
Sexuality Education Program
for ages 12 to 17

Two dark, textured silhouettes of a person and a child. The person is on the left, leaning forward with one arm raised. The child is on the right, leaning back with hands raised.

BETRUE

TO YOU

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

UQÀM

Sexuality Education Program
for ages 12 to 17



BETRUE

TO YOU

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Giving youth tools to deal with hypersexualization project
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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.

ISBN: 978-2-9819587-0-9

Legal deposit, Bibliothèque nationale du Québec 2023

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

PARTNERSHIP

The **REVIEW** and **TRANSLATION** of the **Be True to You** program and the **UPDATE** to the training was made possible by the financial support of:

- **Ministère de l'Éducation** - Direction du soutien au réseau éducatif anglophone (MEQ-DSRÉA).

Éducation
Québec 

- **Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec** through the Programme Études-Travail and UQAM
- **Programme d'aide financière à la recherche et à la création (PAFARC-UQAM)** - Service de la recherche et de la création, UQAM.

UQAM | **Service de la recherche et de la création**

UQAM partnership

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

UQAM | **Service des partenariats et du soutien à l'innovation**

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SECONDARY 5



Secondary 5 - Session 1

Sexual Diversity and Gender Pluralism “Define Yourself On Your Own Terms!”

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)	
Comprehensive View of Sexuality	<p>Become aware of the different facets of yourself so you can embrace your sexuality all your life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Be able to make decisions, assert yourself, articulate your needs and wishes › Be able to examine the ways you express your sexuality.
Emotional and romantic life	<p>Become aware of what supports the establishment and maintenance of meaningful interpersonal and romantic relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Capacity for emotional intimacy: maintenance of your identity and a self-image consistent with your values and personality, openness about yourself and acceptance of the other person.

Possible links to the Québec Education Program
(MESS, 2022)

Broad areas of learning	<p>Health and Well-Being: Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good lifestyle habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.</p> <p>Citizenship and Community Life: To ensure that students take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop a spirit of openness to the world and respect for diversity.</p>	
Cross-curricular competencies	<p>Intellectual competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Exercises critical judgment › Solves problems › Uses creativity 	<p>Personal and social competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieves his/her potential › Cooperates with others <p>Communication-related competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately
Subject areas	<p>Personal development subject area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › <i>Quebec Citizenship and Culture</i> 	

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: Search for Meaning and World Views

Disciplinary competencies	<p>Study a cultural reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Circumscribe › Evaluate knowledge › Analyze social relationships › Exhibit enriched understanding 	<p>To reflect on an ethical question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify the ethical dimension of a situation <p>To examine a variety of points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Develop a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	<p>Study the different factors that allow people to embrace their sexuality throughout life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Ability to make decisions and assert self › Ability to be introspective about the expression of own sexuality 	<p>Reflect on the tensions between the norms related to expressing own sexuality, own personal experience and self-perception</p>



Educational Goals



Session length:
105 minutes

Help the students gain a better understanding of sexual diversity and gender pluralism (vocabulary, issues, realities, etc.) and reflect on the role of allies in supporting, accepting and including LGBTQ+ people.

- 1. Discuss** how they understand and define the concept of diversity.
- 2. Distinguish** between various concepts related to sexual diversity and gender pluralism (SDGP).
- 3. Respond** to myths and prejudices related to sexual diversity and gender pluralism.
- 4. Discuss** the impact and consequences of certain sexual norms on the way we and others form, express and accept our sexual identity.
- 5. Propose** respectful and kind ways of responding to challenges faced by people who identify as LGBTQ+ or don't identify as such.
- 6. Define** the concept of ally.
- 7. Discuss** daily actions that can be taken to show openness and support for LGBTQ+ people.



Sequence



This **105-min.** session has **four activities**.

5 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Brainstorming: What is diversity? › Presentation › Video: “Teens talk about diversity”
40 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activities: Key terms related to sexual diversity and gender pluralism › Discussion and Presentation <i>Sheet 1.1: LGBTQ+...?</i> › Video: “Sexual Orientation, Behavior and Identity”
30 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activity: Situational exercises <i>Sheet 1.2: Situational Exercise: Lennox</i> <i>Sheet 1.3: Situational Exercise: Nora</i> <i>Sheet 1.4: Situational Exercise: Madison</i> <i>Sheet 1.5: Answer sheet: Situational Exercises: Lennox, Nora and Madison</i> › Discussion and Presentation
20 min.	ACTIVITY 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Group activity: Myth or fact? › Discussion and Presentation
10 min.	Session CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation: Key messages from the session

It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow** (PPT) 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 (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

This session will focus on sexual diversity and gender pluralism. This can be a delicate subject because it has to do with personal identity. These topics will be discussed in clear terms, but students will not have to talk about the details of their private lives or answer personal questions.

Students may tell you about difficult personal situations (e.g., uncertainty over their sexual orientation or gender identity, discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity—homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc.—microaggressions, incidents of verbal, psychological, physical and/or sexual violence, 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)



5 MIN.



BRAINSTORMING



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).
- › Next, **tell** the students that the topic of the session is diversity—specifically, sexual diversity and gender pluralism (SDGP). The session will cover the vocabulary of SDGP, the realities and challenges associated with identifying as LGBTQIA2S+ and inclusive attitudes and practices the students can adopt.

Brainstorm

- › To begin the session, **write** the word “Diversity” on the blackboard.
- › Next, **ask** the students the following question:
 - **In your opinion, what does the word “diversity” mean?**
- › **Write** their answers on the blackboard.

Presentation

- › Next, **add** to the students’ answers using the information below:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Diversity is...

- › “The quality of a heterogenous set of people who, in a given environment, differ from one another in their traits—specifically those traits which are social, cultural, physical or mental in nature” [Translation] (OQLF, 2019a).
- › In other words, diversity refers to everything that makes someone different from others; it’s what makes them unique.

- › Diversity takes many forms. Here are some of the dimensions of diversity (OQLF, 2019a):
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Ethnicity, culture and religion
 - Beliefs and values
 - Language
 - Gender identity and sexual orientation
 - Abilities
 - Disability (intellectual, physical, sensory, etc.)
 - Socio-economic status
- › Physical traits (weight, height, colour and texture of hair and skin, etc.)
 - Etc.

Video

- › **End** the activity by presenting a video that depicts young people discussing what diversity means to them.

Teens talk about diversity (USA TODAY, 2014)

Length: 5 min., 42 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFNuRJM4LMs>



.....→
Video



- › After the video, **ask** the following question:
 - **What are your takeaways from this video?**

- › Tell the students that the next activities will focus mainly on “sexual diversity and gender pluralism.” These are concepts that relate to sexual and gender minorities—in other words, “individuals and groups who are considered minorities due to their body or body appearance, sexual behaviours, sexual orientation, gender identity or a family background that is not aligned with cultural norms surrounding sexuality and gender [...]” [Translation] (Laforest and al., 2018).



2

Activity 2



SLIDESHOW (PPT)
SHEET 1.1



40 MIN.



TEAM
ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION
AND PRESENTATION



VIDEO

- › This second activity of the session will focus on different concepts drawn from the vocabulary of sexual diversity and gender pluralism.

Team activity

- › First, **ask** the students to get into teams of two.
- › Next, **give** the following instructions:
 - In this speed activity, we'll look at various words and concepts related to sexual diversity and gender pluralism.
 - Taking turns, give your partner a short definition or explanation of each word/concept displayed on the slideshow (PPT).
 - You'll be given about 30 seconds per concept.
 - Once all the concepts have been presented, we'll discuss and clarify the definitions as a class.

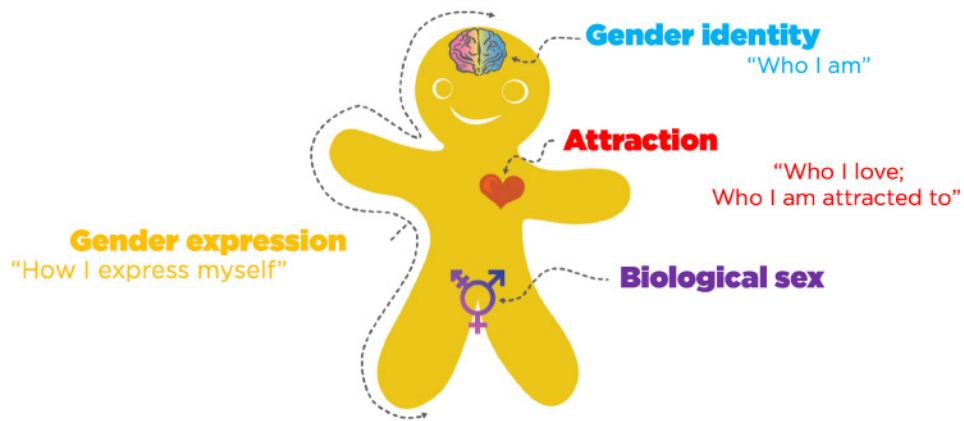
Discussion and Presentation

- › As a class, **define** each of the concepts from the previous speed activity using the information on Sheet 1.1: *LGBTQ+...?*

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

After presenting the definitions related to gender identity and sexual orientation (ending with the definition for "Asexual"), show the students *The Genderbread Person* (The Genderbread Person, 2017), which summarizes the different components of a person's identity.





› Next, **ask** the students the following questions:

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

Get their opinions.

› Next, **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › The vocabulary of sexual diversity and gender pluralism is constantly evolving and varies based on a society's culture, history and language. Many different words, concepts and acronyms could be used to define various identities and sexual orientations, and no one term is better than another.
- › It's normal to feel a little confused when you're exposed to these words for the first time, as they may seem new or unfamiliar. Keep in mind that these words allow us to understand a broader array of identities and freely identify with them, or not. These are personal choices that we make for ourselves.
- › How we identify and what makes sense to us can change over time; our sexual preferences, romantic feelings and sexual orientation can evolve over the course of our lives. But this doesn't happen overnight. We may have experiences and encounters that cause us to reconsider who we're attracted to and how we define ourselves (our identity).

Video

- › **Present** a funny video that uses the analogy of ice cream flavours to illustrate the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations.

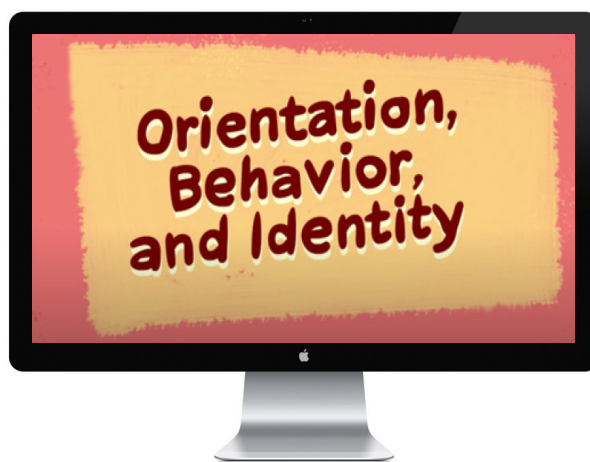
Sexual Orientation, Behavior and Identity (AMAZE Org, 2021)

Length: 2 min., 39 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvJETydN8Vc>



Video



Discussion

- › Next, **lead** a discussion using the following questions:

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

Get their opinions.

- › **End** the activity by sharing the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Some expressions are very precise and describe a specific reality with regard to sexual diversity and gender pluralism. But there are also “umbrella terms” that are used to group together these various realities (CCGQ, 2014; Veltman and Chaimowitz, 2014):
 - **LGBTQ+:** Umbrella term that encompasses all sexual and gender minorities.
 - **QUEER:** Umbrella term that encompasses anyone who identifies as non-cisgender.
 - **GENDER MINORITY:** Umbrella term that encompasses non-binary people, trans people, two-spirit people, queer people and those questioning their sexuality.
- › Key points:
 - Educating yourself is a process. It takes time to understand these words and concepts and integrate them into your vocabulary. By doing so, you allow LGBTQ+ people to feel like their realities and experiences are being heard, acknowledged, understood and respected.



Activity 3



SLIDESHOW (PPT)
SHEETS 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 AND 1.5



30 MIN.



**TEAM
ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION
AND PRESENTATION**

Team activity

- › For the next activity, **tell** the students to remain with their partner from the previous activity.
- › **Hand out** one of the three situational exercises for this activity (Sheet 1.2: *Situational exercise: Lennox*; Sheet 1.3: *Situational Exercise: Nora*; and Sheet 1.4: *Situational exercise: Madison*).
- › **Tell** the students that they have 10 minutes to respond to each situation. Specifically, they will give their opinion on the situation and discuss possible reactions. Each team will need to choose a spokesperson to share the answers with the group. You can read over the instructions on Sheet 1.2 with them.
- › When the 10 minutes are up, before reviewing each of the situations, **ask** the group the following question:
 - **For people your age, what’s the impact of being different or being seen as different by your peers, teammates, classmates, family, etc.?**
 - **What are the risks and advantages of being different or being seen as different?**
- › Next, **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Socially, certain qualities tend to be “expected” and others “prohibited” when it comes to sex and gender. What are the risks of having “prohibited” qualities as part of your gender identity?
 - Being made fun of, marginalized, rejected, feeling at war with yourself, being vulnerable, etc.
- › There are also advantages to not having “expected” qualities as part of your gender identity.
 - You may gain a new perspective on yourself, evolve, shed a self-image that doesn’t suit you, discover new paths, inspire respect and admiration, etc.

- › Next, **tell** the students that you're going to discuss how each of the characters in the situations is impacted by the fact that they're different. **Ask** the spokespeople for the teams that had Situational exercise 1.2 (Lennox) to share their answers for each of the questions. **Do** the same for Situational exercise 1.3 (Nora) and Situational exercise 1.4 (Madison).
- › **Add** to their answers with the suggested content for each situational exercise (see Sheet 1.5 – *Answer Sheet: Lennox, Nora and Madison: Situational Exercises*, which consolidates the information and examples for each situation).

Discussion and Presentation

- › Next, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** the students' answers:
 - **In your opinion, why is it important to be kind and respectful toward people who identify as LGBTQ+?**
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Like environmentalism, equity and social justice—all causes for which youth are agents of change—the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people begins with the understanding that we all, as citizens, have a role to play in creating a welcoming, kind and respectful environment for people who identify as LGBTQ+.
- › Being an agent of change doesn't mean understanding and accepting everything without having questions or being critical. It's about being open toward people who are different from us and accepting them as they are, instead of being judgemental (MEES, 2019). If we feel safe and comfortable doing so, we can also stand up for someone being treated unfairly and speak out against such actions, whether in conversations with those around us or on social media (MEES, 2019).
- › In short, being kind and respectful toward LGBTQ+ people means being sensitive to how they feel or may feel in a given situation by choosing to respect who they are.
- › A society that becomes a “safe space” (a place where people from a minority group or community can express themselves freely, without fear of judgement, discrimination or retaliation) [Translation] (OQLF, 2019b) for people who identify as LGBTQ+ takes concrete actions to ensure that they don't experience humiliation, bullying and violence. This allows LGBTQ+ people to enjoy their lives, thrive and have dreams for the future.



Activity 4



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MIN.



GROUP
ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION
AND PRESENTATION

Group activity and Presentation

- › **Tell** the students that you will be doing a “myth or fact” survey about sexual diversity and gender pluralism. The students will raise their hands to say whether they think each statement is a myth or a fact.
- › As a group, **read** the first statement. Then, **ask** them: “*Do you think it’s a myth or a fact?*”
- › **Let** them take a position and **add** to the information below.
- › **Repeat** the same steps for the following statements.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Statement 1: A gay or lesbian person who doesn’t “come out” must be dealing with internalized homophobia.**
 - **MYTH:** Just because someone isn’t open about being gay or lesbian doesn’t mean that they’re ashamed of their sexuality. “Some people are comfortable with keeping their emotional and romantic life “in the dark” or private, while others want to show it proudly. Sometimes people are more comfortable with hiding that part of their life or delaying their coming out. They do this to protect themselves from judgement and discrimination. While these strategies for coming out and these motivations are different, one is not more right than another” (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).
 - There are also cases where people don’t feel safe coming out. “LGBTQ+ youth often have fears associated with revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity. They are particularly afraid that their loved ones will be disappointed, will oppose what they are saying, won’t take them seriously or will reject them” [Translation] (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022). In some families, parents’ values and beliefs and the things they teach their children do not always send positive messages about sexual diversity and gender pluralism. As a result, some young people may be unsure whether they can count on their parents to support them if they were to come out—for example, in families where homosexuality is seen as a bad thing or as unacceptable (Coalition des familles LGBT, n.d.). Conversely, in some families, when a young person comes out, they’re treated with respect and there’s no “drama.”

- Sexual orientation is a personal matter. Everyone gets to decide for themselves when they're comfortable talking about it and with whom.
- If you're experiencing a lot of uncertainty, discomfort or even distress about your sexual orientation or sexual identity, you can always consult a support worker or organizations that support the LGBTQ+ community.

› **Statement 2: It's harder for bisexual people to be in a committed long-term relationship.**

- **MYTH:** A person's sexual orientation tells you nothing about their level of commitment and faithfulness in a romantic relationship. This is something that varies from person to person, depending on their past dating experiences, the models they had for romantic relationships as children or teens, the way they feel about the relationship with the other person, their perceptions and expectations of a romantic relationship, their personal values and beliefs, etc.
- Since bisexual people may appear to have a larger pool of potential romantic partners, their partners may feel threatened, and they may be extra vigilant. In such cases, it's important to explore the reasons for this insecurity (e.g., anxiety, control, jealousy), and this can be done through healthy communication.
- A person's sexual orientation does not influence whether or not they will be faithful. Regardless of sexual orientation, when a person decides to make a commitment, it's because they value the relationship they share with the other person and feel safe and happy with them.

› **Statement 3: Being trans isn't a new phenomenon** (Interligne, 2021).

- **FACT:** While it may seem like more and more people have started identifying as trans, in fact, "this phenomenon has always been present in cultures around the world, but hasn't left much trace in history" [Translation] (Interligne, 2021). "Other cultures recognize a third gender. Examples are two-spirit people in Indigenous communities in North America as well as Hijra—communities of non-binary people with traditional roles—in South Asia" [Translation] (Blakemore, 2022). The fact is that, in the past, people didn't speak openly about these matters and didn't have the vocabulary to describe these identities" [Translation] (Parr, 2021).
- Today, as we have a better understanding of the realities of trans people and the challenges they face, and as trans people have greater visibility and inclusion in society, they may feel more secure and comfortable and may have less fear and concern over freely expressing their gender. This leads more trans people to live openly and show their true selves (Parr, 2021).

› **Statement 4: In a homosexual relationship, one person plays the masculine role and the other plays the feminine role** (Interligne, 2021).

