?

(Answer: No, because trans is about your gender, not who you are attracted to. You cannot guess what someone's sexual identity is, based on their gender identity. Trans is part of the LGBTQ+-abbreviation though, because historically trans people faced similar - though distinct - discrimination as gay, lesbian and bisexual people, so they often feel part of the same community.)

The grandfather is still confused about this topic. Why do you think that is?

(Answer: Because it's new to him, it was less well known in his days, though it already existed, and there are a lot of new terms. Maybe he doesn't know how to address Alex, which pronouns to use. Emphasise: this is all very understandable, and okay! A lot of people, including some of you probably, feel a bit confused about this.)

When this is new and a bit confusing to you, what can you do to still be respectful to other people? The video mentions: "Be a friend or ally to people of all genders," what does this mean?

(Answer: don't assume people's gender, or what characteristics they have based on their gender. If you are unsure of something, you can ask respectfully. Address people with the name and pronouns they want to be addressed with. Don't be afraid to make a mistake, you can always say sorry and keep trying. And if other people are being disrespectful, ask them too.)

Ask students whether they were aware of the different identities shown in the video and whether they have any questions. Explain to the students that stereotypes limit individuals' perception and actions. Many of these stereotypes are reinforced and reproduced every day, in many ways, through television, books, social media etc. Ask the students if they can give examples of that reinforcement,

or do it yourself if students cannot. Ask them if it is good or bad, or what they think of the fact this happens.

There is a difference between sex (attributed in birth) and gender (a personal experience that is socially constructed). Each person has the right to express themselves the way they want and people need to respect other people's choices.



SUMMARY

In this activity students will watch some videos and discuss about their beliefs around gender stereotypes, identities and sexual orientation.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



The first video is the one you can use in your classroom. The second video is more in-depth information about the topic for the facilitator. The second video is more theoretical, so only show that video if the students' knowledge about gender is above average. The videos are with English with subtitles. In case this is an issue, we encourage each facilitator to find similar videos in their language so it's easier for the participants to focus on the activity. Finding the right video in your language can be a bit tricky. To make sure you find the perfect video, we made a list of important messages that the video should include. If you can't find a fitting video in your language you can also use the English one and translate it if needed.

What should the video include?

What the difference is between gender identity and sexual orientation

Neutral pronouns being used (they/them)

Gender identities (non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid)

The video should highlight that it's okay to have a gender identity that's different from the norm

ACTIVITY 4 – CASE STUDIES

 **DURATION** 30 minutes

Alteration: +10 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

- Understand and can recognise examples of sexism and homophobia.

- Understand that stereotypes play a big role in sexist/homophobic ideas persisting.
- Empathise with people experiencing sexism and homophobia.
- Think about how to combat stereotypes and examples of homophobia.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Tell the students that you would like their opinion on some incidents. Present each case study separately in a PowerPoint presentation and read it out to the class. After each case study, ask them the follow-up questions written underneath and give room for everyone to participate.

Case studies

1. John is fifteen years old and has recently moved to a different town with his parents. As he hadn't had the chance to meet people and make friends yet, he decided to find an extracurricular activity to do after school. He searched for lessons or activities available and he found an incredible offer about some ballet classes. On Wednesday, after school, he went to enrol in the lessons. When he entered the class, the girls that were already there were really surprised and staring at him. After he explained that he wanted to attend the lessons, the girls started pointing at him, laughing. The teacher did not react at all and looked really surprised. John ran out of the class, crying.

Do you think there are stereotypes in the case of John? Could you name some?

What emotions do you think John would be feeling?

Do you think that something like that could happen in real life?

How do you think you would react if something like that happens when you are around?

2. Laura is running for president of the class. She is really happy that she will have a chance to contribute to the exercise of students' rights and she has planned what she wants to change. One day, five of her male classmates approached her and said "You can't be the president of our class! You're a girl! Girls cannot be the leaders!". Laura was devastated, since she had been trying really hard to find ways in order for all students to be represented by her plan.

Do you think there are stereotypes in the case of Laura? Could you mention some?

What emotions do you think Laura would be feeling?

Do you think that something like that could happen in real life?

How do you think you would react if something like that happens when you are around?

3. Paul is a 17-year-old boy. He's into girls and has been dating someone for a while, he likes to hang out with male classmates, and does what other boys his age do. One day, his girlfriend Sarah wants their relationship to go further, she asks Paul if he wants to have sex with her. Paul isn't into it, he doesn't feel ready yet as this is his first ever relationship. Sarah then started mocking him, asking him if he was gay and she told everyone in their class that he doesn't want to have sex with her. The next day, the whole school is calling Paul names, calling him gay, telling him that he is a 'weirdo' and that this is not normal.

Do you think there are stereotypes in the case of Paul? Could you mention some?

What emotions do you think Paul would be feeling?

Do you think that something like that could happen in real life?

How do you think you would react if something like that happens when you are around?



SUMMARY

Students work on different scenarios and express their opinions on incidents of sexism (gender stereotypes) and homophobia.

ALTERATIONS OF THIS ACTIVITY

To help the participants, you can re-enact the case studies and use the description as the scenario. The participants can also be a part of the scenario and then you can ask them the questions. You can also add more questions:

How did this make you feel?

What would you do if this happened to a friend or to a classmate?



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



When you ask the students how they would react if something like these cases would happen around them, you have the opportunity to teach them how to be allies and how to battle discrimination, in case they themselves don't know what to do.

The best first thing to do in a situation like that is ask questions to the people laughing/bullying: "Why is this funny? Do you really think that X? What did you just say?"

Secondly, they should try to speak to the empathy of the discriminating person: "How would you feel if someone said this about you?" or call them on their values: "I've always known you as a very respectful person, and this is not in line with that, how come?" Note that this only works with someone they know relatively well.

Tell students that this might feel uncomfortable at first, but it is something they will get better at the more they practice it!

ACTIVITY 5 – HELLO NO

 **DURATION** 30 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Objectives:

- Give participants an opportunity to think and share opinions about gender and consent
- Recognise and question stereotypes around gender identify how gender stereotypes affect people

- Question and deconstruct the stereotypes and prejudices connected to gender
- Reflect on and question the social pressure connected to gender.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Ask participants to divide into two groups: those who identify as male and those who do not identify as male. Parallel scenes will be presented in the groups. You could choose to do this activity plenary if you don't have 4 facilitators available.

If you do the exercise with the whole class instead of groups you go over both the male questions and questions for the people who don't identify as male.

In the group with students who do not identify themselves as males, one of the facilitators will talk on the phone with their partner and will start saying "no" to something that is being proposed. The other facilitator asks:

What happens when a girl says no to her partner?

Keep it general, not talking about boyfriend or girlfriend and see if the participants mention the gender of the other person that they do not see. In this case you can tackle the topic, otherwise you should not be forcing it.

What might the partner be asking?

How might the partner react to the refusal?

What will her friend think about her refusal?

The same scene will be interpreted in the males' group. The actor is talking on the phone with his partner who says no to something he is proposing.

What should his reaction be?

Why is the partner refusing? Does it matter why they refuse?

Can a man also say no? Is it different than when a woman says no?

Is there a difference if this happens in front of his friends or while he is alone?

If his friends hear the conversation or he tells them afterwards, what will they say? What will they think of him? And about his partner?

Working in separate groups will let them be more honest with each other and share common experiences.

At the end of the exercise, in the debriefing phase, the group will come back together and will be able to share (if they want and how much they want) their experience during the exercise. Summarise the talking points within the groups (without naming & blaming) and open up the conversation to participants to share their thoughts/experiences. Questions to ask in plenary could be:

- How was it to do this exercise?
- What was the exercise about?
- What is the meaning of consent?
- Why is it more difficult for some people to say no than it is for others?
- Do we expect different things from different genders regarding consent? And why?
- If someone was pressured into saying yes or no, is that still consent?



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



In order to carry out this activity, 4 facilitators are needed (ideally two women and two men). Do not divide the students yourself: let them join the group where they feel most represented. Dividing the classroom in two groups depending on their gender, especially while working on genders, might make you sceptical. The exercise is meant to investigate and make participants think about their roles in society depending on their gender, the systems of power, and the pressure they receive from their peers and adults (society) because of their gender. How does this pressure influence them when (not) expressing consent, or (not) receiving a refusal.

