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Sexuality Education Program  
for ages 12 to 17

A dark, textured silhouette of two people in a dynamic, expressive pose. One person is standing with one arm raised, while the other is leaning towards them. The background is a solid teal color.

# BETRUE

## TO YOU

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*Duquet, F. and al., 2023*  
*Projet Outiller les jeunes face à l'hypersexualisation*  
*Project: (Giving youth tools to deal with hypersexualization)*

UQÀM

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*Sexuality Education Program*  
*for ages 12 to 17*

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**BETRUE**

**TO YOU**

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*Be True to You* sexuality education program (2023)  
*Giving youth tools to deal with hypersexualization* project  
Université du Québec à Montréal

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The current version of the *Be True to You* program (2023) is an update of the 2010 version developed by Francine Duquet, Geneviève Gagnon and Mylène Faucher.

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Note that inclusive writing was used for this program in order to reflect the diversity of gender identities.

## PARTNERSHIP

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### UQAM partnership

- Service des partenariats et du soutien à l'innovation (SePSI-UQAM)

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# SECONDARY 1



## Secondary 1 - Session 1

### Friendships and Peer Pressure “Avoiding the Need to Please”



This sexuality education session was created for both schools and youth community settings (for more details, see the sections in the introduction on the session structure and context for using the *Be True to You* program).

For schools, these sessions are consistent with the “Compulsory content in sexuality education” of the ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (2018). The tables below also provide links to the subject areas and broad areas of learning of the Québec Education Program (MEES, 2022) as well as to the “educational intentions in sexuality education” of the “provisional” Culture and Citizenship in Quebec (CCQ) program at the secondary level of the ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (2022).

Links to “Compulsory content in sexuality education” (MEES, 2018)	
<b>Comprehensive View of Sexuality</b>	<b>Become aware that during adolescence, you will gradually adopt new roles and behaviours related to your sexuality and increasingly make your own decisions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Construction of a vision and personal choices: wishes, needs, limits and the ability to consider those of others, whether or not to follow various gender stereotypes and social norms, strategies for finding information and help.</li></ul>
<b>Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms</b>	<b>Recognize the role of puberty in the consolidation of your gender identity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Events at the beginning of adolescence.</li><li>› Exploration of new sexual values and norms, some of which reflect stereotypes (peers, social environment, media).</li><li>› Influence on your gender identity.</li></ul>

**Possible links to the Québec Education Program**  
(MEES, 2022)

<b>Broad areas of learning</b>	<b>Health and Well-Being:</b> Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.	
<b>Cross-curricular competencies</b>	<b>Intellectual competencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information</li> <li>› Solves problems</li> <li>› Exercises critical judgment</li> </ul>	<b>Personal and social competencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Achieves his/her potential</li> <li>› Cooperates with others</li> </ul> <b>Communication-related competency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Communicates appropriately</li> </ul>
<b>Subject areas</b>	<b>Personal development subject area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <i>Quebec Citizenship and Culture</i></li> </ul>	

**Possible links with the educational intentions in sexuality education of the Culture and Citizenship in Québec (CCQ) program at the secondary level**  
(MEQ, 2022)

Theme: Identities and Belonging

<b>Disciplinary competencies</b>	<b>Studies a cultural reality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Establishes the scope of the object of study</li> <li>› Evaluates elements of knowledge</li> <li>› Analyzes social relations</li> <li>› Demonstrates a more complete understanding</li> </ul>	<b>Reflects on an ethical question</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation</li> <li>› Examines a variety of points of view</li> <li>› Develops a point of view</li> <li>› Engages in dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School</b>	<b>Understand the concept of sexuality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Entering adolescence and decision-making</li> </ul>	<b>Reflect on the general underlying influences that can be considered in making decisions about sexuality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Recognition of own wishes, needs and limits and those of others</li> <li>› Self-knowledge and respect for personal choices</li> </ul>
	<b>Understand the role of puberty in consolidating gender identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Physical and psychological transformations</li> <li>› Evolution of relationships with peers</li> <li>› Gendered socialization, stereotypes and gender norms</li> </ul>	<b>Reflect on the tensions that may exist with regard to norms, stereotypes and own gender identity</b>
	<b>Understand the manifestations of friendship, love and attraction in adolescence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Manifestations within self and in own attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>› Variations as to whom it involves and when</li> </ul>	<b>Reflect on the tensions created by the role of feelings of love and attraction in adolescence</b>



## Educational Goals

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**Session length:**

75 minutes

**Become aware of issues that affect teen friendships (e.g. sharing things in confidence, peer pressure) and develop skills to assert yourself when being pressured by your friends.**

- 1. Explain** the differences between an “acquaintance,” “friend” and “boyfriend/girlfriend.”
- 2. Name** similar and different characteristics that people might look for in a “best friend” compared to a “group of friends.”
- 3. Identify** the people you may or may not want to confide in and the reasons you may or may not want to do so in different situations (public versus private life).
- 4. Analyze** a dilemma illustrating the peer pressure that young people can experience and discuss the pros and cons of the available options as well as the most appropriate course of action.
- 5. Identify** ways to assert yourself when pressured by your friends to engage in sexual activity or behaviour that you don't want to do.



## Sequence



This **75-min.** session has **three activities**.

20 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Brainstorming:</b> Difference between an acquaintance, friend and boyfriend/girlfriend</li> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “<i>Small Talk   Friendship</i>”</li> <li>› <b>Discussion:</b> Similarities and differences between a best friend and a group of friends</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
20 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Individual survey:</b> “<i>Who would you want to confide in...?</i>”</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Sheet 1.1: Questionnaire: “Who Would You Want to Confide in...?”</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.2: “Sofia and Ashley”: Situational Exercise</i></p>
25 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Group Activity:</b> “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational exercise</li> <li>› <b>Team activity:</b> “Amelia and Renaud” Situational exercise</li> <li>› <b>Presentation:</b> Real-life experiences with peer pressure</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Sheet 1.3: “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.4: Answer Sheet: “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.5: “Amelia and Renaud” Situational Exercise</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.6: Answer Sheet: “Amelia and Renaud” Situational Exercise</i></p>
10 min.	<b>Session CONCLUSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “<i>Brain games - Social Conformity</i>”</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and key messages</b> from the session</li> </ul>

It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow** throughout the session activities.

Just like the entire “*Be True to You*” program, this slideshow can be downloaded for free from our website [www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca](http://www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca) (Volet 3: Outils pédagogiques en éducation à la sexualité - Programme pour les deux cycles du secondaire: *Oser être soi-même*. <https://hypersexualisation.uqam.ca/volet-3-outils-pedagogiques-education-a-sexualite/programme-secondaire-oser-etre-soi-meme/>)

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Young people may tell you about difficult personal situations (e.g. conflicts, rejection, intimidation, etc.). It's important to protect their confidentiality and provide the assistance and support that they need.

BEFORE leading this session, it is a good idea to let someone in your school or organization know that you will be discussing sex education with the group. This way, if a teen confides in you or if a situation is reported outside the context of the session, you will know whether a support worker is available to offer assistance.

Refer to the Resources section in the introduction to this program to provide the necessary support to teens who need it. A number of online resources are also given at the end of the slideshow for each session.





## Activity 1



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MIN.



BRAINSTORMING



DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION



VIDEO

## Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by reminding the group about the rules presented in the introduction or the session slideshow (e.g. taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).
- › **Explain** that today's session is about friendships and peer pressure.

## Video and Discussion

- › **Start** the session by asking the group:
  - “What is friendship to you?”
  - “What are the differences between an ‘acquaintance,’ ‘friend’ and ‘boyfriend/girlfriend?’”

*Get their opinions.*
- › Continue by **showing** a video of young children explaining what friendship is and the differences between a friend and a best friend:

### Small Talk | Friendship (CBC Kids, 2017)

**Length:** 2 min., 53 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9HH3pTmHz8>



Video



› After showing the video, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:

- **What are your takeaways from this video?**

*Get their opinions.*

## Presentation

› **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

› **Friendship**

- Friendship means feeling close to someone you really like. You share a connection. Friendship also means respect, mutual trust, sharing, understanding, and acceptance (Bukowski and al., 2019)

› **Difference between an “acquaintance,” “friend” and “boyfriend/girlfriend”**

- A friend is someone who cares about you, who is there for you and supports you; a friend is someone you can count on and spend time with; a friend is someone you like being with and someone you can talk freely to and confide in (Bukowski and al., 2019).
- An acquaintance is a person that you have met but don't know well (Acquaintance, n.d.). For example, someone you do activities with (e.g. sports, going to the same school). This is a person you get along well with, but you may not share everything with them (Narr and al., 2019).
- Acquaintances don't give us the same things we find in a friend, such as someone we share a connection with, to whom we can tell things in confidence, who understands us, who is there for us, etc. (Connaissance, n.d.).
- A boyfriend or girlfriend is someone you have romantic feelings for that are different from what you would feel for a friend. You think about this person all the time and want them to be interested in you. You may also feel physically attracted to this person (Tel-Jeunes, 2022c).

## Brainstorming

- › **Split** the blackboard into two sections with:
  - “Best friend” on one side
  - “Group of friends” on the other
- › **Ask** the group to name the characteristics they would want in a “best friend” and the characteristics they look for in a “group of friends.” **Explain** that a group of friends can be two or three people or more.
- › **Write** their answers on the board.

## Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Characteristics you look for in a “best friend”:**
  - Respectful, funny, good listener, friendly, in tune with you, honest, non-judgmental, shares some of your values, you can be yourself with them, you can confide in them, etc. (Tel-Jeunes, 2022b).
  - You feel like equals.
  - They can be counted on, and you can tell them the truth.
  - You can goof around, laugh yourself silly, or even cry with them.
- › **Things you look for in a “group of friends”:**
  - Having fun, sharing activities (e.g. leisure, sports).
  - Sharing interests (Bukowski and al., 2019).

## Discussion and Presentation

- › After the brainstorming, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:
  - **What similarities do you look for in a “best friend” and a “group of friends”?**
    - Which qualities are the same?
    - Which ones are different?
  - **Do you think friendship changes as we age?**
    - If so, what changes specifically?



› **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

### › **Differences between a “best friend” and a “group of friends”:**

- A group of friends lets you get to know each other, have new experiences, feel a sense of belonging to a group, and develop your independence and respect for others (Naitre et grandir, 2021; Narr and al., 2019). A friendship with a best friend lets you feel safe to open up, have more self-confidence, feel less anxious and feel useful and important to someone else (Bukowski and al., 2019; Burgun, 2012).
- Some of the characteristics you look for in a “best friend” may be the same as for a “group of friends” (e.g. sharing the same activities).
- However, you may look for some characteristics in a “best friend” that you may not look for in a “group of friends.” For example, being able to confide in the person and trust that they won’t tell anyone else, being able to talk to that person when you need someone to lean on, etc. (Tel-Jeunes, 2022b).
- A “best friend” often holds a special place in our lives. The ending of this relationship could feel like a hard loss (Tel-Jeunes, 2022a).
- You can generally be yourself with your “best friend” and usually don’t feel judged. With a “group of friends,” however, you may fear being judged if you don’t think or act like them. There may be some pressure to fit in with the leaders of the group.
- Overall, it’s good to have a “best friend” and a “group of friends,” but you need to know that each one doesn’t necessarily provide the same things.

### › **Friendships change as you get older:**

- Friendships can change as we get older for a variety of reasons:
  - Your friend moves to another city and you grow apart because you don’t see or talk to them anymore.
  - You no longer have the same interests, priorities or values.
  - Your friend has a new boyfriend or girlfriend and no longer has time for you; they don’t seem like the same person.
  - You have a fight and never really make up.
  - Etc.
- However, sometimes people grow up and keep the same friends they had in elementary or high school.
- One thing that doesn’t seem to change over time is the trust that develops between two friends. It is very important to know that you can trust the other person.



# 2

## Activity 2



**SHEETS 1.1 AND 1.2  
SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**20 MIN.**



**INDIVIDUAL  
SURVEY**



**TEAM  
ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION  
AND PRESENTATION**

## Survey and Presentation

- › **Hand out** Sheet 1.1 to each person: “*Who would you want to confide in...?*”
- › **Tell** the group that, for confidentiality reasons, they don’t have to share their answers with everyone or fill out Sheet 1.1 in class. **They just need to answer the questions in their heads.** However, they can fill out the sheet at home if they want.
- › **Explain** to the group who the person(s) they can confide in are:
  - **Your best friend is one of your closest friends and even one of your confidants.**
  - **Your family, your siblings, or your boyfriend or girlfriend, if you have one, are also some people who can be closest to you.**
  - **Your “group of friends” can generally be less close; they know you well but less so than your family.**
  - **Your acquaintances are people you don’t know very well and who don’t know you very well either; they may be your classmates, neighbors, etc.**
  - **Adults at your school, such as the principal, teachers, nurse, psychologist, psychoeducator, monitor, etc.**
- › **Read** each question out loud and ask the group to think about each one.

### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Activities dealing with sensitive personal topics need to be kept confidential. This is because some young people may try to snoop and look at other people’s answers, which could be very embarrassing for some. This is why it is important to tell the group not to write their answers on the sheet directly. Another option is to only give them the Sheet 1.1 once the exercise is done.



## Discussion and Presentation

- › Once the questions have been read and answered (in their heads), **lead** a discussion using the following questions.

- **What are your takeaways from this activity?**
- **Does the person or do the people you feel like confiding in vary depending on the situation? If so, why?**
- **Do you share a lot of information about yourself with many people? Or are you more discreet or reticent?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › The people you want to confide in will vary depending on your bond of trust with them, their kindness, their ability to listen, their ability to keep things to themselves, and what you want to confide in them. If the topic is a personal issue, some people may prefer talking to their best friend instead of a parent, as a friend may have good advice because they are going through similar things.
- › Other people prefer asking their parents because they know they will get more accurate and complete information. Others won't dare broach the topic with their friend or parents and will instead confide in a school counsellor.

- **What might prevent you from wanting to say certain things to certain people?** (Don't name the people, but rather give the reasons).

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › You may be reluctant to confide certain things because:
  - You fear being misunderstood. You don't feel heard.
  - You fear that the other person will tell other people or use this information against you and spread rumours; you don't really trust the person.
  - You fear being judged, being laughed at or even harassed.
  - Etc.

- › It's harder to confide in someone when you know that doing so can make you vulnerable. In this case, it may seem better not to reveal too much to "protect" yourself. It's normal not to want to share everything about yourself to everyone. It's a way to protect your "inner life."
- › Sometimes you hesitate to confide in others because you don't want to bother them or you think your problem isn't important. You may also fear that the problem is too big or too complex to tell anyone about. If you're having trouble with a situation or it's all you can think about, you should get help from a trusted adult (e.g. parent, counsellor, teacher).
- › You may also want to talk about the problem simply to get it off your chest without necessarily wanting other people's opinions. You can try and express yourself in some other way:
  - You can write in a personal diary.
  - You can let off steam by doing something that makes you feel good (e.g. play sports, do some art, listen to music, go for a walk).

- › **Continue** by asking the questions below. But first, **tell them** that they do not have to share their answers with the group; they just have to think about their response, as they did in the previous activity.
  - **Which people in your life (including your friends) can you trust, be yourself around, and share personal information with without the fear of being judged?**
- › **Add** to their reflection using the suggested content.

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › In life, it's important to be able to count on someone you trust, including friends. In fact, you don't need to have a ton of close friends; just 1 or 2 may be enough.
- › This trusted person could also be a family member (e.g. sister, brother, parent).

- **In your opinion, based on the information presented in Sheet 1.1: "Who Would You Want to Confide in...?":**

**a. Which information is more "private"?**

- i.e. information that you want to keep to yourself OR that you would only share with someone very close to you OR with someone you trust who could help you and wouldn't make you feel judged.

**b. Which information is more "public"?**

- i.e. information that many people could know without there being any real consequences.

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

› **“Private” information vs. “public” information:**

- It’s important to distinguish between personal (private) information and information that we don’t mind people in our lives or strangers knowing about (public).
- Above all, you need to determine the people you can or would like to confide in. For example, you can tell people in your life that you have a boyfriend or girlfriend because you’re comfortable with people knowing that, so this is public information. However, you may decide not to share that you are no longer happy with your boyfriend or girlfriend and are thinking of breaking up with them. That is personal information. Or, you could decide just to confide in your best friend about your problem.
- On social media or in reality shows, we constantly see people sharing things about themselves and talking about extremely personal things. Some people may talk about conflicts in their relationship or about their past or current sexual experiences. Others will post intimate nude photos of themselves, etc.
- This can give the impression that anything that is usually “private” can easily become “public” and that everyone should share this kind of information with everyone else. This creates confusion between what is “private” and what is “public,” not only for adolescents but for adults too.
- However, remember that the goal of a reality show is to get people’s attention so that they have a big audience and high ratings and can sell advertising time at an expensive rate. Similarly, some people on social media “overshare” with the hope of getting more followers and “likes” to increase their popularity.

## Team Activity

- › **Continue** by giving the group a short situational exercise to test their knowledge of the criteria about whether or not to confide in someone and about which information is more private or public (Sheet 1.2: “Sofia and Ashley” Situational Exercise).

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

If you are leading the session without the slideshow or if you want everyone to read the situation individually, you can print out Sheet 1.2: “Sofia and Ashley” Situational Exercise and hand it out to the group.



## Discussion and Presentation

- Which information that Sofia shares with Ashley would be considered more “private” and which would be more “public”? Why?
- If others heard what Sofia said about them, how would they react?
- Why do you think Ashley is reluctant to confide in Sofia?

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Which types of information are considered “private” and which are considered “public”?**
  - Information that should not be disclosed to respect people’s freedom and privacy is considered private (Braudo, 2021; Trudel, 2014). The right to privacy is a fundamental right under the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (LégisQuébec, n.d.). The Charter is a law that has been in effect since 1975 to protect the rights of adults and minors (CDPDJ, 2022).
  - Sensitive information such as the end of her last relationship or the sexual orientation of her Math teacher is information that could be considered personal, intimate, and “private.” This is information that only the person themselves should disclose if they want and not through someone else. “Private” information becoming public can have negative consequences for the people involved (e.g. being made fun of or rejected; conflict).
  - Sofia herself can decide to reveal aspects of her own private life, such as her past relationships. But talking about others or spreading rumours shows she doesn’t care at all about the “inner lives” of others.
  - Other information she shares with Ashley, such as her dream of becoming an engineer or her favourite TV show, are personal interests that are not considered private, as there would not be any consequences if they became public. Talking about your interests with your friends or even strangers doesn’t necessarily expose you to the risk of ridicule.
- › **Possible reactions if people heard what Sofia said about them**
  - We don’t know what exactly she said about the girls on her team and the coach, but if she is spreading rumours about them, this could be considered a form of bullying (Éducaloi, 2022). The consequences of rumours and bullying can be serious: anxiety, loss of self-confidence, humiliation, isolation, fear, feelings of distress, etc. (Gouvernement du Québec, 2021).
  - Since they are on the same team, her teammates may feel betrayed by Sofia after learning what she has said about them. They may shun her and spend less and less time with her. In short, they may no longer trust her.
  - If this becomes bullying on Sofia’s part, they may go talk to staff at the school to stop the behaviour, which may have consequences for Sofia.

› **Ashley's hesitation**

- Ashley is reluctant to confide in Sofia, since they have only been friends for a very short time (2 weeks) and she is asking her about intimate experiences, which is personal information.
- It could be that Ashley would confide in Sofia if they were somewhere other than the cafeteria, as she doesn't feel that this is the best place to answer her questions.
- Sofia seems to have trouble keeping information about other people to herself. This may prevent Ashley from confiding in her. Sofia may not realize that she is revealing so much personal information about other people. She may not think that she's doing any harm.
- Also, since Sofia seems to be spreading rumours, Ashley may be worried that Sofia would talk about her to other people behind her back. Finally, Ashley may also hesitate because Sofia is pressuring her and insisting that she confide in her. These situations can make it hard to decide and do what you actually want to do. This is what we'll go over in the next activity.
- Finally, Ashley may also hesitate because Sofia is pressuring her and insisting that she confide in her. These situations can make it hard to decide and do what you actually want to do. This is what we'll go over in the next activity.