- **MYTH:** This way of looking at romantic relationships comes from the heterosexual relationship model. Under this model, each partner's role within a couple is based on their gender, and the masculine and feminine gender are viewed as distinct and complementary (Interligne, 2021). Under this heterosexual model, behaviours, interests, preferences and attitudes are attributed to people based on their gender identity (Dorais, 2019). But things have changed a lot over time. Modern societies have been questioning and updating certain roles that were considered stereotypical. Over the past fifty years, the spectrum of roles associated with each gender has greatly expanded.
- "In all relationships, whether the partners are the same gender or not, gender roles will vary based on the individuals and their personalities and what feels most comfortable for each person" [Translation] (Interligne, 2021).

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the following question and **get** the students' answers:
 - “What are your takeaways from this activity?”
 - **Why do you think it's important to question the meaning and relevance of certain social norms associated with sexuality (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression)?**
- › Next, **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Right from childhood, the people around us (e.g., family, friends, classmates), the media (e.g., ads, movies, social media) and societal structures (e.g., school, community, the legal system) present us with specific social, cultural, physical, psychological and sexual norms, and these are seen as the status quo—in other words, as being “normal,” “acceptable,” “natural” and expected. The repeated exposure to these messages influences the way we see and construct the world. It also influences how we perceive and interact with others and how we perceive ourselves.
- › What's more, having this “single mould” imposed on us, and feeling that we need to conform to gain social acceptance and recognition, can make it hard for us to get to know ourselves and learn who we truly are. Whether we like it or not, these external influences impact our attitudes, behaviours, preferences and so on, as they become invisible to us over time. As a result, it can become difficult to recognize and analyze some of these norms.
- › Given this, diversity is often associated with traits that make us different from the majority of people. This way of looking at diversity can lead to negative attitudes (e.g., fear, shame, contempt) and problematic behaviours (e.g., discrimination, bullying, violence) toward people who don't correspond or identify with the norm: such people may be perceived as “troublesome,” “atypical” or even “abnormal.”
- › Based on a study on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that surveyed over 4,000 secondary students in Canada, 62% of LGBTQ+ students don't feel safe at school, compared with 11% of cisgender, heterosexual students, and this is because they experience various forms of harassment and bullying (Peter and al., 2021).
- › Questioning certain norms is justified when done to ensure that nobody is at risk of humiliation or violence just because they differ from the norm.

- › **Present** the students with the following questionnaire, which focuses on how heterosexuality tends to be seen as the norm with regard to sexual orientation, and **get** the opinions after.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Questionnaire on heterosexuality (Cormier, 1995)

To be read only by people who “suffer” from heterosexuality

- › What is the cause of your heterosexuality?
- › Have you already told your parents and friends that you’re heterosexual?
- › Do you think your heterosexuality may just be a phase?
- › Did you decide to become heterosexual because of a failed romance with someone of the same gender or simply because you’ve been rejected by people of the same gender?
- › Do you think a positive homosexual experience could fix your “problem”?
- › When and how did you first realize you were heterosexual?
- › What do you do in bed?
- › How can you say you aren’t homosexual if you’ve never tried it?

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Created in 1995 by the *Association of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Students of Université de Montréal, HEC, Polytechnique* (Cormier, 1995), this questionnaire, which is still relevant 30 years later, gets respondents to put themselves in another’s shoes. This type of exercise shines light on the norm in question. “The objective is to reframe certain remarks that are commonly made, as a way to get people to think about the norm and what we take for granted.” [Translation] (Richard, 2018, p. 7)



Presentation

- › After getting the students' opinions, **end** the activity by sharing the information below, which presents the perspectives of the LGB university students who created the questionnaire in 1995:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Why is heterosexuality never questioned in this way? Why do we never ask ourselves these questions?
- › “Was that questionnaire kind of dumb? It does feel pretty strange to answer those questions. And yet these are the same sorts of questions that gay, lesbian and bisexual people get asked because of their sexuality. Even if these questions aren't intended to deliberately hurt or make fun of the other person, they still have a negative connotation and convey disapproval” [Translation] (Cormier, 1995).
- › “Fundamentally, there is little difference between heterosexual and homosexual people. We're all human beings with the same basic needs, including the need for love and affection. We can't control our sexual impulses. We need to accept them as they are. Homosexuality isn't a disease. But refusing to accept homosexuality can be become one” [Translation] (Cormier, 1995).



Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



DISCUSSION



PRESENTATION

- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
 - **Have you ever thought about whether you're in a kind environment, surrounded by people who respect and embrace difference—including the things that make you and your friends different?**
 - **In your opinion, what are good criteria for determining that an environment is open to difference?**
Get their opinions.
- › Then, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:
 - **In your opinion, why is it important to educate people your age about sexual diversity and gender pluralism?**
Get their opinions.
- › Next, **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The importance of education on sexual diversity and gender pluralism

- › Learning about sexual diversity and gender pluralism, no matter our age, exposes us to the realities and challenges of under-represented groups. Understanding the challenges and experiences of LGBTQ+ people represents a big step toward living in a society that values inclusion and diversity.
- › Everyone, including young people your age, has an active role to play in making our society more CARING, RESPECTFUL and INCLUSIVE when it comes to sexual diversity and gender pluralism.

Being an ally

- › And this role may be that of an ally. An ally is a “person outside a community who is recognized by the members of that community as someone who advocates for their rights (e.g., a heterosexual person who feels affected by or concerned about the realities of LGBTQ+ communities and stands up for their causes)” [Translation] (Lafortune, n.d.). Being an ally is mainly about educating yourself, listening to others and supporting LGBTQ+ people.

› Allies who support diversity can show their openness and provide support in various ways (Tel-jeunes, 2021; 2022):

- **Recognize and respond:**

- The first step is to recognize that we all have prejudices, and then to correct them.
- Express your distaste for discriminatory acts or remarks made toward others.
- Avoid assuming another person's gender identity or who they're attracted to. You can ask them how they identify. You can also find out what pronouns they use (she, he, they, etc.).
- Etc.

- **Educate yourself and others:**

- Learn about the current challenges of marginalized groups.
- Meet people who are different from you.
- Talk with those around you (family members, friends) about the importance of diversity.
- Etc.

- **Support and encourage:**

- Give marginalized people the chance to speak.
- Get involved in activities that promote inclusion.
- Refer people to other resources. (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, n.d.)
- Etc.

› Being an ally means you “believe that all humans, regardless of their age, sex, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, should be treated with dignity and respect” (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, n.d.).

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Diversity, in all its forms, makes the world richer.
- › All of us, whether or not we identify as LGBTQ+, have unique qualities and should feel free to affirm and display who we really are, without feeling guilty or ashamed or afraid to be true to ourselves!
- › Just because someone is gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, etc., doesn't automatically mean that they feel discriminated against and distressed. But it's still important for them to be surrounded by positive role models who inspire them and allies who support them.
- › By joining forces and working together, we can create a future that is more respectful, kind and inclusive with regard to diversity. And the future starts with you!



SHEET

1.1

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

LGBTQ+?

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a class, define the words/concepts from the activity using the information below.

KEY TERMS

Sexual diversity and gender pluralism

Biological sex: Refers to certain sexual characteristics we are born with or develop later, including genitalia, body shape, tone of voice, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc. There are several synonyms for this term: “sex,” “anatomical sex,” “sex assigned at birth,” etc.

Intersex: Someone with physical sexual characteristics that do not reflect the typical social and medical norms for “female” and “male” bodies. These characteristics may relate to physical appearance, genitalia, hormones or chromosomes. In the past, the term “hermaphrodite” was used to refer to a person born with a combination of typically male and female sexual characteristics. However, this term is now considered outdated and inaccurate.

Gender: A person’s status in society as a man, woman or non-binary person. Gender can be influenced by psychological, behavioural, social and cultural factors. A person’s gender

is not determined by the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender expression: The way we present our gender to others through our actions, clothing and attitude, and the way these codes are interpreted based on a society’s gender norms.

Gender identity: A term that refers to the gender a person identifies with, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth and their gender expression. Gender identity is an intimate and personal experience and may change as you go through life. You’re the only one who can affirm your gender identity (self-identification).

Gender binary: The idea that gender is divided into two fixed and separate categories (man and woman), instead of broken down into various identities and expressions.

(Blais, 2017; Dubuc, 2017; Government of Canada, 2019; Interligne, 2021; The Genderbread Person, 2017)

KEY TERMS

Sexual diversity and gender pluralism

Non-binary: Refers to gender identities that fall outside of the exclusive man/woman binary. Non-binary people can feel like they are neither male nor female, or they may feel that they are both or any combination of the two.

Gender-fluid: Refers to someone whose gender and/or gender expression shifts from time to time.

Trans: An umbrella term that encompasses a variety of identities held by people whose gender identity doesn't match the sex or gender they were assigned at birth. This category includes non-binary people. A trans person can be heterosexual, gay, bisexual, queer or any other sexual orientation. "TRANS-" comes from Latin and means "beyond," "through" or "across." It conveys the notion of passage, change or being outside of a category.

Transsexual: A term considered outdated due its medical connotation and which was used to refer to people who, in their transition process, had undergone or planned to undergo certain medical treatments such as hormone therapy or surgical procedures.

Trans woman: A person who identifies as female but was assigned the male sex at birth.

Trans man: A person who identifies as male but was assigned the female sex at birth.

Transition: A process in which a trans person undergoes changes that reflect their felt gender. Transitioning is a complex, multi-phase process that may stretch out over several years. A person can transition socially (e.g., coming out, changing their first name, pronouns, style of dress, etc.), legally (e.g., having their name or sex designation changed on official documents) or medically (e.g., hormone therapy and surgery). These different areas of transition are independent of one another. Keep in mind that every transition is unique, and transitioning is not a mandatory step to identifying as a transgender person.

Misgendering: The act (intentional or non-intentional) of referring to a person using a name, pronoun or greeting that does not reflect their gender identity. Trans and non-binary people are especially affected by misgendering, and it can invalidate their experiences and identity.

(Dubuc, 2017; Government of Canada, 2019; Interligne, 2021; Médico, 2019; Office québécois de la langue française, 2021; The Genderbread Person, 2017)

KEY TERMS

Sexual diversity and gender pluralism

Cisgender: “CIS” is a latin prefix that means “on this side.” As opposed to “trans,” “cisgender” is used to refer to people who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. A simple way of thinking about it is that if a person is not transgender, they’re cisgender.

Sexual orientation: A combination of several types of attraction (physical, sexual, emotional, romantic and intellectual) that a person may feel toward a group or multiple groups of people. Homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality are generally recognized sexual orientations.

Lesbian: A woman who feels sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to women. A non-binary person may also identify as a lesbian.

Gay: A man who feels sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to men. A non-binary person may identify as gay. Some homosexual women identify as gay women.

Bisexual: Someone who is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to

people of their own gender as well as the other genders.

LGBT: The term “gay community” was replaced by “LGBT” to encompass lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans identities.

LGBTQ+: Today, the preferred term is LGBTQ+, which encompasses more identities, including queer, intersex, asexual, agender (someone who doesn’t identify with a gender) and pansexual (someone who is attracted to all genders).

Queer: The Anglo-Saxon term “queer,” which originally meant “bizarre” or “strange” and was used to refer to women with masculine traits or men with feminine traits, was reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community and became a symbol of self-determination and liberation rather than an insult. It refers to any idea, practice, person or identity that differs from the binary view of gender.

(Blais, 2017; Dubuc, 2017; Government of Canada, 2019; Interligne, 2021; The Genderbread Person, 2017)

KEY TERMS

Sexual diversity and gender pluralism

Pansexual: Someone who is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to people of any and all genders.

Two-spirit: A North American Indigenous person who has both a feminine and masculine spirit. This term reflects the complex understanding that Indigenous people have of gender and sexuality. A person who is not of Indigenous descent should not use this term to self-identify.

Aromantic: Someone who feels no or very little romantic attraction but who may feel sexual attraction. This category could include people who feel romantic attraction only after being sexually intimate with someone (demiromantic).

Asexual: Someone who feels no or very little attraction or sexual desire but may feel romantic or emotional attraction. This category may include people who feel desire only after having created a strong emotional bond (demisexual).

Heteronormativity: The belief that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is preferable and superior to all other sexual orientations.

Homophobia: Any negative attitude that can lead to discrimination (harassment, rejection, violence, etc.) toward a person or a group of people on the basis of their sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation. Homophobia encompasses lesbophobia, gayphobia and biphobia. Homophobia can affect anyone whose appearance or behaviour does not conform to gender stereotypes. The suffix “phobia” is “used to form words indicating fear, aversion, hate, rejection or discrimination toward something or someone” [Translation] (Wiktionnaire, 2022).

Transphobia: Any negative attitude that can lead to discrimination (harassment, rejection, violence, etc.) toward a trans person or people who do not conform to stereotypes of masculinity or femininity.

Internalized homophobia: Feelings of guilt, shame or self-hatred in response to one’s sexual orientation, identity or behaviours, which do not conform to the heteronormative model.

(Dubuc, 2017; Fondation Émergence, 2022; Government of Canada, 2019; Interligne, 2021; Richard, 2019; The Genderbread Person, 2017)



SHEET

1.2

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Lennox

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read “Part 1” of the situation and answer the questions provided. Do the same thing for “Part 2.”
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Part 1 – Lennox

For several weeks, a group of students have been saying that Lennox is a “pansy” and looks like a “fag” with his skinny jeans, nail polish and earrings.

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › How do you think Lennox will be impacted by his peer group’s view that he’s different?

Part 2 – Lennox

Lennox has been your best friend since elementary school, and you know him well enough to see that something is wrong. He tells you he doesn’t want to go to basketball practice because of what people are saying to him at school. Also, his mom has sent you a few texts saying that she’s worried about Lennox because she often sees him alone and crying.

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › As Lennox’s best friend, how might you react to his situation?



SHEET

1.3

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Nora

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read “Part 1” of the situation and answer the questions provided. Do the same thing for “Part 2.”
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Part 1 – Nora

Nora has been doing a lot of thinking lately. She tells you that she feels like she isn't like the other girls. You ask her why she feels this way. Is it because of how she dresses? Her attitude? Her interests? You also reassure her it's OK to be different from others. Nora is quick to respond, “No, it's more than that.”

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › What do you think it's like for Nora to feel that she's different from her peer group?

Part 2 – Nora (Robin)

Nora has been your best friend since elementary school, and you're very close. They tell you that they would like to be called Robin now and to use the boy's bathroom at school. They say that this would make them feel more comfortable. However, they're afraid that others would make fun of them and harass them. They also mention that they haven't spoken to their parents about all of this.

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › As a best friend, how might you react to them situation?



SHEET

1.4

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Madison

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read “Part 1” of the situation and answer the questions provided. Do the same thing for “Part 2.”
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Part 1 – Madison

Madison, one of your teammates in your school improv league, has updated the bio on her Instagram[®] account to say that she’s questioning her sexual orientation.

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › What do you think it will be like for Madison to be seen as different from her peers, now that she has publicly revealed that she’s questioning her sexual orientation?

Part 2 – Madison

As you don’t know exactly what’s going on, you talk to Madison. She says that she still isn’t sure who she’s attracted to and that she wants to try every option before she makes a decision. She adds that her cousin who’s in university told her that it’s normal to want to have sexual experiences with a girl and that this would help her make the right decision.

- › What do you think of this situation?
- › How might you react to Madison’s situation?



SHEET

1.5

**FOR SESSION
LEADERS**

Answer Sheet: Situational exercises: Lennox, Nora and Madison

INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Hand out one of the three situational exercises (Lennox, Nora or Madison) to each of the teams.**
- › **Tell the students that, as a team, they will read the situation assigned to them, then respond the questions provided. A spokesperson will share their answers.**
- › **Get the information provided by the teams.**
- › **Next, add to the students' answers using the information below.**

› **Impact of being different or being perceived as different by one's peer group**

1. Lennox

- The group of students making homophobic remarks about Lennox assume that he's gay because of his look, which doesn't conform to their image of masculinity. However, they don't actually know Lennox's sexual orientation.
- "LGBTQ+ people come in all shapes, styles and personalities, just like cisgender and heterosexual people. Not all people in the LGBTQ+ community fit the stereotype society has of them. So you cannot assume their sexual orientation or identity based on these stereotypes" [Translation] (Interligne, 2021).
- The only way to know if someone is LGBTQ+ is when they identify as such (self-identification).
- And keep in mind this "label" for their sexual orientation only tells you who they're romantically and sexually attracted to—nothing more. There are so many other facets to their personality, including their relationship with their family, their plans for the future (studies, work), their sense of humour, their perspective on friendship and romantic relationships, their values, their past experiences (positive or negative), their favourite sports and hobbies and their talents.
- While a person's sexual orientation, whatever it is, may be important, it's only one part of who they are and what they experience and doesn't wholly define their personality. For example, an endearing, funny, spirited son remains an endearing, funny, spirited young man after he tells his parents that he's gay. And bright, generous, talented young woman remains a bright, generous, talented young woman after she tells her friends that she's bisexual.
- It must be acknowledged, however, that young people who know that they're heterosexual don't experience this stress and pressure of "coming out" to their family or friends.

2. Nora (Robin)

- First of all, it's totally normal to question your identity (e.g., your values, personality traits, interests, preferences, sexual orientation, etc.), especially when you're a teen, as this is a key time for identity formation.
- The process of forming your gender identity is strongly influenced by the culture, society and environment we live in. The traits that are presented as stereotypically masculine and feminine in advertising and the media (e.g., movies, TV shows, video games, social media) are continually adopted by the people around us, consciously or unconsciously (Dorais, 2019). We learn that, to be accepted and valued as an individual, it's best to adopt the behaviours, attitudes and roles that correspond to the gender we were assigned at birth (Dorais, 2019). But for some people, this doesn't feel right.
- Regardless of your gender, you don't have to conform to the stereotypical criteria of femininity and masculinity.
- Nora senses that she doesn't have the qualities that are "expected" of her gender, and this is why she feels unsure about herself.

Challenges a young trans person may experience

- Some trans people know right from childhood (between the ages of 5 and 8) who they truly are (Médico and Pullen Sansfaçon, 2019).
- However, for some trans people, it isn't until puberty hits and their body starts changing that they realize they're "different" from other people of the same gender or start to feel that they don't belong to the gender they were assigned at birth by health professionals. This can lead to them experiencing gender dysphoria (Médico and Pullen Sansfaçon, 2019). "The concept of gender dysphoria relates to the feelings and emotions (e.g., anger, disgust) that individuals may have toward themselves about their gender identity or body" (Interlignè, 2021).
- In this situation, we can see that Robin (Nora) personally affirms their gender identity, but that they would like to reveal and display it more freely with those around them. For example, they would like to change their name and use the boy's bathroom at school. However, as Robin understands that their gender identity isn't "conventionally" feminine or masculine, they worry about the possible repercussions (e.g., rejection, exclusion, violence, etc.) from peers and even their parents.
- Trans youth are at greater risk of experiencing verbal, physical and sexual violence compared to their peers (Médico and Pullen Sansfaçon, 2019). As a result, they feel unsafe at school and therefore miss more classes (Médico and Pullen Sansfaçon, 2019; Peter and al., 2021).
- Trans people all go through a unique transition journey. (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2017). Some will choose to affirm their gender identity by making changes in every area (legal, social and medical), while others will choose, for example, only to change their legal documents (e.g., health insurance card and driver's licence) (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2017).
- It's important to listen to and respect the needs of the trans person and not to rush them. They will transition at their own pace, and they alone will choose the moment when they come out as trans to friends and family, if they wish to do.