In the scene, actors should not specify the gender of the person on the other side of the phone. Let the participants form their own idea, and if it happens naturally enter in the topic of sexual orientation as well. Ask the student why they assumed the gender of the partner, and if and how the situation would be different if the partner has a different gender.

Please keep in mind that, always but especially now in the plenary discussion, students should not be forced to share opinions, if they are not ready to do so.

ACTIVITY 6 – OPINION LINE

 **DURATION** 20 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Objectives:

- Give participants an opportunity to think and share opinions about gender and relationships and consent
- Identify the challenges/difficulties around consent and prejudices connected to gender

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Mark a line on the room floor using tape. Ask all the participants to stand on the line. Explain that one end means yes and the other end means no. Read a statement out loud and let participants choose where to stand on the line based on how much or how little they agree.

Start with simple statements so that the participants can understand the method, like “*Teenagers should be allowed to smoke*”. Move on to statements about relationship issues, for example, some of the issues which came out during the previous exercise. Here are some examples:

- If you don't have a relationship/friends, you have a problem.
- Trust is a basic value in a good relationship.
- If you say “no” many times people will no longer invite you to do things together.
- If your friends say you are wrong, you should reconsider your choices.
- True friendship never occurs between boys and girls.
- It's okay not to tell everything to your friends.
- Cool guys are popular among girls.
- Girls are more condescending than boys.
- you should share everything (emotions/dilemmas/thoughts) with the other person.

To end a relationship is always painful.

After each statement, ask participants to briefly explain why they have chosen their positions. Participants can change their positions on the line if someone or something causes them to change their minds. They can share why they changed their minds. In the closing circle, participants can share what was easy and what was difficult during the exercise.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



You could carry out the activity HELLO NO and debrief through the activity Opinion line. If you do this, you should use the questions mentioned in Activity 5, as these can work as opinion line statements too.

3



SEXUALITY & SEX

SEXUALITY & SEX

3

THEORETICAL DEPTH OF CONTENTS

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND SEXUALITY

The term sex refers to the categories male, female or intersex. These categories are typically assigned at birth based on visible physical characteristics: the genitals. However, other characteristics are also used to define someone's sex, like their chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs and secondary sexual organs. Most people will be assigned male or female at birth, but roughly 1 in 2000 people are intersex. This means they have a combination of male and female characteristics, like a penis and uterus, XXY chromosomes, or higher levels of hormones associated with the opposite sex. Sometimes this is apparent at birth, but sometimes this only becomes apparent during puberty or adulthood.

Sexuality is a very broad subject, of which a lot of connected themes surround us daily in the world (media, advertisements, societal expectations, etc.). Sexuality can include everything from a person's biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, pregnancy and reproduction, to every society's norms, opinions, representation, and expectations around these subjects. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.

Sexual activity is any behaviour that feels sexual. People engage in a variety of sexual acts, ranging from activities done alone (e.g., masturbation) to acts with another person (e.g., sexual intercourse, non-penetrative sex, oral sex, etc.) in varying patterns of frequency, for a wide variety of reasons. Sexual activity usually results in sexual arousal and physiological changes in the aroused person.

➤➤➤ PORN¹

Pornography, or *porn*, is represented by text, pictures, audio or videos of people having sex, or doing sexy things. The term does not include live exhibitions like sex shows and striptease. Pornography may be presented in a variety of media:

- books
- magazines
- photos
- videos and films
- animation
- writing
- video games
- audio recordings

Many people look at pornography on the internet. Some people look at pornography because it makes them feel sexy or aroused. This is healthy human behaviour, and not doing this is also healthy human behaviour. They might touch their private parts to satisfy their physical arousal when they are looking at pornography. This is called masturbation.

The main objective of talking about pornography in a sex education course is to explain what pornography is, that watching or wanting to watch a porn is a normal desire, to clarify the difference between fantasy and real-life desires and identifying ways in which pornographic material isn't always representative of real life sex.

¹ Porn can give misleading information about consent and about expectations of I the language is concrete and simplified to be inclusive for all groups of students

sexual relationships, or influence a person's self image/self worth through specific (non-)representation. This is because porn actors are cast in a role because they have a certain look/body type/etc.

➤➤➤ MASTURBATION

"Masturbation is the key to safe sex for kids and teenagers" says Moushumi Ghose, a licensed sex therapist. *"What better way to promote safe sex than by teaching them about masturbation, to pleasure themselves, to take care of their own needs first. The global effect of embracing masturbation for kids would be profound. When we empower kids with knowledge, we give them the tools to make healthy decisions for themselves"*. By encouraging young people to get familiar with their body, and get to know what they like and what they don't like, they will be better prepared to communicate this with possible sexual partners. Better knowledge and communication will help with negotiating consent as well.

Culture, taboos, rules and also religion have a strong influence on these kinds of topics, but when society changes, these things can also change. Most of the sexual desires, sexual behaviours are culturally influenced behaviours. In some cultures or time periods, like the 1900's America, there was a strong belief that masturbation is a danger to one's health. This has been disproven, yet some people still tend to believe this.

➤➤➤ ONLINE DATING & SEXTING²

Online dating websites and apps let you find other people you might be interested in dating. There are many online dating websites and apps you can choose from; some are free to use, others are under payment. You must be 18 years or older to use most of these. Some are specifically for people with a certain sexuality. For people whose sexuality is different from the norm (queer/BDSM/fetish), online dating can be a very important tool to find people with the same interests.

When using online dating it is important to think of your own safety. These precautions might help:

- You could ask somebody you trust to help you set up your online dating profile.
- Take your time when getting to know somebody you meet using an online dating website or app. Do not rush to meet somebody in real life. Try talking to them on the phone first.
- Always log out of the online dating website or app when you have finished using it, if it's on a public computer/device.

When using online dating you should not:

- Include your full name, address, workplace, phone number or bank details on your profile. You should not answer questions about these things either. This information is private and should only be shared with people you trust.
- Give money to somebody you met online.
- Click on suspicious links, or links sent by somebody you met online and don't know very well yet.
- Send sexy/nude pictures to somebody without asking that person first. It is against the law in some countries to send nude pictures to somebody unless both people consent (say it is okay). If somebody asks you for sexy pictures and it makes you uncomfortable, do not send them. If somebody sends you sexy pictures and it makes you feel uncomfortable, delete them (note: if you want to file a police report about harassment, it actually helps if you don't delete the proof). If someone makes you feel uncomfortable online, block them. Tell somebody you trust, especially if the person who made you feel uncomfortable is someone you also know offline.

2 it might be important for some group of students who feel more comfortable to express themselves through images, texts, voice via online

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TARGET GROUP 14-20 years old including people with social and/or intellectual disabilities

 **DURATION OF THE MODULE** 90 - 100 minutes (reserve 30 - 40 minutes for the theatre of the oppressed)

LEARNING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Reflect on and explore the concept of personal space and safe distance in relation to the concept of consent communication.
- Talk about the concepts sex and sexuality, and see how broad it is because of how differently everyone thinks about these concepts.
- Learn about different STIs; the symptoms, how to prevent them, when and where to get tested.
- Discover common misconceptions and find actual answers.
- Learn where and how to find reliable information surrounding sex and sexuality.
- Learn, in an age-appropriate and non-judgemental way, that pornography is not an actual representation of sex and sexuality, and watching it every now and then (or not watching it) isn't bad or unhealthy.
- Learn and talk, in an age-appropriate and non-judgemental way, about masturbation, the normalcy of it, and (depending on the cognitive level of the students) that there is a time and a place for it.

TARGET EXECUTORS Teachers

ACTIVITY 1 - GETTING STARTED: SAFE DISTANCE

 **DURATION** 20 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

This movement-based exercise will allow participants to feel the tensions generated by closeness and distance when relating to others. Participants will experience and reflect on what "safe distance" (in the sense of personal space) means to them.

Objectives:

- Identify, reflect and explore the concept of personal space and safe distance using our bodies in relation to others.
- To feel (embody) dynamics of social (interpersonal) distancing – how we create, maintain and change the distance together.
- To experiment with physical distance and navigate the physical distance in relation to others.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

- Students will work in pairs. They will stand facing each other, some distance apart, with an object (pivot) in the middle.
- The facilitators will demonstrate the exercise by moving around their pivot, being careful to maintain a distance which is always equivalent between the object and both people in the pair. (i.e. if one person steps back away from the pivot, the other person in the pair will too.)
- After the demonstration, it's the students' turn. Don't forget to tell them they need to be aware of all the other pairs around them as well. They shouldn't bump into one another!
- The exercise needs to be done in complete silence (it's okay if it's not completely silent, but the students do need to strive for this) and with participants looking into each other's eyes as

much as they can.