- › **Tell** the group that, in the next activity, you will **go over** different situations of young people experiencing pressure from their friends.
- › In fact, sometimes our friends, and even our best friends, can put pressure on us to think or act "like them." In some cases, this can make it difficult to make a decision and act based on what we actually want to do.
- › The first situational exercise will be done with the group and the second will be done in teams.



## Activity 3



SHEETS 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 AND 1.6

SLIDESHOW (PPT)



25 MIN.



GROUP  
ACTIVITY



TEAM  
ACTIVITY



PRESENTATION



DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION

### Group Activity

- ▶ **Hand out** Sheet 1.3 to the group: “*Thomas, Karim and Nicolas*” Situational Exercise (or refer to the PPT) and **lead** a discussion based on this exercise.
- ▶ Ask the group to come up with a solution to the dilemma, i.e. analyze a situation in which the main character is pressured to do something and has to choose from among several options and decide which choice is best. They must first indicate what the main character *COULD DO* (what are the different options?) and then what they think the character *SHOULD DO* (what would be the best solution for the main character, taking into account the other characters involved?).
- ▶ This first situational exercise done in a large group will facilitate the discussion and give them things to think about. **Refer** to Sheet 1.3: *Answer Sheet: “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise*, for a description of the possible options and solution to consider.

### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

“There are different ways to be popular. Some young people who are popular in a positive way (e.g. leaders, motivators) are imaginative, show a talent for sports or academics, have a sense of humour, and bring people together.

“The qualities required to be popular seem to be being a good listener, coming up with interesting things to do, having a way with words that can persuade people, expressing yourself well, participating in class, being skilled in general, having a good attitude, etc. Caring about others, understanding people’s feelings and mental states, and being good students will also contribute to their popularity. Leaders who speak up easily, who aren’t shy or socially anxious, who know how to consider what other people want and feel are often well liked.





“On the other hand, some kids may be popular because they goof off in class, are disruptive, or aren’t good students.

“The advantages of being ‘popular’ are feeling liked and accepted, having your self-esteem and self-confidence reinforced, and finding it easier to take on new things.

“However, whether they are popular or not, all young people need to feel respected.”

*Pascal Mallet, Professor of Developmental Psychology  
(2008, cited in Parents!, 2016).*

## Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of four and **hand out** the second situational exercise to each team (Sheet 1.5: “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise).
- › **Tell** the students that they will have 10 min. to respond to the situation and do the same exercise, i.e. decide what the main character **COULD** do (what are the different options?) and what they **SHOULD** do (what would be the best solution for the main character, but also taking into account the other characters involved?). Each team will need to choose a spokesperson to share the answers with the group. You can read over the instructions with them on Sheet 1.5: “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise.
- › **Ask** the spokesperson from each team to share their answers for each question.
- › **Ask** the others in the group what they think about the decision made by each team.
  - **Is it the best decision? If so or if not, why?**
  - **Does this decision reduce the pressure that Amelia may feel to meet the expectations of her friends, her boyfriend, or her parents?**

*Get their opinions.*
- › **Add** to their answers with the suggested content (Sheet 1.6: Answer Sheet: “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise). Although each team is asked to consider only two options, others are obviously possible.

## Presentation

- › To illustrate peer pressure in adolescence, **share** these different stories with the group from young adult women, who explain what happened to them as children or teenagers when they felt peer pressure or pressure to be part of a popular group at school.

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Young women around the age of 20 talk about what they did as children or teenagers to be accepted by their friends (adapted from QueenCamille, 2018):
  - Ruby: “When I was 13, I bought Nikes just because they were in fashion and because my best friend at the time had them, but I didn’t like them. I had them in blue, she had them in red. The worst part is that I insisted my mother buy them even though she couldn’t really afford them.”
  - Camila: “Throughout my adolescence, my strategy was to change my identity and dress like a specific group to fit in.”
  - Éloïse: “When I was 9 years old, I went on vacation with my family and ended up playing with a group of older kids. They must have been 11 or 12 years old. The girls wanted to kiss the boys, so they wanted to play spin the bottle all the time. But I just wanted to trade my Pokemon cards. Everyone thought the spin the bottle game was so funny and “forbidden.” I sat in the circle and played the game. I ended up kissing a 13-year-old boy. It was wet and gross. I didn’t want to do it again for years.”
  - Zoey: “To get into a very popular ‘clique’ in high school, I started smoking. I would go to the smoking area with them outside the school. But I hated the smell and taste of cigarettes.”
  - Nellie: “There was a girl in my Grade 6 class who had repeated a grade. Everyone thought she was so cool. I wanted to be in her circle of friends, and she invited me to a sleepover at her house. She liked to go on online chats to strip in front of her web cam. I saw my first “dick pics” around this time, when I was about 12 years old. After that night at her house, I didn’t want to talk to her anymore. I felt really uncomfortable around her.”
  - Tia: We were playing ‘Truth or Dare.’ One of the dares was kissing someone without really wanting to. Everyone was really uncomfortable, but no one said anything.”

## Discussion and Presentation

- › After the presentation, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:
  - **What do you think of these situations?**
  - **Why do you think we sometimes decide not to tell our friends what we really think and to hide our feelings?**
    - **Are there any risks in doing what others want us to do, even if we don’t want to do it? If yes, what are they?**
  - **When pressured by our group of friends or best friend to do something sexual that we don’t want to do... (e.g. kissing someone during a Truth or Dare game; looking at naked pictures on the Internet), why is it important to respect our limits and tell others that we don’t really want to do something or like something?**
    - **What are your tips for getting out of this situation?**

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

› **Reasons you may decide not to say what you really think and hide your feelings from your friends.**

- Sometimes you can't tell your friends everything you think or you may decide to lie outright because:
  - You don't want to be laughed at or ridiculed.
  - You just want to be part of the group.
  - You feel pressure from your classmates or friends to think or act a certain way.
  - You don't want to disappoint your friends, etc.
- However, lying can put you in a tricky situation because you risk being found out and losing your friends' trust. At first, "playing the game" may seem harmless, but you can get trapped in a lie.
- Telling the truth and saying what you really think also means being honest with yourself and others. It means being able to speak up for yourself and accepting that you may have a different point of view. This isn't always easy, as the fear of rejection and confrontation is very strong in adolescence.
- You could simply decide not to tell people everything in order to protect yourself from other people's judgment. However, constantly lying to others is a sign of a real problem, because it means that you are never (or seldom) yourself and can't be vulnerable with others, especially with people who say they are your friends.
- You have to ask yourself if you are safe with your friends. Will they reject you over nothing? Or will they defend you in front of others who are pressuring you?

› **Tips to get out of something your group of friends or best friend is asking you to do but that you don't really enjoy or want to do**

- It's not always easy to be assertive and tell your friends that you don't like or don't want to do something they are asking you to do. But if they are good friends, they will understand and respect your decision.
  - For some people, being assertive means speaking up firmly and loudly; however, speaking your mind in a more quiet and discreet way is just as valid (Tel-Jeunes, 2022d).
- You can be assertive and tell your friends the truth: "I'm sorry, but I don't feel like it, I'd rather go home."
- You can leave the situation without explaining any further. This signals your discomfort and refusal to participate in something someone is trying to persuade you to do. You may have to explain later why you left.

› **Tips for getting out of an uncomfortable situation at a friend's house**

- You may also need an excuse to leave the situation. For example: a chore your parents asked you to do that you just remembered, a meal planned with your family, you don't feel well, etc.
- You can also get help from your friends and try to get their support.
  - Have a friend agreement: agree on a subtle non-verbal or verbal cue (e.g. a word, phrase, gesture) that signals you feel uncomfortable and want to leave.

- You can also set up a system with your parents to let them know if ever you are in a situation that you want to get out of and they can come get you.
  - Send a text message with an emoji or a word signalling that you want to get out of a situation.
  - Call and hang up after a few seconds to let your parents know they need to call back.
  - Calling your parents and saying a specific word or phrase that means they should come get you.
  - Etc.
- The important thing is to REACT when you see a situation that makes you uncomfortable or when you're feeling pressured in a situation and know that you don't want to do what everyone is asking you to do.



## Session Conclusion



10 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

- › Ask the group about their takeaways from this session.

### Video

- › **Show** a video that illustrates the difficulty of going against a group (social conformity). This revealing experiment shows how hard it can be to stand up for yourself when the group is doing something that doesn't work for you and that makes you feel indirectly (or directly) pressured by others. The question that the video asks is "How far will we go to be part of the group?"

#### Brain Games - Social Conformity (Mohamed Squalli, 2015)

**Length:** 3 min., 39 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UemyY4Hmeeg>



Video



### Discussion and Key Messages

- › After the video, **get** their opinions:
  - What are your takeaways from this video?

- › **Add** to what they say with these **KEY MESSAGES**:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › It's hard not to give in to group pressure, as this experiment has shown us.
- › In "real life," it's normal to want to do what others do or hope to be popular with our friends. However, you shouldn't pressure yourself or agree to do things that you aren't comfortable with, including intimate or sexual acts.
- › If you are experiencing peer pressure to do something you don't want to do, it's important to learn to speak up for yourself and find ways to get out of the situation. Everyone has their own way of asserting themselves.
- › You can also ask for advice or help from trusted adults (e.g., our parents, school counsellors).
- › It's important to tell the difference between true friends and people you simply want to please or "avoid displeasing."
  - Do we act differently with them because we think we have to be a different person for them to like us?
  - There are "friends" who can make you feel stressed, sad or even angry. If this happens, try to understand why you feel this way with these people and ask yourself if this is a "real" friendship.
- › In friendship, you have to feel that you can just be yourself. Sometimes our friends are the ones who won't let us, but sometimes we're the ones limiting ourselves.
- › **Rule no. 1**  
Disagreements or small conflicts can be easily resolved with your real friends.
- › **Rule no. 2**  
A real friend makes you feel good, and you don't need to "fake it" around them.



# SHEET

## 1.1

### FOR THE GROUP

## Survey: “Who Would You Want to Confide in...?”

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Think about the person with whom you would like to share this information about YOURSELF. You can name more than one person OR no one at all.
- › For now, just think about it. You can fill out the questionnaire later at home.

Who would you want to confide in...?	Someone in your family	Your best friend	Your boyfriend or girlfriend	Your group of friends	Your followers on social media	An adult at school	Someone else: _____	No one in particular
Your favourite hobby								
That your parents are splitting up								
That you failed a test								
That you feel alone or are being bullied								
That you feel that you are in love with someone in your class								
That you have questions about puberty								
That you don't like parts of your body								
That you think you're smart								
That you did something you regret								
That you have done something you are particularly proud of								
<b>TOTAL</b>								



## “Sofia and Ashley” Situational Exercise

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Read the short situational exercise.**
- › **Make connections with the criteria for confiding in someone or not.**

### “Sofia and Ashley” Situational Exercise

**Sofia** is in the cafeteria talking with her new friend **Ashley**, whom she met for the first time two weeks ago on the school soccer team. As they both wait in line to get their food, Sofia tells Ashley all sorts of things in rapid succession:

- › How her last relationship ended.
- › Rumours about people in her class.
- › What she really thinks of the girls on their soccer team and the coach.
- › What she likes about her favourite TV show.
- › That the Math teacher is gay.
- › And finally, that she wants to become an engineer.

Then she turns to Ashley and asks: “Do you have a crush on a boy or girl in school? Who? Have you kissed them yet?” Ashley blushes and feels uncomfortable.

Sofia adds, “Come on, don’t be so embarrassed! I swear I’ll keep it between us.”

Ashley doesn’t know what to do and hesitates to answer.

- › **Which information that Sofia shares with Ashley would be considered “private” and which would be more “public”? Why?**
- › **If others heard what Sofia said about them, how would they react?**
- › **Why do you think Ashley is reluctant to confide in Sofia?**





## SHEET

### 1.3

FOR THE GROUP

## “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a group, read the situational exercise with Thomas, Karim and Nicolas and answer the questions.

### “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise

**Thomas, Karim** and **Nicolas** have been friends since primary school and have always been very close. Since starting high school, Thomas has made new friends in his class, who are very popular boys at school. He has slowly started spending less time with his old friends from primary school to spend time with his new group of friends. Nicolas and Karim tell Thomas that he has changed a lot; he dresses differently and even ignores them at school. **Thomas doesn’t know how to react.**

- › What do you think of Thomas’s attitude?
- › What do you think of Nicolas and Karim’s reaction?

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- › Suggest **different ways that Thomas could respond** and describe the **pros** and **cons** of each choice.

**CHOICE 1** - Thomas **COULD**...:

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Pros of this choice	Cons of this choice
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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

**CHOICE 2** - Thomas **COULD**...:

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Pros of this choice	Cons of this choice
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<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

- ▶ Thomas would like your opinion.  
In your opinion, what **SHOULD HE DO**?  
Why should he make this choice?

*Help Thomas find a solution*

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## Answer Sheet: “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Present the situational exercise and lead a group discussion.
- › For each question, get different opinions from the group.

### “Thomas, Karim and Nicolas” Situational Exercise

**Thomas, Karim** and **Nicolas** have been friends since primary school and have always been very close. Since starting high school, Thomas has made new friends in his class, who are very popular boys at school. He has slowly started spending less time with his old friends from primary school to spend time with his new group of friends. Nicolas and Karim tell Thomas that he has changed a lot; he dresses differently and even ignores them at school. Thomas doesn't know how to react.

- › What do you think about the attitude of Thomas's friends?
- › Suggest different ways that Thomas could respond and describe the pros and cons of each choice.

### Thomas COULD decide to:

1. Apologize for being more distant lately and decide to spend most of his time with his primary school friends.

#### Pros

- He has been friends with Nicolas and Karim for a long time. Their trust in each other is worth a lot.
- Etc.

#### Cons

- By remaining friends just with Nicolas and Karim, Thomas would miss out on new friendships.
- Etc.

2. He could spend less time with his primary school friends as they don't have the same interests and he prefers hanging out with his new friends. Without being rude to his older friends, he could tell them that he enjoys his new group of friends because they share his interests and style.

**Pros**

- Thomas becomes part of the popular group at school and makes new friends.
- Thomas then becomes popular himself and feels more interesting.
- Thomas feels good because he is accepted by this popular group at school, not like his friends from primary school.
- Etc.

**Cons**

- When we grow up, our personality can change and our interests can change as well. We have to adapt to these changes, which is normal. If Thomas changes his personality just to be with his new "friends," this may not reflect who he really is.
- If Thomas is constantly letting down his long-time friends, he may hurt them and miss them.
- Thomas's parents might worry that he is seeing his old friends less (or not at all), especially since he's known them for so long.
- Maybe popularity has become more important to Thomas than loyalty to his old friends.
- Etc.

3. Continue to see his primary school friends after school and on weekends and see his new group of friends at school.

**Pros**

- Thomas creates a balance between his new friends and his long-time friends, who would then become his "school friends" and his "weekend friends."
- Etc.

**Cons**

- By doing this, Thomas is ranking his friends by "style" and "popularity." Is he ashamed of his long-time friends?
- He can't practically ignore them at school and then still want to do activities with them on the weekend.
- Etc.

4. Introduce his primary school friends to new high school friends so that they can all do activities together sometime.

**Pros**

- Thomas makes sure his two groups of friends do activities together. This way, he wouldn't be separating his friendships and wouldn't need to ignore the friends he's known since primary school.
- Thomas can be happy, and even proud, to introduce his "popular" friends to his new group of friends.
- Etc.

**Cons**

- Thomas's new friends may not accept his old friends and vice versa.
- Thomas may experience a lot of pressure to "make it work."
- Etc.

› **Thomas would like your advice: what should he do and why?**

## INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Get the solutions from the group. Then suggest the ones below that are intended to be respectful for everyone involved.**

### Thomas SHOULD decide to...

#### Several options are possible depending on the person's needs and their situation:

- Options 3 or 4 could be good decisions depending on the interests of his two groups of friends.
- However, option 4 seems to be the best decision.
- At the same time, Thomas needs to ask himself questions about his new attitude. Does he want to be with his “new friends” only to be popular like them at school? Does he really feel accepted in this new group or does he have to fake it?
- He can't forget that things are easy and comfortable with his long-time friends (whom he has had since the beginning of primary school) because they've known each other for a long time, they've shared activities, and they confide in each other, and this type of bond can't be recreated overnight.
- It is understandable that he feels torn between his old and new friends and hopes that both groups will like each other so that he won't have to choose between them.
- It is also understandable that Karim and Nicolas do not want to lose their friend and may feel a little jealous that Thomas is developing new friendships. They may fear that these new friends become more important to him than they are.
- However, it could be that the bond and interests that Thomas shared with his friends just aren't what he's looking for anymore when it comes to friendship. It is not easy to explain this to childhood friends. Even if hearing this may help them better understand their friend's attitude, they may still feel saddened or shocked. When a friendship ends, people can feel pain at the loss.
- In life, we sometimes grow apart from our friends without always understanding why, and this can happen naturally without anyone saying anything.



**SHEET**

**1.5**

**FOR THE GROUP**

## “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situational exercise and answer the questions.
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.
- › You will have 10 minutes to respond to the situation.

### “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise

Since **Amelia** has been dating **Zachary**, she spends less and less time with her friends. Every day, Zachary takes Amelia home after school, and he loves their time together. Amelia also enjoys being with Zachary, but she used to go home all the time with her friends. They accuse her of choosing a boy over them, but they are also curious and want to know everything about her relationship. One day, her friend Maria asks her (somewhat discreetly) during class if she and Zachary have made out. Amelia feels uncomfortable and worries that other people are listening. Amelia’s parents are also concerned about this new relationship, as they don’t want it to become too serious and interfere with her studies. **Amelia doesn’t know what to do to share her time equally between everyone and make everyone happy.**

- › What do you think of the attitude of Amelia’s friends, boyfriend and parents?

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- › Suggest **different ways** for Amelia **to respond** and explain the **pros** and **cons** of each choice.

**CHOICE 1 - Amelia COULD...:**

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Pros of this choice	Cons of this choice
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<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
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**CHOICE 2 - Amelia SHOULD...:**

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Pros of this choice	Cons of this choice
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- ▶ Amelia would like your opinion. In your opinion, what **SHOULD SHE DO?** Why should she make this choice?

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*Help Amelia find a solution*



## Answer Sheet: “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Hand out the Amelia and Zachary situational exercise to all of the teams.**
- › **The teams will then read the situation and answer the questions.**
- › **Choose a spokesperson.**
- › **Let the spokesperson from each team share their answers with the whole group.**

### “Amelia and Zachary” Situational Exercise

Since **Amelia** has been dating **Zachary**, she spends less and less time with her friends. Every day, Zachary takes Amelia home after school, and he loves their time together. Amelia also enjoys being with Zachary, but she used to go home all the time with her friends. They accuse her of choosing a boy over them, but they are also curious and want to know everything about her relationship. One day, her friend Maria asks her (somewhat discreetly) during class if she and Zachary have made out. Amelia feels uncomfortable and worries that other people are listening. Amelia’s parents are also concerned about this new relationship, as they don’t want it to become too serious and interfere with her studies. **Amelia doesn’t know what to do to share her time equally between everyone and make everyone happy.**

- › **What do you think of the attitude of Amelia’s friends, boyfriend and parents?**
- › **What could Amelia do or say to her friend in this situation?**
- › **Write down the pros and cons of each choice.**

### Amelia COULD decide to ...

1. Tell her friends that she really likes them, but that she needs to see her boyfriend more often.

#### Pros

- Spending more time with her boyfriend would help her get closer to him.
- This could give others the impression that she is more mature and serious.

#### Cons

- She may sense her friends’ disappointment that she’s not spending all her time with them. Spending less time with her friends means sharing fewer activities with them, confiding in them less, and not laughing together as often.