3. Madison

- As a teen, it's completely natural to question your identity or sexual orientation, like Madison is doing (Who am I? What am I interested in? What am I passionate about? Who do I love? Whom am I attracted to?). That said, while experimenting and trying new things can help us learn more about ourselves (our values, interests, needs, boundaries, preferences, etc.), this doesn't mean that we should be ready to try anything and everything.
- Certain trends that are popular on social media (e.g., TikTok®, Instagram®, YouTube®) or among our peers can influence and guide our actions, but may not reflect who we really are or what we really like or want. Some people may experiment as a way to be like others, be different, be original or be popular (for instance on social media).
- While there's nothing inherently wrong with posting about yourself on social media, such posts can make you the target of unwanted, unpleasant or even insulting comments. Plus, some of Madison's followers may react with unhealthy curiosity when they see what she has shared on her Instagram® account. This could put Madison in an uncomfortable position, should she receive intrusive comments or questions about her personal life.

› Possible reactions to the situation involving...

1. Lennox

Lukewarm reactions:

- Feeling uncomfortable and awkward, not knowing what to do about the situation.
- Worrying about how your classmates will react and being afraid of getting labelled as gay and getting bullied.
 - Feeling uncomfortable at the thought that, if your friend comes out as gay, he may be attracted to you (if you're the same gender). It's important not to mistake someone opening up to you with them "declaring their love" for you. That said, if both these things do happen, and you're heterosexual, you can just explain to the other person that you aren't interested, just as you would with someone of the opposite sex.

Supportive reactions:

- Listening to Lennox: hear his concerns, feelings and needs and give him the support he requires, if he wants you to.
- Suggesting that Lennox speak with trusted adults about what's happening (e.g., parents, school administrators, support worker, the coach of his sports team). Schools have procedures for taking immediate action to stop bullying.
- Searching the internet for resources that could be helpful for Lennox.
- Standing up for Lennox by telling the group of students who are bullying him that their words are hurtful, and that their bullying is severely impacting the life of your best friend.
- Etc.

2. Nora (Robin)

Lukewarm reactions:

- Feeling awkward or uncomfortable, not knowing how to handle your best friend's situation.
- Worrying that you don't know enough to be as supportive as you can of your best friend.
- Fearing that your best friend will be made fun of.
- Etc.

Supportive reactions:

- Thanking your best friend for trusting you. It must have been challenging to be so open with you.
- Being attentive to their concerns, feelings and needs, while them with the support they needs, if this is what they wants.
- Suggesting that Robin speak with their parents about the situation so that they can help them navigate the steps they take at school.
- Searching the internet for resources that could be helpful for them.
- Using the name and pronouns your best friend has chosen.
 - Chosen name and pronouns : There's more and more talk about non-binary pronouns and gender neutral pronouns such as iels, ael, ille, ielle, etc. in French (Beha, 2022) and they, them, their (CBCKids, 2022) in English. Using someone's chosen name and pronouns is a way to validate their experience and identity (Beha, 2022). To find out a person's preferred pronouns, you can just ask. Some people add them to their signature.
- Etc.

3. Madison

Lukewarm reactions:

- Feeling awkward and uncomfortable, not knowing how to handle Madison's situation.
- Being judgemental toward Madison, telling her that she has to know who she's attracted to.
- Worrying that you don't know enough to be helpful to Madison
- Fearing that she will be made fun of.

Supportive reactions:

- Trying to understand how Madison may be feeling.
- Reassuring Madison by telling her that it's normal to be unsure about who we like and who we're attracted to. But there's no hurry.
- Encouraging Madison to think about her true motivations for wanting to "discover" her sexual orientation by trying every option.
- Helping Madison understand that just because her cousin "in university" said she should experiment, it doesn't necessarily mean that this is what's right for her.
- Etc.

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Secondary 5 - Session 2

Romantic Relationships “Let’s Talk About Love”

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)

Emotional and Romantic Life

Become aware of what supports the establishment and maintenance of meaningful interpersonal and romantic relationships.

- › Balance between the dimensions of dependence and autonomy and of the importance attributed to interpersonal and romantic relationships.
- › Capacity for emotional intimacy: maintenance of your identity and a self-image consistent with your values and personality, openness about yourself and acceptance of the other person, reciprocal feelings, self-care and care for the other person, commitment, expression of your needs, trust.

Understand how experience acquired in previous interpersonal and romantic relationships can enrich your current relationships.

- › What you learned about interpersonal relationships.
- › What you learned about romantic relationships.
- › Applying your past experience to your present relationships.

Possible links to the Quebec Education Program
(MEES, 2022)

Broad areas of learning	<p>Health and Well-Being: Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good lifestyle habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.</p> <p>Citizenship and Community Life: To ensure that students take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop a spirit of openness to the world and respect for diversity.</p>		
Cross-curricular competencies	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Intellectual competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Exercises critical judgment › Solves problems › Uses creativity </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Personal and social competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Realizes his/her potential › Cooperates <p>Communication-related competency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Intellectual competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Exercises critical judgment › Solves problems › Uses creativity 	<p>Personal and social competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Realizes his/her potential › Cooperates <p>Communication-related competency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately
<p>Intellectual competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Exercises critical judgment › Solves problems › Uses creativity 	<p>Personal and social competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Realizes his/her potential › Cooperates <p>Communication-related competency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately 		
Subject areas	<p>Personal development subject area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › <i>Quebec Citizenship and Culture</i> 		

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: Search for Meaning and World Views

Disciplinary competencies	<p>Study a cultural reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Circumscribe › Evaluate knowledge › Analyze social relationships › Exhibit enriched understanding 	<p>To reflect on an ethical question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify the ethical dimension of a situation To examine a variety of points of view › Develop a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	<p>Understand the elements that foster meaningful interpersonal and romantic relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Balance between dependence and autonomy › Balance with regard to the importance attributed to interpersonal and romantic relationships › Capacity for emotional intimacy › What is learned from previous interpersonal and romantic relationships 	<p>Reflect on tensions in the search for balance between autonomy and dependence as well as on the issues inherent to emotional intimacy</p>



Educational Goals



Session length:
110 minutes

Develop students' ability to communicate what they expect from an intimate relationship given the challenges that arise in the different relationship types, including the difficulties of dating in the digital age.

- 1. Identify** the pros and cons related to the use of technology on dating, romantic relationships and emotional intimacy.
- 2. Define** the different relationship types among young people and the terms associated with them.
- 3. Discuss** the levels of commitment and intimacy in the different relationship types, particularly in romantic relationships.
- 4. Describe** different avoidant behaviours people may use in relationships, specifically “ghosting,” “icing,” and “simmering.” Discuss how these behaviours impact the person on the receiving end and the relationship.
- 5. Discuss** the importance of ending a relationship in an honest, considerate manner (“power parting”).
- 6. Set out** the basic rules of kind, honest communication.
- 7. Let** students practise their ability to express what they want and expect from an intimate relationship using kind, honest communication.



Sequence



This **110-min.** session has **three activities.**

20 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Video: “<i>Histoire 2 Couples</i>” › Discussion and Presentation
40 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: “<i>Couples Together 30+ Years Give Us Love Advice</i>” › Discussion and Presentation › Team Activity › Discussion and Presentation <p><i>Sheet 2.1: Level of commitment and intimacy</i></p>
45 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activity <p><i>Sheet 2.2: What is “ghosting,” “icing,” and “simmering”?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Video: “<i>States of Affairs: Modern Love Vocabulary</i>” › Discussion and Presentation › Team activity: Situational exercises <p><i>Sheet 2.3a: Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 2.3b: Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew’s best friend</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 2.4a: Answer sheet: Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 2.4b: Answer sheet: Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew’s best friend</i></p>
5 min.	Session CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation: Key messages from the session

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 (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 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)



20 MIN.



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).
- › **Tell** the group that you're going to talk about romantic relationships in the digital age.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the students the following questions and **add** the following information:
 - **In your opinion, what are the PROS and CONS of using information and communication technologies (ICT) (e.g., internet, social media, texting, video calling, etc.) when dating or in a romantic relationship?**
Get their opinions.
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Pros of using technology when dating or in a relationship:

- › You can use technology to take the first steps with someone you're interested in (Tordo, 2015).
- › It may be less awkward to reach out to someone online rather than in person.
- › Text messaging is simple. It's a quick, instant way to talk with someone (Metton-Gayon, 2009; Neyrand, 2017).
- › According to a Quebec study that surveyed 1,620 secondary 4 students, 26.2% were in a relationship, and 18.8% of the students in a relationship met their boyfriend, girlfriend, or person they're casually seeing online (Paquette and al., 2020).
- › In long-distance relationships, using technology may help *strengthen the romantic relationship and improve communication* (Tordo, 2015).

Cons of using technology when dating or in a relationship:

- › Technology use can lead to “hyperconnectivity.” Being hyperconnected means using technology (smartphone, social media, etc.) frequently and even impulsively (Neyrand, 2017; OQLF, 2012).
- › When couples overuse technology, this can put up a barrier between them and make it harder for them to talk to each other (Demonceaux, 2014).
- › When someone constantly uses technology, they may begin to feel less interested in their partner and less engaged in the relationship. This can lead to poorer communication between the couple and a sense of isolation (Demonceaux, 2014).
- › Technology can take up a lot of time, and these are moments a couple could be spending together (Demonceaux, 2014; Neyrand, 2017).
- › Technology lets people make a lot of new connections online, which can lead to second-guessing their feelings for their partner or a sense that there are better options out there (Neyrand, 2017).
- › Some teens use technology in ways that are unhealthy. For example, someone may use technology to keep tabs on their partner, read their private conversations, stalk them, know their location at all times, or harass them (SOS violence conjugale, 2021). For example, someone may send their partner so many messages that their partner begins to feel afraid and unsafe (SOS violence conjugale, 2021).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Depending on the size and dynamics of the group, you can ask the following question and get the student’s thoughts: **How would you use technology in a romantic relationship?**

Information (Paquette and al., 2020).

- › According to a Quebec study that surveyed 1,620 secondary 4 students, 26.2% of them were in a relationship. 99% of students in a relationship used social media or texting to communicate with their partner.
- › 11.2% of students in a couple participated in activities with their partner over Facetime and Messenger over the course of an average month.



Video

- › **Show** the following video by saying that it depicts the daily life of a young couple in the digital age. While the cartoon doesn't have any dialogue, it does present the difficulties of dating in the digital age in a compelling way.
- › **Instructions:** Ask students to pay attention to how technology impacts the couple's relationship.

Histoire 2 Couples (TjeCGBros, 2016)

Length: 3 min., 58 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-t8aSjSS7E>



Video



- › Next, **ask** the following questions:
 - **What do you think of the video?**
 - **Why do you think it's important to be critical of the use of technology in dating and relationships?**
 - **We can see that this young couple isn't very close. Can you give some examples that show this?**
 - **The young woman is always on her cell phone. How do you think this was affecting the relationship?**
 - **Why do you think it's important to develop intimacy in a relationship?**

Get their opinions.

Discussion and Presentation

› **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Examples of the lack of closeness in the young couple's relationship

- In a relationship, you need to care for yourself as much as you care for the other person (MEES, 2019).
 - In the video, the young man cares about his girlfriend much more than she cares about him.
 - In a relationship, it's important to be yourself and not change who you are just to please the other person (MEES, 2019).
 - In the video, the young man does all he can to please his girlfriend. You can't help but admire his energy and generosity, but the relationship causes him to lose touch with himself.
 - In a relationship, it's important to be committed and involved (MEES, 2019).
 - In the video, the young man cares a lot about commitment (going so far as to propose), but the young woman doesn't pay any attention to this and isn't invested in their relationship.
 - In a relationship, it's important to express your feelings and communicate your needs and boundaries (Gagnon and Thériault, 2006; Rondeau and al., 2018).
 - In the video, instead of telling his girlfriend that he'd like her to be more present, the young man tries to get her attention with a bunch of romantic gestures: he organizes various activities (e.g., dining out, walks, movies), tries to amuse her, and even goes so far as to propose to her. He doesn't seem capable of communicating his needs and boundaries.
 - In a relationship, it's important to listen to your partner without judging them (Gagnon and Thériault, 2006).
 - In the video, the young woman isn't listening to her partner. There is no interaction nor communication (verbal or non-verbal) within the couple.
- › By communicating effectively, a couple develops a close bond that helps them open up to one another (MEES, 2019). Sharing experiences and feelings is what intimacy is all about.

Behaviours that can hurt the relationship

- Despite the young man's attempts to attract his girlfriend's attention, the young woman maintains a distant, indifferent attitude, which puts up a wall between her and her boyfriend.
 - In the video, the young woman is always on her cell phone and is barely involved in the relationship. The young man, on the other hand, is very invested in the relationship and is in love.
- When someone is constantly on their cell phone, they may begin to lose interest in their partner, communicate less, and become disengaged (Démonceaux, 2014).
 - In the video, it's clear that the young woman is not very interested in the young man.
- When someone is on their cell phone all the time, their partner may begin to feel frustrated and disappointed (Neyrand, 2017).
 - In the video, the young man is brushed aside and ignored by his partner, who is obsessed with her cell phone. As a result, he begins to have doubts about their relationship, seeing it as unequal and disappointing.

The importance of developing intimacy in a relationship

- It's important for a couple to develop intimacy because it helps them communicate better and feel secure and respected. Intimacy also allows the couple to establish a closer bond, cooperate, share experiences, and begin a journey of self-discovery (MEES, 2019).
 - In the video, the young woman takes a lot of time for herself, while the young man is busy trying to please his girlfriend. So there's no balance in the relationship.
- Couples should aim for balance in their relationship, as this brings a sense of satisfaction. It's important to take time for yourself, but also devote time to your partner (e.g., taking the time to appreciate and acknowledge the nice things your partner does for you, and being thoughtful to your partner in return).
 - In the video, the young man's new relationship is very different from the last one. It's clear that both partners are equally invested in the relationship and enjoy being together.



2

Activity 2



SHEET 2.1
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



40 MIN.



VIDEO



**TEAM
ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the group:
 - **In your opinion, what does commitment mean?**
Get their opinions.
- › **Share** the following information about commitment:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › When two people decide to be a committed relationship, it's because they feel so close and comfortable with one another that they see their relationship continuing well into the future. They begin to make plans and participate in activities together (MEES, 2019).
- › A couple can commit to being in an exclusive relationship (sexually and emotionally exclusive), living together, or even getting married or having a child together (Piazzesi, Blais, Lavigne, Lavoie-Mongrain and Renière, 2018; MEES, 2019).
- › In short, commitment takes many forms, but it always involves valuing your partner and the relationship and making an effort to grow as a couple (MEES, 2019).

Video

- › **Show** the following video by explaining that it presents couples of different ages talking about how their relationship has changed over time.
- › **Ask** the students to pay attention to the differences in couples' relationships based on the era (before and after digital age).

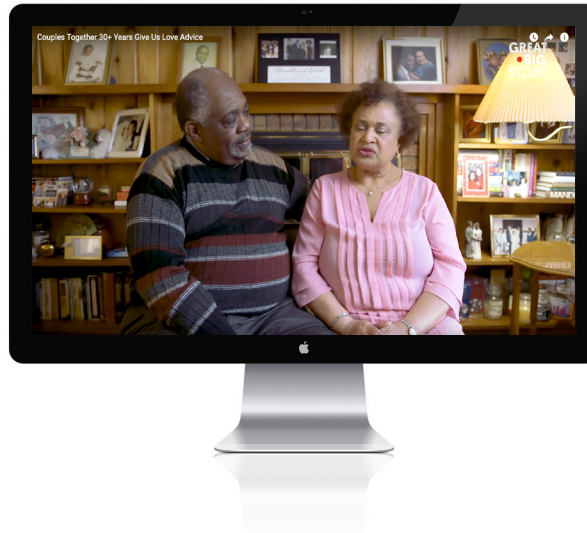
Couples Together 30+ - Years Give Us Love Advice (Great Big Story, 2021)

Length: 12 min., 12 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tpEPc-bdoE>



Video



› **Ask** the students the following questions:

- **What do you think of the video?**
- **What's your reaction to hearing the couples' different perspectives on what it means to be in a relationship?**

Get their opinions.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Explain** to the students that our understanding of what a couple is has changed a lot over the years and that there are now many types of relationships—in other words, many different ways to have intimate, meaningful, enriching experiences (Rodrigue, 2014). Not all of these would necessarily be called romantic relationships.
- › **Ask** them the following question:
- **What are some examples of the different types of relationships?**

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Relationship types:

- › **Friend zone:** When someone is in love with another person but their feelings aren't reciprocated; instead, they're treated like a friend (Le Ngoc, 2015).
- › **One-night stand:** When two people have a one-time sexual encounter (Klipfel, Claxton and Dulmen, 2014).
- › **Friends with benefits:** When two friends have sex regularly without developing romantic feelings (Klipfel, Claxton and Dulmen, 2014).
- › **Sex buddy:** When two people have an ongoing relationship based almost exclusively on sex (Sullivan and Reynolds, 2003).
- › **Ex (ex boyfriend or ex girlfriend):** When two people were previously a couple, but they have broken. Sometimes two persons who were together continue occasionally to have sex even they're not together anymore (Rodrigue, 2014).
- › **Dating:** When two people are getting to know each other, with the possibility of becoming a couple (Wentland and Reissing, 2011).
- › **Casual relationship:** When two people have an emotional or loving bond but don't commit to being a couple. They regularly spend time together and/or have sex (Gonsalves, 2021).
- › **Girlfriend or boyfriend:** When two people care for each other and spend time together socially and/or romantically ("Blonde/Chum, Larousse, n.d. [Translation]).
- › **Partner:** Either member of a married couple or an established unmarried couple. A person with whom one has sexual relations (Partner, 1998)
- › **Fiancé:** When two people make a solemn promise to marry each other or simply have a firm intention to get married (Fiancé/fiancée, Larousse, n.d. [Translation]).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Depending on the students' level of maturity and the dynamic in the class, the students may mention other types of relationships. Here are four other relationship types with their definitions. However, note that these are less prevalent in or relevant to the lives of teenagers.