- The students must try different movement speeds, always paying close attention to the feedback they receive from their partner and at the same time to the pivot, to maintain balance in the distance between them and the pivot.
- There is no predetermined leader/follower, but it might naturally occur.
- This is an embodied exercise, and the students should experience and feel in their bodies what personal space and safe distance mean to them personally. Should the class need it, you might specify beforehand that they should be aware of sensations in their body while doing the exercise.

Debrief together as a group. Reflect about the following aspects:

- What was easy and what was difficult?
- What happened, what were you feeling?
- Did you feel something in your body? And where?
- Did you feel any limits or boundaries because of the eye contact? And because of the movements? How?
- How did you feel your body before and after the exercise? Did you notice any change?
- Have you discovered or learnt something about what personal space means to you?

OPTIONAL OR ALTERATIONS

You may remove the pivot from the middle and ask your participants to keep the same distance as if the pivot was still there between them. As a last step in this exercise you can ask participants to continue to work with their partners but this time forgetting about the pivot. They will try to negotiate the right distance without speaking, and experiment with moving a bit closer or further from each other.

After doing it in pairs, you can also try the exercise with small groups or the entire group pivoting together.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Don't explain beforehand what safe distance/personal space means. This is an embodied exercise, so explaining the theory too much beforehand would take away from the embodied experience the students will have. Afterwards, in the debriefing, you can ask about what 'safety' feels like when it comes to distancing.

All communication consists in a sequence of openings and closings, showing something to one another, disclosing oneself and putting limits to the disclosure. Such movements towards and away follow our two basic and seemingly opposed motivations: the motivation towards sharing and belonging and the motivation towards separating and being different from the others. This should not be seen as a confusion, rather as sign of the complexity and dynamism of our internal self-system: we are indeed motivated by divergent forces and we seek a dynamic equilibrium between these in almost each interaction.

Relationships are created through the process of different interactions, and in all our relationships we find the same dynamic of moving towards and away from the other. Through this process, we negotiate the appropriate distance or proximity in between us. We may not be quite conscious of it, but we have a quite good sense of what this "right distance" is: as soon as there is a transgression in either direction, emotional reactions call our attention to a disorder in the implicit choreography. The actual physical distance we take from another person is not random, it is part of our personal and cultural repertoire of non-verbal communication. But it is much more: it includes what we say to each other and how we say it. This activity requires 2 facilitators.

Source: [Book of Good Proximity](#), Intimacy across cultures Erasmus+ project

ACTIVITY 2 - BRAINSTORMING

 **DURATION** 20 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

- Learning that sexuality is more than just sex (also relationships, identity etc).
- Explore the diversity of the ideas and experiences about sex and sexuality;
- Understand that we all have our own feelings and opinions about sex and sexuality and that they are all valid (as long as you are not discriminating).
- Understand that it's okay and perfectly normal to discuss sex and sexuality with your peers and teacher.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students are invited to each say at least one word they associate with sex and sexuality. The facilitator will write down everything and already tries to categorize the words that belong to “sex” and “sexuality”.

Examples of follow up questions you can ask during the brainstorm:

- What is sex?
- Why do people have sex?
- Which sexual acts can you name?
- What's the difference between sex and sexuality?
- Which sexual orientations can you name?
- What emotions are related to sex?
- Can you talk to your friends about these topics?
- Can you talk to your parents about these topics?
- Why is it important to learn about sex?
- Is there a right age to start with sex?
- In which way does media influence our view on sex?
- In which way does religion/culture influence our view on sex?
- Where can you find reliable information about sex and sexuality?
- Should we learn about these topics in school?

Definitions for the facilitators:

SEX

Sex is any activity with oneself or others, that gives sexual pleasure or satisfies sexual arousal. Because the word is a homonym (one word with two meanings), sex also refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female, intersex, or male. People with intersex conditions have any combination of both typically male and typically female characteristics.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health is more than just being physically healthy. It also concerns emotional, mental and social well-being. Knowing yourself and your body, knowing what you want and don't want, knowing where and when to find help or other resources, and who to talk to, are all part of sexual health. According to the World Health Organisation, the definition of sexual health is:

“...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”

SEXUALITY

Sexuality is a very broad term, because it encompasses everything surrounding sex and sexual health, from personal behaviours, opinions, and feelings, to societal, cultural and religious ideas, norms and opinions about those themes. Sexual health cannot be defined, understood or made operational without a broad consideration of sexuality, which underlies important behaviours and outcomes related to sexual health. The WHO's definition of sexuality is:

"...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and, for some, reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Facilitator can add a box for anonymous questions or any online tool at the start of the activity, to know what the students would prefer to learn by this activity. In the case of a physical question box, give them all a piece of paper on which to write something, and tell the students that if they don't have a question, they should just write "no questions" and put that in the box. This way all questions will stay truly anonymous. If you are to use an online tool, it may be a good idea to not show the answers on a board/screen, because the students might find it uncomfortable or there may be students who write some things down just for 'shock value'. You as a teacher can then decide which of the useful questions to answer, or which words to write down on the board.

After this activity, the teacher will have a better picture of the students' knowledge level, important for raising their awareness on their sexual life, preventing diseases and who to refer to in case of particular symptoms.

Remember that each activity may vary in terms of visual, auditory material, selection of language, simplicity of words, length of activity, etc. depending on the target groups' characteristics like age, disability level, language comprehension, religion, the cultural context of the country. For the students who may struggle to understand abstract concepts some visual materials may be shown on the blackboard in the classroom. The following websites contain visual materials that can be helpful: All about sex, Family planning nsw.



SUMMARY

The brainstorm will show how many different things can belong to sex and sexuality. Emphasize to the students that it differs for any person what they consider to belong to sex and sexuality. Tell students that these lessons or this exercise will help prepare them for when (if at all) they want to engage in sexual activity, by teaching them to take care of themselves (and their partners).

ACTIVITY 3 - QUIZ

 **DURATION** 30 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

- Common misconceptions about sex and sexuality are diverted
- Learn how to find good resources about sex

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students have to be split up in groups. Each group will get a few question cards. Make sure all the groups get different questions than each other. It is possible to use game-based learning platforms such as Kahoot and interactive presentation tools such as Mentimeter. The groups are allowed to look up the information on their own phones/devices. As there are some websites on the cards, tell students to not just Google the subject! Make sure they write their answers down on a piece of paper. When all the groups are done, ask each group to present their questions and the answers they found. Tell them if their answers are correct or incorrect. If the answers are incorrect, explain the correct answers to everyone. If every group is done presenting their answers you could also ask the entire group the following questions:

- What information was new to you?
- What did you already know?
- Was there something that surprised you?
- How do you know which websites are reliable sources?

Questions are:

- What do the letters in LGBTQIA+ stand for? [Source for answer](#)
- What can you do to prevent pregnancy? [Source for answer](#)
- Sex and pain: What do you do if you or your partner experiences pain during sex? [Source for answer](#)
- Is masturbation normal? [Source for answer](#)
- When are you 'good at sex'? [Source for answer](#)
- Does everyone have to have sexual activity?
- When should you get tested for STIs? Source [1](#) and [2](#) for answers
- Can you get tested for STIs anonymously? [Source for answer](#)



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



It is important to keep an eye on the time and on students to see if they are using appropriate websites. Facilitators must check the websites that are being used in the exercise beforehand, so they can answer the questions students might have about the website.

ACTIVITY 4 - INTERESTING FACTS TEACH

DURATION 25 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

- Learn what pornography is and what type of pornography exists

- Learn that watching or wanting to watch porn is a normal desire
- Talk about the difference between fantasy and real-life desires
- Be able to identify the ways in which pornographic material isn't always representative of real sex.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

A list of statements about the porn, porn sector, type of pornography will be displayed as sentences on the screen of the class or one the papers that will be given to each group of students. Some suggestions:

The word "pornography" is from the Greek words porne (prostitute) and grapho (to write or to record). So, in other words, pornography means "writing about prostitutes"

Porn makes up 30% of all the data transferred across the Internet

Every second, nearly 30,000,000 unique Internet users view porn

Twelve per cent of websites on the Internet are pornography

Specific kind of porns like magazines, written stories can stimulate sexual fantasies of people in different ways

Diverse media tools can help people to not develop an addiction

Watching porn video is a passive action by a user

Reading written sex stories can help people for their imagination

Different media tools may have different side effects

Sex workers have to get tested for any STIs regularly

There is a porn video sector made by women and for women that is called feminist pornography

Porn video sector is lead by mostly men

Pleasure of women in porn videos are important

Both partners have to be satisfied with their sexual relation

The average porn actress earns between \$800 and \$1,000 for a male-female sex scene, while men in porn average \$500-\$600 per scene

The average age of first Internet porn exposure is 11 years old

All porn is sex work, not all sex work is porn

Watching porn is a normal behaviour

Not watching porn is a normal behaviour

Porn can help people to explore their own sexual desires

Many people use pornography as a leisure activity to relieve stress or distract them from uncomfortable emotions.