- Spending more time with her boyfriend can also mean less time for her studies.
- Etc.

2. Tell her boyfriend that he is very important to her and that she loves him, but that her friends are also very important. Explain that she feels the need to see her friends as much as him.

**Pros**

- This would create a balance between her boyfriend and her friends. It could be that both Zachary and Amelia’s friends understand the situation.
- Amelia’s friends will no longer accuse her of “dumping” them for a boy.
- She can enjoy time with her friends, which is normal for people her age. And she can spend time with her boyfriend as well.
- This may reassure her parents.
- Etc.

**Cons**

- Amelia may feel her boyfriend’s disappointment. Amelia’s boyfriend might feel that she isn’t prioritizing him and might risk breaking up with her, which would make Amelia’s choice even more complicated.
- Amelia may want to spend all her time with her boyfriend because it’s a brand-new relationship. Although she thinks about him a lot and he takes up a lot of space in her life right now, she would have to stop seeing him so often so that her friends can spend time with her too.
- Spending a lot of time with your friends can also have an impact on your school work.
- Etc.

3. Tell her boyfriend that she wants to break up with him.

**Pros**

- Amelia’s friends will no longer accuse her of “dumping” them for a boy.
- Amelia will have more free time for her friends and her school work.
- Etc.

**Cons**

- This solution seems a bit drastic. Amelia isn’t listening to her feelings, and Zachary may not understand why she’s breaking up with him since she said she loved him and likes being with him.
- Going through a breakup is difficult. Especially if that isn’t what you really want.
- This may have an impact on her studies.
- Amelia’s friends may feel bad for indirectly “demanding” her to break up with him.
- Etc.

4. See only her boyfriend and quietly distancing herself from her friends or even telling them she’d rather not see them anymore because she doesn’t want to choose between them and her boyfriend.

**Pros**

- Amelia no longer has to worry about what her friends think of her relationship.
- Amelia will have more time for her boyfriend and her studies.
- Etc.

**Cons**

- This solution seems a bit drastic. Amelia isn’t listening to her feelings, and her friends may not understand her decision.
- “Breaking up” with friends can be just as hard as breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend. In this case, it is clear that this is not what Amelia wants.
- This may impact her studies.
- Zachary might feel bad because he never asked for her to stop seeing her friends for him.
- Etc.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Amelia would like your opinion. What do you think she should do and why?**
- › **Collect the solutions from the different teams. Then suggest the ones below that are intended to be respectful to everyone involved.**

### Amelia SHOULD decide to...

#### Several options are possible depending on the person's needs and their situation:

- Choices 1 and 2 seem like good decisions, as long as Amelia is comfortable explaining the reasons for the choice to Zachary and her friends. And there's no need to break up with your boyfriend (Option 3) or stop seeing your friends (Option 4). You can definitely find a balance.
- For example, Amelia might tell her friends how important it is for her to spend time with her new boyfriend but that they are no less important to her and that she wants to keep them as friends.
- Conversely, Amelia might tell her boyfriend that she misses her friends and would like to see them more often. If he really loves her, he will understand her need to see her friends too. In any case, he too most likely needs to see his friends.
- At the beginning of a relationship, it is normal to feel in love and want to be with the other person as much as possible, but it can also be very awkward when you are alone together. In this case, it is easier to see each other with friends.
- Even though you can be in love and have a boyfriend or girlfriend in Secondary 1, you don't yet have a real "couple's life" like young adults who live together.
- In the long run, it's better not to invest all of your energy in one area of your life. The important thing is for this initial phase to eventually lead to a balance between your friends, school work, family and your boyfriend/girlfriend (if you have one).
- Friendships, family, and school work are all very important at your age as well.

#### Beware of Too Much Pressure!

- Although this is not the case with Zachary and Amelia, putting pressure on someone or even blackmailing them so that they don't see their friends as much or at all is not a way to prove your love.

#### Hey, That's Private!

- Amelia can decide whether to share more personal information with Maria. She doesn't have to tell her friend everything that happens between her and Zachary: she may want to keep some things private. If she feels the need to confide in her, she will when they are alone so that other people don't overhear them. Protect your privacy and the other person's is important.

#### My Parents Are Worried!

- Many young people your age don't have a boyfriend or girlfriend. If you do start a relationship, your parents may become concerned because they don't want you to experience an emotional roller coaster (e.g., intense joy followed by intense heartache) that could interfere with your studies or other aspects of your life. They also want this new person in your life to treat you right!
- Getting to know this person in your life may reassure them.

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## Secondary 1 - Session 2

### Body Image “More Than Just One Model of Beauty”

This sexuality education session was created for both schools and youth community settings (for more details, see the sections in the introduction on the session structure and context for using the *Be True to You* program).

For schools, these sessions are consistent with the “Compulsory content in sexuality education” of the ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (2018). The tables below also provide links to the subject areas and broad areas of learning of the Québec Education Program (MEES, 2022) as well as to the “educational intentions in sexuality education” of the “provisional” Culture and Citizenship in Quebec (CCQ) program at the secondary level of the ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (2022).

Links to “Compulsory content in sexuality education” (MEES, 2018)	
<b>Sexual Growth and Body Image</b>	<p><b>Reflect on the advantages of having a positive body image:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Feelings about your own body.</li> <li>› Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating your own body.</li> <li>› Influence of body perception on the expression of sexuality.</li> <li>› Advantages of having a positive body image.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand how certain norms can influence body image:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Standards and messages about the body from the people in your life (peers, family), society and the media.</li> <li>› Influence of these standards and messages on people’s body image.</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehensive View of Sexuality</b>	<p><b>Become aware that during adolescence, you will gradually adopt new roles and behaviours related to your sexuality and increasingly make your own decisions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Construction of a vision and personal choices.</li> <li>› Whether or not to follow various gender stereotypes and social norms.</li> </ul>

**Possible links to the Québec Education Program**  
(MEES, 2021)

<b>Broad areas of learning</b>	<p><b>Health and Well-Being:</b> Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.</p> <p><b>Media Literacy:</b> Enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.</p> <p><b>Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities:</b> Encourage students to develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude toward consumption and the exploitation of the environment.</p>	
<b>Cross-curricular competencies</b>	<p><b>Intellectual competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information</li> <li>› Exercises critical judgment</li> <li>› Solves problems</li> <li>› Uses creativity</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal and social competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Achieves his/her potential</li> <li>› Cooperates with others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication-related competency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Communicates appropriately</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodological competency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information and communications technologies</li> </ul>
<b>Subject areas</b>	<p><b>Personal development subject area:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <i>Quebec Citizenship and Culture</i></li> </ul>	

**Possible links with the educational intentions in sexuality education of the Culture and Citizenship in Québec (CCQ) program at the secondary level**  
(MEQ, 2022)

Theme: Identities and Belonging

<b>Disciplinary competencies</b>	<p><b>Studies a cultural reality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Establishes the scope of the object of study</li> <li>› Evaluates elements of knowledge</li> <li>› Analyzes social relations</li> <li>› Demonstrates a more complete understanding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflects on an ethical question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation</li> <li>› Examines a variety of points of view</li> <li>› Develops a point of view</li> <li>› Engages in dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School</b>	<p><b>Understand the concept of sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Entering adolescence and decision-making</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the role of puberty in consolidating gender identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Gendered socialization, stereotypes and gender norms</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand how body image is formed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Thoughts, feelings and attitudes about own body</li> <li>› Influence of norms and messages about the body</li> <li>› Advantages of having a positive body image</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflect on the general underlying influences that can be considered in making decisions about sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Self-knowledge and respect for personal choices</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflect on the tensions that may exist with regard to norms, stereotypes and own gender identity</b></p> <p><b>Reflect on the tensions between norms, the bodily changes of puberty and the perception of own body and own physical appearance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Feelings about own body</li> <li>› Attitudes and behaviours related to appreciating own body</li> </ul>



## Educational Goals

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**Session length:**  
75 minutes

**Help young people respond to the pressure of beauty standards on how they perceive their body image.**

- 1. Define** beauty and a positive body image.
- 2. Discuss** the importance and benefits of having a positive body image.
- 3. Clarify** how beauty standards for girls and boys are both similar and different and the importance that people attach to these standards.
- 4. Identify** different sources of positive and negative influence on beauty standards.
- 5. Show** students how to critically analyze the three sources of influence (media, friends, family) on the perception of their looks and body image.
- 6. Discuss** how young people can protect themselves against things that negatively influence their body image.
- 7. Identify** ways they can change their own behaviour to positively impact the body image of others.



## Sequence



This **75-min.** session has **four activities**.

10 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Quiz:</b> Beauty and body image</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b> <i>Sheet 2.1: TRUE / FALSE Cards</i> <i>Sheet 2.2: Beauty Facts and Falsehoods</i></li> </ul>
10 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Team activity:</b> Beauty standards</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b> <i>Sheet 2.3: Beauty Standards</i></li> </ul>
20 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Impact technique:</b> Water glass and body image</li> <li>› <b>Three videos:</b> Talking to kids about...Body image Seeing the beauty in our friends and ourselves Dove: choose beautiful</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
15 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Personal reflection:</b> Things that influence body image</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Content Overview:</b> Strategies to help students protect themselves against negative stereotypes and impossible beauty standards <i>Sheet 2.4: Am I Influenced by Beauty Standards?</i></li> </ul>
20 min.	<b>Session CONCLUSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Video:</b> <i>You're beautiful - social experiment</i></li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>



It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow** throughout the session activities.

Just like the entire “*Be True to You*” program, this slideshow can be downloaded for free from our website [www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca](http://www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca) (Volet 3: Outils pédagogiques en éducation à la sexualité - Programme pour les deux cycles du secondaire: *Oser être soi-même*. <https://hypersexualisation.uqam.ca/volet-3-outils-pedagogiques-education-a-sexualite/programme-secondaire-oser-etre-soi-meme/>)

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Young people may tell you about difficult personal situations or situations involving violence. It is important to protect their confidentiality and provide the assistance and support that they need. If a young minor is in danger or has been sexually assaulted, the police *or* Youth Protection Directorate must be contacted.

BEFORE leading this session, it is a good idea to let someone in your school or organization know that you will be discussing sex education with the group. This way, if a teen confides in you or if a situation is reported outside of the context of the session, you will know whether a support worker is available to offer assistance.

Refer to the *Resources* section in the introduction to this program to provide the necessary support to teens who need it. A number of online resources are also given at the end of the slideshow for each session.





## Activity 1



**SHEETS 2.1 AND 2.2**

(PHOTOCOPY AND CUT OUT THE CARDS IN ADVANCE)

**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**10 MIN.**



**QUIZ**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

## Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by telling the group that you are going to discuss body image and the perception of beauty.
- › **Continue** by reminding the group about the rules presented in the introduction or the session slideshow (e.g. taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).

## Quiz

- › **Explain** that the first activity will be a True or False quiz about beauty and body image. Here are the instructions:

Everyone will get a TRUE card and a FALSE card (Sheet 2.1: *TRUE / FALSE Cards*). Read each of the different statements about beauty (Sheet 2.2: *Beauty Facts and Falsehoods*). After each statement, everyone will raise either their TRUE card or FALSE card to show whether they think the statement is true or not. Then give the correct answer (Sheet 2.2) and ask one or two students to explain why. If necessary, add to the information using Sheet 2.2.

- › **Hand out** the TRUE and FALSE cards to the group and start the quiz.

- › **Use** the content below to summarize the statements in the quiz:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Beauty standards evolve over time, and we are living in an era when it can be particularly hard to have a positive body image.**
  - Social media is everywhere, and social media use can increase the desire to change one's body (Rodgers and al., 2020).
- › **Teens of all genders worry about their body image, which means that during this time in their lives they may:**
  - Judge their appearance harshly.
  - Find it harder to think they are good-looking (Yager and al., 2013).
  - Confuse beauty and attractiveness, which are two different things (Tylka and Wood-Barcolow, 2015).
  - Believe they have to be sexy to be good-looking.
  - Accept their body image more easily if they feel that others accept their bodies (Rodgers and al., 2020).

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the group:
  - **How would you define “positive body image” to a friend?**
  - **Why do you think it’s important to have a positive body image?**

*Ask some volunteers to share their opinions.*
- › **Explain** what it means to have a positive body image along with the benefits of a positive body image.

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

### › **Definition of positive body image:**

“Positive body image is a recent concept that includes several facets, such as the acceptance of one’s body and the ability to take care of it with safe, nurturing methods” (Carrard and al., 2019). It’s about feeling good about the way you look (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).

### › **Benefits of a positive body image:**

- When you love your body, you want to take care of it. A person who loves their body therefore:
  - Develops good habits, such as eating well and exercising, not to have a perfect body but to take care of their bodies (Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015).
  - Can find good strategies to feel better when they aren’t doing so well (e.g. go for a walk) (Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015).
- When you accept your appearance and think you are good-looking, it’s easier to have good self-esteem and self-confidence, to feel good about yourself, and to be more caring or kind to yourself, which makes it easier to connect to others (Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

### › **Conclude** with the following question:

- **After the TRUE or FALSE quiz and our discussion about the benefits of a positive body image, what are your main takeaways about beauty and body image?**

*Get their opinions.*



## Activity 2



**SHEET 2.3**  
(PHOTOCOPY AND CUT OUT  
THE QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE)

**POSTER TACK  
SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**10 MIN.**



**TEAM ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of three or four.
- › **Go over** the definition of “beauty standards.” This definition will help the group do the next activity.

**Beauty Standards:** *Beauty standards are physical criteria that people think they have to meet to be considered beautiful and that are determined by our society or culture (Dufour-Bouchard, 2016).*

*Specific standards will influence our perception of beauty (Dufour-Bouchard, 2016). For example, Western society is highly influenced by standards of beauty portrayed in the media (e.g. movies, reality shows, ads, social media, music videos).*

- › **Randomly assign** one of the three questions from Sheet 2.3: *Beauty Standards* to each team.
- › **Explain** that their team will have five minutes to answer the question before sharing their answers with the group.

Below are the questions on Sheet 2.3: *Beauty Standards*:

- **Give examples of “beauty standards” portrayed in the media that are directed at boys or men. In other words, what qualities do boys or men need to have for people to think they’re “good-looking”?**
- **Give examples of “beauty standards” portrayed in the media that are directed at girls or women. In other words, what qualities do girls or women need for people to think they’re “good-looking”?**
- **How far are some people willing to go to meet the “beauty standards” portrayed in the media (e.g. movies, reality shows, ads, social media)?**

- › **Divide** the blackboard into three columns (one column for each question).
- › **Ask** each team to put up their answers (using poster tack) into the corresponding column.
- › **Choose** three volunteers from the group to come to the board. Each one will be assigned a question and will have to read their team’s answers.

## Presentation and Discussion

- › **Add to** their answers with the information below:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Examples of “beauty standards” portrayed in the media and directed at boys or men.**
  - Men should have muscles and not a lot of fat; they must be tall and tanned; they shouldn’t have a lot of hair, etc.
  - They have to represent strength (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).
- › **Give examples of “beauty standards” portrayed in the media that are directed at girls or women.**
  - Women should be thin, have smooth hair, full lips, big breasts (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022), long legs, straight teeth (Mimeault, 2005), rounded buttocks and little (or no) body hair, etc.
- › **How far are some people willing to go to meet these beauty standards?**
  - It is okay to want to take care of yourself and improve your appearance without becoming obsessed about it.
  - But some people are willing to risk their health to get their dream body (e.g. strict dieting, intense workouts, not protecting themselves from the sun (Nowicki, n.d.)).
  - Others take more definitive action with plastic surgery: “Cosmetic surgery sells the dream that you can look like your favourite celebrity and be admired like them too” (Mimeault, 2005). The number of teenagers who want surgery to change something they don’t like about their bodies has increased (Nowicki, n.d.). However, this doesn’t mean that surgeons automatically perform these operations. They need to make sure that the request isn’t hiding a more significant problem.

- › **Ask** the following questions and **get** their opinions:
  - **Who do you think decides on these beauty standards?**
  - **Are there beauty standards that make it difficult for you to be satisfied with your body image? If so, why?**
- › **Add** to their answers with the information below:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Who decides on these beauty standards?**
  - The entertainment, fashion, cosmetics and other industries all impose their own “beauty standards.” By bombarding us with the same type of images, they “make us believe that there is just one way to be beautiful” (Mimeault, 2005).
- › **Are there beauty standards that make it difficult to be satisfied with our body image? If so, why?**
  - Yes, some of these stereotypical and unattainable standards can impact self-esteem. The problem is when you constantly compare yourself to these images, which can be “technologically manipulated,” and constantly feel dissatisfied with your body. You can’t compete with Photoshop or a team of professionals (e.g. hairdresser, make-up artist, fashion designer) who are there to improve the image of these models, actors, and singers.
  - Remember that the body is changing and transitioning during adolescence. You can’t compare your body to an adult body.
  - Some days we feel like we look our best and other days we don’t. Learning to appreciate your body image is a challenge at any age, and this is the key to “beauty.”



## Activity 3



**LARGE GLASS**

**WATER**

**MATERIALS OR “POLLUTANTS”  
THAT WILL BE ADDED TO THE WATER**  
(e.g. moss, soil, stones, shredded tissues)

**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**20 MIN.**



**IMPACT TECHNIQUE**



**VIDEOS**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Impact techniques are simple activities that use movement or objects (in this case, a glass of water) as metaphors. When material engages multiple senses, and not just verbal language, the students will be more likely to remember the key message, as they will make different associations between the glass of water and body image. The goal is to help them retain the information more easily (Beaulieu, 2014). After the activity, and for the rest of the session, refer back to the glass of water as often as applicable.

We based this glass of water activity on the one developed by Beaulieu (2014) and adapted it to the theme of body image. However, you can also use the glass of water metaphor to address other aspects of self-esteem.



### Impact Technique

- › **Take** a see-through glass, fill it part-way with water, and show it to the group. Explain how the water is of very good quality because it is clean and transparent.
- › Now **take** the stones, earth, etc. that you collected and show them to the group.
- › **Show** the glass to the group as well and explain that the glass and water together represent a teenager.
- › **Ask** the group to give examples of things they may say about their own bodies and things that others may say about them from the time they get up until the end of the day. Whenever someone says something negative, add some “pollutants” to the water. Whenever someone says something positive, add some water.





## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

It is very likely that the examples students give will be fairly negative (e.g., ugly, fat, skinny) if not outright disrespectful and insulting (e.g., fat cow, troll). Ask the students to provide positive examples as well. The goal is to illustrate the effect that receiving either compliments or disparaging remarks can have on how someone's day goes and, by extension, on that person's self-esteem. The point is not to allow a free for all; it's important to "protect" those who are often the target of mockery or insults, so do not allow students to use their examples as personal attacks. The goal is for them to realize how big an impact negative comments can have on body image perception and self-esteem. It is not to make it a game or a joke "just for laughs," etc.

- › After some pollutants and water have been added to the glass several times, **ask** the group what they think the water and pollutants represent. (Water = positive thoughts or comments; pollutants = negative thoughts or comments).
- › After several pollutants have been put in the glass, **show** the glass to the group so that everyone can see what it looks like.

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the following questions and for each question, add to the answers with the information below:
  - **What do you think the message of this activity is?**  
*Get their opinions.*
- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Every day, we take different negative thoughts about our body or our appearance into our "glass of water." These things may be our own dissatisfaction with our bodies or even comments from others.
  - › Taking these "pollutants" (negative thoughts) into our "water" will have an impact on us. Waste "pollutes" our water. In other words, negative thoughts and messages about our bodies influence how we think and feel.
  - › A day when we don't appreciate our body and judge it severely means that we may have a lot of "pollution" in our water and therefore a lot of negativity about our appearance.
- › **Continue** the discussion by asking the following questions:
    - **Do you think that the media (e.g. ads, social media) and our friends, and family have an impact on whether we appreciate our bodies, i.e. can they add "water" or "pollutants" to our glass?**

- **Can the media and friends and family influence whether teens are satisfied or not with their appearance?**
- **If so, why?**  
**If not, why not?**

*Get their opinions.*

› **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Body image, or how we perceive our body, is influenced by the different messages we get about appearance and beauty.
- › These messages can come from our own personal experiences and from the people around us, such as our friends and family, the media, or society in general (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).