- › **Marriage:** The solemn act of a man and women (or in some countries, two people of the same sex) forming a union together. The conditions and consequences of marriage (and divorce) are governed by the Civil Code (civil marriage) or religious law (religious marriage). (Mariage, n.d.)
- › **Open relationship:** A non-exclusive relationship in which each partner is free to have sex with other people (Rodrigue, 2014).
- › **Polyamory:** Being in romantic relationships with several people at the same time, with everyone's consent (Lévesque, 2019).
- › **Toyfriend:** A toyfriend is someone that a person has sex with and also shares an affection and intimate bond with. However, both individuals are free to see other people and discuss the situation openly with each other (Urban Dictionnaire, 2009). The "toyfriend" may already be in a relationship, which may rule out labels like "girlfriend" and "boyfriend" (Slangdefine, 2021).

Discussion

- › **Ask** the group the following questions:
 - **What terms do you use to refer to your partner based on the relationship type?**
 - **What's the difference between introducing someone as your "girlfriend/boyfriend," "wifey/hubby," "bae," "boo," "fling," or "friend with benefits"?**
 - **Do you use these terms? In what context?**
- › **Share** the following information:
- › Using one term or another may reflect the strength of your feelings and/or the relationship.
- › Also, the terms you use to refer to the other person may influence how others see the relationship (e.g., "boyfriend/girlfriend" versus "friend with benefits").

- › **Tell** the students that you're now going to talk about the levels of intimacy and commitment associated with the different relationship types.

Presentation

- › **Tell** the students that levels of intimacy and commitment may vary a lot among the relationship types discussed earlier. **Go over** the definition of intimacy and commitment presented previously in the session.
 - **Emotional intimacy:** Emotional intimacy develops when partners share their experiences and feelings. Communicating with each other allows the partners to become closer and open up to each other (MEES, 2019).
 - **Sexual intimacy:** Sexual intimacy is cultivated through shared experiences involving physical closeness and/or sex (Gagnon and Thériault, 2006).
 - **Commitment:** When two people decide to be in a committed relationship, it's because they feel so close and comfortable with one another that they see their relationship continuing well into the future. They begin to make plans and participate in activities together (MEES, 2019). For many people, commitment is associated with emotional and/or sexual exclusivity (Piazzesi and al., 2018).
- › In the next activity, the students will apply these concepts to the different relationship types.

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the students to get into teams of three.
- › **Give** the following instructions:
 - On Sheet 2.1: *Level of intimacy and commitment*, the teams identify on a scale from 1 to 3 the level of commitment and level of intimacy associated with each of the relationship types discussed earlier. The teams will have 10 minutes to fill out Sheet 2.1.
 - Next, the teams will be asked to answer questions about the ways that technology impacts the two relationship types assigned to them by the session leader. Refer to the list of relationship types in Sheet 2.1: *Level of intimacy and commitment* to assign two relationship types to each team.
 - Next, as a class, the teams can share their answers and thoughts.
- › **Ask** the group:
 - **What level of intimacy and level of commitment did you select for the different relationship types? Explain your answers.**
 - **For the relationship types you were assigned...**
 - **How might the use of technology weaken these types of relationships?**
 - **How might the use of technology strengthen these types of relationships?**
- › **Explain** that this is not a test (with right or wrong answers). What's important is their thought process. However, you can **add** to the discussion by sharing the information below.

Discussion and Presentation

› **Share** the following information as needed:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Relationship types	Commitment	Intimacy (emotional and sexual)
Friendzone	Desire for commitment: The commitment is currently limited to friendship. Unsatisfying for one of the two people.	Emotional intimacy: The intimacy that exists between friends. Unsatisfying for one of the two people.
One-night stand	No commitment: One-time encounter	Emotional intimacy: Fairly little, as the two people don't know each other and likely won't have the opportunity to share experiences and feelings. Sexual intimacy: This depends on the degree of connection.
Friends with benefits	Little commitment: There often aren't any expectations in this relationship.	Emotional intimacy: The intimacy that exists between friends. Sexual intimacy: This depends on the degree of connection.
Sex buddy	Little commitment: There often aren't any expectations in this relationship.	Emotional or sexual intimacy: This depends on how strongly the two people connect.
Ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend	Memory of commitment: The two people still feel attached to each other, but it isn't necessarily an exclusive relationship.	Emotional intimacy: Memory of intimacy. Sexual intimacy: This depends on the degree of connection.
Dating	Commitment is often being developed: We get to know the other person gradually and see if we want to go out with them.	Emotional and sexual intimacy: We get to know the other person and begin to confide in them and open up to them. Intimacy is often being developed.
Casual relationship	Usually little commitment: At this stage, we enjoy ourselves with the other person without having any expectations.	Emotional and sexual intimacy: This depends on the degree of connection.
Boyfriend, girlfriend,	Genuine commitment: We see ourselves being with the other person in the short-, medium-, or long-term.	Emotional and sexual intimacy: This depends on the degree of connection.
Partner	Genuine commitment: We want to be in a relationship with the other person in the medium- or long-term.	Emotional and sexual intimacy: Deep intimacy. Since the partners are committed, they feel that their love is reciprocated and enjoy being intimate. But being in love doesn't automatically mean that a couple will develop greater intimacy.
Fiancé	Strong commitment: We want to be in a long-term relationship with the other person.	Emotional sexual intimacy: Deep intimacy. Since the partners are committed, they feel that their love is reciprocated and enjoy being intimate. But being in love or engaged doesn't automatically mean that a couple will develop greater intimacy.

Different degrees of commitment and intimacy

- › As a teenager, you want to have positive dating experiences. This means feeling comfortable, respected, and free to choose, at your own pace, when you want to have sex or if you want to have sex. It's also normal for teenagers to not wish to date just yet.
 - Some teens are looking for a committed relationship, while others don't want to rush into anything and may be more interested in exploring their options.
 - Some people find commitment intimidating or don't know what it involves. As a result, they're less comfortable with being in a relationship. Others prefer being in a committed relationship and are less comfortable with having sex without a strong emotional bond (Lévesque, 2019; Rodrigue, 2014).
- › Indicators of a high level of intimacy in a relationship (MEES, 2019):
 - Caring about yourself and your partner
 - Staying true to who you are
 - Not changing to please your partner
 - Expressing your feelings and communicating your needs and boundaries
 - Being committed to the relationship and listening to your partner without judging them
- › Intimacy is also associated with a desire for:
 - Closeness
 - Self-discovery
 - Physical intimacy (Connolly and McIsaac, 2009)
- › There is usually a greater degree of trust, closeness, and consideration in reciprocal relationships than in one-night stands.
- › This doesn't mean that being in a relationship makes things perfect. For example, you may find that your partner doesn't listen when you share something personal, or you may try to get close to your partner physically, but then feel unwanted.
- › Whether you wish to be in a committed relationship, meet different people, or even have a one-night stand, it's important to respect and be attentive to the other person's boundaries as well as your own (Lévesque, 2019; Rodrigue, 2014).

- › **Add** that when someone starts to lose interest in a relationship (whether at the beginning or at a later stage), they may text less often, constantly give excuses for why they can't see you or stop talking to you overnight with no explanation. In the next activity, we'll look at how technology can influence these avoidant behaviours.



Activity 3



SHEETS 2.2, 2.3A, 2.3B, 2.4A AND 2.4B
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



45 MIN.



VIDEO



TEAM
ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

- › **Present** the next activity, in which various avoidant behaviours will be explained—namely “ghosting,” “icing,” and “simmering.”

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the students to get into teams of three. Each team will need to choose a spokesperson.
- › **Explain** that each team will receive a sheet of paper with an avoidant behaviour written on it (ghosting, icing, or simmering).
 - Each team will need to explain, to best of their knowledge, what the avoidant behaviour on their sheet of paper means and the potential consequences of this behaviour (for the person on the receiving end, the person acting in this way, and the relationship as a whole).
 - The teams will have five to eight minutes to complete the exercise.
 - Get the students back into one group and have the teams share their answers.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the students the following questions:
 - **What exactly is “ghosting” in a relationship?**
 - **What exactly is “icing” in a relationship?**
 - **What exactly is “simmering” in a relationship?**

Get their opinions.

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Ghosting:** When someone suddenly stops communicating with the person they were seeing, without explanation, and ignoring the other person's attempts to communicate (LeFebvre and al., 2019; Lifehacker, 2017).
 - Example: Not sending or replying to any text messages. "Crickets."
- › **Icing:** When someone invents a reason to pause the relationship for a period of time (Lifehacker, 2017), while creating the illusion that the bond is being maintained.
 - Text message example: "It's not a good time for me to be in a relationship. But we could probably get together in a month or two."
- › **Simmering:** When someone begins spending less time and communicating less with the person they're seeing (Lifehacker, 2017). They have nothing to offer this person but don't want them out of their life entirely. So the person is kept "simmering" at a comfortable distance (Lifehacker, 2017).
 - Text message example: "I have a lot of schoolwork right now and need to stay focused. We can get together when I have some free time. I'm not sure when. I'll get back to you."
- › These avoidant behaviours are used to keep someone around and maintain a kind of relationship. At the same time, the person acting in this way doesn't give up their own freedom and isn't held accountable for the way their behaviour impacts the other person (Lifehacker, 2017).

Video and Presentation

- › **Tell** the students that they will be watching a video (presented by Esther Perel) that explains ghosting, icing, and simmering and the consequences of these behaviours.
 - **Instructions:** Ask the students to pay attention to the consequences of these avoidant behaviours.

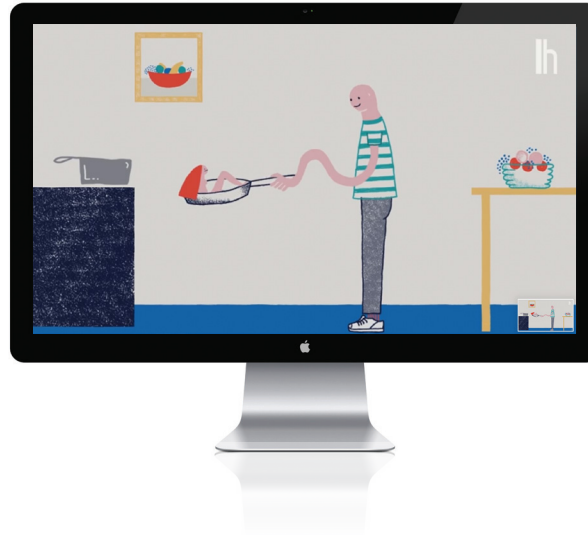
States Affairs: Modern Love Vocabulary (Lifehacker, 2017)

Length: 3 min., 47 sec.

<https://youtu.be/VDF75MM9Y1M>



Video



- › After the video, **get** the group’s comments and reactions, using the following questions:
 - **What do you think of the video?**
 - **How might these avoidant behaviours impact...**
 - **the person on the receiving end?**
 - **the person engaging in them?**
 - **the relationship?**
 - **What do you think is meant by “Power parting”?**
- › **Share** the following information about the impacts of “ghosting,” “icing,” “simmering,” and “power parting” (Lifehacker, 2017).

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The impacts of avoidant behaviours such as “ghosting,” “icing,” and “simmering”

- › Impact on the person who is on the receiving end: The feeling of waiting endlessly, emotional roller coaster, confusion, incomprehension, doubting, disappointment, sadness, decreased self-esteem and confidence, etc. (Lifehacker, 2017; Perel, 2021).
- › On the person acting in this way: Lack of empathy and understanding, fear of facing reality and the other person’s reactions (Lifehacker, 2017; Perel, 2021).
- › On the relationship: Breaking up, ending the relationship on a note of confusion, pointlessly getting the other person’s hopes up, etc.

Power parting

- › When you decide to break up with someone because the relationship isn't working, it's important to be respectful and to use direct, clear language that can't be misinterpreted (Lifehacker, 2017; Perel, 2021). It's also important to show empathy and kindness. This is what's known as "power parting."

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Continue** the discussion:
 - **Why do you think it's important to be honest and considerate when ending a relationship?**
Get their opinions.
- › **Share** the following information about power parting and the importance of being honest and considerate when ending a relationship.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The importance of being honest and considerate when ending a relationship

- › When a relationship is no longer working or isn't meeting your expectations, it's important to be honest and considerate when ending it (Perel, 2021).
 - When you communicate virtually (via text or online), this can lead to inaction, i.e., not staying in touch with the other person or giving a long list of reasons for why you haven't been available. This can confuse the other person or cause them to second-guess the relationship (Perel, 2021).
 - When you end a relationship properly, the other person isn't kept waiting, in a passive role, due to false hope.
 - At the end of the day, people are able to accept that a relationship wasn't meant to be, but that doesn't mean you can be insensitive and ignore their feelings when breaking up with them (Lifehacker, 2017).
 - It can be difficult to be transparent and honest when ending a relationship. But it's important to try your best. However, this doesn't mean you should be brutally honest and say hurtful things.
 - There are benefits to being honest:
 - You avoid or minimize confusion, ambiguity, disappointment, and insecurity (Perel, 2021).
 - You're able to learn from past experiences, enrich current relationships, and find out more about yourself (e.g., your ability to communicate well, listen, express your feelings/needs/boundaries) (MEES, 2019).
 - You learn more about the strategies used for resolving conflicts (MEES, 2019).

- › To end a relationship properly, you need to be kind and honest when communicating with the other person. In other words, you need to take their feelings into consideration.
 - Example: “This relationship is no longer working for me. I really enjoyed our conversations and all the time we spent together. I’ll always have fond memories of our relationship.” (Adapted from Perel, 2021)

- › Continue by **sharing** information about kind, honest communication.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

What is kind, honest communication?

- › Use “I” statements to speak clearly about your emotions and feelings (Robert, 2002, cited in Gascon, 2011).
 - Examples: *“I feel confused and ignored because every time we’re supposed to meet up, you reschedule.”*
“I’d like us to spend more time together, but I also want to see my friends and want you to see yours.” (L’Institut Pacifique, 2020)
- › Avoid “you” statements. Otherwise, it seems like you’re accusing the other person, and it makes them the focus of the conversation (Gascon, 2011).
- › Don’t generalize with words like “always” or “never,” as this can lead to conflict (Gascon, 2011).
- › Avoid saying things that are demanding, judgemental, or demeaning. That’s the opposite of kind, positive communication (Robert, 2002).
- › Choose the right time for the conversation, when the other person is available to listen (Gascon, 2011).
 - Example: In a neutral, quiet place and at a time when both people are available and willing to talk. This may be after school, in the evening, on the weekend, etc.
- › Express yourself calmly and respectfully to avoid hurting the other person (Gascon, 2011; L’Institut Pacifique, 2020).

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the students to get into teams of two. The following activity will allow them to put kind communication into practice.
- › **Give** the following instructions:
 - Each team will be given a situation to analyze (Sheet 2.3a: *Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac*, Sheet 2.3b: *Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew's best friend*). Their task will be to suggest how communication could be improved in the relationship.
 - Length: 10 minutes
 - Next, as a class, get the students to share their answers.

Discussion and Presentation

- › When the students are all together again, **ask** them the following questions for each of the situations:

Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac (Sheet 2.3a)

- **How can Isaac COMMUNICATE his confusion and expectations to Janelle?**
- **What could Janelle have SAID to Isaac rather than ghosting him?**

Get their opinions.

Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew's best friend (Sheet 2.3b)

- **What do you think of the way Marco ACTED?**
- **What could Marco have SAID to his girlfriend to let her know that the relationship wasn't working for him, instead of forcing her to break up with him?**

Get their opinions.

- › **Add** to what the students say using the answer sheets for Sheets 2.4a and 2.4b: *Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac* and *Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew's best friend*.



Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



5 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

Discussion and Presentation

› **Ask** the students about their takeaways from this session.

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

Get their opinions.

› **Share** the following key points:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Technology and dating

- › Technology (e.g., internet, social media, texting, video calling, etc.) can be used to flirt, meet new people and strengthen an existing relationship. However, technology shouldn't be used in ways that jeopardize the relationship by discouraging intimacy or commitment.
- › Balance is important.
- › There's a difference between feeling connected to someone AND simply being connected online.

Your choice

- › Before being in a relationship with someone, it's important to think about what you hope to experience.
 - What type of relationship do you see yourself in?
- › You may see yourself in a romantic relationship (in a couple).
- › You may feel more comfortable being in a casual relationship.
- › You may not want to be in a relationship at the moment, or you may enjoy being single.
- › You may hope to eventually get engaged and marry the other person.
- › No matter what type of relationship you're seeking, the most important thing is to feel comfortable and respected.

Your expectations

- › What do you expect from a romantic relationship?
- › If you're in a relationship right now (casual or serious), does this relationship meet your expectations?
 - What do you expect from the other person in a romantic relationship?
 - What does the other person expect from you?
 - Respect and honesty? To be listened to and supported? Affection and intimacy? Trust and understanding? Generosity? Spending quality time and doing activities together?

› **End** the session by presenting the following statements shared by kids about love:

- **Love is a powerful feeling that gives us wings. Everyone has their own understanding of love and experiences love differently.**
- **Here's how some kids ages four to eight answered the question "What is love?"** (Ekrem_1129450, 2002; Sois un ami, 2016):
 - "When someone loves us, they say our name differently than everyone else. We know that our name is safe." (Léopold, 4)
 - "Love is when you go out to eat and give someone a lot of your fries without asking for some of theirs." (Jeanne, 6)
 - "You shouldn't say 'I love you' if it isn't true. But if it is true, you should say it a lot. People forget." (Jessica, 8)
 - "Love is when people give each other kisses and hugs that touch the heart." (Zoé, 4)
 - "It's kissing and making out. It's being nice and doing your best to be pleasant." (James, 7)
 - "Love is when the girl puts on perfume and the boy puts on aftershave so that they can smell each other." (Martin, 5)
- **What are these kids telling us?**
 - To love someone is to...
 - Care about them
 - Be attentive to them
 - Be treated the same way in return
 - This makes us feel good, secure, and safe.



SHEET

2.1

FOR THE GROUP

Levels of intimacy and commitment

INSTRUCTION

- As a team, decide what level of intimacy and commitment corresponds to each relationship type. Answer by drawing an **X** on the lines. **1** is a low level of intimacy or commitment and **3** is a high level.

Relationship types	Level of intimacy	Level of commitment
Friend zone	← →	← →
Partner	← →	← →
Boyfriend or girlfriend	← →	← →
Ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend	← →	← →
Friends with benefits	← →	← →
Sex buddy	← →	← →
One-night stand	← →	← →
Casual relationship	← →	← →
Dating	← →	← →
Fiancé	← →	← →

INSTRUCTION

- › As a team, answer the following questions for the two relationship types assigned to you.

Technology

E.g., internet, social media, texting,
video calling, etc.

- › How might the use of technology **WEAKEN** the relationship?

Relationship type #1: _____

Relationship type #2: _____

How might the use of technology **STRENGTHEN** the relationship?

Relationship type #1: _____

Relationship type #2: _____



SHEET

2.2

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

What is ghosting, icing and simmering?

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Before the activity, you will need to cut out the cards on this page. Each card contains an avoidant behaviour and questions for the students.
- › Be sure to cut out enough cards (one per team).
- › Hand out one card to each team.