Desire to watch a specific fantasy in porn does not mean you want to have it in real-life

Porn can be watched with a partner

Porn can be watched alone

Porn can create a desire for masturbation during or after watching

Watching porn with a partner can help a couple to identify what their desires about their sexual life are

Of men who masturbated frequently, 70% used pornography at least once a week

Seeing the bodies of people portrayed in porn can create pressure on people

Most people take some time to be aroused and don't want sex the whole time

Watching porn via illegal extensions of websites can lead to delegitimization of the industry

It is important to know about law and rules on pornography

Porn addiction is an unhealthy situation

Then students will be divided into smaller groups and will be asked to create a discussion about these facts and statements. They can group the statements as “favourable” and “unfavourable” or “neutral” according to their personal opinions.

Teacher will emphasise that it is important to think around these sentences, to not spend very long time thinking to categorise each sentence correctly. There is no right or wrong. Important is to be aware of these facts about pornography. The teacher will encourage students to be kind to each other while discussing their opinions about the statements.

Finally, the teacher will ask students “*which facts or statements made you most surprised?*” and will briefly sum up saying “*Watching porn is a normal act and is not to be judged. However, like any form of media, consuming so much of it that it distracts or keeps you from the rest of your life, can be a sign of addiction.*”

The aim is to make students aware of the positive and negative aspects of porn and related behaviours.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



This activity would require skills on reading and language comprehension, teachers may decide to exclude this activity according to the disability level of the classroom.

Interesting statements at the beginning of the activity will take the students' attention on the topic of pornography. It is aimed to show that porn is a media sector and most of the time does not reflect real-life sexual relation contexts. Watching/enjoying porn is very common.

Additional source:

Making Sense of Relationships, NSPCC

Teaching and learning about pornography in health education, NZHEA

ACTIVITY 5 - TOUCH AND FIND OUT



DURATION 25 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

The activity “Touch and find out” was designed in Spain by La Xixa Teatre to give answers to a concern that was expressed by the school they collaborated with for the piloting of this training. One of the main concerns was related to masturbation, as it had happened that some students had been found masturbating in class. For this reason, the school staff considered important to offer an activity that would help the students reflect on the difference between intimate and public spaces, on what is appropriate and accepted at school, what can be done publicly, and what should be done in a private space, or what, if done in the presence of other people, requires everyone's consent. How-

ever, it is important that this would be done without feeding the already big stigma existing around masturbation.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

PART ONE

This can also be done with the students finding an object in the room to hold and touch, instead of visualising their favourite food.

- The facilitator asks the participants to find a space in the room where they feel comfortable and where they feel they have some privacy.
- The facilitator invites the participants to sit down (on the floor or on chairs, wherever they feel more comfortable) and to close their eyes.
- At this point the facilitator asks the participants to become aware of their breathing, without modifying it. Keeping the same rhythm and intensity.
- The facilitator explains that now the entire group is going to breathe at the same time, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth. The facilitator counts “1,2,3...and inhale”. Then, “1,2,3...and exhale”.
- Once this has been repeated a few times, the facilitator asks the participants to breathe in their own rhythm again and to imagine their favourite food. Just think about it for a few seconds.
- *Visualise it. What is the colour? The texture? Is it visually attractive?*
- Now focus on the smell. How does it smell? Focus a little more and check if you can smell it right now. Does this smell take you somewhere else? Does it open pleasant memories?
- *Now imagine that you are eating it. Chew it. Feel the sensations in your mouth.*
- *Now make the sound you would make while chewing it.*
- *Exaggerate that sound and feel the pleasure of eating your favourite food.*

The facilitator can decide to end the activity here without proceeding to the next part. In that case, use what is below for debriefing. If the activity continues, move on to part two.

Ask the participants to open their eyes when they feel ready and ask the following questions.

- What was the food you imagined?
- How was imagining having it in front of you, to see it and smell it?
- When you were invited to do so, did you feel like you were eating it?
- How was the experience? Did you feel some pleasure?
- We are talking about pleasure connected with food. But what happens if we shift the concept of pleasure to sexuality?

PART TWO

Once they are ready, tell them they are going to do the same they did with visualising their favourite food, but now with touching their skin: forearms, leg, head and neck.

Ask them to keep their eyes closed and now touch the internal part of their arms and think about its characteristics: its temperature, its texture, etc..

How is the skin in that part? What do I feel when I touch it?

Ask them to keep their eyes closed and now touch their leg (it must be a part which is not covered by clothes).

How is my skin in that part? What do I feel when I touch it?

Ask them to keep their eyes closed and now touch their head and give themselves a massage.

How is my skin in that part? What do I feel when I touch it?

Ask them to keep their eyes closed and now touch their neck.

How is my skin in that part? What do I feel when I touch it?

While they are still with their eyes closed, ask them to take a deep breath and remember those sen-

sations and think:

- How did I feel when I was touching myself?
- Which part did I like touching the most?
- In which moment was I the happiest?
- Did I feel pleasure?

No shared answers are expected. The teachers should stress that those are questions to stimulate reflection. They do not need to be answered out loud and no one needs to feel exposed.

Before the students open their eyes again, repeat the breathing exercise for a moment, and have them think of their favourite food again. This will be a good cool-down for any accidental arousal that has been felt.

Touching oneself can give pleasure, it can cause relaxation and/or excitement. We all need a space of intimacy where we can freely experience pleasure with our body. However, it is important to make a difference between intimate spaces where one can fully live the pleasure and public spaces where there are other people and norms to be respected.

OPTIONAL

Ask participants to find a more public space in the room and feel how they inhabit it in a different way.

Do you feel the difference?

Conclude with:

It can happen that while you are in a public space (like in class, in a cafeteria or on a bus) you feel arousal, or the need to experience pleasure with yourself. It is okay, but remember those are public spaces where people expect you not to share intimate experiences. Managing this kind of situation takes some effort and exercise but it is not impossible. Especially after puberty it will become easier. Remember to breathe in, breathe out and wait for the right moment and place to live the experience.

If questions/remarks come up, take some time to address these in a taboo-free and non-judgemental way.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



It is fundamental that before starting the activity, the facilitator(s) does not mention that it is about masturbation, in order to avoid reluctance and embarrassment in the participants.

Masturbation at any age is not dirty, shameful or illicit, it is perfectly normal and healthy, but it is a private matter that can occur only in an intimate-safe space, and doing it in public is legally forbidden. This does not mean that it cannot be practised in the company of a partner or mutually, whether there is consent of all the parties.

It is important to consider and explain to the participants that sexuality is continuously constructed and reconstructed through socio-cultural processes and practices, so our view on sexuality, what is socially accepted or not in public, is not the same in every culture. However, there are legal rules that as citizens we need to respect in order not to make infractions of the law.

It also needs to be acknowledged that we are all different, and while it is normal for some people to feel sexual attractions towards others and wanting to experience pleasure with their body, there are also asexual people who do not experience sexual attraction toward individuals of any gender

and have or low or no interest in or **desire** for any type of **sexual activity**. **Asexuality** is distinct from **abstention from sexual activity** and from **celibacy**, which are behavioral and generally motivated by factors such as an individual's personal, social, or religious beliefs.

ACTIVITY 6 - QUIZ ABOUT MASTURBATION

 **DURATION** 15 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

- Learn that masturbation at any age is not dirty, shameful or illicit, it's perfectly normal and healthy behaviour for people.
- Learn about masturbation in an age appropriate and comfortable way.
- Learn that it is normal to have sexual urges and interests at different ages.
- Learn that although masturbation is absolutely fine, boundaries must be set around it. Students will explicitly be taught about what is an appropriate time and place.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

For this activity it is possible to use game-based learning platforms such as Kahoot and interactive presentation tools such as Mentimeter.