## Videos

- › **Tell** the group that they will watch three videos that represent different sources that can influence teens' body image: 1. the media; 2. their friends and peer group; and 3. their families. A discussion will follow each video.
- › **Show** the following video that illustrates the “influence of media” on body image:

**Talking to kids about... body image (The House of Wellness, 2018)**

**Length:** 4 min., 34 sec.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N6-mTvW9Zw>**



.....>  
Video



## Discussion and Presentation

- › After the group watches the video, **ask** the following questions and **get** their opinions.
  - **One message from this video is that the media, including social media, negatively influence young people’s body image and self-esteem. What do you think?**
  - **What role can the media, such as advertising, movies, TV shows and social media, play in how you perceive your body image?**
  - **If you had the same discussion with your parents about self-esteem and the influence of the media on body image, what would you say?**
  - **How can the media influence whether you want to change things about your body? Do they add more “water” (positive thoughts) or “pollutants” (negative thoughts) to your glass?**
- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Every day, teens are exposed to idealized body images in the media, and these standards are often very difficult to reach (SIECCAN, 2013).
- › Girls’ constant exposure to media images of women’s bodies portrayed as “sexy” can cause them to be dissatisfied with their bodies, have low self-esteem, and do excessive and even dangerous things (e.g. working out too much, not eating enough) to become perfect like the images shown in the media (Vandenbosch and Eggermont, 2013).
- › Boys also experience pressure from the media and are less encouraged by society to talk about any anxiety they may feel due to their body dissatisfaction (Vandenbosch and Eggermont, 2013; Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).
- › Teen boys and girls who don’t meet beauty ideals may have negative feelings about their bodies. If the media presented more diverse images of bodies, it would probably be easier to accept our bodies both as teens and adults.
- › In recent years, the media have been trying to present women and men of different shapes and sizes that do not necessarily conform to stereotypes. This not only allows more people to identify with these models but also makes everyone realize that there isn’t a single model of beauty.

## Video

- › **Show** the following video that illustrates the “influence of friends” on body image:

### **Seeing the beauty in our friends and ourselves (Dove US, 2014)**

**Length:** 1 min., 43 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APgEJoAYh0Y>



Video



## Discussion and Presentation

- › After watching the video, **ask** the group the following questions and **get** their opinions:
  - **The message of this video is “If we can see beauty in others, why can’t we see it in ourselves?” What do you think?**
  - **What role do friends and family play in how teens accept their body image?**
- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Friends play an important role in the lives of teens, and what their peers think is very important: feeling accepted by others and that their appearance is perceived positively by others is part of a positive body image.
- › The experiences of teens with other young people their age and their friends will influence how they see themselves (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022). For example, being made fun of for your weight or appearance by people your own age can have a negative impact on your body image.
- › Since friends are very influential, young people may feel pressured to look or dress a certain way to be like everyone else (Kids Help Phone, 2020).
- › They can also be influenced by their friends' and family's vision of beauty. Whether they have very stereotypical views or are open to many forms of beauty will have an impact on teens' own view of beauty.
- › Having friends who accept different forms of beauty and who value each other in ways other than for their physical appearance will help teens more easily accept their own bodies.

## Video

- › **Show** the following video that illustrates peer pressure on body image:

**Dove “Choose Beautiful” (Barnes, 2015)**

**Length:** 3 min., 40 sec.

**<https://vimeo.com/124362501>**



Video



## Discussion and Presentation

- › Then **ask** the following questions and **get** their opinions:
  - **At one point in the video, a young girl says, “I wanted to go through the average door, but my mum just pulled me over to the ‘Beautiful’ door.” What do you think about her reaction?**
  - **Why do you think her mother did this, and what impact did this have on her daughter?**
  - **How can your family (parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc.) influence your body image?**
- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › The family plays an important role in the body image of children, whether by setting a negative or positive example of their own body image. For example, if parents constantly talk about their weight or foods that make them fat, it will make children more weight-conscious (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022). E.g., If parents feel comfortable with their body image no matter what they look like and feel “comfortable in their own skin,” this sends a message of self-acceptance.
- › Negative comments from a parent and even jokes by siblings about the looks of a brother or sister can have an impact on self-perception.
- › Conversely, if children are valued for who they are and what they do, and not just what they look like, this sends a message that it is important not to judge others solely based on their appearance.

- › **Conclude** the activity by explaining that, for each of the three sources of influence on body image that they just saw, they can decide to behave in different ways. These sources of influence—the media, friends and family—can have a negative or positive impact on our body image.
  - **When the media only portray images of perfect (and sometimes photoshopped) bodies, we have to be critical.**
  - **When people say mean things about our appearance, we have to protect ourselves from these negative messages (e.g. put our hand over our glass to prevent this negativity from “polluting” our water).**
  - **This is what we’ll do in the next activity.**



## Activity 4



**SHEET 2.4**  
**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**15 MIN.**



**PERSONAL  
REFLECTION**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### Personal Reflection

- › **Explain** that this activity will get the group to reflect on whether beauty standards influence their choices about their appearance and body image.
- › **Hand out** Sheet 2.4: *Am I Influenced by Beauty Standards?* to the group.
- › **Give** the following instructions:
  - **This is an individual and personal activity.**
  - **You don't need to write your name on the sheet and you won't have to hand it in.**
  - **You won't have to share your answers with the group either.**
  - **Answer as best you can by checking off the answer that most accurately reflects your experience. You can also decide to simply think about your answers, without filling out the sheet.**
  - **You have five minutes to do this activity.**
- › After five minutes, **tell** the group that their time is up and that they can finish answering the questions later at home if they want.
- › **Review** the exercise by mentioning that it is perfectly normal to be influenced by the beauty standards all around us, but some people will be more influenced than others.

### Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the following question:
    - **How can we protect ourselves from stereotypical or unachievable beauty standards or the of negative influences from the people around us on our body image?**
- In other words (if we think back to the glass of water exercise), “How can I prevent my ‘water’ (body image) from being polluted by stereotyped, unrealistic or negative messages from the media or people around me?”**

*(This refers back to the glass of water activity in which the “water” represented body image and the “pollutants” represented stereotypical or unachievable beauty standards).*

**Get their ideas.**

- › **Share** the four strategies suggested by Julia Lévy-Ndejuru (2020) from Équilibre, an organization whose mission is to prevent and reduce weight and body image problems. These strategies help us move away from behaviours that are influenced by beauty standards, which may be stereotypical or unachievable. Here are the strategies:
  - **Choose one action at a time that you would like to move away from (e.g. severe dieting, working out intensely, feeling obligated to wear makeup).**
  - **Decide for how long you will stop this behaviour (e.g. “This week I’m not going to work out” or “I’m only going to work out if I really want to”).**
  - **Take time to think about how you feel before, during and after the experience.**
  - **Be kind to yourself. This exercise may be difficult, and you won’t succeed the first time. It doesn’t matter, the important thing is to try.**

## Personal Reflection

- › **Ask** anyone in the group who wants to share a behaviour they feel pressured to do in order to meet a beauty standard (they can choose a behaviour from their personal reflection exercise). This behaviour must be one they would like to stop doing altogether or less often. After choosing the behaviour, they have to apply these four strategies for one week while thinking about why it is important to apply these strategies in their daily lives.
- › It is important to distinguish between:
  - **Eating a healthy diet AND constantly dieting to control your weight and look like your favourite celebrity.**
  - **Exercising to feel fit AND working out intensely to get a perfect body like you see in magazines.**
  - **Doing a sport that you like or even practising intensively to get ready for a competition AND only doing that sport to sculpt your body and get noticed.**
  - **It’s great to eat well, get exercise and play sports for FUN. These activities become problematic when they get overly intense, when you don’t enjoy them, and when they feel like something you have to do.**
- › **Conclude** by mentioning that the next activity will be about a student initiative to change beauty perceptions at her school.





## Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



5 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

- › **Tell** the group that, after talking about beauty standards, body image, and different things that influence how we perceive our appearance and discussing what we can do to change things, they will now watch a video made by a teenage girl who wanted to do a social experiment at her high school. She asked students and school staff if she could take their photo for a school project. Some of the people she knew and some she didn't. Just before taking the picture, she explained to them that her goal was to take pictures of "things she finds beautiful."

**Instructions:** As they watch the video, **get** the group to pay close attention to the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the people receiving the compliment.

## Video and Discussion

- › **Show** the following video:

**You're beautiful – social experiment (Beacham, 2018)**

**Length:** 9 min., 59 sec.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDO-6suZPYE>**



Video



- › **Stop** the video at 5 min., 20 sec.

- › **Ask** the following questions:
  - **Based just on the reactions of people who are told that they are beautiful, what do you notice about their self-perception?**
  - **What explains their reactions?**
  - **Think about how you would have spontaneously reacted if someone said the same thing to you.**  
*Get their opinions.*
- › **Continue** the video by explaining that this girl then asks people what characteristic makes them a beautiful or unique person, a question that people often don't take the time to think about.

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Share** with the group what this young filmmaker learned from this experience:
  - *"People don't get told that they're beautiful enough."*
  - *"When I asked, most people said that they did not know or could not identify what makes them beautiful."*
  - *"Everyone is beautiful in their own way!"*
  - *"When you see something beautiful about someone, tell them! It only takes a few seconds of your time, but for them, the impact will last for a long time!"*
- › **Ask** the following questions:
  - **This young director said that when you see something beautiful in someone, it's important to tell them. Why do you think that is?**
  - **If you would like to do something to help a family member or friend improve their body image, what could you do or say to them?**
  - **Be kind to yourself. This exercise may be difficult, and you won't succeed the first time. It doesn't matter, the important thing is to try.**  
*Get their ideas.*

## Session Conclusion

- › **Conclude** with the following information:
  - Wanting to be beautiful is not a bad thing in itself.
  - Beauty IS NOT JUST ABOUT being good-looking or having a perfect body.
  - Kindness, intelligence, humour, personality, and style are also ways we find someone beautiful.
  - There may be times when you feel less comfortable in your body and are more critical of some aspects of it. As explained by psychologist Annabelle Ryburn, it is unrealistic to expect all young people to appreciate everything about their bodies (KidsMatterAustralia, 2015). The same is true for adults.
  - But if we judge ourselves too harshly or let other people judge us, this can have an impact on our self-esteem.
  - What's important for good self-esteem is that you feel good about your body most of the time (KidsMatterAustralia, 2015).
  - Self-esteem is the ability to like who you are with all of your qualities, flaws and limitations (Mimeault, 2005).
- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.
  - **What are your takeaways from this session?**  
*Get their opinions.*



**SHEET**

**2.1**

**FOR SESSION  
LEADERS**

## TRUE / FALSE Cards

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Before the activity, photocopy and cut out enough cards for all students in the group. Give each person one TRUE card and one FALSE card.

TRUE

FALSE

TRUE

FALSE

TRUE

FALSE



## SHEET

### 2.2

FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

## Beauty: What's True, What's False?

Statement	Answer	Explanation
Someone who thinks they are good-looking is vain, i.e. they think a lot of themselves.	<b>False</b>	It isn't vain to accept your body and think that you're good-looking. Appreciating your body is a very positive thing. However, if your goal is to look better than everyone else (comparison or competition) or if you are willing to do anything to be good-looking or to maintain your appearance at all costs, then this could be considered vanity (Tylka and Wood-Barcolow, 2015).
When you think someone is attractive, that means you want to date that person.	<b>False</b>	You can think someone is attractive without being attracted to them or wanting to date them (Tylka and Wood-Barcolow, 2015). Beauty and attractiveness are two different things.
Girls tend to get more compliments about their appearance than boys do. (i.e. "Your hair is so pretty"; "I love your outfit").	<b>True</b>	The positive comments that girls get usually relate to their appearance ("You're beautiful," "You have beautiful eyes") while boys are complimented more for their physical abilities or what their bodies can do ("You're good at basketball," "You run fast," "You're strong," (Gattario and Frisen, 2019 cited in Todd, 2019).
It can be harder to think that you are good-looking or to appreciate your body during adolescence.	<b>True</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Our body image can vary at any age.</li><li>› However during adolescence, the body is going through a lot of changes, and it can be hard for teens to adapt while dealing with the pressure from the media and their messages about perfect bodies. It has been shown that 70% of teen girls and 45% of teen boys are dissatisfied with their bodies and want to change their weight or shape (Yager and al., 2013).</li></ul>
You have to be sexy to be considered good-looking.	<b>False</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› When you look at celebrities or images on social media, you may get the impression that sexy equals beautiful. But these are two different things. For example, dressing in a sexualized way may get people's attention, but beauty is something else. Beauty is personal and it's not just about appearance, weight or your "look."</li><li>› Beauty is above all how we express our unique personality.</li></ul>

Statement	Answer	Explanation
Social media helps make us satisfied with our bodies and how we look.	<b>False</b>	It has been shown that people compare themselves with the images on social media and then become dissatisfied with their bodies and want to change them. Girls are more likely to want to lose weight, and boys are more likely to want to build muscle (Rodgers and al., 2020).  On social networks, people usually want to show themselves in the best light (e.g. smiling, fit, energetic). When you feel like you don't measure up, you risk becoming very critical of your body, your look, your appearance, etc.
If I feel that people around me accept my appearance, I'll be more likely to have a positive body image.	<b>True</b>	When other people accept our bodies and appearance, we are less likely to want to change our appearance and may be more concerned with how we feel rather than just what we look like (Tylka and Wood-Barcolow, 2015).
What a person needs to look like to be considered good-looking is always the same, no matter what time period we live in.	<b>False</b>	Beauty standards change over time. For example, people considered "fat" by today's standards would have been seen as canons of beauty in other eras. For women, having curves was a sign of fertility, while for men, this was a sign that they were in a high-status position, as they could eat as much as they wanted. In other times, thinness and muscles have been in vogue.
Boys also feel pressure to meet beauty standards and may have a negative body image.	<b>True</b>	A study of boys aged 16 to 19 showed that they are under pressure to meet the beauty standards conveyed by the media and that these standards are very difficult for most boys to achieve (e.g. being muscular and "ripped" like the people they see on TV). They feel inadequate if they do not fit this model (Spur, Berry and Walker, 2013).
It is more difficult to have a positive body image in this day and age.	<b>True</b>	Although each era has had its different pressures to fit a certain body type, it seems more difficult to have a positive body image today, as we are bombarded with images of perfect, remade, and photoshopped bodies in the media or on social media. People didn't used to have this technology and were exposed to fewer images with which to compare themselves. This is why it's important to be critical of stereotyped or unrealistic images.





# SHEET

## 2.3

FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

# Beauty Standards

## INSTRUCTIONS

- › Give each team one of the following three questions.
- › Photocopy the sheet as needed and cut out each question.



1. Give examples of beauty standards portrayed in the media that are directed at men or boys, i.e. what qualities do men or boys need for people to think they're good-looking?

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2. Give examples of beauty standards portrayed in the media that are directed at women or girls, i.e. what qualities do women or girls need for people to think they're good-looking?

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3. How far are some people willing to go to meet these beauty standards portrayed in the media (e.g. movies, reality TV, ads, social media)?

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# Am I Influenced by Beauty Standards?



## SHEET

### 2.4

#### FOR THE GROUP

Take time to think about how beauty standards impact you personally. This sheet is just for **you**.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

#### Step 1

- › To learn if you need to “protect yourself” against beauty standards, first ask yourself whether you are really influenced by these stereotyped or unrealistic beauty standards.
- › Answer the questions by checking off the answer that you find most closely reflects YOUR experience. You can also decide to simply think about your answers, without filling out the sheet.
- › You only need to answer the questions that apply to you; for example, if you don’t wear makeup, you don’t have to answer Question A.

#### A) Why do you wear makeup?

- Because I like wearing it and it makes me feel good.
- To improve my appearance.
- Because I feel like I’m supposed to.
- Other reasons. Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### B) Why do you absolutely want to change your weight?

- Because I would look better.
- Because I want to be healthier.
- To improve my appearance.
- Because I feel like I’m supposed to.
- Other reasons. Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### C) Why do you work out?

- Because I like doing it and it makes me feel good.
- To be healthier.
- To improve my appearance.
- Because I feel like I’m supposed to.
- Other reasons. Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### D) Why did you choose to wear the clothes you are wearing today? (if you wear a school uniform, think about the clothes you wear on the weekend.)

- Because I like them and I’m comfortable in them; I would wear them even when hanging out by myself in my living room!
- These clothes are not my first choice, but I feel like I should wear them to look good.
- Other reasons. Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### E) Why do you retouch photos of yourself (e.g. use a filter) before posting them on social media?

- Because I like doing it and it makes me feel good.
- Because I feel like I’m supposed to.
- Other reasons. Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Step 2: What do you notice about your answers?

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## Secondary 1 - Session 3

### Bullying Prevention “A Dangerous Game!”

This sexuality education session was created for both schools and youth community settings (for more details, see the sections in the introduction on the session structure and context for using the *Be True to You* program).

For schools, these sessions are consistent with the “Compulsory content in sexuality education” of the ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (2018). The tables below also provide links to the subject areas and broad areas of learning of the Québec Education Program (MEES, 2022) as well as to the “educational intentions in sexuality education” of the “provisional” Culture and Citizenship in Quebec (CCQ) program at the secondary level of the ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (2022).

Links to “Compulsory content in sexuality education” (MEES, 2018)	
<b>Comprehensive View of Sexuality</b>	<b>Become aware that during adolescence, you will gradually adopt new roles and behaviours related to your sexuality and increasingly make your own decisions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Construction of a vision and personal choices: wishes, needs, limits and the ability to consider those of others, whether or not to follow various gender stereotypes and social norms, strategies for finding information and help.</li></ul>
<b>Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms</b>	<b>Recognize the role of puberty in the consolidation of your gender identity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Events at the beginning of adolescence: physical and psychological transformations of puberty, evolution of relations with peers.</li><li>› Exploration of new sexual norms.</li></ul>

**Possible links to the Québec Education Program**  
(MEES, 2021)

<b>Broad areas of learning</b>	<p><b>Health and Well-Being:</b> Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.</p> <p><b>Media Literacy:</b> Enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.</p> <p><b>Citizenship and Community Life:</b> Enable students to take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity.</p>	
<b>Cross-curricular competencies</b>	<p><b>Intellectual competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information</li> <li>› Solves problems</li> <li>› Exercises critical judgment</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal and social competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Achieves his/her potential</li> <li>› Cooperates with others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication-related competency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Communicates appropriately</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodological competency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information and communications technologies</li> </ul>
<b>Subject areas</b>	<p><b>Personal development subject area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <i>Quebec citizenship and culture</i></li> </ul>	

**Possible links with the educational intentions in sexuality education of the Culture and Citizenship in Québec (CCQ) program at the secondary level**  
(MEQ, 2022)

Theme: Identities and Belonging

<b>Disciplinary competencies</b>	<p><b>Studies a cultural reality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Establishes the scope of the object of study</li> <li>› Evaluates elements of knowledge</li> <li>› Analyzes social relations</li> <li>› Demonstrates a more complete understanding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflects on an ethical question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation</li> <li>› Examines a variety of points of view</li> <li>› Develops a point of view</li> <li>› Engages in dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School</b>	<p><b>Understand the concept of sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Entering adolescence and decision-making</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the role of puberty in consolidating gender identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Evolution of relationships with peers</li> <li>› Gendered socialization, stereotypes and gender norms</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflect on the general underlying influences that can be considered in making decisions about sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Recognition of own wishes, needs and limits and those of others</li> <li>› Self-knowledge and respect for personal choices</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflect on the tensions that may exist with regard to norms, stereotypes and own gender identity</b></p>



## Educational Goals

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**Session length:**  
75 minutes

**Get young people to think about how sexual rumours impact a person's reputation and what to do to stop a rumour from spreading, with the ultimate goal of preventing cyberbullying.**

- 1. Define** what a rumour is and why people start rumours.
- 2. Identify** the impacts of a hurtful rumour and ways to stop a rumour (based on a real-life case study).
- 3. Recognize** the differences between how rumours spread through word of mouth and how they spread online.
- 4. Discover** possible consequences for victims of a rumour and for the people who start rumours.
- 5. Discuss** the impact of sexual rumours on a person's reputation and the differences or similarities when it comes to boys' and girls' reputations.
- 6. Differentiate** between bullying and cyberbullying.
- 7. Analyze** how the "group effect" can be either negative or positive in a bullying situation.
- 8. Discuss** ways to react when you are either the victim or observer of a hurtful rumour.