Ghosting

What exactly is **ghosting** in a relationship?

What are the potential consequences of this avoidant behaviour?

▪ Impact on the **person who is on the receiving** end this behaviour:

▪ Impact on the **person acting** this way:

▪ Impact on the **relationship**:

Icing

What exactly is **icing** in a relationship?

What are the potential consequences of this avoidant behaviour?

▪ Impact on the **person who is on the receiving** end this behaviour:

▪ Impact on the **person acting** this way:

▪ Impact on the **relationship**:

Simmering

What exactly is **simmering** in a relationship?

What are the potential consequences of this avoidant behaviour?

▪ Impact on the **person who is on the receiving** end this behaviour:

▪ Impact on the **person acting** this way:

▪ Impact on the **relationship**:



SHEET

2.3a

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac

INSTRUCTION

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.

Key elements of considerate communication

Use “I” statements.
Avoid “you” statements.

Be calm and respectful.

Don't generalize and avoid saying things that are demanding, judgemental, or demeaning.

Janelle and Isaac

Isaac met **Janelle** one month ago through Instagram. They sent each other a few messages and afterward met in person five times. They had a nice time together and even kissed. Isaac was planning to ask Janelle if she wanted to go out with him “officially.”

However, for a few days now, Janelle hasn't been answering Isaac's messages. He's very confused and doesn't understand why he hasn't heard from her. Previously, they were writing to each other every day. Isaac is wondering whether he did or said something to hurt her.

His best friend tells him that she “ghosted” him. This friend encourages Isaac to badmouth Janelle on social media to get back at her. Isaac doesn't want to do that. Instead, he's hoping he can discuss the situation with Janelle. But first he needs for there to be two-way communication. The problem is they don't go to the same school and don't live in the same area.

- › How can Isaac **COMMUNICATE** his confusion and expectations to Janelle?

- › What could Janelle have **SAID** to Isaac rather than ghosting him?



SHEET

2.3b

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew's best friend

INSTRUCTION

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.

Key elements of considerate communication

Use "I" statements.
Avoid "You" statements.

Be calm and respectful.

Don't generalize and avoid saying things that are demanding, judgemental, or demeaning.

Marco, Andrew's best friend

Andrew tells you that his best friend, **Marco**, and his girlfriend recently broke up. They had been going out for almost a year. Andrew explains that Marco's girlfriend was the one who "officially" ended it, but that the relationship hadn't been working for Marco either. As Andrew listened to what happened, he realized that Marco was the one who caused the break-up, but that he hadn't been straightforward with his girlfriend.

Marco did all he could to get his girlfriend to break up with him. For example, he was distant and sometimes very rude with her. After the break-up, he played the role of the victim and blamed his ex. His friends felt sorry for him, and other girls became interested in him.

Andrew is shocked by his friend's lack of maturity and doesn't understand why he acted this way. To add insult to injury, Marco posts lots of pictures of his new girlfriend on social media when everyone knows that his ex is still trying to cope with their recent break-up.

- › **What do you think of the way Marco ACTED?**

- › **What could Marco have SAID to his girlfriend to let her know that the relationship wasn't working for him, instead of forcing her to break up with him?**



Answer sheet: Situational exercise: Janelle and Isaac

How can Isaac COMMUNICATE his confusion and expectations to Janelle?

Although he doesn't know whether Janelle will answer his message or even read it, Isaac could tell her why he's confused in a calm and respectful manner, using "I" statements.

- In the message, he can tell her what he's thinking, namely, that he doesn't understand why she stopped talking to him overnight.
- He can also share how he felt when he realized she had ghosted him: surprised, confused, disappointed, sad, etc.
- He can send her a text message, call her, or suggest that they meet in a neutral location.
- He can ask Janelle for an explanation and state his expectations: honesty, respect, etc.
- **Note:** Isaac deserves credit for not taking his friend's advice to get back at Janelle by badmouthing her on social media and hurting her reputation.

What could Janelle have SAID to Isaac instead of ghosting him?

Janelle could have told Isaac that she wants to break up in a calm and respectful manner, using "I" statements.

- She could have been honest with Isaac and told him that the relationship wasn't right for her or was no longer working for her. She could have shared her reasons.
- She could have told him that while she enjoyed their time together and appreciated his kindness, sense of humour, and other qualities, she doesn't want to give him false hope.
- **Note:** Ending a relationship in an honest way, without being abrupt or using avoidant behaviours, is known as "power parting."



SHEET

2.4b

**FOR SESSION
LEADERS**

Answer sheet: Situational exercise: Marco, Andrew's best friend

What do you think of the way Marco ACTED?

- Marco acted inappropriately. Instead of telling his girlfriend that the relationship was no longer right for him, he forced her to break up with him.
- He wasn't honest with his girlfriend and may have felt incapable of being honest. Maybe Marco was afraid of hurting his girlfriend.
- Although his girlfriend eventually broke up with him, she was likely hurt and upset by the way Marco acted and didn't know that, for him, it was all a plan to end their relationship.
- Marco seems to have taken advantage of the situation and acted like the victim to gain sympathy from his friends.

What could Marco have SAID to his girlfriend to let her know that the relationship wasn't working for him, instead of forcing her to break up with him?

Marco could have explained why the relationship wasn't working for him and told her he wanted to break up in a calm and respectful manner, using "I" statements.

- He could have told her what he's looking for: independence, more time for himself, etc.
- He could have told his girlfriend that he needs time to think about their relationship.
- He could have told her that the relationship is no longer right for him or is no longer working for him.
- He could have apologized for his avoidant behaviour and explained that he didn't know how to tell her that he's unsure about how he feels about her and their relationship.
- He could have told her that he enjoyed spending time with her and appreciated many things about her but thought it was time for them part ways.

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Secondary 5 - Session 3

Desire and pleasure: “The key components of desire and pleasure” Parts A and B

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)	
Comprehensive view of sexuality	<p>Become aware of the different facets of yourself so you can embrace your sexuality all your life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Be able to make decisions, assert yourself, articulate your needs and wishes › Be able to examine the ways you express your sexuality, including your sexual behaviours
STBBIs and pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Have a positive body image from a sexual point of view (consider yourself attractive) › Be able to obtain sexual pleasure alone and with a partner <p>Identify the risks of STBBIs and pregnancy associated with different contexts of a sexually active lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Context of sexual relations: nature of the relationship with the partner, choice and number of partners, frequency of sexual relations, meeting places, risk level of sexual behaviours, consumption of alcohol and other drugs

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

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

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: Search for Meaning and World Views

Disciplinary competencies	<p>Study a cultural reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Circumscribe › Evaluate knowledge › Analyze social relationships › Exhibit enriched understanding 	<p>To reflect on an ethical question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify the ethical dimension of a situation <p>To examine a variety of points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Develop a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	<p>Study the different factors that allow people to embrace their sexuality throughout life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Ability to make decisions and assert self › Ability to be introspective about the expression of own sexuality › Positive body image from a sexual point of view › Ability to feel sexual pleasure alone and with a partner <p>Understand the elements that foster meaningful interpersonal and romantic relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Capacity for emotional intimacy 	<p>Reflect on the tensions between the norms related to expressing own sexuality, own personal experience and self-perception</p> <p>Reflect on tensions in the search for balance between autonomy and dependence as well as on the issues inherent to emotional intimacy</p>



Educational Goals

**Session length:**

150 minutes

Part A: 75 minutes

Part B: 75 minutes

Help young people reflect on the role that sexual desire and pleasure play in sexual activity, develop critical thinking with regard to specific depictions of desire, pleasure and performance, and consider the basic rules of sexual communication.

- 1. Define** sexual desire and pleasure.
- 2. Locate** desire, sexual excitement, fantasies, orgasm and sexual pleasure in the sexual response cycle.
- Using anatomical charts, **identify** female and male sex organs, including similar sensitivities and functions.
- 4. Identify** events and feelings that can influence each person's sexual response cycle, given that it does not represent an absolute standard.
- 5. Discuss** the advantages and disadvantages of sexual desire and pleasure with regard to a "sex buddy" relationship focused almost exclusively on sexual behaviour.
- 6. Discuss** the pitfalls of sexual performance with regard to sexual desire and pleasure.
- 7. Identify** specific myths related to sexual activity and sexual desire and pleasure.
- 8. Discuss** the importance and advantages of sexual communication with your partner.



Sequence



This **150-min.** session will be divided into **two 75-min. parts (Part A and Part B).**

75 min.	<p>PART A ACTIVITY 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Team Activity: Sexual response quiz: What am I? <i>Sheet 3.1: What am I?</i> <i>Sheet 3.2: Answer sheet: What am I?</i> <i>Sheet 3.2a: Sexual anatomy</i> › Discussion and Presentation <i>Sheet 3.3: Sexual response is like a roller coaster</i> <i>Sheet 3.4: The role of the five senses in desire and pleasure</i>
25 min.	<p>PART B ACTIVITY 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Team Activity: Situational Exercises <i>Sheet 3.5a: Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David</i> <i>Sheet 3.5b: Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin</i> <i>Sheet 3.6a: Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David</i> <i>Sheet 3.6b: Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin</i> <i>Sheet 3.7: Specialized resources in STBBI and unplanned pregnancy prevention, and safe sexual behaviour promotion</i>
30 min.	<p>ACTIVITY 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Individual Activity <i>Sheet 3.8: Myth or fact?</i> <i>Sheet 3.9: Answer sheet: Myth or fact?</i> › Discussion and Presentation
20 min.	<p>Session CONCLUSION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: “Rosey Project – Talking to Your Partner about Sex” › Role play or Presentation: Sexual communication <i>Sheet 3.10: Examples of sexual communication (Before-During-After)</i> › Discussion and Presentation

It is recommended that you use the **companion slideshow (PPT)** 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** (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

The topics of sexual desire and pleasure covered in this session may seem more delicate, since they are very intimate. They will be discussed in clear terms, but participants will not have to talk about the details of their private lives. Moreover, the students will be told that it is not necessary to have had a boyfriend or girlfriend or to have had sexual experiences to be informed on and talk about sexual desire and pleasure. Everyone has an opinion on them and gets bombarded with different messages about them. That’s why it is important to debunk myths and determine what they really mean.

The topic of sexual practices will also be covered. Tell the students that some parts will not apply to their experiences, which is normal, since everyone goes at their own pace and has their own personal tastes. What’s important is that people make choices that reflect who they are and what they’re comfortable with.



Part A



Activity 1



SLIDESHOW (PPT)

SHEETS 3.1, 3.2, 3.2A, 3.3 AND 3.4



75 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION



TEAM
ACTIVITY

Session Introduction

- › **Begin** 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, **explain** what will be discussed during the session: sexual desire and pleasure, the sexual response cycle and the importance of communication.

Presentation

- › **Share** the following information and explain that you will be looking at the meanings of “desire” and “pleasure” in both a general context and a sexual context.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Desire and pleasure in a GENERAL CONTEXT. Desire and pleasure in a SEXUAL CONTEXT

- › **Desire in a general context**
 - Desire in a general context is a feeling of wanting to have something. It’s something you want, hope for or wish for (Désir, n.d.).
- › **Desire in a sexual context**
 - Sexual desire can start with attraction to a particular person. It is based on mystery and the unexpected (Hénil, 2022 in de Brébisson, 2022). It can develop through actions, words, looks and attentions (Télé-Québec, 2019). Feeling desire can mean wanting to be close to another person, wanting to date them or kiss them, and/or feeling sexually excited by them.
- › **Pleasure in a general context**
 - In general, pleasure is when you like or enjoy something, and it gives you a good feeling (Plaisir, n.d.).

› **Pleasure in a sexual context**

- During sex or sexual activities, you may feel psychological pleasure (i.e., well-being) in the form of genuine positive feelings from being very intimate with someone. Physical sexual pleasure can be experienced through fondling, kissing and pleasurable touching, in particular of sensitive parts of the body (Noovo moi, 2021).

Discussion

› **Continue** the presentation by asking the following question:

- **Why do you think it is sometimes so difficult to talk about the positive aspects of sexuality, in particular sexual desire and pleasure?**

Presentation

› **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Embarrassment or boundaries around talking about desire and pleasure

For some people, talking about sexuality is tantamount to “talking about sex,” and that can be embarrassing, cause discomfort and provoke nervous laughter, etc. Talking about sexual desire and pleasure in particular can be embarrassing because it refers to intimacy.

- › You can hesitate to talk about it because of *boundaries*.
 - People rarely discuss the topic of sexual desire and pleasure directly, simply and explicitly.
- › You may also feel *more vulnerable*.
 - You may worry about showing your ignorance or inexperience, being compared with others, or being judged or ridiculed, etc. (Télé-Québec, 2019).

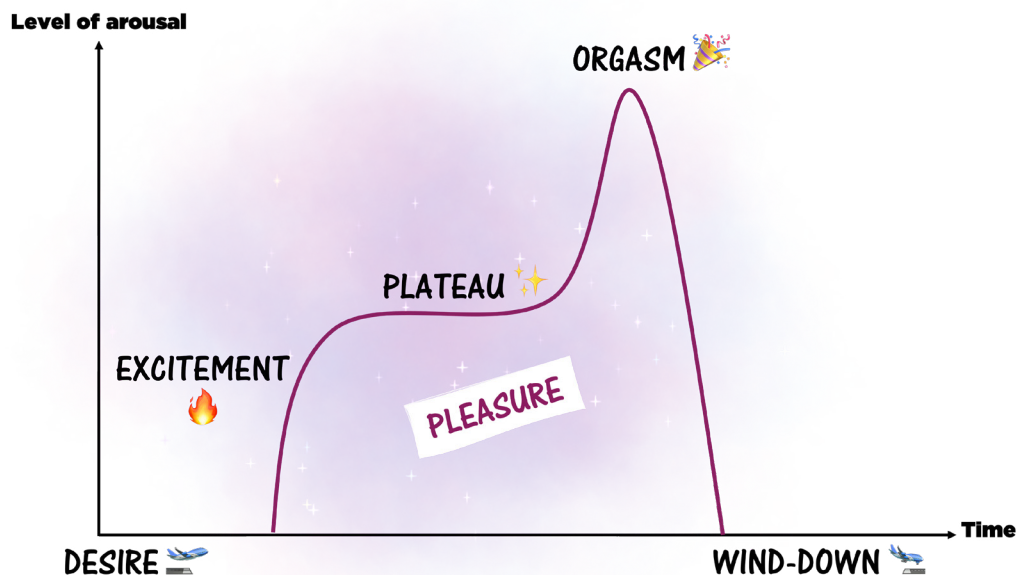
Engaging in sexual activity involves sensations and different physical reactions of the body, as well as emotions and feelings (heart) and thoughts and questions (mind).

Sexual response cycle

- › It's important to be familiar with your body's possible reactions before, during and even after sexual activity. This is referred to as the “sexual response.”
- › We will use the sexual response cycle to illustrate sexual desire and pleasure.

- › The sexual response cycle is generally described as having five phases: desire, excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution (Kaplan, 1979; Masters and Johnson, 1996; MEES, 2020; Teljeunes, 2022b) (see the diagram below).
- › This model of the sexual response cycle was first developed in 1966 by gynecologist William Masters and his research assistant Virginia Johnson. The model was then modified by Kaplan (1979). Let's start by seeing what it entails.

Illustration of the sexual response cycle



1. **Sexual desire:** An internal drive that leads to attraction and/or wanting to engage in sexual activity (Diamond and Savin-Williams, 2009, in MEES, 2020; Kaplan, 1979); you can desire someone in particular; you can also feel desirable.
2. **Sexual arousal:** The physical changes related to a sexual stimulus (e.g., erection: a hardening/stiffening of the penis that occurs when the tissues inside the penis fill with blood; lubrication of the vaginal tissues, erection of the clitoris also because of engorgement with blood, etc.) (Kaplan, 1979; Masters and Johnson, 1966; MEES, 2020; Planète Santé, 2017). The duration of the arousal phase ranges from a few seconds to a few minutes depending on the intensity and effectiveness of the fondling (Acteur de ma santé, 2022). Sexual excitement does not necessarily lead to sexual activity.
 - **Sexual fantasy:** A sexual fantasy is an image or an imaginary scenario that reflects more or less conscious desires and whose content can lead to sexual excitement (Bourahla, 2022; Lessard, 1997). From an etymological standpoint, the term “fantasy” comes from the Greek word “phantasma,” meaning “to make visible” (Bourahla, 2022). It can appear, disappear and reappear in our thoughts.
 - A sexual fantasy can be brief and vague (Crépault, 1981) or be carefully structured and take the form of a detailed scenario with a context, action, characters, roles and locations (Loonis, 1999; Tapernoux, 2019). Although sexual fantasies can increase excitement, they cannot necessarily be played out in real life. When fulfilled, some can be enjoyable, while others can be disappointing (Bourahla, 2022).

You cannot necessarily expect your partner to fulfill your sexual fantasies. You can use your imagination to fill in the gaps.

- According to a Quebec survey of 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 87% of those interviewed said that they had “sexual fantasies” (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022). Some people rarely or never have sexual fantasies, but this does not hamper their ability to feel sexual pleasure.

3. Plateau: The level of sexual excitement is maintained over a certain period of time (Masters and Johnson, 1966; Tel-jeunes, 2022b).

4. Orgasm: The result of muscle contraction; a moment of intense pleasure during sexual activity (Kaplan, 1979; Masters and Johnson, 1966; Tel-jeunes, 2022b). Orgasm may be accompanied by heavy breathing, sighing and loud sounds, but it can also be very discreet (Brune and Ferroul, 2010a).

- **Sexual fantasy:** Sexual fantasy can appear at various times. It’s very volatile.

5. Sexual pleasure: Sexual pleasure is not necessarily related to orgasm, but it can be. It can be satisfied through affection and shared intimacy, sensuality (the five senses) or sexual activity per se. Pleasure can therefore occur at every stage of the sexual response cycle.