Student will be divided into groups and match the sentences below to complete the statements about masturbation:

- Masturbation can occur ____ in safe and private places
- In order to masturbate when someone is present in the same space ____ you need their consent
- Masturbation can be done alone or ____ with others.
- Masturbation done with a partner is called ____ mutual masturbation.
- In case of ejaculation ____ it is important to clean up yourself and the space.
- Masturbation can be connected with ____ visual aids like sexting, nude images or videos, pornography, voice recordings.
- If you masturbate ____ you won't go blind because of it.
- There are ____ health benefits to masturbation.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



If you have time, you can make the exercise a bit longer: Explain why you used "you won't go blind if you masturbate" (it is a myth used to dissuade, mostly religious, youth from masturbating). Ask the students to look for more myths about masturbation from their countries as groups. List some of the interesting myths from the following website and make sure that students know they are myths, not facts.

Source: The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People with Intellectual Disability: A Scoping Review



SUMMARY

Masturbation is healthy and normal behaviour, that some people like to do, and others like to do less of, or not at all. This is something that is entirely up to you to decide for yourself. You can do it alone, in the privacy of your own home, or together with a sexual partner (if they consent to it, of course). Masturbation can help you to figure out what you find pleasurable, thereby preparing you for sexual relationships you may have.

4



CONSENT

CONSENT

4

THEORETICAL DEPTH OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS CONSENT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Consent is the set of invisible, personal rules and boundaries that must be clarified and established so that our relationship with others is protected and we can derive pleasure and enjoyment from it. Consenting to something therefore means giving permission out of free choice, for a specific thing that involves something that belongs to us, such as data, images, our personal space, or our body.

According to research on the perception of dating and sexual behaviour by a group of adolescents aged between 14 and 18, (Righi et al., 2019) it emerged that adolescents felt that girls had to express their consent to a greater extent than boys, since the latter usually played the role of initiators of the sexual act and therefore regarded the lack of an explicit 'no' as a sign that their partner was consenting.

This perception therefore sees women (in a heterosexual relationship) as entrusted with the task of "sexual gatekeeping" as a means of preventing assault (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Jozkowski, 2015).

The 'gatekeeper model' is a theory of sexual consent developed by activist Jaclyn Friedman according to which women as 'gatekeepers' reluctantly grant their partners access to their sexuality in response to a request or invitation to sexual activity from men.

This would also imply:

- a significant amount of responsibility on women to make sexual decisions for the couple;
- limiting the expression of consent as a mere expression of 'yes' or 'no', leaving little room for non-verbal signals, including silence or signs of discomfort, to convey rejection.
- no room for women to ask for what they want, or for men to follow/reply to an initiation

In the face of evidence such as that offered by the above research, there emerges an internalisation of a very limited perception of consent that is closely linked to gender. This assumption, rooted in our cultural perception, is however very relative because on the one hand it is harmful to male victims of sexual assault, typically cast as aggressors of sexual activity, and on the other hand it doesn't consider the importance of the responsibility of sexual consent in other types of sexual relationships, reiterating a heteronormative vision.

In this regard, it is therefore crucial to point out that consent is a right that should be recognised for everyone for the respect of individual human dignity and should never be taken for granted, despite what has been seen in human history in the relation between men and women.

Being clear about one's own and the other's consent is very important to respect each other and to achieve the goal of all receiving pleasure and enjoyment from

the shared experience.

When we talk about sexual consent, we mean a voluntary agreement to engage in a particular activity involving intimate and personal physical contact, which can range from a kiss to an intimate contact or a sexual activity.

It should also be borne in mind that sexual consent:

- can be expressed verbally (e.g. by saying no or yes, or even maybe);
- can be expressed with non-verbal language, through silence or nodding or meeting/matching a movement;
- requires the free will of both parties and no forcing of any kind;
- it is not permanent, so even if you have had physical contact or sexual intercourse beforehand, you still need to check that there is the will at that moment too;
- it can be given and withdrawn at any time, because one is always free to change one's mind or have uncertainties and give oneself time to think about it, and everyone has the right to change one's mind.

Consent can only be given if it is clear what is being proposed, but saying yes if you think you understand what is being proposed, while the other person actually means something else, is not technically consent. It doesn't always mean there is a problem, but there is at least a miscommunication.

Each of us through knowledge and awareness of ourselves and our limits can:

- understand our own rights and will and the rights and will of others;
- recognise our own and others' wishes, needs and limits;
- understand our own responsibilities;
- have power of choice and control over ourselves;
- be able to express consent or dissent in a respectful and explicit manner.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE RESPECTFULLY IN A RELATIONSHIP

From research, mentioned above, by Righi, Bogen & Kuo on 2019, it emerged that consent is expressed on the one hand through the verbal communication of consent (saying yes or something similar), and on the other hand through the interpretation of non-verbal signals such as silence, the exchange of glances, or the act of taking off one's clothes.

What are the different levels of communication to watch for and observe?

- Verbal: communication that takes place through the use of words, whether written or spoken;
- Non-verbal: communication that takes place through posture and facial expressions, movements, manner of dress, appearance, attitude, proxemics;
- Paraverbal: communication through the use of tone, timbre, volume and the rhythm with which words are articulated.

It is evident that communication is partly made up of words and that body language plays an important part. This type of communication is also a two-way process between us and others, and vice versa.

Therefore, we need to:

- be aware of our body language and the messages we communicate through;
- read the body language of others to understand the messages they send us.

The concept of consent is therefore based on verbal and non-verbal communication and it's not only a question of asking for permission, but also **listening to and observing the answer**.

Keeping in mind that consent is not permanent, you need to establish **ongoing communication**, also because especially in intimate situations there are specific activities that can make you feel more or less comfortable and any sexual activity needs consent from all parties involved. Consent is **specific**: For example, consent to kiss does not imply consent to have sex. It's fundamental to communicate and be sure that there is the consent from all involved.

When it comes to sexual consent it is crucial to be able to discover, decide and communicate what

we want in an intimate relationship and **not just what we do not want**.

Being able to express clearly, both verbally and non-verbally, our wishes in affectivity and sexuality will help us avoid unwanted sexual experiences, or worse coercion, as we make aware decisions about our bodies and the experiences we really want. Communicating in wishes instead of just in boundaries leaves less 'guesswork' from the person if you communicate your wishes to, whereby establishing a more positive relationship and approach to sexual activity within it.

FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE

What could help us to raise awareness of our bodies for healthy responsiveness during a relational exchange?

Normally, when confronted with certain situations, we trigger automatic reactions, which occur very quickly, before our brains can take the time to consciously react.. In situations where boundaries are crossed, or that are even scary/traumatic, the initial reaction is one of the fight/flight/freeze reactions. You cannot choose which of these is your initial reaction to a situation, but you can choose how you react after this initial reaction. To make the secondary reaction a conscious response, we need to take into account how we are feeling, and the causes and consequences of the situation and initial reaction in order to make choices that respect ourselves and others.

- Listen to your body: when you are at a crossroads, try to feel if your body is trying to send you messages and signals such as a change in breathing, a feeling of tiredness or nausea, pain in certain parts of the body. These are all important signals to listen to before acting, because the body does not lie!
- Try to take some time: when faced with certain situations that require a choice, it may be appropriate to take some time, or take a step back to stop and reflect, to understand your body, mind and emotions before giving an answer. If there is no answer, don't be in a hurry because it may be necessary to take more time and come back to the question later.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



In order to clarify the distinction between the different elements enabling communication, a practical example may be provided by using a letter (e.g., A) or a word to express a feeling, emotion or idea using only the sound of A or a word, in all its possible modulations of tone, timbre and volume, adding an accompanying gesture or movement.

NEXT LEVEL OF CONSENT

➤➤➤ INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The inclusion of alcohol in the sexual context amplifies the potential for miscommunication. Sexual consent when both parties are under the influence of alcohol may lead to **confusion about the sexual situation** and miscommunication: alcohol (and drugs) make it harder to recognize your own and others' boundaries.

It is possible that women are perpetrators of sexual violence and men are sexual assault victims, **the majority of sexual assaults involve male perpetrators and female victims**. Among LGBTQIA+ people, there is an even increased amount of sexual violence, especially among trans folks.

Smith et al. research on the influence of drugs on communicating decisions about sexual consent showed that people who consumed drugs described that they **were perceived as sexually available** by people close to them.