## Sequence



This **75-min.** session has **four activities**.

10 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation:</b> What is a rumour?</li> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “What is a Rumour?”</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
15 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Case study:</b> Alexandra Discussion <i>Sheet 3.1: Alexandra’s Story</i></li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
15 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation:</b> Illustration of how a rumour spreads <i>Sheet 3.2: Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth</i> <i>Sheet 3.3: Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads Online</i> <i>Sheet 3.4: Discussion Questions About How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth or Online</i></li> </ul>
25 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation:</b> What does it mean to have a “good” or “bad” reputation?</li> <li>› <b>Team activity:</b> Expressions about reputation</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> <li>› <b>Presentation:</b> Harassment, bullying and cyberbullying</li> <li>› <b>Two videos</b> <i>“Mean girls”</i> <i>“A Happier Morning in Paris”</i> <i>Sheet 3.5: Expressions About Reputation</i> <i>Sheet 3.6: Answer Sheet: Reputations - Negative or Positive?</i></li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
10 min.	<b>Session CONCLUSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion:</b> “What can you do if you find out a rumour is being spread about you? What if you hear a rumour about someone else?”</li> <li>› <b>Presentation:</b> Key messages</li> </ul>



It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow** throughout the session activities.

Just like the entire “*Be True to You*” program, this slideshow can be downloaded for free from our website [www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca](http://www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca) (Volet 3: Outils pédagogiques en éducation à la sexualité - Programme pour les deux cycles du secondaire: *Oser être soi-même*. <https://hypersexualisation.uqam.ca/volet-3-outils-pedagogiques-education-a-sexualite/programme-secondaire-osser-etre-soi-meme/>)

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Young people may tell you about difficult personal situations or situations involving violence. It's important to protect their confidentiality and provide the assistance and support that they need. If a young minor is in danger or has been sexually assaulted, the police or *Youth Protection Directorate* must be contacted.

BEFORE leading this session, it is a good idea to let someone in your school or organization know that you will be discussing sex education with the group. This way, if a teen confides in you or if a situation is reported outside of the context of the session, you will know whether a support worker is available to offer assistance.

Refer to the *Resources* section in the introduction to this program to provide the necessary support to teens who need it. A number of online resources are also given at the end of the slideshow for each session.



## Activity 1



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION

## Session Introduction

- › **Remind** the group about the rules presented in the introduction or the session slideshow (e.g. taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Start** the session by asking the group:
  - **What is a rumour?**  
*Get their opinions.*
- › **Add** to their answers if necessary with the information below:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Rumour: “an unofficial interesting story or piece of news that might be true or invented and quickly spreads from person to person” (Rumour, 2021).
- › Rumours can be about someone’s physical appearance, behaviour or attitude. Although rumours are usually negative, they can also be positive. Sometimes rumours are an exaggeration or caricature of someone’s characteristics; however, they can also be completely untrue and made up.
- › “Rumour” is a synonym for “gossip” (Gossip, 2021).
- › Gossip: “conversation or reports about other people’s private lives that might be unkind, disapproving, or not true” (Gossip, 2021).

- › **Continue** the discussion by asking this question:
  - **Why do you think people start rumours?**  
*Get their opinions.*

› **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › To make themselves feel important or get other people's attention.
- › To be funny.
- › Out of jealousy or envy.
- › Out of boredom.
- › To do what their friends are doing.
- › To vent their frustration or get revenge.
- › To bully someone.
- › From a lack of confidence or self-esteem (Kolwalski et al., 2014).
- › Because by drawing attention to other people's faults and weaknesses, we pull focus away from ourselves (Bordeleau, 2009).
- › Because someone who constantly says mean things about others may be experiencing personal problems themselves and may also be feeling sad, lonely or vulnerable.

## Video

› **Show** the following video:

**Rumours spread about me at school (Storybooth, 2017)**

**Length:** 3 min., 12 sec.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrEJ5W8KUdk>**



Video



## Discussion and Presentation

› **Lead** a discussion using the suggested questions below:

- **What are your takeaways from this video?**
- **Does the video clearly illustrate what a rumour is?**
- **If so, can you give examples from the video?**

*Get their opinions.*

› **Add** to their answers with the information below:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › This story clearly represents a rumour.
- › A girl's best friend started to tell everyone stories about how she supposedly...
- › Put her in a choke hold.
- › Almost broke her arm.
- › Gave her an Indian burn.
- › And almost broke her leg.
- › The rumours spread to the entire Grade 6 class.
- › After she confronted her former best friend, the rumours stopped; however, they started up again a few months later, which can happen with rumours.
- › Regardless of their reasons for starting a rumour, people who spread them may not always realize the consequences of their actions.



# 2

## Activity 2



**SHEET 3.1**  
**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**15 MIN.**



**CASE STUDY**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### Case Study

- ▶ **Begin** the second activity by telling the group that they will hear a story in different parts with breaks for questions to have a broader group discussion. Although this is a true story, the person's name is fictitious.

#### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

OPTION: This activity can also be done in mixed- or single-gender teams. If you do the activity in teams, read the story out loud and each team can discuss and answer the different questions. Bring everyone back into a group after each part of the story. As the activity goes along, give them new information to discuss.



- ▶ **Tell** Alexandra's story using Sheet 3.1: *Alexandra's Story* and, with the whole group, **ask** the discussion questions for each part of the story about what this girl did in response to a rumour going around about her.
- ▶ If necessary, **add** to the young people's answers using the information in Sheet 3.1.



## Activity 3



**SHEETS 3.2, 3.3, 3.4**  
**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**15 MIN.**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### Discussion and Presentation

- › To illustrate how a rumour spreads through *word of mouth*, **read** the story of Nicolas and Kim (Sheet 3.2: *Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth*) while showing the images in the PowerPoint presentation step by step. If you can't use the slideshow (PowerPoint) during the activity, draw the diagram from Sheet 3.2 on the blackboard.
- › **Ask** the group the following question:
  - **How far do you think this rumour spread through word of mouth?**  
*Get their opinions.*
- › **Share** the following information:

#### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › We can see that more than 25 people can quickly hear a rumour through word of mouth.
- › To illustrate how a rumour spreads *online*, **read** the same story about Nicolas and Kim (Sheet 3.3: *Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads Online*) while showing the images from the PowerPoint presentation step by step. If you can't use the slideshow (PowerPoint), draw the diagram on the board based on Sheet 3.3.
- › **Ask** the following question:
  - **What did you notice about how fast the rumour spread online compared to word of mouth?**  
*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › A rumour spreads much faster online than through word of mouth.
- › In this case, 1110 people heard about the rumour.

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the following questions and **share** the information on Sheet 3.4: *Discussion Questions About How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth or Online*.

- **What makes a rumour so easy to spread?**
- **Is it easy to stop a rumour?**
- **What’s different about a rumour spread online compared to one spread through word of mouth?**
- **What are the consequences for the victims of rumours spread online?**
- **What could be the consequences and punishments for people who start rumours online or who cyberbully?**

*Get their opinions.*

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

It’s important for the group to know that “ignorance of the law is no excuse,” which means that even if they aren’t aware that their behaviour is illegal, they can still be punished for it. Not knowing the law is not a reason for bad behaviour (Éducaloi, 2021-a). However, depending on the seriousness of their actions, sentences are often less severe for teens.

Students who want more information about what is and isn’t against the law can visit the Éducaloi website (<https://educaloi.qc.ca/en/>) or ask a parent or other adult they trust.

The site of the Service de police de la ville de Montréal (SPVM, 2021) has a section for teens on cyberbullying:

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Jeunesse/Cyberbullying>.



- › **End** the activity by reading this story that illustrates how hard it is to stop a rumour:
  - In the movie *Doubt* (2008), directed by John Patrick Shanley, one of the main characters, a priest, includes an anecdote in his sermon about the impact of rumours and gossip. He tells the story of a woman confessing to her priest that she has said mean things about her neighbour. In the story, the priest tells the woman to go home and up to the roof of her house with a feather pillow, cut the pillow open with a knife, and then return to see him. She does so, and the priest asks what happened. She says, “Feathers everywhere, Father.” The parish priest then says, “Now, I want you to go back and gather up every last feather that flew out on the wind.” “Well,” she says, “It can’t be done. I don’t know where they went. The wind took them all over.” The priest says to her, “And that is gossip!”
  - This is a very good illustration of how a hurtful rumour can take on a life of its own!





## Activity 4



**SHEETS 3.5, 3.6**  
**2 LARGE ENVELOPES**  
**SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**25 MIN.**



**TEAM ACTIVITY**



**VIDEOS**



**DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION**

### Discussion and Presentation

› **Tell** the group how spreading hurtful rumours can impact a person’s reputation. **Ask** the group to answer the following questions:

- **What does it mean to have a “good reputation”?**
- **What does it mean to have a “bad reputation”?**

*Get their opinions.*

› **Add** to their answers if necessary with the information below:

#### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › A reputation is how people perceive a person or their lifestyle (Government of Canada, 2016). Generally, someone who behaves well will have a good reputation and vice versa.
- › Having a good reputation means that people have POSITIVE perceptions and opinions of you.
- › Conversely, a bad reputation means that people have NEGATIVE perceptions or opinions of you.

### Team Activity

- › **Tell** the group that rumours related to sexual stereotypes can impact someone’s reputation. Rumours can also involve stories that are completely made up or consist of sexual insults. This is what we’ll talk about in the next activity.
- › **Ask** the group to split up into teams of two.

- › **Give** each team the series of questions from Sheet 3.5: *Expressions About Reputation*. **Tell** them that you will all look at a specific example to better understand the impact of rumours and gossip on someone's reputation.
- › **State** that this exercise is ANONYMOUS. They don't have to write their names on the answer sheet. They must also not provide any names with the examples.

Below are the questions from the sheet:

- **Have you ever heard expressions for someone (boy or girl) who has dated more than one person (e.g. had serial boyfriends or girlfriends)? If so, which ones?**
  - **Would these expressions have an impact on that person's "reputation"? If so, explain.**
- › When you finish the exercise, **ask** them to put their answers in the envelope you prepared.
  - › **Divide** the blackboard into three sections labelled:
    - Expressions about girls
    - Expressions about boys
    - Expressions about either a boy or a girl
  - › **Explain** that you are going to read the expressions written on the answer sheets and that the group will have to decide whether the expression applies more to girls, to boys or to both. Write the expression in the column for the gender with which most of the group associates the expression.

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

During this exercise, you will have to review the answers on the spot. You don't have to read all the answers verbatim; instead, ensure that all points of view have been presented.

Note that you should avoid asking an open-ended question as much as possible and only ask for fixed expressions (the more open-ended the question, i.e. "What are the words that come to mind when you think of someone who has slept around?" the more likely they will name someone specifically). To avoid this, you may want to review the answers and quickly rank them before saying them out loud to avoid sharing anything derogatory about someone in particular.

Expect some of the expressions to be vulgar (e.g. slut, whore, fuckboy). The point, however, is not to give the group ideas for new sexual insults but rather to see how often the expressions for boys and girls can be different, even for the same behaviour. It will also be interesting to see whether the comments are more vulgar, derogatory and harsher for girls compared to boys.



## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the questions below:
  - **What do you notice about the expressions primarily aimed at girls and those primarily aimed at boys? Are there similarities or differences?**
  - **What about expressions that apply to both girls and boys?**

*Get their opinions.*
- › **Add** to their answers using Sheet 3.6: *Answer Sheet: Reputations – Negative or Positive?*
- › **Continue** by reading the answers to the last question from the answer sheets:
  - **Would these expressions have an impact on that person’s “reputation”? If so, explain.**
- › **Ask** the following question:
  - **Let’s take some expressions as examples: why is it positive or negative to have this reputation?**

*Get their opinions.*
- › **Add** to the answers using Sheet 3.6.

### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

When a rumour spreads about a young person’s sexuality, it is harder for them to seek help and report the situation (Chelab and al., 2016). Their lack of knowledge about sexuality and inexperience may make them even more vulnerable.



## Presentation

- › Let the group **know** that some young people don’t care about rumours or sexual insults about other people. However, this is nothing to trivialize. Saying mean things like this isn’t simply a case of teasing between friends or an interpersonal conflict. When this behaviour happens frequently by one or more people, it becomes harassment or (if it happens online) cyberbullying.
- › **Clarify** what is meant by “harassment,” “bullying” and “cyberbullying.”

*“Harassment means treating someone in a way that harms their dignity or their psychological or physical health. [...] Usually, repetition is what makes insulting comments and behaviour into harassment” (Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, 2021).*

*“Bullying includes words, actions, images and actions that hurt, humiliate or socially exclude someone or that lower someone’s self-esteem” (Éducaloi, 2021-b).*

*“Cyberbullying is posting threatening, hateful, offensive or degrading messages about someone, using words or images. It also includes harassment. Cyberbullying can use many different means: email, chat rooms, discussion groups, Websites, Instant messaging (SPVM, 2021).*

## Video

- › **Show** the video of young singer Rachel Crow to illustrate the effect that bullying can have on teens.

**Mean girls by Rachel Crow (2012)**

**Album: Rachel Crow**

**Length:** 3 min., 36 sec.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTIBDuTxzUw&list=PLRhgpZP8sZte6isYIQOQte586FitMZnc0&index=2>**



Video



## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the suggested questions below:
  - **What are your takeaways from this video?**
  - **What do you think about the consequences of bullying shown in this video? How far do you think bullying can go?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Add** to their answers with the information below:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › This video shows the bullying experienced by different people as well as the “group effect” that this creates for the victim. People make fun of and exclude these girls, who feel like they don’t fit in and have no one to turn to.
- › These teens who experience bullying talk about how lonely they feel, how they don’t understand what is going on, and their feelings of powerlessness. They feel worthless.
- › Some teens change schools because they no longer feel safe.
- › It’s important to understand that any form of bullying can make the victims—both boys and girls—feel humiliated and scared and feel like it will never stop. They may experience great distress, which for some can lead to suicidal thoughts.
- › This is why it’s important for victims to speak up, get help, and not keep this problem to themselves.

- **At what point in the video do we see a positive change for the victims of bullying? Why does that happen?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Add** to their answers with the information below:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › You notice a change when someone (Rachel, in this video) approaches a girl and shows her support.
- › It’s important to them to make a friend and have an ally.
- › That’s why it’s also important for people who witness bullying to take action as best they can when they see one of their peers being bullied (e.g. on social media, in class, in the schoolyard, on the school bus). This may involve disagreeing with what’s going on, stepping in, comforting and listening to the victim, or getting help from an adult.
- › When you become an ally for a victim, others will join in and this can create a “positive” group effect, which can reduce the “negative” group effect of bullying.

## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



In bullying situations, adults may want to empower victims by getting them involved in filing charges against the person or people bullying them. Although the final decision is not up to the victims, they may nevertheless be consulted about what the punishment could be, especially if a possible punishment could involve the bully and victim being around each other.

- › **Conclude** the activity by explaining that the group effect can also be used in a positive way to stop bullying.

## Video

- › **Show** the following video that illustrates a positive group effect, as a man gets a group of passengers in the Paris subway to dance without fearing that people will laugh at them.

« A Happier Morning in Paris » (Tracktl, 2015)

**Length:** 3 min., 9 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLQ937a-Odl>



Video



## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion:
  - **What are your takeaways from this video?**
  - **What connections can you make between this video and what you can do when you WITNESS bullying?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Add** to their answers with the information below:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Although dancing in public seems strange to everyone at first, the dancing becomes less so as more people decide to join in.
- › You can do the same thing as a witness. By daring to speak out against the bullying situation, you can influence other people to do the same.
- › It may seem easier to ignore the situation and pretend that you don't see or hear anything. However, how would you want other people to react if you were the one being bullied?
- › When you do something positive that helps someone else, you get a sense of pride and accomplishment that is motivating and makes you want to do it again.
- › If you can't intervene or express your disagreement with the situation, you can still seek out help for the victim. It's not easy to witness bullying and to feel powerless or afraid, so witnesses may also need support.



## Session Conclusion

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5 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

### Discussion and Presentation

› **Ask** the group the following question:

- **What are your takeaways from this session?**

*Get their opinions.*

› **Ask** the group to take a few minutes to think about the following questions on their own:

- **Why is it important to do something as soon as a rumour starts spreading about you?**
- **What would you do if you found out that a hurtful rumour was going around about you?**
- **Whom could you ask for help?**
- **What would you do if you heard a rumour about a classmate from someone you knew or on the Internet?**
- **Why is it important to respond?**

*Get their opinions.*

› **Summarize** the session with the following key points:



## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE for not spreading rumours about other people, as rumours can damage people's reputations.
- › WE ALL HAVE THE POWER to stop a rumour: first, by not spreading it and second, by standing up to the people who do spread them.
- › Our true friends should "protect us," but they may fear that they too will be the target of rumours if they do something to stop it. You have to be very assertive to avoid getting caught up in this dangerous game, which can easily get out of hand.
- › When you are the victim of a rumour, don't wait for the situation to get worse before asking for help and talking about it with your friends, trusted adults or professionals at your school, etc.
- › Asking for help is a sign of self-esteem (i.e. you value yourself) and courage. No one has to bear the weight of this situation alone.
- › There are punishments for people who spread embarrassing rumours or who cyberbully.
- › Instead of saying bad things about people, what if we talked about what we like about them?

- › **Conclude** by telling the group about useful websites that address online dangers, particularly cyberbullying. **Remind** the group that professionals from the school are available to listen to them and support them.

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Internet safety resources): <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/is-si/>
- Tel-Jeunes (*Cyberbullying: When the bullying is virtual*): <https://www.teljeunes.com/Tel-jeunes-en/All-topics/Something-s-wrong/Bullying/Cyberbullying>
- Kids Help Phone (*Cyberbullying: How to support the young person in your life*) [https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/open-conversation-young-person/cyberbullying-support-young-person-life/?\\_ga=2.32330750.1550271739.1600790731-1103714071.1586962666](https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/open-conversation-young-person/cyberbullying-support-young-person-life/?_ga=2.32330750.1550271739.1600790731-1103714071.1586962666)
- Suicide Action Montreal: 1 866 277-3553



## SHEET

### 3.1

FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

## Alexandra's Story

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Introduce the case study and ask questions after each part of the story.
- › Ask the group to answer the questions and give their opinions by raising their hands.
- › Use the sheet to add to the answers given.

### Alexandra's Story - Part 1

Girls at school have started a rumour about Alexandra. They started telling their classmates that she's "*as hairy as a monkey*."

#### › Could this rumour harm Alexandra? How?

- Yes, it could, because she risks being ridiculed, laughed at, and rejected. She may feel ashamed even though she knows that what these girls are saying about her isn't true.

#### › Why do you think these girls started this rumour about Alexandra?

- Out of jealousy and envy, to make fun of Alexandra, to make themselves seem more interesting, popular or even "tough" in other people's eyes, out of malice, to feel empowered, etc.
- In a group of friends, some may think they will be left out if they don't join in on the gossip.

### Alexandra's Story - Part 2

Alexandra started getting harassed more and more. At first, just the people in her class knew about this ridiculous rumour. Now the whole school knows. She's feeling more and more alone and doesn't know what to do.