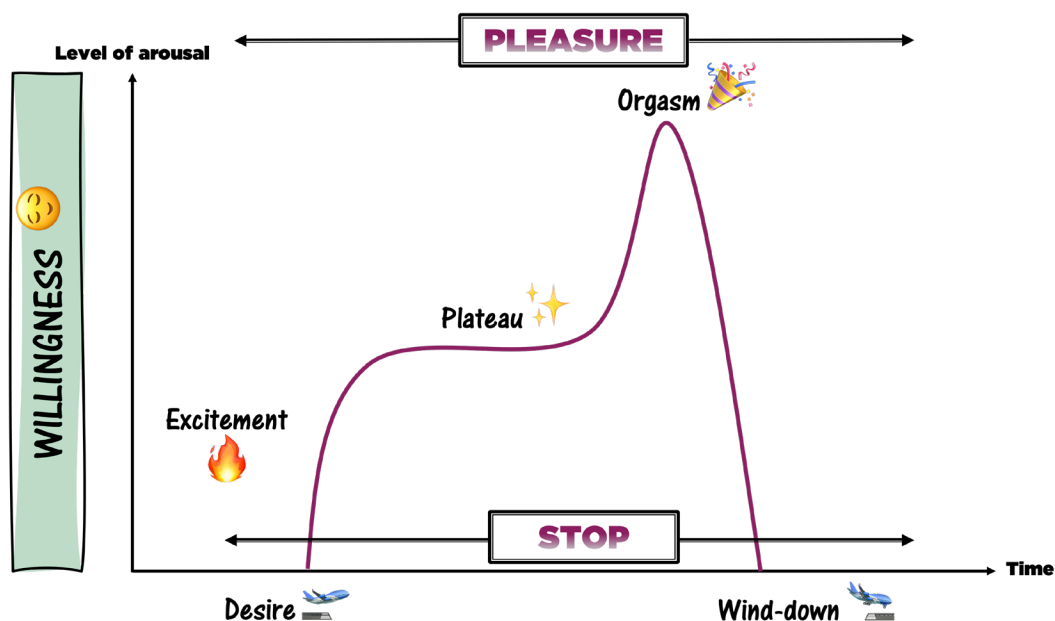
6. Resolution: During this phase, the level of sexual arousal decreases, and the body returns to a resting state (Masters and Johnson, 1966; Robert, 2002 in MEES, 2020; Tel-jeunes, 2022b).

- › Then, **tell** the participants that it is important to keep in mind that at each stage of the sexual response, it is possible to feel sexual pleasure; if you feel willing when having a sexual activity or relationship.
- › **Introduce** them, using the following content elements, to the definition and application of the notion of “willingness” in a sexual context.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › This is the stage where we are open to the possibility of sexual activity; we make this choice ourselves (Loulan, 1984; Trudel, 2020).
- › This is an active stage. We decide to engage in sexual activity because we really want to (Body, Mind, Heart) (Loulan, 1984).
- › There are several reasons why we may be “willing.” For instance, we may want to get physically closer with the other person or we may appreciate the connection and intimacy we have with them during sexual activity (Loulan, 1984).
- › We may already begin to feel pleasure (enjoyable experience) at the “willingness” stage. “Willingness” may lead to the stages of “desire” or “excitement”; alternatively, we may choose to “stop” (Loulan, 1984).

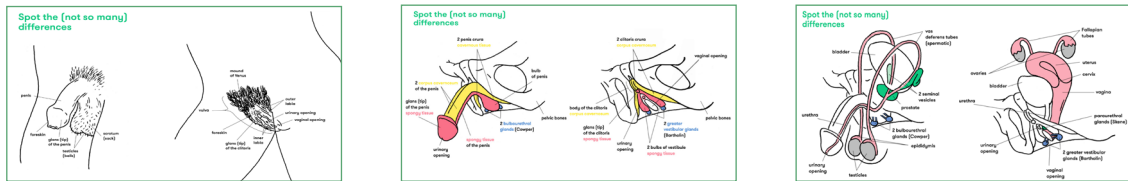
- **PLEASURE** : One of the goals of sexual activity! (Loulan, 1984)
 - But it doesn't always mean having an orgasm (Trudel, 2020).
 - Every stage can be enjoyable, and we can choose to stop at any point without this being perceived or experienced as a "failure."
- **STOP** : During sex or sexual activities, we can choose to stop what we're doing at any time. We can also make a decision to stop and resume later, when we're actually in the mood or have more time, etc. In short, we always have the option to "stop" (Loulan, 1984).
 - This stage of sexual response is just as important as the others. It involves listening to ourselves and our bodies and respecting ourselves.
 - Sometimes we stop for an obvious reason (e.g., tiredness, embarrassment, stress, fear of intimacy, physical discomfort or pain) (Loulan, 1984). Other times, the reason isn't as clear to us (e.g., discomfort), but it's still important that we stop (Loulan, 1984). This decision can be made by just one of the partners or can be mutual.



Team Activity

- › **Ask** the students to get into teams of two.
- › **Hand out** Sheet 3.1: "What am I?" to each team. **Explain** that each team must identify whether the proposed statement refers to one of the following concepts: sexual desire, sexual excitement, sexual fantasy, sexual pleasure or orgasm. **Give** them approximately 10 minutes to complete this task.
- › **Tell** students that this activity is not a race to find the right answer, and that they are there to learn while having fun.
- › **Review** the activity by **reading** each statement and ask the teams to read their answers (sexual desire, sexual excitement, sexual fantasy, sexual pleasure or orgasm) on a volunteer basis. **Verify** or **correct** each team's answer as needed, using Sheet 3.2: "Answer Sheet: What am I?"

- › For additional information on specific aspects of sexual anatomy, **show** anatomical charts of male and female sex organs (internal and external views) that illustrate the similarities between the penis and the clitoris in terms of sensitivity and function (Brockmann and Chytil, 2018). See *Sheet 3.2a: Sexual anatomy*.



- › **Continue** by explaining the information on Sheet 3.3: *Sexual response cycle*, which covers the sexual response cycle and various situations that can negatively or positively affect it. The sheet features subtle differences compared with the initial proposal by Masters and Johnson (1966), which presented the sexual response cycle as an “absolute standard.”
 - You can discuss the content of the sheet directly or ask the group questions beforehand to see whether they are able to identify events that can change, interrupt or enhance the sexual response cycle. It’s up to you to decide whether the group dynamic lends itself to this type of discussion without degenerating into sex-related jokes or overly personal details.
- › In order to illustrate how a given event (e.g., a tender look, discomfort, performance anxiety) can affect each person’s sexual response cycle differently, **show** the students a fictional illustration of a sexual relationship between two people (Person A and Person B). See the animation in the companion slideshow.

Discussion

- › To complete the activity on the sexual response cycle, **propose** an exercise on the role that the five senses play in sensory ability and their relationship to pleasure. Participants will have to list pleasant aspects related to the five senses, but in a NON-sexual context at first. Then, **complete** the information for a sexual context. See Sheet 3.4: *The role of the five senses in desire and pleasure*, which deals with identifying specific aspects for each of the five senses that can elicit pleasure in a “NON-sexual context” at first, and then in a “sexual context.”
- › To begin with, using the following question, **have** the students raise their hand to indicate the role that the five senses play, but in a non-sexual context at first:
 - **Can you identify one element for each of the five senses (smell, sound, taste, touch, sight) that can elicit a pleasant sensation, but in a NON-SEXUAL context?**

Get their answers.

Presentation

- › **Add** to their answers as needed using Sheet 3.4: *The role of the five senses in desire and pleasure (NON-sexual context)*.
- › Then, **specify** how the five senses can enhance desire or elicit pleasure, this time in a sexual context. Depending on the group dynamic, you may decide not to have the students identify aspects related to sexual pleasure and the five senses to avoid situations where some might give too many unnecessary details. It’s up to you.
 - Our five senses provide access to a range of pleasant sensations on a daily basis (NON-sexual context), but that’s also the case when sharing sexual intimacy. See the information on Sheet 3.4: *The role of the five senses in desire and pleasure*.

- › Lastly, **add** the following to the shared content:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › The five senses play an important role in the way we experience pleasure, in both a NON-sexual and sexual context.
- › However, different circumstances can influence how we perceive a situation and our sensations.
 - **Example: NON-sexual context**
Let's say that you're planning to eat your favourite meal (pasta) and dessert (chocolate cake) tonight. You think about it off and on throughout the day and you're really looking forward to it. You get home, however, only to find that your parents are bickering, your little brother has broken your video game console and your little sister is pouting for no apparent reason. So much for a pleasant atmosphere. You still appreciate your favourite meal and dessert, but the context makes it less enjoyable.
 - **Example: Sexual context**
Similarly, before sharing sexual intimacy, several things may help make the experience more desirable and pleasurable: feeling secure and safe; feeling comfortable enough to express your needs and boundaries; using humour to create a relaxed atmosphere; being attentive; gazing into each other's eyes, etc. But other things can have the opposite effect: being in a relationship where there is a great deal of conflict and misunderstanding; feeling disrespected; having the other person compare you to their ex or make a disparaging remark or bad joke about your body, etc. Our body is not disconnected from our feelings and emotions.
 - **The five senses and sensuality**
What can help arouse desire and pleasure is also connected to the world of sensuality, which refers to the body's sensory ability to experience desire and/or pleasure through one or more of the five senses (Bérard, 2008). The entire body (e.g., scalp, lips, neck, breasts, hands, lower back, buttocks, lower abdomen, penis, vulva, clitoris, legs, inner thighs, ankles) can be a source of pleasant sensations, and some of the body's erogenous zones (e.g., hands, lips, genital areas) can be especially sensitive (Xavier, 2020).

Sensuality involves intimate touch and gestures, as well as closeness. It is the ability to enjoy sensory pleasures and be receptive to different physical sensations (Sensualité, n.d.). There is no predefined model of sensuality, since each body is unique (Éducation sensuelle, 2010a). Touch and actions that are pleasurable for one person may not be for another (Éducation sensuelle, 2010b; Xavier, 2020). You learn about and develop an understanding of what is sensual with your partner (Éducation sensuelle, 2010a).
- › To sum up, sexual desire and pleasure can be fragile if you aren't sufficiently sensitive to small signs of discomfort or unease.

Part B



Activity 2



SLIDESHOW (PPT)

SHEETS 3.5A, 3.5B, 3.6A, 3.6B AND 3.7



25 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION



TEAM
ACTIVITY

Discussion

- › **Start** the activity by asking the group the following question and **get** their answers:
 - **Why do you think it's important to clearly understand the body's different responses to sexual desire and pleasure?**

Presentation

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of understanding the body's different responses to sexual desire and pleasure

- › Even though the body's responses to sexual desire and pleasure are essentially the same for everyone, each person's perception of and experience with desire, excitement, fantasy, sexual pleasure (physical and psychological) and orgasm can vary considerably, according to their:
 - Environment (cultural and social influence)
 - Education (values)
 - Interests
 - Motivations (attraction, curiosity)
 - Personal experiences (positive and negative)
 - Attitudes
 - Sensitivity
 - Boundaries
 - Etc.
- › In other words, almost everyone is able to experience desire and pleasure, but not in the same way, at the same age, in the same context, etc.

- › Being attentive to the body's various sensations that can be aroused by the five senses (smell, sound, taste, touch, sight) and the thoughts that are on your mind when you're having sex help you learn about yourself and your partner, and respect your boundaries and those of your partner. It also helps you discover what you and your partner find enjoyable so that you can give in to the pleasure and "let yourself go" under the right circumstances. There's a lot to learn and it takes time.
- › Masturbation (the stimulation of one's own genitals) can be a good way of discovering your own body first and privately exploring what gives you pleasure. Knowing how your body responds and what you find satisfying increases your chances of experiencing pleasure with a partner (Daguzan Bernier, 2019).
- › Although masturbating helps you learn more about yourself, there's absolutely no need to do it if you don't feel like it. Some people don't feel the need, and that's OK. Masturbation is natural and healthy, but it's important to know that it can become a problem if it takes up too much time in your everyday life (Daguzan Bernier, 2019; Tel-jeunes, 2022d).

Team Activity

- › **Ask** participants to get into teams of four.
- › **Give** the following instructions:
 1. Each team will receive one of two situations to analyze (Sheet 3.5a: *Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David* or Sheet 3.5b: *Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin*).
 2. The teams will have 10 minutes to analyze the situation and answer the corresponding questions.
 3. Once they are done, each team will select a spokesperson to share their answers with the entire group.
- › **Hand out** one of the two Situational exercises (Sheet 3.5a or 3.5b) to each team.

Discussion and Presentation

- › Once the time is up, **ask** the teams with Sheet 3.5a: *Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David* to share their answers for each of the questions. Complete the same step for Sheet 3.5b: *Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin*.
- › **Add to** participants' answers with the suggested content for each situational exercise (see Sheet 3.6a: *Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David* and Sheet 3.6b: *Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin*).

- › **Add** that, like Collin, many young people feel pressure when it comes to sexual performance, and **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Placing too much importance on sexual performance can become an obstacle to developing intimacy (emotional and/or sexual) with your partner (Bessaïh and La CORPS féministe, 2019; Marsan, 2013) and giving in to and experiencing pleasure.
- › Focusing on sexual performance can also lead you to want to impress your partner and therefore adopt risky sexual behaviour (e.g., failing to use sexual protection during sex) or adopt sexual behaviour that you are not entirely comfortable with.
- › Add to that the misunderstandings, prejudices and myths surrounding what a pleasurable or memorable sexual activity or sex should be like.

- › **Add** that, in the next activity, you will be analyzing a few myths surrounding sexual activity, and sexual desire and pleasure.



Activity 3



SLIDESHOW (PPT)
SHEETS 3.8 AND 3.9



30 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION



INDIVIDUAL
ACTIVITY

Individual Activity

- › **Introduce** the next activity, explaining to the students that there are myths and false beliefs surrounding various sexual practices, and the question of sexual desire and pleasure.
- › Each student will receive Sheet 3.8: *Myth or fact?*, and will have five minutes to answer the questions individually. They will have to identify whether they think the statements are myths or facts.

Discussion and Presentation

- › As a class, students will share their answers on a volunteer basis.
- › **Read** each statement out loud, one at a time, with the group. Then, **ask** the students to identify whether they think it is a myth or a fact. They can explain their answers on a volunteer basis.
 - When dealing with topics that focus on sexual intimacy, it is preferable to avoid pressuring the students to explain their answers if nobody spontaneously volunteers.
- › **Continue** by discussing the answers and their explanations for the activity on myths or facts, using Sheet 3.9: *Answer sheet: Myth or fact?*
- › **End** the activity with the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Nobody has to be sexually active if they don't want to.
- › Similarly, nobody has to become a "sex machine" to have fun. Learning to manage desire and pleasure means learning how to feel things, being attuned to what's happening for you and your partner and being attentive to non-verbal cues. It's also about asking yourself whether a given sexual practice works for you. It's not all about "getting off and having a good time."
- › It's important to learn how to express what you like, as well as your fears and apprehensions, because it takes two to build a sexual relationship. However, that's easier said than done. The following are a few tips.



Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)
SHEET 3.10



20 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION



ROLE PLAY

Video and Discussion

- › **Show** the following video:

Talking to Your Partner about Sex (Rosey Project, 2020)

Length: 1 min., 13 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9Rif1vJj0c>



Video



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Although this video is 1 minute, 46 seconds, long, we suggest you stop it after 1 minute, 13 seconds. The final seconds feature referrals to organizations that offer support to victims of sexual violence in Scotland.

Several of the characters' comments also appear in the form of text.

- › **Get** the students' comments and reactions to the video.
 - **What are your takeaways from this video?**
 - **Why is it important to tell your partner how you feel when it comes to your sexual desires and boundaries? And how do you go about it?**

Get their opinions.

Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of communicating how you feel about sexual activity

- › Sexual communication is defined as the ability to express and talk about your desires, boundaries, needs and sexual preferences with your partner (Vincelli, 2013).
- › It has several benefits, including:
 - Feeling close to the other person, building trust, getting to know your partner better (Télé-Québec, 2019)
 - Developing satisfying romantic intimacy with the other person (Larivière, 2012)
 - Promoting the more regular use of contraceptive methods, and therefore decreasing concerns about unplanned pregnancies (Manning, Longmore and Giordano, 2005; Widman & al., 2006)
- › In particular, this communication helps develop intimacy with the other person by:
 - **Allowing you to open up and trust the other person:** This allows you to express your feelings, your reasons for wanting to have sex, your needs and your boundaries (e.g., being ready or not to adopt certain sexual behaviours). Self-confidence and trusting the other person are keys to getting there (Gagnon and Thériault, 2006; MEES, 2019).
 - **Showing concern for the other person and self-care:** Showing concern for the other person, considering how they feel and placing importance on their well-being and safety is central to the concept of emotional intimacy. However, it's important to find a balance between showing concern for the other person and self-care (MEES, 2019; Thériault, 1995).
 - **Being able to assert yourself and negotiate:** Being able to assert yourself and discuss your needs and boundaries makes it possible to find common ground when conflicts arise between partners. You shouldn't worry about saying what you think or feel out of fear of displeasing the other person or out of embarrassment. Otherwise, your needs and boundaries aren't expressed and aren't taken into account (MEES, 2019).
- › It's not necessarily a matter of saying everything that's on your mind.
 - You can, however, write all the points that you want to bring up on a piece of paper to make sure you don't forget anything.
 - You can practise saying them to yourself; it will help you find the right words and the right tone (Tel-jeunes, 2022a).
 - Some people choose to communicate through texting (SMS) (Télé-Québec, 2019).
- › The most important thing is to keep it simple and discuss the items that are important to you and that will help enrich the relationship.

Role Play or Presentation

- › **Give** three compelling examples of “positive and clear” sexual communication. One **BEFORE** sexual activity, another **DURING** and a last one **AFTER** (Sheet 3.10: *Examples of sexual communication (Before-During-After)*).
- › If you’d like and if there’s enough time, ask two participants to read the dialogues (in particular example no. 1). Since the first names of the characters aren’t gender specific, the characters can be a boy and a girl, two girls or two boys. The same goes for example no. 3. You (or the students) can decide on the sex of the characters. Example no. 2, however, deals with the sexual anatomy of one of the characters.

Discussion

- › **Ask** the students for their reactions and comments regarding these ways of communicating.
 - **What do you think of these ways of communicating and asserting yourself?**
Get their opinions.
- › Then, **explain** the following:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Like with these young people, it’s not always easy to be completely honest about how you feel.
 - It requires stopping and thinking about your own feelings: “*How do I feel?*”
 - And about the other person’s: “*How do you feel?*”
- › You can learn how to talk about your expectations and what pleases and displeases you, and how to take an interest in what the other person is going through.
- › Since there are few role models around, it’s rather rare in some popular media (e.g., movies, TV shows) to see people talking about how they feel about their sex life. As for the depiction of sexual behaviour in pornography, the imposed “standard” is often to be pro-sex, willing, intense, insatiable, dominant (or a victim), etc. All that without saying a word, without any real discussion.
- › In “real life,” there can be intensity, but also fits of laughter, shyness, silence, joy, embarrassment, fear, pleasure, doubt, emotions, feelings, questions, lack of enthusiasm, action, etc.
- › Communicating with your partner becomes a concrete way of “doing things differently” and reacting against the porn “standard,” where you’re limited to “behaving sexually” and where feelings are secondary.
- › We are built to connect with others. Sharing our sexual intimacy inevitably connects us to our emotions and feelings, and to those of the other person.

- › Lastly, **ask** the students about their takeaways from the session.
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
Get their opinions.