This perception appeared to be related to two assumptions. First, that people are easier to convince to have sex when they have consumed drugs and second, that people who consume drugs will exchange sex for drugs. While people under the influence of drugs or alcohol actually experience a partial or complete unawareness of what is happening, which **disables them from making informed decisions**.

➤➤➤ COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDING

If, for example, one even says “Yes, I definitely want to have sex with you,” is this truly consent if the person who asked the question has sufficient power over the respondent? A lot of aspects of the situation and relationship between partners can have deep effects on the implications of one's statements and behaviours for sexual consent.

It is generally indicated that **nonverbal communications** are most frequently used to express and interpret consent. Explicit verbal consent is more likely in first time encounters. Moreover, explicit verbal consent is often considered as unnecessary, unnatural, and as interfering with the mood and rhythm of the sexual encounter, though verbal consent also consists of less explicit verbal interactions like asking ‘can I take off your shirt’ or ‘can I touch/kiss/lick you here’.

There is also the influence and impact of **power dynamics** on consent communication and interpretation. Definitions of consent often specify that consent to participate in a sexual act must be freely given. But in specific power-imbalanced relationships, consent is impossible due to the potential consequences for rejecting the sexual advances of a person in a higher status position.

Besides, **social norms** may promote misunderstanding. For example, when the socialization of women leads them to be indirect and submissive with men, it can result in the use of more indirect means of communicating non-consent, even in the presence of very strong feelings against sexual engagement that should presume an explicit refusal. This could lead men to underestimate the intensity of actual non-consent or even to misinterpret the meaning as consent instead.

In addition, **sexual stereotypes** may promote the misperception of sexual consent. Sexual stereotypes, or scripts, casting men as the initiator and women as more reluctant for sexual activity promote the interpretation of passivity as consent. A widely known misleading sexual script is the “token resistance” or “playing hard to get”: it suggests that a person (women in particular) will initially refuse sexual advances even when actually desiring to engage in sexual activities.

➤➤➤ WHEN CONSENT GOES WRONG

Being aware of the relevance of sexual consent and how it is communicated is a fundamental aspect of sexuality and the full enjoyment of everyone involved in the sexual experience. This awareness will leave less room for very unpleasant events that can put your safety at risk.

As we mentioned earlier, showing willingness to engage in sexual activity does not occur only through verbal language, but one must consider that there are various points of view and one should not assume that the directions are universal and therefore always clear. Consent is precisely associated with the recognition and understanding of the set of verbal and nonverbal signals received from the other person, thus it is always susceptible to errors made regarding the interpretation by the partner.

What, then, can be the risks when communication goes wrong and is ineffective?

When communication goes wrong, it may be that you are not expressing and understanding what your intentions may be. The concept of consent is a fundamental element in distinguishing what is sexual violence from what is not. In fact, when any sexual activity does not have our full consent, we are not participants in the activity, but we are subjected to it and therefore become victims.

Sexual abuse and sexual violence are crimes and as such it is essential to be able to recognize them and report them to a trusted adult, and possibly to the authorities. These types of crimes are also even more serious when the victim is a minor or is a person with a disability.

➤➤➤ **SEXTING**

There is also another channel in which you communicate and which is essential to take into account: the channel of virtual communication.

The term sexting is made up of two words, “sex” and “texting”. These words generally mean the exchange of messages, audio, images or videos through digital devices - especially through smart-phones or social network chats - that are sexually oriented or sexually explicit, including nude or semi-nude images.

Sexting is a phenomenon, or rather a reality, that is common even among adolescents and can be done to:

- demonstrate love and trust toward a partner;
- have fun;
- explore one’s sexuality.

Sexting is experienced by adolescents as a very comfortable way to express their sexuality or to start their sexual life. However, nude or sexualized images are very personal and sensitive content, so it is very important to consider the risks of taking, sending or sharing nude images. Note however, that most of the time only the ‘bad’ stories about or experiences with sexting come to light. The positive experiences with sexting stay between the people who engage in this behaviour, while the negative experiences are shown in media, court cases, and scare tactic/warning stories.

Let’s take a detailed look at what the possible risks may be:

Risks on the web

Sharing or sending intimate images on the web and social networks is difficult to control. If the bond with the person you send a sext to is not good, you could be at risk of online sexual abuse. Examples of this are:

- revenge porn: dissemination on the web without the consent of the person portrayed in private images or videos with a sexual background for purposes of revenge (for example by an ex-partner) and injury to the reputation of the person portrayed;
- sextortion: threat of dissemination of the photo/video material, always with the aim of damaging the reputation of the person portrayed, to receive money or other gain;
- cyberbullying: aggressive, abusive or harassing acts and communications carried out by means of online tools.

Legal Consequences:

Even when there is no intention to damage the other person or to commit online sexual abuse (as in the cases mentioned above), it is not excluded that the typical behaviours of sexting can create

crimes related to child pornography, because you have lost, even if naively, the control and the management of personal material. According to the recent opinion issued by the Committee of Lanzarote of the Council of Europe (the body that monitors the implementation of the Convention of the Council of Europe on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse) when the sexting, so the exchange of nude or sexualized contents, happens between two minors and the use remains exclusively between these, the conduct is not connected to child pornography. However, the opinion specifies that minors forced into such conduct should be referred to victim assistance services and not be prosecuted.

Social Consequences:

As with physical sexual activities, consent is important just as much in sexting and therefore must be calmly evaluated at one's own pace and desire. Sometimes certain external pressures may lead adolescents to give in to behaviours that do not reflect their own wishes. These pressures may include:

- peer pressure (“everybody does it”);
- intimidation or threats (“if you don't do it, you don't love me”);
- self-esteem issues;
- feeling obligated to one's partner in order to avoid guilt.

Before consenting to sending sexually explicit or sexually suggestive photos, videos, audios or messages, it is essential to critically analyse one's own wishes and the situation, so as to define one's own boundaries and recognize when an external request exceeds them.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



In order to better convey the concept of consent, you can show this short video* (2 minutes) where you will see practical examples of pressure for photo exchange.



*This video is developed within the STAY SAFE Project (GA NUMBER — 881693) to raise awareness and educate women with disabilities on how to respond to sexual harassment (both online and offline) and violent incidents. The videos are available in the following partner languages: English, Italian, Greek and Spanish. For the other partner languages, you can use the automatic subtitles available in all languages or search for a similar video available in your national language

RESOURCES:

Amnesty International, 2020, #IoLoChiedo, Il consenso è condivisione, è rispetto dell'altro

Smith et al., 2020, Making and Communicating Decisions About Sexual Consent During Drug Involved Sex: A Thematic Synthesis.

Ward et al., 2012, Alcohol and Sexual Consent Scale: Development and Validation.

Wood et al., 2019, Definition, Communication, and Interpretation of Sexual Consent.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TARGET GROUP 14-20-year olds, including people with social and/or intellectual disabilities



DURATION OF THE MODULE 90 - 100 minutes (reserve 30 - 40 minutes for the theatre of the oppressed)

LEARNING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn what consent means.
- Learn that consent is communicated verbally and nonverbally.
- Experience what it is like to say yes and no and to hear yes and no from others said to themselves.
- Relate gender stereotypes to consent and question these.
- Learn to be aware of the signals their own body gives them.
- Reflect on boundaries and rejection.

TARGET EXECUTORS Teachers

ACTIVITY 1 – YES AND NO



DURATION 20 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Objectives:

- Reflect on how our body reacts when we give a “yes” and “no” and foster non-verbal communication.
- Reflect on how we feel when we receive a “yes” or a “no” and when somebody wants to make us change our opinion.
- Question and reflect on consent based on gender.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Ask participants to create pairs then ask them to decide who will be “A” and who will be “B”. First, “A” can only use the word “YES”, while person “B” can only say the word “NO”. Each one needs to convince the other to change their opinion. The pairs will work simultaneously. They cannot say any other word, but they are welcome to move in the space and accompany the word with gestures. They can use their words in many different ways; YES can mean agreement, a wish, a question, etc., while NO can mean rejection, keeping one’s boundaries, a sign of tiredness, etc. The meaning of words can be constantly modified, participants can give them many different meanings. The task of person “A” is to get person “B” to say YES at the end. “A” might or might not succeed in their mission (both outcomes are interesting and could be discussed in the debriefing session).

After 5 minutes, the roles are changed.