#### › What impact could this rumour have on Alexandra?

- She may start feeling very bad about herself; she may question the image she projects to others; she may feel watched, different, and isolated from other kids her age; she may feel rejected, ashamed, hurt, etc.
- Since the rumour is about her body hair, which is something private, she may also feel embarrassed or humiliated.
- She may feel depressed and want to drop out of school.

### › What can Alexandra do to stop this rumour about her?

- It can be very hard to stop a rumour and ensure that everyone who has heard it stops believing and/or spreading it.
- ALEXANDRA'S POWER IS IN HOW SHE REACTS TO THE SITUATION.
- Alexandra might wonder what made the girls spread that rumour about her. Were they just making a joke or were they out to hurt her? Or did they want her to lose friends? Knowing the intentions behind this rumour can help her decide how to manage the situation to resolve it or decrease its intensity. .
- Alexandra could choose one of these strategies:
  - Ignore others and what they say about her.
  - Confront the girls who helped spread the rumour.
  - Ask her friends to defend her.
  - Tell the kids who spread the rumour how she feels (however, this isn't recommended if the girls' goal is to hurt her, as this will only encourage them to keep going).
- In addition to these strategies, Alexandra can talk to her friends and trusted adults about the situation.
- Alexandra can also turn to helplines, whose counsellors can help her think about the best strategies for her situation and abilities.

### › What do you think about the option of telling a parent or trusted adult?

- It's not always that simple, for several reasons:
  - You may be embarrassed for your parents know the mean things that people at school say about you.
  - You may be afraid of losing control of what happens next:
    - You may be afraid your parents will get mad.
    - You may be afraid that they'll want to meet with the school principal to quickly resolve the situation.
    - Or they may contact the parents of the person who is harassing or bullying you.
  - By giving control to someone else, you may fear that the situation will get worse.

### › Why is it important to tell a trusted adult?

- To make the bullying stop.
- If Alexandra doesn't talk about it, the situation could get even worse and make her even sadder and more vulnerable.
- Alexandra could think about what she needs from her parents or from an adult: Someone to listen to her? Advice? Protection?
- Having an idea of her needs will make it easier for her to explain them to the adult she trusts and clearly state what she wants the adult to do for her.
- Teens who are the victims of rumours and experience harassment may feel completely distraught and unable to react. In this case, they may need adults to support them and take action to make it stop.

- Every school is required to have a plan to respond to and stop bullying, which means that staff at the school know the resource person who can deal with the situation. It is the school’s responsibility to ensure that its students feel safe at their institution (MEES, 2022b).

## Alexandra’s Story – Part 3

Here is what Alexandra did to stop the rumour that she’s “*as hairy as a monkey*”: Using her webcam, she took pictures of herself in her underwear and sent them to her whole class to prove that she wasn’t hairy like people were saying.

### › What do you think of her response?

### › Do you think that this was the best way to stop the rumour? Why?

- No, this is not the best way to stop the rumour:
  - She may start getting harassed for other reasons (e.g. people saw her almost completely naked and may laugh at her or insult her).
  - She no longer has control over the images/video posted online. Many people may see them, and this may have further consequences:
    - Taking her clothes off and posting the pictures online could make it more likely for her to be harassed and ridiculed.
    - This could damage her reputation, or people could say mean or untrue things about her.
    - These images can circulate for a long time and even resurface many years later.

### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

In Alexandra’s story, it isn’t specified what people do with Alexandra’s pictures. However, it’s important for them to know that the law prohibits the sharing of intimate images of a person under the age of 18. An intimate image is a photo or video that shows certain parts of the body, like breasts or genitals. An intimate image could also show a sexual activity (Éducaloi, 2021c). It might also be useful to invite a community police officer to discuss this aspect and the issues surrounding the law in more detail.



› **Why do you think Alexandra did this?**

- To prove to everyone that the rumour was untrue and to stop the harassment.
- Alexandra most likely wanted to “take care of the situation on her own.” She was so caught up in her problem that she saw this as the best solution. Unfortunately, her actions put her in an even more vulnerable position.
- Even though sending these pictures was not the most effective thing to do, remember that Alexandra did this to defend herself from other kids who were bullying her and that she does not deserve more harassment because of her actions.
- When we feel trapped in a situation, we often do things we wouldn’t normally do. It can be difficult to think of the best solution on our own. That’s why it can be helpful to get advice from someone else who isn’t affected by the problem.

› **What are the impacts for the people who started the rumour?**

- If adults discover the hurtful rumour about Alexandra and find out who started and spread the rumour (including any pictures of Alexandra in her underwear that may have been shared), the people who did so could be punished as per the school’s anti-bullying and anti-violence plan (e.g. suspension from school).

› **Why is it important to react when you see someone being bullied?**

- If you hear a rumour (e.g., insinuations, hurtful comments or sexual insults) or learn about a rumour by email or on social media, you have the power to stop it.
- You can decide to stop a rumour by not spreading it or by standing up to the person or group spreading the information.
- We can all be part of the SOLUTION!
- Conversely, when you hear hateful comments or condone insults on social networks by doing nothing or clicking “Like,” you are contributing to the PROBLEM and become an accomplice in this personal attack (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

› **If you had witnessed what happened to Alexandra or were a friend or someone in her social group, what could you have done to help her?**

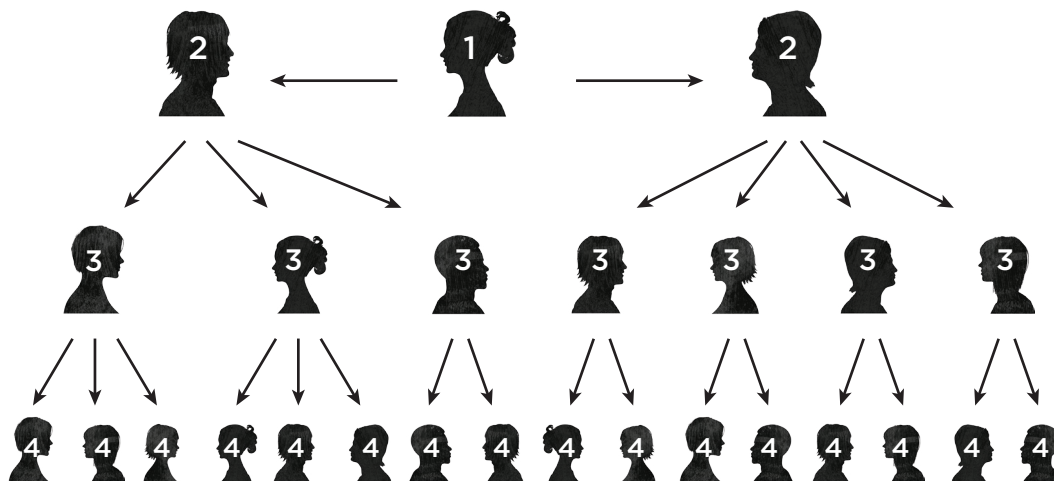
- Put yourself in her shoes and think about what you would want others to do for you if you were in her situation.
- Imagine that your sister or brother (or someone else close to you) were the one being victimized by the rumour and think about what you would do.
- When you hear a rumour, refute the information instead of spreading it.
- Don’t feed the rumour or pass it (or Alexandra’s pictures) on to others.
- Tell the person (Alexandra in this case) that a rumour is going around about her and that you don’t believe it. This will reassure her that she is getting support from others.
- Notify adults with the authority to do something to stop the rumour and harassment.



## Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Show how a rumour spreads through *word of mouth* by using the slideshow for the session (or draw the diagram below on the blackboard for each part of the story).



- Nicolas has just broken up with Kim.
- To get back at him, Kim tells Nicolas's two best friends that she doesn't mind that they are no longer together because Nicolas "*is afraid to go past first base.*"
  - Nicolas's two friends tell three or four friends
  - Who also tell two or three friends
- Overall, over 25 people hear that Nicolas is "*afraid to go past first base.*"



## SHEET

### 3.3

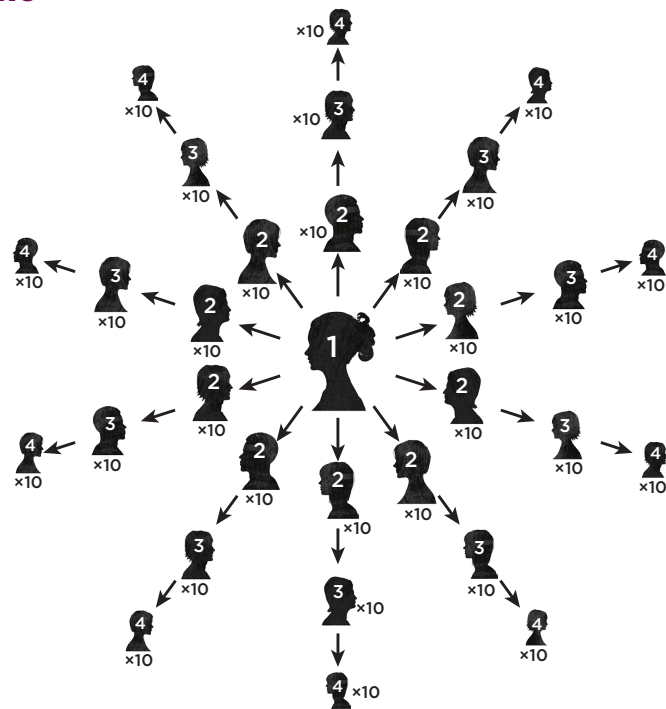
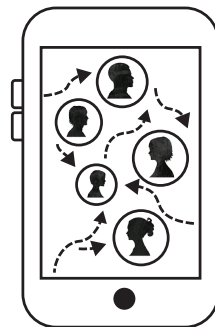
FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

## Illustration of How a Rumour Spreads

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Show how a rumour spreads *online* by drawing the diagram below on the blackboard (or use the slideshow for the session) for each part of the story.

### How a Rumour Spreads Online



- Nicolas has just broken up with Kim.
- To get back at him, she writes a private message on social media to ten friends saying that she doesn't mind that they are no longer together because Nicolas "*is afraid to go past first base.*"
  - They share this news with 10 of their friends
  - Who also share it with 10 other friends
- Overall, 1110 people hear that Nicolas "*is afraid to go past first base.*"



## Discussion Questions: How a Rumour Spreads Through Word of Mouth or Online

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Lead a discussion using the suggested questions.

#### › What makes a rumour so easy to spread?

- Some people enjoy spreading, changing and exaggerating rumours. They may feel like they have “special” information without realizing the possible impact of spreading the information.
- Other people don’t question the source of the information: they think that everything they hear or read is true and are eager to share with others.
- When so many people see these messages and don’t object to them or share or “Like” them, this is seen by both the victim and the cyberbullies as approval for the humiliation of this person and encouragement to continue.
- That’s why it’s important to say something to object to these negative messages.

#### › Is it easy to stop a rumour?

- No, it isn’t easy to stop a rumour, because you can lose control over who tells whom, and the rumour itself can change. We don’t know how much importance people will place on the rumour or the impact that it could have now or in the future.
- It may seem harmless at first and even funny; however, in reality, rumours can become a weapon to humiliate and hurt people (FPJQ, 2021).

#### › What’s the difference between a rumour spread online compared to a rumour spread through word of mouth?

- It’s easy to reach many people very quickly online and to lose control of the information. For example, “Harassing messages, posts and photos can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience, including strangers, and can be extremely difficult to delete once they’ve been sent or posted” (Public Safety Canada, 2018).
- It can also be difficult to find out who started the rumour in the first place (e.g. email address with a pseudonym).



- The frequency of attacks can be relentless: victims can get hundreds of hurtful text messages at any time of day or night (Public Safety Canada, 2018).
- Spreading embarrassing or hurtful rumours about someone online is a type of cyberbullying (Public Safety Canada, 2018).
- The comments can be even more disrespectful, if not cruel, since people are hidden behind their screens.

› **What are the consequences for victims of rumours that spread online?**

- Rumours spread online can lead to more consequences that have a greater impact (Chehab, Levasseur and Bowen, 2016).
- It's easy for people who spread rumours and who cyberbully to simply say "It's not true, it's just a joke." However, the victim's suffering is very real, and these actions have repercussions in the person's real life (FPJQ, 2021).
- The rumour (or photo, etc.), especially when spread online, can circulate for months or even years without the person being able to stop it. A situation that seems "funny" or "harmless" at first may eventually have short-term consequences (anxiety, insomnia, anger) as well as medium-term consequences, such as isolation (no longer wanting to go out), school problems (late homework, lower grades, school absences), distress (crying, feelings of great loneliness) (PREVNet, 2019).

› **What could be the consequences and punishments for people who start rumours online or who cyberbully?**

Because these attacks take place online and are mostly anonymous, some cyberbullies are less aware of the harm they cause, their responsibility in the situation, and the seriousness of their actions. However, the consequences and punishments for people who start rumours online or who cyberbully can be:

• **Possible consequences for people who start rumours or who cyberbully:**

- Having problems making real friends because they aren't respected by their peers or because others fear them (Kowalski and al., 2014).
- Some people who cyberbully have trouble distinguishing between right and wrong, and this can lead to long-term difficulties in their friendships, romantic relationships, or professional relationships (PREVNet, 2019).

• **Possible punishments for people who start rumours or who cyberbully:**

- The person may be punished by the school as per its anti-bullying plan and intervention protocol (e.g. making amends, being suspended from school).
- They could also get into trouble with the law. Even if people think that what they are doing is anonymous, police can trace them and subject them to criminal sanctions or civil lawsuits (SPVM, 2020).
- Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is prohibited to communicate repeatedly with a person with the intent of causing them to fear for their safety or to post something that insults them or could harm their reputation (Éducaloi, 2020d).
- In Canada, young people can be held responsible for a crime starting from the age of 12 and will be tried under the Youth Criminal Justice Act (Éducaloi, 2020e).



## Expressions About Reputation

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Print** and cut out the questions for the number of participating teams.
- › **State** that this exercise is **ANONYMOUS**. They don't have to write their names on the answer sheet. They must also not provide any names with the examples they give.
- › When you finish the exercise, ask them to put their answers in the envelope you prepared.



Have you ever heard of expressions for **SOMEONE** (boy or girl) who has dated more than one person (e.g. had serial boyfriends or girlfriends)? If so, what are these expressions?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Would these expressions have an impact on that person's "reputation"? If so, explain.

_____
_____
_____





## SHEET

### 3.6

FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

## Answer Sheet: Negative or Positive Reputations?

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › If necessary, add to the teams' answers using the information from this sheet.

- › What do you notice between the expressions primarily aimed at girls and those primarily aimed at boys?
- › What do these expressions mean?
- › Are there any expressions that apply to anyone, whether they identify as a boy or a girl? If yes, which ones?

Possible answers:

**For girls:** These descriptions generally refer to girls who are thought to be “easy” (e.g. let people touch them sexually, agree to sexual activity, “sleep around”). Some expressions that might be mentioned include “easy,” “slut,” “whore/ho,” “skank,” etc.

**For boys:** These descriptions generally refer to boys who come on to girls, who play with girls' feelings, who do not take relationships seriously, who date several girls at once, and who are only out to “get some.” Expressions that might be mentioned include “stud,” “player/playa,” “fuckboy,” “womanizer,” etc.

**For all genders:** There are few expressions that are similar for boys and girls. However, some behaviours are considered just as inappropriate whether they are done by a boy or girl (e.g. cheating on someone, lying).

- › **Do these expressions have an impact on a person's reputation?**
  - Out of sheer repetition, things said about a person will inevitably give them a “reputation.”
  - Many of these expressions may be sexual insults. For example, if someone has dated more than one person (i.e. had serial boyfriends or girlfriends), this can give them a reputation, e.g. “easy” (for a girl) “player” (for a boy), etc., suggesting that the person has already been sexually active when very often this is not the case. Even if someone has become sexually active, this is no reason to insult or humiliate them.

› **Let's take an example. What do you think is POSITIVE about having this reputation?**

- “Easy,” “Hot,” “Player,” “Womanizer”:
  - Getting noticed by others.
  - Be considered more “mature” than others (not a child!).
  - More popular.
- In fact, some girls and boys may:
  - Want to get noticed more, to please people, to enjoy coming on to or teasing others sexually.
  - Enjoy the effect they have on others.
  - Like being the centre of attention without necessarily wanting to go further.
- At your age, you may want to have fun getting to the “initial bases” or having a boyfriend or girlfriend without going any further, i.e., engaging in sexual activity with this person.

› **What do you think is NEGATIVE about having this reputation?**

- It may create pressure to adopt behaviours just to meet other people’s expectations.
  - Some girls or boys may feel pressured to fit with the image of being “hot.”
  - Some may feel pressured to fit with the image of not being very respectful (e.g. saying vulgar things).
- Others may find themselves in situations that are inappropriate for their age and that they don’t really want to engage in because they were dared to or they were pressured into fitting with a certain image (examples: being intimate with someone you barely know or engaging in sexual touching without wanting to, etc.).
- This can change how people are perceived; they may become the target of derogatory remarks or disrespectful acts.
  - The person who gets this “reputation” in the form of “sexual insults” (e.g. “slut,” “whore,” “fuckboy”) may then get unwanted sexual solicitations from other people.
  - Based on these rumours, some people may decide to come on to them sexually, thinking that they are “easy” or “players” etc.
  - Rumours, sexual insults, etc., are disrespectful.

› **Overall...**

- Expressions for “girls’ reputations” can often be perceived more negatively than those associated with “boys’ reputations.”
- This is what we call a double standard. Very often, we judge a behaviour by a girl differently from how we would if the action were done by a boy. When it comes to sex, girls are often judged more severely (and unfairly) compared to boys who behave in the same way.
- However, anyone can experience stress and pressure when they get a “bad reputation.” And this situation becomes even more stressful when the rumours or gossip circulate on social media (e.g. insults, cyberbullying). When a rumour is related to someone’s sexuality, it can be more difficult for them to ask for help (Chelab et al., 2016). But it’s important to get help anyway.

- When sexuality is used to hurt and humiliate someone:
  - This automatically touches on something private and sensitive for that person.
  - The person may not know how to defend themselves against these types of accusations (e.g. sexual insults, reputation related to sexuality).
  - The person can become uncomfortable and have no idea what to say.
- If someone were being bullied because of the colour of their glasses, most people would find that ridiculous. People don't usually care about that. However, sexual insults are more sensitive, and people may take more interest in them.
- All negative rumours and insults can cause worry and embarrassment, and it is understandable for the victim to feel frustrated, sad and humiliated. This is why it's important not to be afraid to seek help (e.g., parents, nurse, youth police officer, psychologist, sexologist, an aid organization such as Tel-jeunes, Kids Help Phone, etc.).

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## Secondary 1 – Session 4

### Attraction and Dating

#### “Expressing Your Feelings to Someone”

This sexuality education session was created for both schools and youth community settings (for more details, see the sections in the introduction on the session structure and context for using the *Be True to You* program).

For schools, these sessions are consistent with the “Compulsory content in sexuality education” of the ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (2018). The tables below also provide links to the subject areas and broad areas of learning of the Québec Education Program (MEES, 2022) as well as to the “educational intentions in sexuality education” of the “provisional” Culture and Citizenship in Quebec (CCQ) program at the secondary level of the ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (2022).