Presentation

- › **End** the session with the following **KEY MESSAGES**:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › In short, it's important to remember that sexual activity is more than just a "sex position"; that it's essential to have a consenting partner, regardless of the sexual practice; that these highly intimate acts have to be managed to ensure a desirable and pleasurable experience; and that it's not a "to-do list" to be completed like an automaton.
- › It always involves a person you like, someone you find desirable (or not); affection and possibly love (or not); a context that is favourable (or not); an act that you're interested in (or not).
- › At the beginning of your sex life, you have to deal with several things before you can make clear decisions, be assertive about what you really find pleasurable and possibly explore various erotic games.
- › It's all a matter of maturity, awareness and feelings. Basically, there's no need to put pressure on yourself. Give yourself time and keep things simple and natural.



SHEET

3.1

FOR THE GROUP

“What am I?”

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Determine whether each of the following statements refers to sexual desire, sexual excitement, sexual fantasy, sexual pleasure or orgasm.

“What am I?”

1. Sexual desire	2. Sexual excitement	3. Sexual fantasy	4. Sexual pleasure	5. Orgasm
1. _____ is an internal drive that leads to attraction and/or wanting to engage in sexual activity with another person (Diamond and Savin-Williams, 2009, cited in MEES, 2020).	2. Signs of _____ include erection (i.e., swelling of the penis, which fills with blood); the penis hardens and gets longer.	3. _____ is not necessarily associated with orgasm, but it can be.	4. _____ is characterized by a series of rhythmic muscle contractions, during which blood pressure, heart rate and respiration reach their peak. It is a response involving multiple physical, emotional, social and hormonal factors. The brain excites the nerve centres in the spinal cord and their reflexes trigger it.	5. _____ is experienced inside your body. You can feel it in several ways, including shivers, tension inside the body and increased respiratory rate.
6. _____ can be compared to a movie. It’s a scenario that your imagination creates when you’re awake to get excited. It can help you get to know yourself, namely figure out what you like and what you’re less interested in exploring sexually (MEES, 2020), and allow you to explore your desires.	7. _____ can be emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical or genital.			

8. _____ is a feeling of intense pleasure, of sexual satisfaction that is felt in the body and the mind (feeling of letting go and of deep relaxation) that can vary in intensity from one time to the next and from person to person (Crooks and Baur, 2003).

9. Signs of _____ include enlargement of the clitoris (erection) and lubrication (the vaginal membrane becomes moister, more lubricated); the vagina become longer and somewhat wider.

10. _____ is also related to sensuality. All the senses (sound, sight, smell, taste, touch) are involved.

11. _____ can be romantic (e.g., imagining going out with someone that you're in love with) or sexual (e.g., imagining engaging in sexual activity with that same person) in nature (MEES, 2020).

12. You can feel _____ for someone (e.g., your body can react when you see someone that you find desirable, exciting) without having feelings of love or even affection for that person. You can also feel it by looking at an image or thinking about a fantasy (daydreaming).

13. _____ is characterized by waiting, putting things off, and not getting everything all at once.

14. _____ can be satisfied through sexual contact alone (e.g., masturbation) or with a partner (e.g., kissing and touching).

15. _____ can be satisfied through shared affection and intimacy, sensuality (the five senses) or sexual behaviour per se.

1. There are all types of _____. Some are realistic and accessible (MEES, 2020) (e.g., kissing and touching your girlfriend or boyfriend under the stars in a park, out of other people's sight. Some are less so or not at all (MEES, 2020) (e.g., spending a hot night with your favourite actor in a villa in California). That said, you don't have to share or indulge in them; it's up to you. Some people indulge a little, and others, not at all.

2. The erogenous zones (e.g., neck, earlobes, breasts, buttocks, inner thighs, genitals) are the most sensitive parts of your body and can lead to _____.

3. Although not necessarily associated with love, affection and feelings of love add to _____. (Hajcak and Garwood, 1989)

4. _____ can be triggered by stimulating the clitoris.

5. _____ is related to attraction, the ability to charm your partner or arouse their interest.



SHEET

3.2

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer Sheet: “What am I?”

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Review the activity by reading each of the statements and asking the teams to give their answers (sexual desire, sexual excitement, sexual fantasy, sexual pleasure or orgasm) on a volunteer basis.
- › Verify or correct the answers as needed according to the information presented below (Duquet, Gagnon and Faucher, 2010).

“What am I?”

1. Sexual desire

2. Sexual excitement

3. Sexual fantasy

4. Sexual pleasure

5. Orgasm

- 1. Sexual desire** is an internal drive that leads to attraction and/or wanting to engage in sexual activity with another person (Diamond and Savin-Williams, 2009, cited in MEES, 2020).
 - 2. Sexual excitement** include erection (i.e., swelling of the penis, which fills with blood); the penis hardens and gets longer.
 - 3. Sexual pleasure** is not necessarily associated with orgasm, but it can be.
 - 4. Orgasm** is characterized by a series of rhythmic muscle contractions, during which blood pressure, heart rate and respiration reach their peak. It is a response involving multiple physical, emotional, social and hormonal factors. The brain excites the nerve centres in the spinal cord and their reflexes trigger it.
 - 5. Sexual excitement** is experienced inside your body. You can feel it in several ways, including chills, tension inside the body and increased respiratory rate.
- 1. Sexual fantasy** can be compared to a movie. It’s a scenario that your imagination creates when you’re awake to get excited. It can help you get to know yourself, namely figure out what you like and what you’re less interested in exploring sexually (MEES, 2020), and allow you to explore your desires.

2. **Sexual pleasure** can be emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical or genital.

3. **Orgasm** is a feeling of intense pleasure, of sexual satisfaction that is felt in the body and the mind (feeling of letting go and of deep relaxation) that can vary in intensity from one time to the next and from person to person (Crooks and Baur, 2003).

4. Signs of **sexual excitement** include enlargement of the clitoris (erection) and lubrication (the vaginal membrane becomes moister, more lubricated); the vagina become longer and somewhat wider.

5. **Sexual desire** is also related to sensuality. All the senses (sound, sight, smell, taste, touch) are involved.

1. **Sexual fantasy** can be romantic (e.g., imagining going out with someone that you're in love with) or sexual (e.g., imagining engaging in sexual activity with that same person) in nature (MEES, 2020).

2. You can feel **sexual excitement** for someone (e.g., your body can react when you see someone that you find desirable, exciting) without having feelings of love or even affection for that person. You can also feel it by looking at an image or thinking about a fantasy (daydreaming).

3. **Sexual desire** is characterized by waiting, putting things off, and not getting everything all at once.

4. **Sexual excitement** can be satisfied through sexual contact alone (e.g., masturbation) or with a partner (e.g., kissing and touching).

5. **Sexual pleasure** can be satisfied through shared affection and intimacy, sensuality (the five senses) or sexual behaviour per se.

1. There are all types of **sexual fantasy**. Some is realistic and accessible (MEES, 2020) (e.g., kissing and touching your girlfriend or boyfriend under the stars in a park, out of other people's sight). Some is less so or not at all (MEES, 2020) (e.g., spending a hot night with your favourite actor in a villa in California). That said, you don't have to share or indulge in it; it's up to you. Some people indulge a little, and others, not at all.

2. The erogenous zones (e.g., neck, earlobes, breasts, buttocks, inner thighs, genitals) are the most sensitive parts of your body and can lead to **sexual excitement**.

3. Although not necessarily associated with love, affection and feelings of love add to **sexual desire and pleasure** (Hajcak and Garwood, 1989).

4. **Orgasm** can be triggered by stimulating the clitoris.

5. **Sexual desire** is related to attraction, the ability to charm your partner or arouse their interest.



SHEET

3.2a

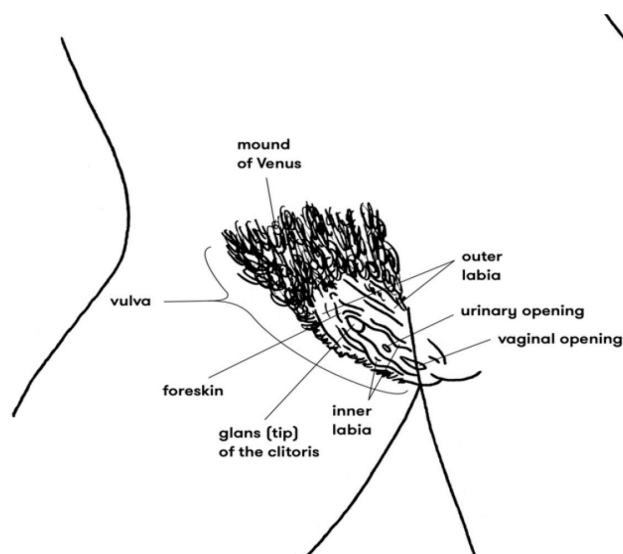
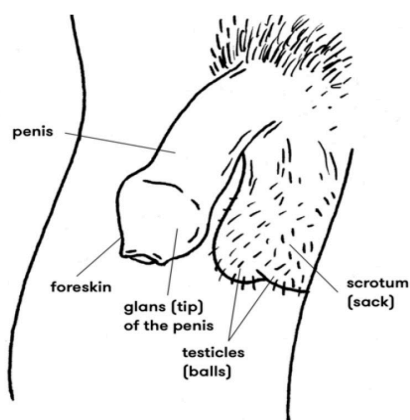
FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Sexual anatomy

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Show the three anatomical charts of male and female sex organs (external and internal views) entitled “*Game of (few) differences*” (Brockmann and Chytil, 2018), which illustrate in particular the similarities between the penis and the clitoris in terms of sensitivity and function.

Spot the (not so many) differences



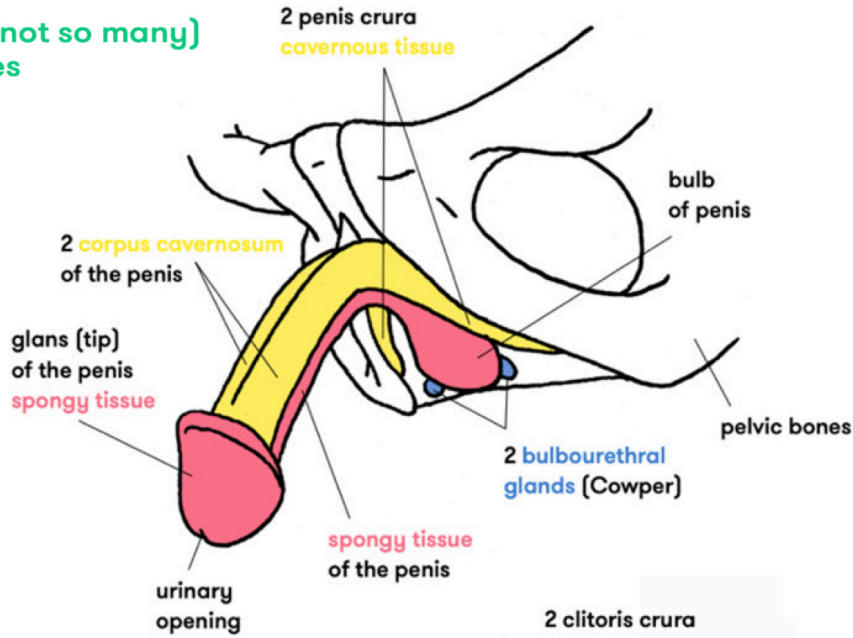
As seen from the outside. What we see with the naked eye!

Even though we easily recognize female and male genitals, there are as many variations as there are humans on Earth!

Just like the nose or ears, the vulva, penis and scrotum vary in shape, size, color, etc. For example, the inner labia can be larger than the outer labia or not, or be asymmetrical.

Note: The drawing on the left represents an uncircumcised penis, the foreskin therefore covers the tip of the penis. The inner and outer labia of the vulva naturally cover the urinal and vaginal opening; on the right-side drawing, they have been spread apart so they are visible.

Spot the (not so many) differences



**As seen on the inside
We're all geared up for pleasure!**

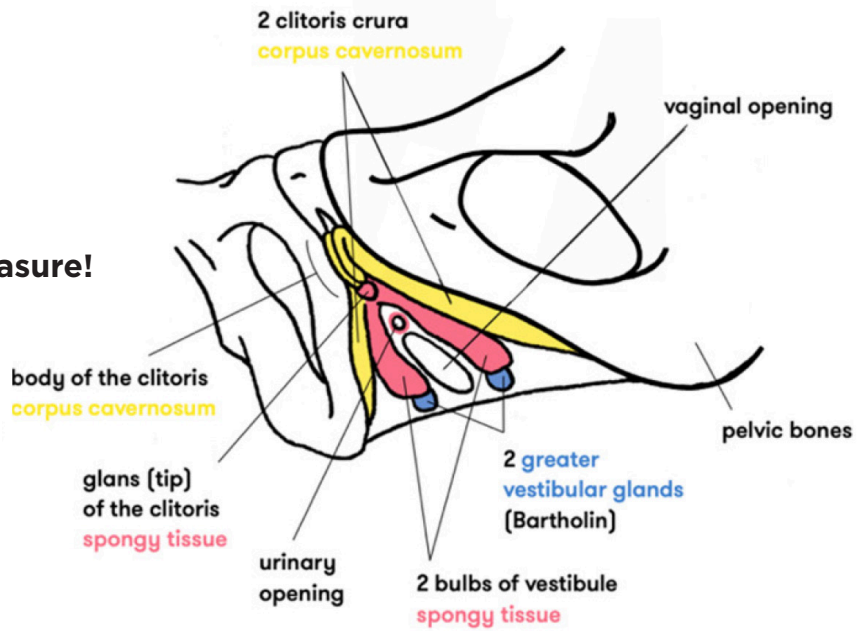
The penis and the clitoris have a common embryonic origin, which is why they have so much in common, especially when we talk about their role in sexual arousal and pleasure.

- › The tips of the penis and clitoris have the same receptors for sexual pleasure.
- › These two organs are shaped in very similar ways (glans, body, crura, bulbs).
- › The crura of the clitoris and penis are attached to the pelvic bones.
- › Both the clitoris and the penis are made of cavernous and spongy tissues; these are erectile tissues which, during sexual arousal, fill with blood, swell and become hard.

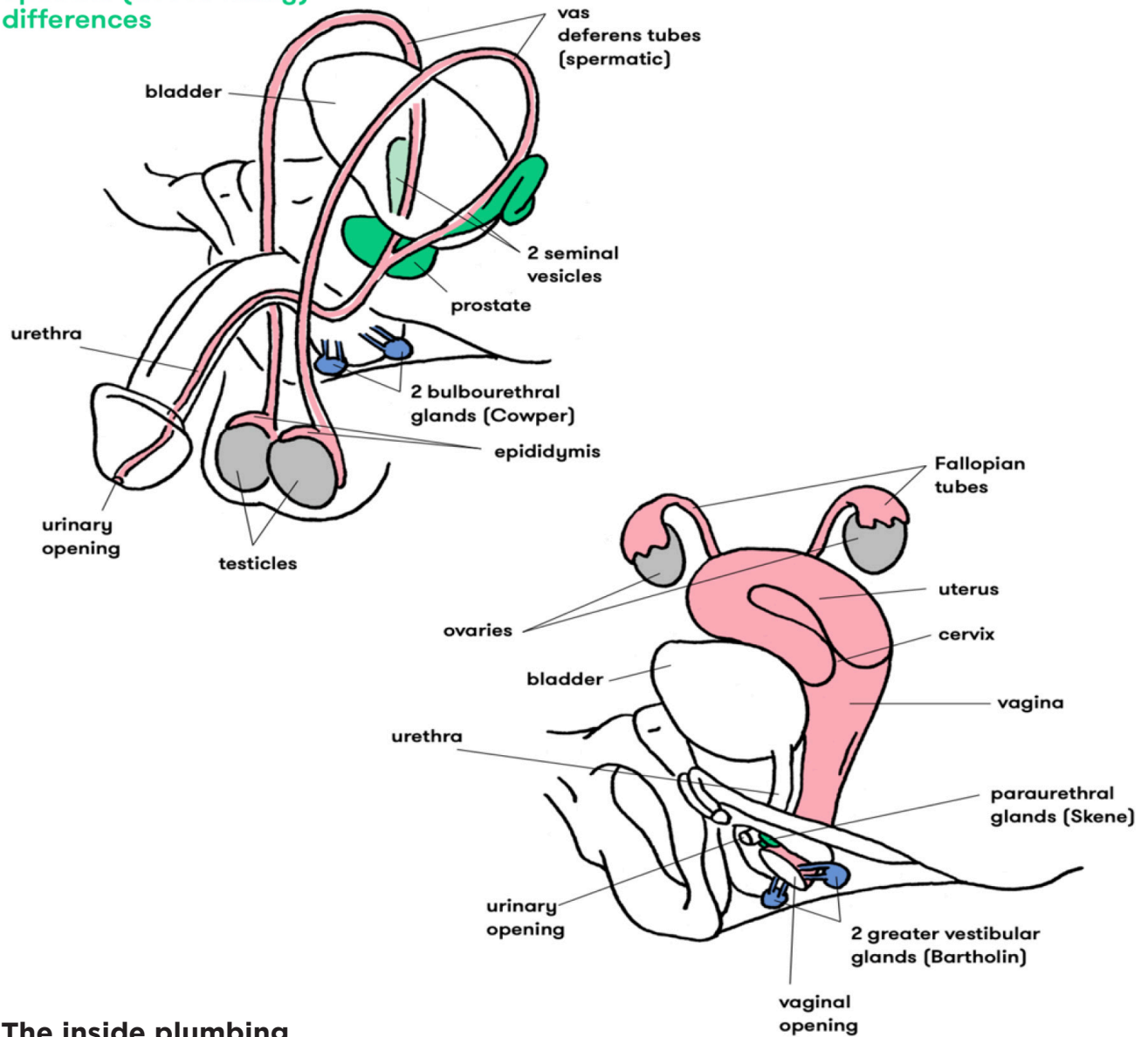
The clitoris' erection is less visible than the penis', because it is smaller and for the most part hidden.

- › Sexual arousal also produces lubricating fluids through the vaginal walls and the greater vestibular glands for the female, and through the bulbourethral glands for men.

It is important to note that sexual desire and pleasure, genital or not, depends on multiple factors which are unique to each individual, but which always involve the nervous system.



Spot the (not so many) differences



**The inside plumbing
The reproductive system**

- Reproducing is possible for humans thanks to **reproductive tubes** which allow transport and delivery of gametes from their production site, the ovaries and testicles, to their meeting point: the Fallopian tubes! The **accessory glands** contribute to ejaculation for both males and females.