EDUCATOR’S NOTE



The aim of the exercise is for participants to experience giving and receiving “yes” and “no” for an answer. Think about how it feels when someone insists on doing something to someone who doesn’t want to, but also how it feels to be rejected and receive a “no” as an answer.

No topic, phrase, content needs to be chosen before the activity; the participants simply say “yes” and “no”, they feel it and act it with their body. If it helps them they can think about something specific to which they are saying yes or no, but it is not fundamental. Depending on the students to whom the activity is proposed (age, awareness of their sexuality), a variation in which the activity is repeated with condoms could be proposed. In this case, students will need to repeat the Yes and No activity simply by holding a condom. Depending on the group, it can also be interesting to show an internal condom.

Neither finding an agreement or convincing the other person is necessary, both are options of the exercise.

Questions for debriefing:

How did you like the exercise?

How could you use gestures, body language, your voice to add further meaning to the one word you could use?

Are those gestures/movements always paired with the “yes/no” answer? In all cultures?

Was it easier to say YES or NO? Why?

How did you feel when you were saying “yes”, insisting so that the partner would agree?

How did you feel when you received “no” as an answer? How did the refusal make you feel?

Could you get your partner to change their mind? If you could, how did you do it?

Was your partner able to persuade you? If so, how did he/she/they manage to do it? How did you feel when your partner was trying to make you change your mind?

Do we always have to try to convince the other person if he/she/they do not want the same thing that we want? Where is the limit?

Receiving a no as an answer might be difficult, and trying to convince the other person to do what we would like them to do might come from instinct, but it is not always right, and it definitely is not when it is about intimate relationships and boundaries that our partner is setting. In intimate relationships, we need to make sure that all parties involved want the same thing, and consent needs to be as explicit as possible. Communicating in an assertive way and accepting refusal are competences that can be learned and need to be put into practice; it is normal if at first this is hard, but be sure it is possible. Consider that some gestures do not mean the same in all cultures, and also that a smile doesn’t always mean happiness or agreement but it can also mean embarrassment or discomfort for example.

ACTIVITY 2 –INTRODUCING THE TOPIC OF CONSENT THROUGH NEWS CASES AND ARTICLES

 **DURATION** 15 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will see for themselves the importance of sexual consent by linking to real-world cases

related to the national context.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Four pictures of news items and articles dealing with issues of sexual consent will be presented. Read the news items or ask a student to read them out loud. Lastly you will ask the students the following questions:

- What do you think of these news items?
- Have you ever heard about any of these topics?
- What is the common demeanour of the news items (its consent)?

Example from the Italian context:

Case 1 and Case 2: articles related to consent facing the topics of Stealthing and Catcalling.

Case 3: Amnesty International campaign “#iolochiedo” (“I ask for it”), which promotes a consent-based rape law.

Case 4: an online article that presents the topic of consent as a universal issue, between all genders.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Refer to the theoretical part **What is consent and why is it important?**

Based on the students targeted by the training (age and cognitive ability), it is possible to use images that convey situations concerning consent instead of news facts.

Clarify that obviously there are no right or wrong answers, but that we considered these cases interesting precisely because they deal with consent, which is the subject of the module. This exercise only serves to introduce the concepts that will be explored later in the module.

ACTIVITY 3 – BRAINSTORMING ON THE MEANING OF CONSENT

 **DURATION** 20 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will have a discussion to investigate whether they know the term consent and what meaning they give to it.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Ask to the students *What is consent in your opinion?* And stimulate a discussion.

Some possible questions that teachers/trainers could ask young people are:

- Have you ever heard the word “*consensus*”? In what context?
- What does “*giving consent*” to something mean to you?
- In your opinion, is it necessary to ask every time for consent or can also be taken for granted (e.g. with friends, family members, partners...)?
- Does consensus have anything to do with our gender/age/place of birth/nationality/capacities (psychical /intellectual)?

Pin the various ideas on a wall or write on a whiteboard in order to have an overview of what emerged.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



In this exercise, refer to the theoretical unit: What is consent and why is it important? to support you in the implementation of the activity and to better convey the core contents.

Based on the target groups' characteristics like age, disability level and language comprehension, facilitators may add some examples and use their body language to show examples of the concepts.

The teacher has to keep in mind the answers given by the participants in order to make connections in the next exercise, during the theoretical explanation. If specific correct or incorrect beliefs emerge, they could be argued precisely through the following theoretical aspects.

It is important that the trainer/teacher does not let the discussion flow unregulated, but manages the input given by the students, also correcting the answers that go in a discriminatory direction or against the universal rights of individuals. Here are some examples of how to handle risky responses:

“Consent is taken for granted in people we know well (e.g. partners)”: consent is not a permanent attitude, but nevertheless represents a choice that must be made freely in every action and whatever other people are involved in it. A person may consent to any action, even sexual, at one moment and then not consent the next day, even when talking about a long-lasting relationship. A person can also change his mind within a few minutes, and this is his/her/their right.

“I can tell there is consent by the way the person looks at me/talks to me”: non-verbal language, such as proximity, gaze, tone of voice, the way we position our body in relation to the partner, can reveal a lot about how we feel. However, many signals can be ambiguous and can represent very different emotions.

A smile, for example, is generally associated with happiness, but can represent many other perceptions: it can also reflect nervousness and/or anxiety, or even condescension. For this reason, it is necessary to ask a person every time if they want to perform a certain action (especially in the sexual field) without taking their agreement for granted.

“Consent is a girl thing”: consent is not linked to a specific gender or gender identity. All persons involved in a sexual act must consent to it. The purpose of sexual relations is to have fun as well as to get to know oneself and others better through sexuality. For this reason, all persons involved must be in full agreement.

The educator should collect what the students say on a flipchart (physical or digital), noting down important aspects which can be taken up later in the explanation. The role of the educator is to explain to the young people the definition of consent because they need to consider it in their relationships to be responsible of their impact in relationships with other people, especially in sexual relationships, so special attention should be paid to risky opinions (e.g., discriminatory, offensive to some social group).

Suggested tools for the idea wall: Black board, Flip chart or online tools such as Ideaboardz or JamBoard.

It's recommended to provide a theoretical explanation with the support of a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation (this last one is an online tool that offers the opportunity to create more dynamic and interactive presentations), in order to underline main aspects and characteristics of the consent concept.

A short discussion about what emerged can follow, so that there is a chance to collect any doubts or comments and summarise what has been said before moving on to block 2 on communication.

In order to better convey the concept of consensus, you can show this short video* (2 minutes) where you will see practical example of situations when consent is given or not given.

You could also use this short video* (2 minutes) which represents the right to say no to a situation of abuse, conveyed through a short story.



**This video is developed within the STAY SAFE Project (GA NUMBER — 881693) to raise awareness and educate women with disabilities on how to respond to sexual harassment (both online and offline) and violent incidents. The videos are available in the following partner languages: English, Italian, Greek and Spanish. For the other partner languages, you can use the automatic subtitles available in all languages or search for a similar video available in your national language.*

ACTIVITY 4 – LISTEN YOUR BODY

 **DURATION** 25 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will learn to be aware of signals as sensations in their body. Students will discuss the term consent and what meaning they give to it.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Invite the students to sit comfortably, close their eyes and take a few conscious breaths and follow what you are telling them, paying attention to the body sensations they feel.

Then invite them to imagine that for a few moments someone does something to them that makes them very angry, such as a heated argument in which they disagree with a friend or partner or parents, or somebody takes something from you without your permission.

Allow them to visualise the scene in their mind for a minute.

Now ask the pupils to imagine their usual impulsive reaction, giving them the following questions as a stimulus:

- How do you respond to this situation?
- What do you say?
- How do you act?
- Is this a fight/flight/freeze reaction?
- Do you shout, swear, throw things or say things you will regret later?

Imagine you have one of these reactions.

After a minute or so, allowing them time to reflect, ask the participants to imagine the initial situation again, but to focus on the moment right after their initial reaction.

Ask them first to observe what bodily sensations they feel when someone crosses their boundaries and try to identify where exactly, then to try to notice the thoughts associated with this anger. Are they thoughts of revenge, hatred, malevolence, disappointment? Or fear, sadness, distancing, dissociation? Invite participants to focus then on what related emotions and body sensations they feel.



SUMMARY

To conclude, devote 5 minutes to a debriefing in which students can voluntarily share what emerged during the experience. Guide the concluding group reflection with questions such as:

Was it easy to try to feel what you felt?

What was more difficult?