Links to “Compulsory content in sexuality education” (MEES, 2018)	
<b>Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms</b>	<b>Recognize the role of puberty in the consolidation of your gender identity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Events at the beginning of adolescence: romantic and sexual awakening.</li></ul>
<b>Emotional and Romantic Life</b>	<b>Become aware of the role of feelings of love and attraction in adolescence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Manifestations of feelings of love and attraction: inside yourself and in your attitudes and behaviours.</li><li>› Variations as to for whom and when these feelings arise.</li><li>› Similarities and differences between feelings of friendship, love and attraction.</li></ul>

**Possible links to the Québec Education Program**  
(MEES, 2022)

<b>Broad areas of learning</b>	<b>Health and Well-Being:</b> Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good living habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.	
<b>Cross-curricular competencies</b>	<p><b>Intellectual competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information</li> <li>› Exercises critical judgment</li> <li>› Solves problems</li> <li>› Uses creativity</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal and social competencies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Achieves his/her potential</li> <li>› Cooperates with others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication-related competency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Communicates appropriately</li> </ul> <p><b>Methodological competency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Uses information and communications technologies</li> </ul>
<b>Subject areas</b>	<b>Personal development subject area:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <i>Quebec Citizenship and Culture</i></li> </ul>	

**Possible links with the educational intentions in sexuality education of the Culture and Citizenship in Québec (CCQ) program at the secondary level**

(MEQ, 2022)

Theme: Identities and Belonging

<b>Disciplinary competencies</b>	<p><b>Studies a cultural reality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Establishes the scope of the object of study</li> <li>› Evaluates elements of knowledge</li> <li>› Analyzes social relations</li> <li>› Demonstrates a more complete understanding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflects on an ethical question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation</li> <li>› Examines a variety of points of view</li> <li>› Develops a point of view</li> <li>› Engages in dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School</b>	<p><b>Understand the concept of sexuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Entering adolescence and decision-making</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the role of puberty in consolidating gender identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Romantic and sexual awakening</li> <li>› Gendered socialization, stereotypes and gender norms</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the manifestations of friendship, love and attraction in adolescence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Manifestations within self and in own attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>› Variations as to whom it involves and when</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflect on the general underlying influences that can be considered in making decisions about sexuality.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Recognition of own wishes, needs and limits and those of others</li> <li>› Self-knowledge and respect for personal choices</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflect on the tensions that may exist with regard to norms, stereotypes and own gender identity</b></p> <p><b>Reflect on the tensions created by the role of feelings of love and attraction in adolescence</b></p>



## Educational Goals

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**Session length:**  
75 minutes

**Get young people to develop their ability to understand their feelings surrounding dating and attraction.**

- 1. Define** what dating means for young people today and how it has changed since the time their parents and grandparents were teens (similarities/differences).
- 2. Identify** the main stages of attraction and the behaviours, emotions, concerns, and potential outcomes that go along with each stage.
- 3. Discuss** the different ways young people try to attract the attention of or ask out the people they like, and **evaluate** how effective these approaches are.
- 4. Identify** the similarities and differences between feelings of friendship, love, and attraction so that students can better articulate what they're feeling and what they want out of a given relationship.
- 5. Discuss** the importance of being yourself and expressing your true feelings when it comes to attraction and dating, without giving into pressure from others.



## Sequence



This **75-min.** session has **four activities**.

15 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Brainstorming:</b> Different Words Related to Dating</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “<i>Dating: Do’s And Dont’s (1949)</i>”</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
15 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “<i>Butterflies</i>”</li> <li>› <b>Presentation:</b> Stages of Attraction</li> </ul>
25 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> <li>› <b>Team activity:</b> Ways to get someone to notice you</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Sheets 1.1a and 1.1b: Ways to Get Someone to Notice You</i>  <i>Sheet 1.2: Answer Sheet: Ways to Get Someone to Notice You</i></p>
10 min.	<b>ACTIVITY 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Raised Hand Survey:</b> Friendship, Attraction and Love</li> <li>› <b>Discussion and Presentation</b></li> </ul>
10 min.	<b>Session CONCLUSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› <b>Presentation:</b> Key Messages</li> <li>› <b>Video:</b> “<i>Tumbleweed Tango</i>”</li> </ul>

It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow** throughout the session activities.

Just like the entire “*Be True to You*” program, this slideshow can be downloaded for free from our website [www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca](http://www.hypersexualisation.uqam.ca) (Volet 3: Outils pédagogiques en éducation à la sexualité - Programme pour les deux cycles du secondaire: *Oser être soi-même*. <https://hypersexualisation.uqam.ca/volet-3-outils-pedagogiques-education-a-sexualite/programme-secondaire-oser-etre-soi-meme/>)



## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Young people may tell you about difficult personal situations (e.g., romantic breakup, romantic rejection, questions about sexual orientation). It's important to protect their confidentiality and provide the assistance and support that they need.

BEFORE leading this session, it is a good idea to let someone in your school or organization know that you will be discussing sex education with the group. This way, if a teen confides in you or if a situation is reported outside the context of the session, you will know whether a support worker is available to offer assistance.

Refer to the Resources section in the introduction to this program to provide the necessary support to teens who need it. A number of online resources are also given at the end of the slideshow for each session.



## Activity 1



**BLACKBOARD  
SLIDESHOW (PPT)**



**15 MINUTES**



**BRAINSTORMING**



**VIDEO**



**DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION**

### Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by reminding the group about the rules presented in the introduction or the session slideshow (e.g. taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).
- › Next, **tell** the group that you'll be discussing the topic of dating and attraction.

#### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Tell the group that they don't need to currently have or have had a boyfriend or girlfriend to talk about the topic of "attraction."



### Brainstorming

- › On the blackboard, **write** "Dating."
- › **Ask** the group to tell you all the expressions that come to mind to describe interacting with someone they want to date.
- › **Write** their answers on the blackboard.
- › Then **ask** the following question:
  - **Do all of these expressions mean exactly the same thing? Explain your answer.**  
*Get their opinions.*



## NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Some expressions that the group comes up with may be “colourful” or even direct and vulgar. Some ideas may relate more to explicit sexual relationships (e.g. “getting some,” “scoring”). You may need to redirect the discussion by pointing out that these expressions don’t fully encapsulate this aspect of relationships or how we should perceive the other person. Some young people at this age (Secondary 1) may not even know what these expressions really mean.

## Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **There are many expressions that describe interacting with someone you want to date.**
  - These can include behaving as though you are attracted to the person, i.e., “flirt,” “tease,” “chat up,” “make eyes at.”
  - Other words are more explicitly sexual: “hit on,” “come on to,” “pick up,” “make a pass at,” “make a move on,” “make sexual advances toward.”
- › People also had a different dating language in different time period. Do you know these expressions from past eras: “Court,” “woo,” “going steady,” “beau,” “getting pinned,” “necking,” or “keeping company.”
- › **What does the word “Attraction” mean?:**
  - “A feeling that makes someone romantically or sexually interested in another person” (Attraction, n.d.).
  - These feelings can include things like having a “crush” on someone, having “chemistry” with them, or feeling “close” to them.

## Discussion and Presentation

› Ask the group the following questions:

- “What was dating like when your parents or grandparents were teenagers compared to what it is like now?”

*Get their opinions.*

› Share the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › People seemed to take more time before “going steady.”
- › When your grandparents or even your parents were teens, they didn’t have cell phones to text each other. To see each other, they had to call the person on their home phone or go knock on their door to ask them out (Duquet, 2019).

Other examples:

- › In a study, young people aged 14 to 17 were asked about how dating was different for their parents (Duquet, 2019). Here are some of their answers:
  - “I think that back then they didn’t really have technology. I think they talked face to face. Now we talk on Facebook, Snapchat and stuff like that.” (Emma)
  - “People don’t really go on ‘dates’ at a restaurant anymore, because they don’t really know how to talk to each other in person. Young people talk on their phones instead.” (Phil)
  - “Some young people still ask each other out in person but they do this more often on social media because it’s easier to admit your feelings online than face to face.” (Félix)
  - “Things have changed. I’m pretty sure my dad wrote letters to my mom when they first met. Now it’s more like you just text the person. I don’t think that this has anything to do with your age but rather the century you are in and what part of history you belong to.” (Raphaëlle)
  - “I think our generation places too much importance on the physical aspect and what the person looks like instead of their personality and everything else.” (Anaïca)
  - I think the way we talk to each other is different. The compliments are different. People used to say things like, ‘You’re beautiful.’ Now they’ll say, ‘OMG, you’re a hottie!’ It’s more vulgar.” (Rose)
  - “In my parents’ time, there was a stage called ‘getting to know the other person before getting naked.’ It’s as simple as that.” (Maggie)
- › To sum up, what is considered appropriate when it comes to dating practices and when to start dating may be influenced by:
  - Our culture (where we come from; the values of our community).
  - Our immediate surroundings (our family’s values, what our friends do, the messages we get at school).
  - Our environment (media messages, e.g. from movies, TV shows, social media, music videos) and values conveyed by celebrities (e.g., YouTubers, singers, actors).



## Video and Discussion

- › **Tell** the group that they will be watching a video from 1949 that discusses the do's and don'ts of dating for young people.
- › **Show** the following video:

**Dating: Do's And Don'ts (1949), (Old TV Time, 2010)**

**Length:** 12 min., 25 sec.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxBOsdl-b54&t=5s>**



Video



### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

You can present the video in two ways:

**Option 1:** Show the video in full.

**Option 2:** Show the video up to 7 min. and 10 sec.; stop and then fast forward to 10 min. 38 sec. until the end. The content between these 2 segments is less relevant to this session, as it simply includes a discussion that the boy has with his parents a few minutes before his date along with some images from the event that he and his date are attending.

- › Then **ask** them the following questions:
  - **What do you think about this video?**
  - **What do you think are the differences between young people's experiences back then and their experiences today when it comes to asking someone out or going on a first date?**

- **The young man’s mother agreed to let him go on the date but with certain conditions, i.e. weekends only and not too late. What do you think of these conditions for a 14-year-old?**

*Get their opinions*

## Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

#### What did the people in the video say?

##### Dating at the dawn of the 1950s:

- › In those days, a date was a “major event,” and boys were the ones who generally invited girls to an activity, such as going to the movies, attending a carnival, going skating, etc.
- › As you can see in the video, parental approval was important: teens needed permission to go on their first date. They had conditions (e.g. only on weekends and not too late!).
- › Even then, physical appearance or “looks” were important. We can see the two teens spend a lot of time on their appearance to get ready (e.g. the boy wears a shirt and tie, while the girl wears a dress).
- › The boy also thinks about other things to make the date go well, such as making sure they each feel appreciated, have fun together, laugh, and have a good time.
- › In those days, people also took their time to get to know the other person before getting close (e.g. kissing).

##### A good way to ask someone out:

- › Some ways of asking someone out on a date are more effective, clear or “respectful” than others.
  - The fact that the boy mentioned the activity first and then asked the girl out was a good way to get her interested in his proposal.
  - For example, if he had only asked whether she was available at a specific time (e.g. “Are you available this Saturday?”), she may have been caught off guard and, not knowing whether she would like the activity, might have said no.
- › It’s best to ask the person if they are interested in the activity you’re suggesting (e.g. going to the skatepark, going for ice cream, having a game night).

**Now:**

- › Teenagers' approach to dating may be influenced by various factors, including their family, friend group, the media (e.g., movies, TV shows, social media).
- › Since the advent of the Internet, attraction has generally focused on physical appearance and "sexiness" (Boëtsch and Guilhem, 2005). People seem to focus on getting physically close (e.g. kissing, caressing) very early on in their relationship, if not immediately.
- › People may get the feeling that they absolutely have to be like what they see in the media to get noticed or be attractive to someone. This is not realistic; plus, is that even a good thing ?
- › The video showed rather stereotyped views of how boys and girls should be and how they should act. However, the media today also present stereotypes about what boys or girls should do on a date.

**Some things that don't change over time:**

- › It doesn't matter where you come from, your culture, or how you were raised: you are attractive because of your sense of humour, talents, intelligence, good mood, empathy and kind words.  
**These things never go out of fashion.**
- › When you want to get closer to someone you like, it's important that both of you take the time to get to know each other.



# 2

## Activity 2



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



DISCUSSION  
AND PRESENTATION



VIDEO



EXPOSÉ

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Start** the second activity by **asking** the group:
  - How does it feel to want to get close to someone you like to get to know them better?
    - How does it feel physically?
    - What things do you wonder about?

*Get their opinions.*

## Video, Discussion and Presentation

- › **Show** the *Butterflies* video, which shows how we get butterflies in the stomach when we see someone we like.

**CGI Animation Short Film: Butterflies (Abby Boyce CGMeetup, 2018)**

**Length:** 2 min., 14 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEGlhgoShbY>



Video



- › Then **ask** them the following questions:
  - **What do you think about this video?**
  - **How do the characters feel?**
  - **Why do you think they act the way they do?**

*Get their opinions.*

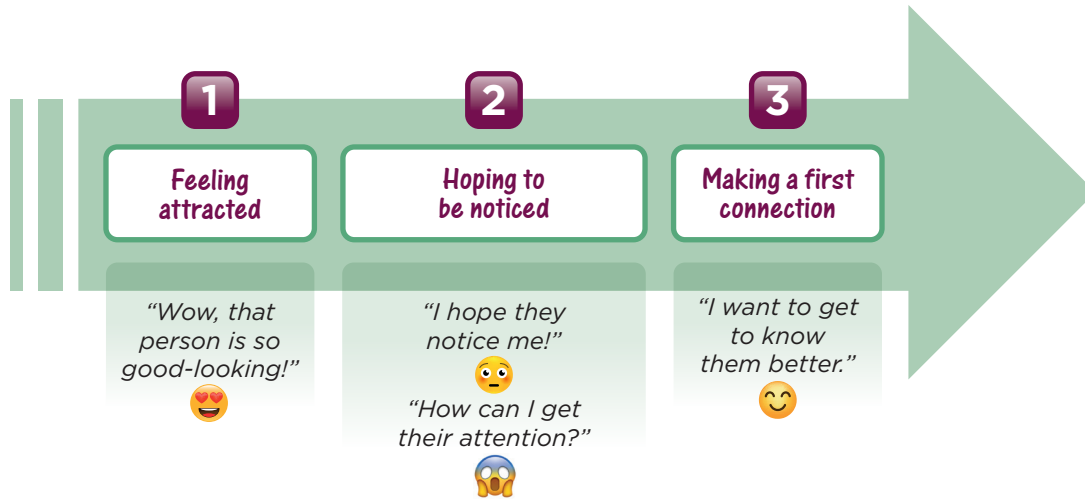
- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › When you are around the person you like, you can have all kinds of emotions or sensations.
- › Your body reacts:
  - You may feel nervous and blush, have trouble talking, and feel butterflies in your stomach, etc.
- › You can experience all kinds of emotions:
  - Embarrassment and awkwardness. Or, on the contrary, you can also feel very comfortable and cheerful.
  - You may be afraid that the person won't be attracted to you or like you back.
- › You may wonder a lot of things:
  - What will I say to them?
  - How will they react if I talk to them (or text them)?
  - Why do I feel like this when I'm around them?
  - What if I blush?
- › Sometimes it feels like you aren't in control and that you'll say or do something stupid.
- › The good news is that these reactions are quite normal and are part of the experience!
- › The important thing is to take your time and stay as calm and natural as possible!

# Presentation

› **Explain** the main stages of attraction to the group.



• **Attraction happens in 3 stages:**

1. Noticing a particular person: "Oh wow, that person is so good-looking!"
2. Hoping to be noticed back and to make a good impression: "I hope they notice me too! How can I get their attention?"
3. Making a first connection: "I want to get to know them better."



## Activity 3



SHEETS 1.1A, 1.1B AND 1.2  
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



25 MIN.



TEAM ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION

### Discussion and Presentation

- ▶ To discuss the topic of attraction, **ask** the group the following question:
  - **What are ways that young people today can get noticed by someone they are attracted to?**  
*Get their opinions.*
- ▶ **Show** the group this table, which lists the ways young people can try to get someone they like to notice them. **Tell** them that they will use this for the next team activity.

How to get someone to notice you	
1. Use your personality (e.g. sense of humour, talents, kindness).	5. Focus on your appearance.
2. Get to know the person.	6. Attract their attention.
3. Be yourself.	7. Want to impress them.
4. Use a go-between to avoid face-to-face interaction (e.g. friend, social media).	8. Agree to do things you don't like to please them or avoid displeasing them.

### Team Activity

- ▶ **Ask** the group to get into teams of two.
- ▶ **Present** the situations illustrating the different ways that they can show they are attracted to someone. Half of the teams will get Sheet 1.1a: *How to Get Someone to Notice You*, while the other half of the teams will fill in Sheet 1.1b: *How to Get Someone to Notice You*. The group will have about 10 min. to fill out the sheet.
- ▶ For each approach, the teams will have to **indicate**:
  - **Whether the approach is EFFECTIVE or NOT.**
  - **Briefly explain why these approaches are considered effective or not.**
  - **Name the category of the approach (e.g. personality, appearance, motivation to get to know the other person, desire to impress) (See box above).**

- › Then, **go** back over each statement and lead a discussion while **comparing** the teams' answers.
  - **For each statement, ask the group to raise their hands if they think the approach is EFFECTIVE.**
  - **Then ask a few volunteers to explain their point of view.**
- › **Add** to their answers using Sheet 1.2: *Answer Sheet: How to Get Someone to Notice You.*

## Discussion and Presentation

- › Then **ask** the group:
  - **Do you think that some approaches are better for letting someone know you are attracted to them? If yes, which ones? Why?**

*Get their opinions.*

## Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

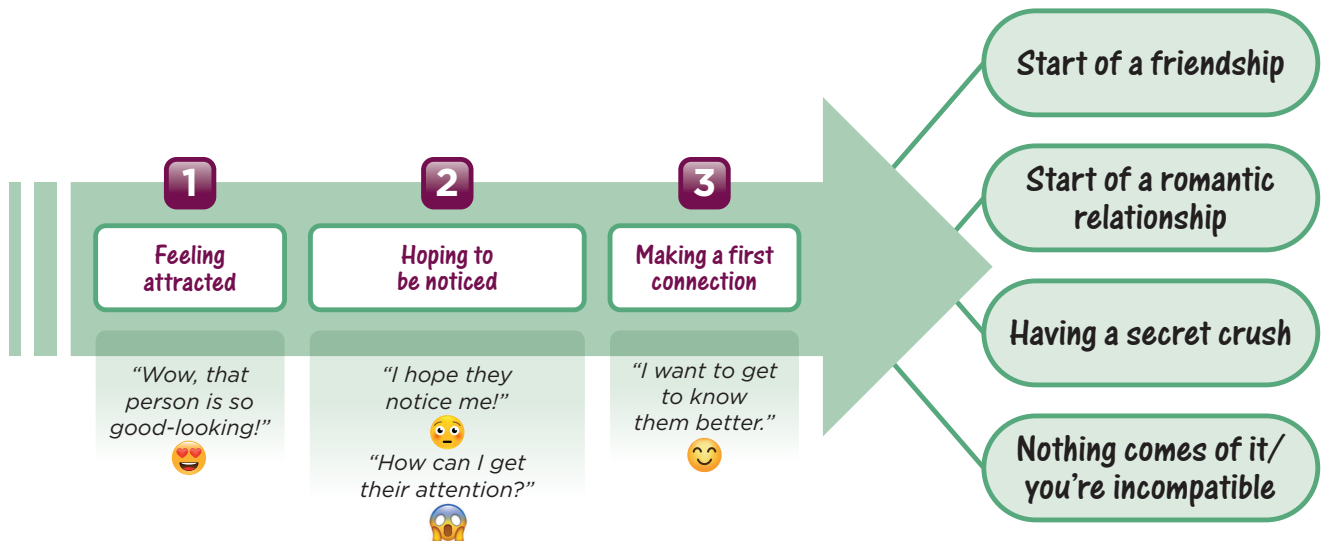
- › There isn't just one way to let someone know you like them. There are no magic spells!
- › People also don't like us just for our appearance, look, attitude, or a sexy photo.
- › People like us for our:
  - Skills or talents: sports, music, improvisation, science, dance, sewing, writing, mechanical ability.
  - Passions: the environment, video games, cooking, gardening, reading, history, comics, animals, travel.
  - Our personality: sense of humour, ability to keep a secret, intelligence, originality, kindness, charm, self-confidence (or conversely, shyness), simplicity, ability to listen.
- › The important thing is to draw on these qualities and your personality and to be yourself.



- › **Go back** to the table illustrating the stages of attraction but this time with the possible outcomes.
  - **“We've gone over the main stages of attraction and getting someone to notice you. Now let's look at the possible outcomes. In other words, what could happen next?”**



› **Share** the following information:



• **Very important to remember:**

- **Just because you are interested in someone and think about them a lot doesn't mean they will feel the same way about you. Expressing your feelings for someone can have a number of outcomes:**

- 1. Start of a friendship:** In the end, you become friends.
- 2. Start of a romantic relationship:** The two people are interested in each other. They fall in love.
- 3. Having a secret crush:** The other person doesn't know because you weren't clear (e.g. you were too embarrassed to admit your feelings). You may keep this feeling a secret and continue to daydream about the other person.
- 4. Nothing comes of it / you're incompatible:** If the person doesn't return the feelings or one person realizes they just aren't into the other person, i.e. they're incompatible, then the story ends there.

› **Continue** the presentation:

- **To sum up, there are different stages of attraction and different possible outcomes. However, BEFORE making an initial connection, it's important to think about why you want to be noticed or liked by someone (Stage 3).**
- **In your opinion, why is it important to think before you act when you want to approach someone you like?**

*Get their opinions.*

# Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › It's normal for teenagers to want to test out how attractive they are to others (Séduire, 2007).
- › In other words, it's okay to want someone else to be interested in you and enjoy the feeling of knowing that they like you. And it's perfectly fine not to want to have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- › But beware of playing games and leading someone on when you aren't really interested in them, as this can lead to hurt feelings.
- › To avoid hurting someone's feeling, ask yourself questions to better understand why you want someone to like you or go out with you.
- › Am I interested in this person because:
  - I find them good-looking? I am attracted to them physically?
  - I think they are funny and intelligent and I want to get to know them better?
  - I want to see if I am attractive? I only want this person to be interested in me, but I'm not interested in a being with them?
  - I really don't want to be single?
  - I don't want to get laughed at because I'm the only one in my friend group who has never dated anyone?
  - I feel ready to have a boyfriend or girlfriend—and be in love!?
  - I feel ready to get physically close to someone (e.g. hugging, kissing)?
  - Etc.
- › Overall, it's important to think about what you really want.
- › You also need to think about what the other person might want:
  - Is this person interested in me? Do they really like me and want to go out with me?
  - Is this person only responding to my advances because they don't know how to say no?
  - Is this person only interested in me physically?
  - Are they flirting with me just for the fun of it? Or, worse, to make fun of me?
  - Or do they actually want to get physically close (e.g. kissing, cuddling, sexual activity)?
  - Etc.
- › Wanting to be liked at all costs (e.g. just to be like your friends) without caring about how you actually feel or how the other person feels can lead to uncomfortable situations for both you and the other person.
- › Sometimes it's hard to tell if you're feeling love, friendship, or simply attraction. Also, it's possible to be interested in someone without necessarily wanting to go out with them. In the next activity, we'll explore the differences between love, friendship, and attraction.



## Activity 4



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



RAISED HAND  
SURVEY



DISCUSSION AND  
PRESENTATION

### Raised Hand Survey

- ▶ **Tell** the students that this activity involves a survey to help differentiate between friendship, attraction, and love. The students vote by raising their hands.
- ▶ Using the list below, **ask** the students to raise their hands if they think that the statements are related to (A) friendship, (B) attraction, (C) or love. **Tell** them that they can raise their hands more than once for a given statement if they think that there is more than one possible answer.

#### NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

If you're leading the session without the slideshow, **read** the statements below during the session.



#### Statements: Friendship – Attraction – Love

1. I often laugh with this person. We have fun together.
2. This person and I often do things together, and we sometimes share our lunches.
3. I think of this person a lot and want to go out with them.
4. I know I can trust them. Sometimes we tell each other personal things.
5. When I see this person, I feel funny and want to get closer to them, even though I'm really shy.
6. This person makes me feel special and unique.
7. I find this person beautiful.
8. When life gets hard, this person is there for me.
9. When I'm with this person, I feel good.
10. This person's opinion is important to me.

## Presentation and Discussion

› **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Sometimes it can be hard to tell if you're feeling friendship or attraction or are in love. This is perfectly normal.
  - You can feel attraction, friendship, and love toward another person all at the same time.
  - It's possible to trust your friends as well as a person you're in love with.
  - You can laugh, have fun, and feel good with someone you love, a friend, or someone you're attracted to. These feelings aren't unique to romantic relationships.
  - Just because you find a person beautiful doesn't mean you're in love.
  
- › Here are some tips for differentiating between **friendship**, **attraction**, and **love**:
  - **Friendship:**
    - A friend is someone you trust, enjoy spending time with, can be yourself around, and rely on during hard times. However, you don't want to become more intimate with a friend, or kiss them, like you would in a romantic relationship. You don't constantly think about your friend or daydream about dating them. But sometimes feelings of friendship can turn into feelings of love.
  - **Love:**
    - When you're in love with someone, you want to spend all your time with them. You see them as having only good qualities: charming, beautiful, handsome, funny, etc. You feel special when you're around them. With time, the person you're in love with can become your best friend.
  - **Attraction:**
    - You feel drawn to this person; you have a crush. You may get butterflies in your stomach when you see them. There's something about this person that makes you want to get to know them better. You don't know if they're attracted to you too, but you're sure that you're interested and attracted to them and want to be physically close to them. The person you're attracted to may also be someone unattainable, like a celebrity.

- › Then, **ask** the students the following question:
  - **Why is it important to ask yourself if you're feeling attraction, friendship or love toward another person?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Thinking about what you're feeling helps you make good decisions and avoid false hopes. It also helps you express what you want more clearly and consider whether your expectations are realistic. Here are some examples of why it's useful to think about your feelings:
  - So you can gently tell someone that you don't want to go out with them and would rather be friends.
  - So you can tell someone you like that you want to get to know them better.
  - So you understand that your crush on a celebrity won't lead to anything further—though you may still enjoy daydreaming about them.
    - Why can't it lead to anything? Because it would be a relationship between an adult and a teenager, because the person lives in Hollywood while you live in Quebec (your chances of meeting them are nil), etc.
  - Or say you have a crush on the guy who works at the depanneur. This person is 16 and has a girlfriend he's in love with. You understand that this can't go further, but you may still enjoy daydreaming about this person.
    - Why can't it go further? There is too large of an age gap between a 12-year-old and 16-year-old (Secondary 1 and Secondary 5).

- › **Ask** them the following question:
  - **Whether you are in love with someone or are just friends, why is it important to express your true feelings?**

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

### The importance of expressing your true feelings

- › When you feel ready to express your feelings to another person or respond to someone who has expressed their feelings to you, it's important to be honest, even if it may be difficult or awkward.
  - That way, you avoid misunderstandings, and the situation becomes less stressful for both of you.
  - It's disappointing and painful when you find out that the other person doesn't feel the same way. But it will be easier to move on once you know how the other person really feels.
  - Being assertive is also important.
    - Take the following example: Alex asked Sophie, "Do you want to be my girlfriend?" Sophie doesn't want to be his girlfriend, but she feels really awkward. She doesn't know how to say "no" and doesn't want to hurt Alex. She answers, "Okay."
    - What do you think about this?

### The importance of thinking about how to reveal your feelings

- › It's also important to think about the best way to reveal your feelings to the other person:
    - So that your words convey what you really think.
    - So that you say it in a polite and respectful way.
- Examples:
- **If someone is in love with you, but you only feel friendship for them:**
    - "I really like spending time with you as a friend, but I'm not in love, like you are. I'm sorry."
  - **If you're in love with someone, but don't know how to tell them:**
    - "I want to tell you something, but I don't know how to say it. It's a bit awkward. I like you and enjoy spending time with you. Do you feel the same way?"
- › Whether this new relationship turns into friendship or love, the important thing is:
    - Feeling comfortable around the other person.
    - Not pretending to be someone you're not just to please the other person or avoid disappointing them.



## Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

## Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.

*Get their opinions.*

- › **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › “Attracting someone we like involves many little things we can’t learn “by heart,” because then how we communicate can start to look fake. Spontaneity is one of the main qualities that make people attractive” (Turchet, 2004).
- › Everyone has unique traits that make them attractive:
  - Personal qualities
  - A distinct way of thinking, a particular style
  - A unique talent, passion or interest
- › Everyone has their own way of being attractive.
- › There are no magic spells to get someone to like you, which is actually a great thing!

## Video

- › **End** the session with the video *Tumbleweed Tango*. This wonderful cartoon is a great illustration of the dance that people do when they have feelings for each other, which can lift them both up.

### Tumbleweed Tango (Mickey Mouse, 2013)

**Length:** 3 min., 15 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlwfd1ZaDJ4&t=11s>



Video



› **Get** their comments and reactions to the video.

- **What do you think about this video?**
- **What are your takeaways?**

*Get their opinions.*

## Presentation

› **Share** the following information:

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Being attracted to someone is like a dance. It can be the first in a series of what we call “dating rituals.”
- › At first, you aren’t always sure of yourself, and sometimes you feel like you’re walking on eggshells (or dancing in a field of cacti!). However, when both people gradually trust each other, these moments can be very enjoyable and uplifting!
- › Then, who knows...
  - It could turn into a romantic relationship.
  - Or become a great friendship.
  - Or even remain a fantasy!





## SHEET

### 1.1a

#### FOR THE GROUP

## Ways to Get Someone to Notice You

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Each of the following statements is a suggestion from a teen on how “to get someone they like to notice them.”
- › State whether you think their approach is EFFECTIVE or NOT.
- › Categorize their approach using the table below (more than one approach may apply):

How to get someone to notice you	
1. Use your personality (e.g. sense of humour, talents, kindness).	5. Focus on your appearance.
2. Get to know the person.	6. Attract their attention.
3. Be yourself.	7. Want to impress them.
4. Use a go-between to avoid face-to-face interaction (e.g. friend, social media).	8. Agree to do things you don't like to please them or avoid displeasing them.

**Statement A:** *“I changed my look. Since then, I feel like people notice me more. I hope the person I'm interested in will notice me too.”*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement B:** *“In the morning, I like to get up two hours before I leave for school. That gives me enough time to have breakfast, do my hair, and choose my clothes. This makes me feel confident because I feel that I look really good! I make an extra effort on Tuesdays because I know Charlotte is in my class.”*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Different ways to get someone to notice you:**

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Use your personality (e.g. sense of humour, talents, kindness).                 | 5. Focus on your appearance.                                                   |
| 2. Get to know the person.                                                         | 6. Attract their attention.                                                    |
| 3. Be yourself.                                                                    | 7. Want to impress them.                                                       |
| 4. Use a go-between to avoid face-to-face interaction (e.g. friend, social media). | 8. Agree to do things you don't like to please them or avoid displeasing them. |

**Statement C:** *“When I like someone, I try to get to know them. I talk to them a lot and take an interest in what they like to do.”*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement D:** *“Last year, I had a huge crush on someone. At every break between classes, I would walk near his row of lockers with my friends and laugh so he would notice me.”*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement E:** *“I got a follower request on Instagram® from Maxime. To find out if he was interested in me, my friend did my makeup for a photo shoot. I posted the best photos and Maxime ‘liked’ one of them. I guess he likes me.”*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_



## SHEET

### 1.1b

FOR THE GROUP

## Ways to Get Someone to Notice You

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Each of the following statements is a suggestion from a teen on how “to get someone they like to notice them.”
- › State whether you think their approach is EFFECTIVE or NOT.
- › Identify what they did using table below:

#### Different ways to get someone to notice you:

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Use your personality (e.g. sense of humour, talents, kindness).                 | 5. Focus on your appearance.                                                   |
| 2. Get to know the person.                                                         | 6. Attract their attention.                                                    |
| 3. Be yourself.                                                                    | 7. Want to impress them.                                                       |
| 4. Use a go-between to avoid face-to-face interaction (e.g. friend, social media). | 8. Agree to do things you don't like to please them or avoid displeasing them. |

**Statement F:** “My friend has a big crush on a guy in Secondary 3. Since he smokes, she started smoking too and visits him in the smoking area during breaks. I don't know why she started; she used to think it smelled gross.”

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement G:** “I text her and started doing activities with her. We often hang out together at school. Right now we're friends, but I'm hoping that at some point we'll start going out.”

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Different ways to get someone to notice you:**

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Use your personality (e.g. sense of humour, talents, kindness).                 | 5. Focus on your appearance.                                                   |
| 2. Get to know the person.                                                         | 6. Attract their attention.                                                    |
| 3. Be yourself.                                                                    | 7. Want to impress them.                                                       |
| 4. Use a go-between to avoid face-to-face interaction (e.g. friend, social media). | 8. Agree to do things you don't like to please them or avoid displeasing them. |

**Statement H:** *"I didn't know how to take the first step to tell Alex I was interested in him, so I got my friend to ask him what he thinks about me."*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement I:** *"I often go on Instagram® to see if the person I like is 'online.' If they are, I'll make myself 'online' right away so that maybe they'll message me."*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement J:** *"When I'm interested in someone, I don't try to change. Because if they only show interest in me when I change, that means they're only interested in me for something I'm not."*

- › Can this approach be EFFECTIVE?  YES  NO
- › Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- › Which approach(es) did the person use to get noticed? (Use the numbers): \_\_\_\_\_



## SHEET

### 1.2

FOR SESSION  
LEADERS

## Answer Sheet: Ways to Get Someone to Notice You

### INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read each statement to the group.
- › For each statement, ask the group to raise their hands if they think the approach is EFFECTIVE.
- › Then ask a few volunteers to explain their point of view. This includes students who didn't think the approach was effective.
- › Add to the reflection activity using the answers below for each statement.

**Statement A:** *"I recently changed my look. Since then, I feel like people notice me more. I hope the person I'm interested in will notice me too."*

Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? **YES and NO**

- › **Yes**, if that's what the person wants to do. The benefit of dressing well is that you look your best. However, this is a temporary effect, so you can't rely on looks alone to make someone attracted to you.
- › **No**, if the change in clothing style is ONLY to please others and isn't really who you are. Also, just because you change how you look doesn't mean the other person will notice or appreciate it.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 5:** Focus on your appearance.

**No. 6:** Attract their attention.

**Statement B:** *“In the morning, I like to get up two hours before I leave for school. That gives me enough time to have breakfast, do my hair, and choose my clothes. This makes me feel confident, because I feel that I look really good! I make an extra effort on Thursdays because I know Charlotte is in my class.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES and NO**

- › **Yes**, it is true that a routine can make you feel good, which in turn can make you feel confident. Confidence lets some people feel more comfortable and be themselves around others. This can be a good way to get someone to notice you.
- › **However**, you should not rely solely on your appearance. Also, if you care more about your appearance than about people, this may be a sign that you have trouble being yourself when you aren't made up or in nice clothes. This can create a lot of pressure to always look your best.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 3:** Be yourself.

**No. 5:** Focus on your appearance.

**No. 6:** Attract their attention.

**Statement C:** *“When I like someone, I try to get to know them. I talk to them a lot and take an interest in what they like to do.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES**

- › **Yes**. This approach lets you get to know the person better to find out if you have common interests and if you still would like to “go out” with them.
- › You can also discover if the other person is interested in you; if so, you can both gradually reveal your feelings.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 2:** Get to know them.

**Statement D:** *“Last year I had a huge crush on someone. At every break between classes, I would walk near his row of lockers with my friends and laugh so he would notice me.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? NO**

- › **No**. When you don't send clear signals, you may have to wait a long time for the other person to respond. They can't read your mind. “Laughing” in front of someone may even create the opposite effect to what you want. The other person may misinterpret the laughter and wonder if you and your friends are laughing at them. They may even find you a little too intense.
- › **However**, this could work if you also do other things to get noticed and get to know the person (e.g. approaching them, smiling, saying hello).

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 6:** Attract their attention.

**Statement E:** *“I got a follower request on Instagram® from Maxime. To find out if he was interested in me, my friend did my makeup for a photo shoot. I posted the best photos and Maxime ‘liked’ one of them. I guess he likes me.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES and NO**

- › **Yes**, a person may “Like” another person’s photo to let them know that they like them.
- › However, liking a photo doesn’t mean you have a crush on someone or romantic feelings for them.
- › Some people may think that you absolutely need “sexy” photos to get people to notice you. However, people actually notice us for the things that make us different.
- › Plus, you don’t always have control over the photos you post on social media. People can make unwanted and inappropriate comments, even if the photos weren’t meant for them.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 4:** Use a go-between (here, social media) to avoid face-to-face interaction.

**No. 5:** Focus on your appearance.

**No. 6:** Attract their attention.

**Statement F:** *“My friend has a big crush on a guy in Secondary 3. Since he smokes, she started smoking too and visits him in the smoking area during breaks. I don’t know why she started; she used to think it smelled gross.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? NO**

- › **No.** Sometimes you may agree to do something you aren’t really interested in (e.g, biking, video games) just to please the other person. But lying about the things you like to look cool and get someone’s attention can be a slippery slope: you may start agreeing to do other things you don’t want to do to please or impress the other person and then end up doing even more things you really don’t like.
- › Doing things you don’t like or find “gross” does not guarantee that the other person will notice you or like you back. You should never agree to do things that you don’t like or that are risky just to please someone else.
- › Even if you say yes to everything, it doesn’t mean the other person will like you back. You might be getting used and you could get hurt if the other person takes advantages of how nice you’re being.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 8:** Agree to do things you don’t like to please them or avoid displeasing them.

**Statement G:** *“I text her and started doing activities with her. We often hang out together at school. Right now we’re friends, but I’m hoping that at some point we’ll start going out.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES and NO**

- › Getting to know someone as a friend first can work—for example, by texting with them and spending time together at school, like in this case. This allows a relationship to develop naturally (and not just virtually but also in person).
- › **However**, just because you become friends with someone doesn’t mean they will end up having romantic feelings for you. Being nice and pleasant to someone does not mean that they owe you anything in return and will want to be your boyfriend or girlfriend.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 1:** Show off your personality (e.g. humour, talents, kindness).

**No. 2:** Get to know them.

**Statement H:** *“I didn’t know how to take the first step to tell Alex I was interested in him, so I got my friend to ask him what he thinks about me.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES and NO**

- › **Yes**, because you can find out what the other person thinks of you and if they are interested in you. Your friend can also let the person know that you like them. This can “break the ice” so that you can approach them directly afterwards.
- › **No**, because this may give a false first impression if the other person doesn’t really know you. It can also make the person uncomfortable and put pressure on them that wasn’t there to begin with. Also, there is no guarantee that the person will tell the truth to your go-between.
- › With this approach, the other person may get a “weird” first impression of you.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 4:** Use a go-between (in this case, a friend) to avoid face-to-face interaction.



**Statement I:** *“I often go on Instagram® to see if the person I like is ‘online.’ If they are, I’ll make myself ‘online’ right away so that maybe they’ll message me.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES and NO**

- › **Yes**, this can be a good way if the person uses Instagram® in the same way.
- › **However**, the other person may not use the chat feature and may not answer. And when they do answer, it can be difficult to figure out what they mean.
- › Getting to know each other first on social media can seem exciting and may be less awkward than interacting face to face. But you can’t stay online; for example, the other person can invent things about their life and say anything to get you to like them. Ideally, you should talk to each other and meet in real life and eventually meet their friends (in real life), and their family (in real life), etc.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 4:** Use a go-between (here, social media) to avoid face-to-face interaction.

**No. 6:** Attract their attention.

**Statement J:** *“When I like someone, I don’t try to change. Because if they only show interest in me when I change, that means they’re only interested in me for something I’m not.”*

**Can this approach be EFFECTIVE? Why? YES**

- › **Yes**, you are more likely to be noticed for your authenticity. This keeps you from having to pretend to be someone you’re not or constantly fearing that you will disappoint the other person and not be who they want you to be.
- › **However**, just because you are interested in someone doesn’t mean they will feel the same way, even if you are nice and authentic.

**Ways the person tried to get noticed:**

**No. 1:** Show off your personality (e.g. humour, talents, kindness).

**No. 3:** Be yourself.

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*Sex Education Program  
for 12 to 17 years old*

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