Do common elements emerge?

When someone crosses our boundaries, we cannot help our initial fight/flight/freeze reaction. What we can do is think about our secondary reaction. Do we step away from the situation? Talk to the person in the moment? Or step away first and go back to talk to the person at a different time?



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Refer to the theoretical part **How to communicate respectfully** in a relationship to support you in the implementation of the activity and to better convey the core contents. Before concluding the activity, tell the learners to take three conscious breaths and, when they feel up to it, stretch their arms and legs and then, slowly open their eyes looking around and getting back in touch with their body and environment. The question "Do you shout, swear, throw things or say things you will regret later?" should only be used if you know it might be applicable for your students. Otherwise leave it out.

ACTIVITY 5 – RED LIGHT / GREEN LIGHT GAME

 **DURATION** 30 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

To practise identifying if there is consent or not, in several scenarios.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Following the theoretical-practical explanation of what consent is and how it is present and necessary in different areas of our lives, short scenarios are explored by asking students to recognise which are consensual and which are not.

The class will be divided into groups of 3 or 4 students, each group will be given three short scenarios and two cards - red and green. The students will have to read the scenarios, discuss together whether there is consent or not and then vote for the final group response. After concluding the small group session, the answers will be reported to the whole class through the use of the red card, sign of non-consent, and the green card, sign of consent.

Scenarios:

1. Giulia takes a bus to school every morning and often meets Federico, a boy of her age who goes to her school. Giulia thinks Federico is very cute, and when he comes up to her one day to talk to her she is surprised, she didn't think he would be interested in her. They start talking often on the bus, always sitting close together and making the whole journey together. One day the bus is very crowded, there is no room to stand apart and while Giulia is looking at her phone, she feels a hand grab her bottom; she looks at Federico and he winks at her. Giulia gets off at the next stop and walks to school alone.

If you had been Federico, would you have touched Giulia? Please, explain your answer.

2. Francesca is 15 years old and is in a relationship with Riccardo, who is the same age as her. While they are together at Francesca's house, her parents tell them that they are going out to do some business and will not be back for at least an hour. Left alone, Francesca starts to undress Riccardo telling him that if they want to have sex, they must take advantage of the short time and do it quickly. Riccardo tells her that he has had a hard day and would just like to cuddle. She insists and, in the end, convinces Riccardo.

If you were Francesca, would you have sex with Riccardo? Please, explain your answer.

3. Paolo loves techno music and often goes to concerts or events with friends. One night, at a bar in one of these places, he meets another boy, Gregorio, with whom he discovers he shares several passions: they both like basketball, Netflix series and techno music. After a few drinks Gregorio says he wants to go home because he feels a bit tired and thinks he's had too much to drink. Paolo offers to accompany him and Gregorio accepts. When they arrive in front of Gregorio's house, Paolo asks him if he can kiss him and Gregorio nods, smiling.

If you were Paolo, would you kiss Gregorio? Please, explain your answer.



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



Refer to the theoretical part “Next level consent” to support you in the implementation of the activity and to better convey the core contents.

If teachers have the skills, they can act out the scenarios instead of reading them.

Here are some examples of questions related to the scenarios that you can ask the students to stimulate their reflection:

Scenario 1. Does Federico have Giulia’s permission to touch her? Does Giulia have a free choice? Does the fact that Giulia likes Federico influence her right to consent? Does the fact that Federico and Giulia are close, always taking the bus together, influence her right to consent? How do you think Giulia feels?

Scenario 2. Does Francesca have Riccardo’s permission to undress him? Is Riccardo allowed to choose freely? Does the fact that Francesca and Riccardo are in a relationship influence his right to consent? How do you think Riccardo feels?

Scenario 3. Does Paolo have Gregorio’s permission to kiss him? Is Gregorio allowed to choose freely? Does the fact that Gregorio and possibly also Paolo drank alcohol influence the consent discussion? How do you think Gregorio feels?

On the basis of the students targeted by the training (based on age and cognitive abilities), these discussion inputs can be made into a checklist to be proposed to the students, to support them in identifying or not identifying consent in a more structured way. However, it would be ideal to propose the activity with only the green and red cards in order to allow as much freedom as possible in analysing the situation and their own opinions. The teacher could also decide to add new scenarios relevant to students with disabilities of different forms (physical and psychosocial).

The teacher has to correctly manage the input offered by the learners and stimulate the discussion in the classroom. Some of the scenarios might be ambiguous, so it is not easy to classify them as “red” or “green” immediately. When the teacher comes up with their own scenarios, they should make sure to have at least one ambiguous one too, many situations in reality are not red or green either, but have numerous factors to be analysed which contribute to defining whether the situation is consensual (e.g. in the second case the consent was forced, in the third case it was given by a person potentially impaired by alcohol).

The teacher stimulates the group discussion and encourages the plenary discussion of concerns and doubts raised in small groups. Stimuli that can generate a connection between this exercise and the theoretical part that follows it are collected (e.g., the last scenario could raise questions that will be answered later).

At the end of the exercise, the trainers explain: “If someone runs a red light, it is unsafe and could hurt themselves or another person. If someone performs a sexual act without the consent of the other person, this is also a red-light behaviour, as there is a risk of harming (physical or psychological) the other person. If you experience red light behaviour, you have the right to say no and make your point.”

ACTIVITY 6 – TEA AND CONSENT

 **DURATION** 45 minutes

LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

- Learn what non-consent looks like.
- See examples of scenarios in which consent is important.
- Define consent by talking about what they see acted out.
- Learn to come up with resolutions to problematic scenarios.
- Reflect on boundaries and rejection.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The video Tea and Consent was made to make it very clear and simple that sexual consent is of the utmost importance. In the video, sex is compared to a cup of tea: you wouldn't ever just pour a cup of tea into someone's mouth if they didn't want the tea. Obviously, the same goes for sex. This video is not about learning to be better at saying no, it is about recognising and respecting a no.

The simplicity of the video is great, but also leaves some room for error. What isn't shown in the video, for instance, is that it can be very hard to say no when you are pressured, or when someone has some power over you or is holding something over your head. This may be good to talk to the students about afterwards as well, for instance by asking a question like "is it always as easy to say no to someone? When is it easier/harder?".

Before you give this lesson, watch the video. Write down some of the scenes that you think are important for the students to see. Then during the learning activity, two facilitators act out the scenes from the video *twice*. The first time they do it like in the video with a cup of tea; the second time they change the tea for a kiss (or a hug, depending on your comfort level with the other facilitator). The second time finishes with one of the actors kissing the other although they do not agree. Once the second scene has ended, ask questions to the class:

What did we see?

Is it something that happens in real life?

How do you feel about this?

Tell the participants that the actors will repeat the kiss/hug round, but that now, each time that they see something going wrong, they can say "STOP". When they stop the scene they will say what is wrong with what is happening and will come up with alternatives to change the scene. Reflect on the parallelisms between the first and second scene, on how to express consent and how to manage rejection.

Debriefing this exercise is not more than summarising the points that have come up during the activity, but if you feel it's necessary for your class you can ask them: What was easy/difficult? How do you feel after doing this exercise? Is this something you are going to use in real life?



EDUCATOR'S NOTE



For this activity we suggest that there are at least two facilitators. When acting the video “Tea and consent” and using a kiss/hug instead of tea, it is important that the actors express the lack of consent of one of the parties involved.

There are some possible alterations to this exercise:

If it is not possible to get more than one facilitator involved, you can decide to show the video instead, and the second time around the students can say ‘stop’ to pause the video and come up with alternative scenarios.

You can also have students act out the scenes for the second (or third) round of acting, in groups of either two (just two actors who deliberate together) or 3-5 (two actors and others to say stop). Make sure the students know that even though they are acting, they shouldn’t cross anyone’s boundaries. Have the students say ‘stop’ to their acting partner when they feel there is no consent in what they are acting out or what is being acted out to them (so both/all students can say stop, no matter who is the “boundary-crossing actor”).

These are scenes that might be familiar to the students; they have probably seen them in movies and tv series, or maybe they have even experienced something like this first hand. Encourage them to recognize, think about, and express what they do not agree on and to speak up for themselves and others if something similar happens in real life.

If you show the class the video, it is important to note that the simplicity of the comparison can make the video seem a bit absurd and thereby funny to some students. It is still a very serious subject, and should be treated as such. Imagine how a student who has been assaulted or raped must feel if the rest of the class starts laughing loudly at those scenes.



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