If fertilization occurs, the embryo will set up camp in the uterus, which will remain its growing place for the following 9 months. The vagina is very elastic and, if everything goes well, it is the exit for the baby

Brockmann, C. and Chytil, T. (2018). Sexess: Mon corps sous la loupe. Bioscope de l'Université de Genève et RTS Découverte. https://www.unige.ch/ssi/files/5616/5364/0740/Booklet_Sexess_EN_OK.pdf

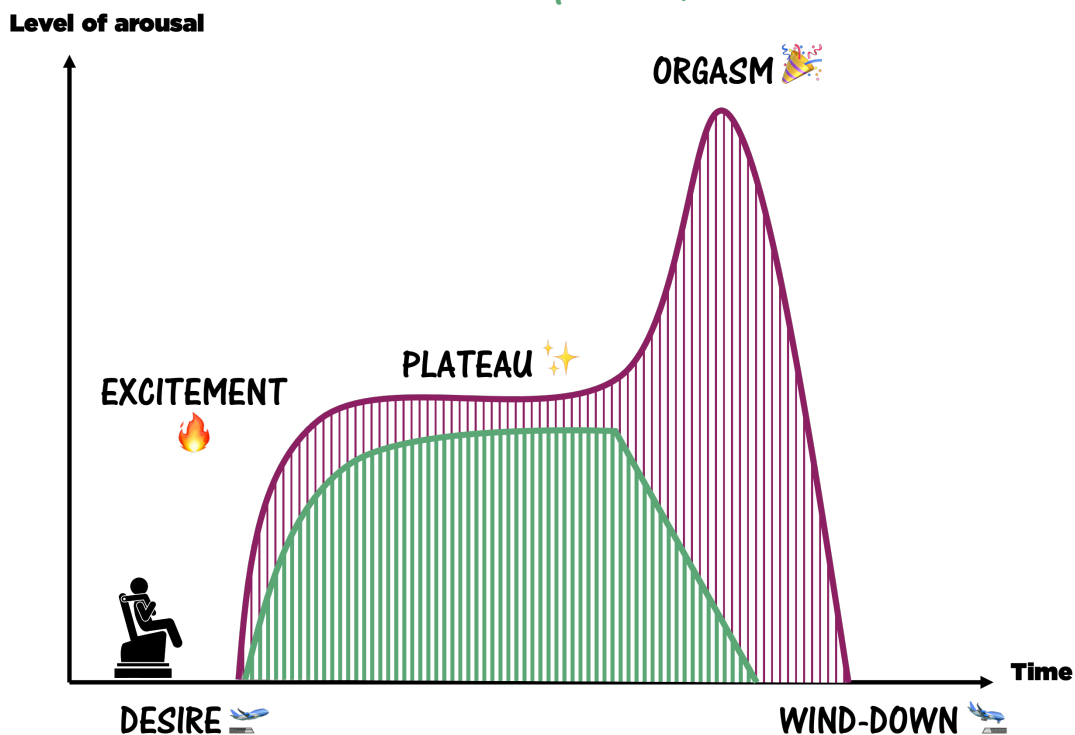


Sexual response cycle

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Following the “*What am I?*” activity, share the information on the “sexual response cycle” below.
- › All these signals and changes in the body that occur when you engage in sexual activity (alone or with another person) are part of the sexual response cycle (see the diagram below). However, there is no single model or absolute standard for everyone (Médico, 2005-2007), as authors Masters and Johnson (1966) claimed. There are, in fact, several possible reactions, and these stages differ depending on a person’s gender, age and state of physical and/or mental health, as well as the situational context, among other things.
- › The sexual response cycle can be compared to a roller coaster, where each person will have a very different experience.

Sexual response cycle



- › The first thing you do before you get on a roller coaster is make sure it's safe. The same is true when you decide to have sex. It's important to:
 - Use effective contraceptive methods (e.g., birth control pill, vaginal ring, contraceptive patch, IUD) and sexual protection (e.g., condom or dental dam). Condoms should be used systematically and correctly for all sexual activity outside of a monogamous relationship with a non-infected partner (Clinique rue McGill, 2015).



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Note that secretly removing a condom during sex without a partner's consent or pretending to put on a condom during consensual sex without actually doing so (known as "stealthing") has been considered a form of sexual assault since 2014 (Robert, 2022) and, according to Sylvie Lévesque, professor at UQAM's Department of Sexology, and Sheilah L. Martin, Supreme Court judge, is a phenomenon that occurs more often than we think (Pineda, Provost and Vallet, 2022).

In July 2022, the Supreme Court of Canada further clarified the concept of consent surrounding this practice to determine whether it constituted a violation of consent. Previously, according to lawyer Suzanne Zaccour, it had to be shown that consent had been wrongfully obtained not only to prove the partner's dishonesty, but also to show that the person had been exposed to risk of injury, including pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (Pineda, Provost and Vallet, 2022). There is no longer a need to ask whether the partner was dishonest. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that anyone who adopts this practice violates consent and is therefore guilty of sexual assault.

- Be with a partner that you feel comfortable with (e.g., someone who doesn't judge you, someone you can discuss your concerns with, someone you can laugh with about the little things that happen along the way)
- Be somewhere where you feel comfortable
- › Also, you can experience a variety of emotions and feelings (before, during and/or after) a ride on a roller coaster, much like when you have sex. You can feel:
 - Excited, happy, worried, unprepared; you can have chills, hot flashes, regrets, a fast-beating heart, butterflies in your stomach, etc.
- › At any time, like on a roller coaster ride, your sexual response cycle can take a different turn than the one you imagined. A number of factors can affect sexual excitement and whether or not it is sustained, and cause feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The body has its reasons for reacting or not reacting a certain way.

Dissatisfaction:

- Discomfort, embarrassment or unease
- Severe fatigue
- Performance anxiety
- Fear of being judged and/or disappointing the other person
- Inappropriate comment by the other person that affects your desire (e.g., talking about their ex)
- Poor sexual hygiene
- A high level of alcohol and/or drug use can interfere with excitement (e.g., erection, lubrication).
 - **Note:** The use of alcohol and drugs (e.g., MDMA or Ecstasy, marijuana, GHB, antidepressants) can have a direct impact on sexual response (i.e., loss of sexual desire; difficulty with regard to vaginal lubrication, getting or maintaining a penile erection, reaching orgasm (Larivière, 2021)). The use of MDMA is illegal and, aside from generating feelings of euphoria and a desire to touch, this product can have adverse effects on health (Gouvernement du Québec, 2017). It weakens the immune system's ability to fight infections (Savoie, 2004) and alters sensory perception (Gouvernement du Québec, 2017).
 - Consequently, some boys and girls might accept sexual fondling that they would otherwise refuse. A malicious person could take advantage of the situation.
 - Excessive use of alcohol or drugs can be problematic and a sign of personal difficulties. Instead of choosing a chemical alternative to a relational or sexual difficulty, one solution could be to simply stop and think about what you're experiencing at the time (e.g., lack of desire for that person; unsuitable context for letting go and feeling desire and pleasure; worries; fear of disappointing; performance anxiety; feeling of disappointment or sadness). If you're dealing with difficulties involving alcohol or drug use, addiction or a matter of a sexual nature, or if you have any questions, consulting a professional is always an excellent option.
- More or less pleasant touching and/or feelings of pain; going too far
- Distractions, unexpected and/or stressful situations (e.g., quickly glancing at your cell phone when it rings or, worse, answering it; being in an intimate place where someone arrives unexpectedly; lack or misuse of sexual protection (e.g., condom, birth control pill))
 - Note: When used correctly, condoms have a break rate of approximately 1%. Leaks are even rarer. However, condoms can slip or break if the wrong size is used (Government of Canada, 2022).
- Etc.

If you are having an unpleasant experience, you can postpone sexual activity until both partners are better prepared to share that type of intimacy. It's important to respond to what you're feeling. Even though it may not have gone exactly as you hoped, you can still laugh about the little things that happen along the way and enjoy your time together.

Satisfaction:

- Several factors can help make shared sexual intimacy a time to enjoy:
 - A compliment or thoughtful gesture from the other person
 - Pleasant mutual touching
 - A break where both partners embrace
 - A relaxing massage
 - A tender look
 - Shared laughter
 - Etc.

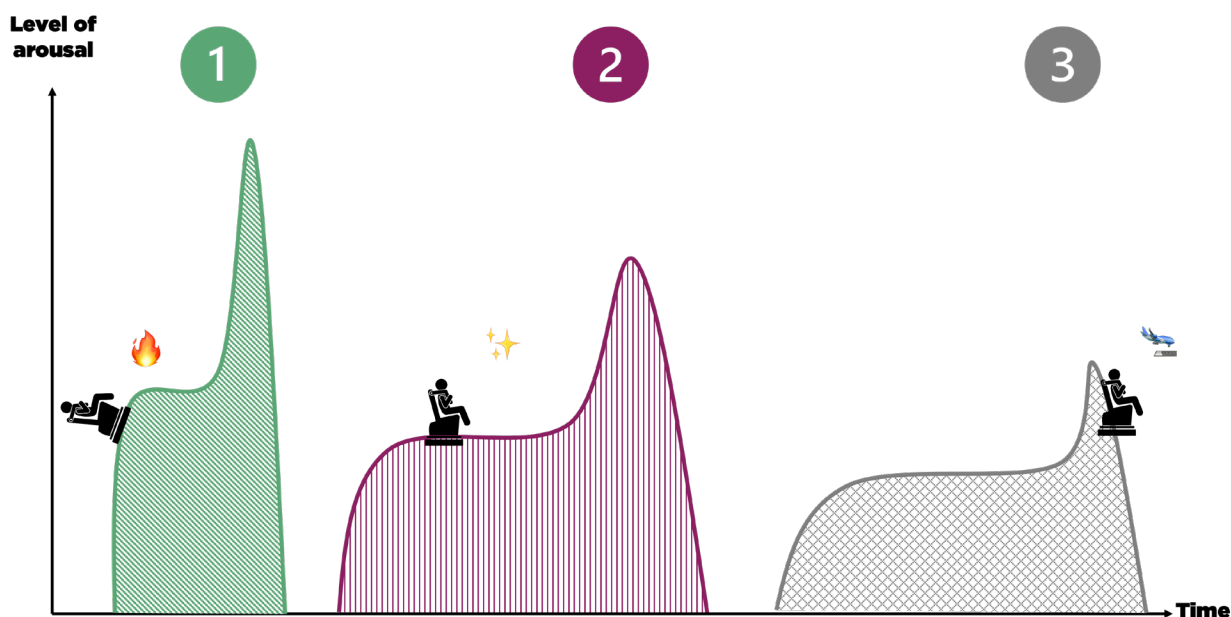


NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Here, show the students the fictitious illustration of the initial stages of a sexual relationship between two people (Person A and Person B), (see the animated slideshow (PPT)), where they can see that a given situation can result in various possible feelings and reactions, and consequently affect the sexual response cycle, namely the body's reactions, as well as a person's mood.

A tender look, compliments and/or a caress are all examples of affectionate or sexual behaviors that can be exchanged between partners; for one, these can be pleasant, while for the other, they can generate discomfort or anxiety.

- A roller coaster ride can be very different for different people. Similarly, during a sexual activity or sex, both partners may not reach the same stage at the same time and may not achieve the same level of satisfaction.
- Consequently, some people will reach orgasm, while others will not. And, just because you reach orgasm once doesn't mean you'll necessarily reach it every time you have sex or masturbate. Having sex is not a race to orgasm, which could lead you to completely miss out on feelings associated with being fully in the moment.



- A fulfilling sex life is not measured by the number and intensity of orgasms. It is about finding a personal balance between satisfying your physical and psychological needs (Acteur de ma santé, 2022).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Details regarding the previous notes:

1. Dental dam

Although they are included among types of sexual protection, dental dams are currently difficult to obtain because of a lack of availability in pharmacies, CLSCs, etc. However, in order to offer protection against sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBIs) during oral sex, it is possible to make a dental dam using a condom (to learn how, see the document produced by the Direction de la santé publique de l'Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal (n.d.) https://santemontreal.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/population/sante-a-z/shigellose/shigellose_digue_dentaire.pdf).

However, since making a dental dam requires time and a pair of disinfected scissors, it is not a very realistic option, in particular for adolescents.

2. Viagra

Although taking Viagra is reserved for men aged 18 or over, some adolescents and young men choose to take Viagra, an oral treatment for erectile dysfunction (Le Figaro santé, n.d.), and combine it with other drugs to make it easier to get an erection and/or increase sexual performance. The reasons given for its use include being under too much pressure, stress, embarrassment and fear of not getting an erection (Lachance, 2021). However, combining the use of other drugs with Viagra, for example, can have major health impacts (e.g., heart problems, painful erections), possibly resulting in death (Observatoire du sida et des sexualités, 2022). The use of Ecstasy, even in young people, increases the risk of cardiovascular events because it causes the blood vessels to contract. Conversely, Viagra causes the blood vessels to dilate. Someone who comes to a hospital emergency room because they're having a stroke will immediately be given medication to dilate their blood vessels and get more oxygen to their heart. However, if they've taken Viagra, the prescribed treatment could lead to death because their blood vessels are already dilated (Observatoire du sida et des sexualités, 2022). The effect is additive. Taking Viagra or Cialis is not the solution to loss of erection from drug or alcohol use. Moreover, according to experts, using Viagra or Cialis makes some users unable to get an erection without it (Lachance, 2021).



SHEET

3.4

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

The role of the five senses in desire and pleasure

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Share the following information with the students:

The five senses

What can provide pleasure (a pleasant feeling) in a NON-SEXUAL context	What can enhance desire or provide pleasure in a SEXUAL context Some items inspired by Xavier (2020)
Smell Smelling the aroma of flowers, essential oils, bread baking, your favourite meal, etc.	Smell Smelling the aroma of your partner's skin or perfume, etc.
Sound Listening to music you enjoy, the voice of someone you like, laughter, a brook, the ocean, etc.	Sound Listening to ambient music, lyrics whispered by your partner, your partner's breathing or heartbeat, etc.
Taste Savouring fresh-squeezed juice or a good cup of coffee; tasting a new spice, etc.	Taste Enjoying kissing your partner, etc.
Touch Enjoying receiving or giving a hug; wrapping yourself up in a soft, cozy blanket; walking barefoot through the grass; petting an animal, etc.	Touch Enjoying kissing or touching your partner. Snuggling or cuddling with one another, etc.
Sight Gazing at a beautiful landscape; watching a movie; seeing someone you like; looking at family photos; reading a book, etc.	Sight Seeing a partially or completely naked body; gazing at your partner: enjoying your partner's plunging neckline, torso or curvy hips. Finding your partner desirable. etc.



SHEET

3.5a

FOR THE GROUP

Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.

Jennifer and David

Jennifer and **David** met on a camping weekend with a group of friends two months ago. They quickly got along, spent an evening together and decided to share a tent for the night. They continue to see each other occasionally and have sex together. For David, Jennifer is his sex buddy.

Jennifer enjoys the time she spends with David. She told her best friend that she thinks she's in love with him and that she wishes they were a couple. However, she knows that there's no way that her relationship with David will develop in that way. David clearly told her that he doesn't see any advantage to having them "officially go out together," since what they share suits him just fine.

Jennifer's best friend asked her why she doesn't end the relationship since she knows what to expect from David. "*Won't you always feel disappointed because he's not in love with you?*" Jennifer replied: "*At least he's in my bed. That's something!*"

- › **What do you think of this situation?**
- › **Do you think there are advantages to having a sex buddy relationship? If so, what are they?**

- › **Are there disadvantages to this type of relationship in the short or medium term, including with regard to intimacy and sexual experience (desire and pleasure)? If so, what are they?**



SHEET

3.5b

FOR THE GROUP

Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.

Bianca and Collin

Bianca and **Collin** have been going out for four months. They spend a lot of time talking about everything and laughing together. They are really in love. Since first having sex a few weeks ago, Collin has had a number of questions on his mind because things didn't go exactly the way he had hoped:

- › “Did it show that I was nervous?”
- › “Was I good enough in bed?”
- › “Did Bianca really enjoy it?”

In short, he's worried that Bianca was disappointed with his sexual performance because he felt clumsy. “Pleasure during sex seems more complicated for girls,” he thinks.

- › **What do you think of this situation?**
- › **Do you think it's common for young people your age to worry about sexual performance? If so, how does that play out (type of worry)?**

- › **What do you think Collin means by “Pleasure during sex seems more complicated for girls”?**



Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Jennifer and David

Advantages and disadvantages of a sex buddy relationship

Advantages:

- A sex buddy relationship can allow you to:
 - Share sexual intimacy with someone that you like, who is a friend, without being in love. The relationship is easy and honest; there's no drama (Bay-Cheng & al., 2009).
 - Share sexual intimacy without any ambiguity. The goal is clear and both people see each other when they want to (Doctissimo, 2022), without having to flirt and try to attract the other person each time.
 - Have non-exclusive sexual experiences. This type of relationship can be suitable for people who don't want to commit to a romantic relationship. It's important, however, that each person clarify their expectations from the outset (Doctissimo, 2022).
 - See yourself as desirable to the other person. Feeling attractive to the other person allows you to give in to your desire and pleasure (the same applies when you're in love).

Short-term disadvantages:

- In a sex buddy relationship, it can be difficult, or even impossible to:
 - Talk about that relationship with friends and family, for fear of being judged or misunderstood. This type of relationship can be somewhat secretive in nature.
 - Share a great deal of emotional intimacy, express your feelings or even be completely trusting, since it may be someone that you don't know that well (if that's the case) or that you see only occasionally.
 - Give yourself time to enhance your desire because, in this type of relationship, there isn't necessarily enough time set aside to charm the other person. Usually, desire builds through words, attentions and personalized ways of attracting that can be occasional or extend over a period of time.
 - Express your desires and boundaries. Some people have trouble letting go physically if the relationship isn't romantic from the outset. Sharing sexual intimacy with someone that you're in a romantic relationship with is a completely different emotional experience that can have a positive impact on sexual desire and pleasure.
- For some people, sexual desire and pleasure can be the same whether they're in a sex buddy or romantic relationship.

Medium-term disadvantages:

- In a sex buddy relationship, it's possible that:
 - One or both people have some concerns about performance. Since the relationship is non-exclusive, in the long run, there can be some pressure to always be desirable and satisfy the other person sexually.
 - One of the two people falls in love and wants to make the relationship official and exclusive, which makes it more complicated and possibly unsatisfactory. Consequently, since both people no longer have the same expectations, this type of relationship may no longer work for that person.
 - One of the two people may feel that they are being used simply to satisfy the other person's sexual needs.

To sum up:

- Whether in the case of a romantic relationship or a relationship without any real emotional commitment, namely a strictly sexual relationship, it's important to ensure that respect, mutual desire and consent are taken into account.
- When sharing intimacy, nobody wants the other person to be indifferent. Humans are social beings.
- According to neuropsychiatrist Boris Cyrulnik, it's healthy to have desires. It means that you're alive and that you enjoy life, and that's a good thing, but you can't express that just any old way. If you do, then the other person pays the price (Cyrulnik, 2022). In other words, you shouldn't treat the other person like an object.
- Being treated like a sexual object means being used by the other person for sexual purposes; it can also involve failing to obtain the person's consent or consider their emotions (Gaudet-Lebrun, 2021). Laws exist to condemn behaviour in which the other person's consent was not taken into account and boundaries were crossed.
- During sexual activity, if you don't feel completely comfortable and you suddenly have the impression that your safety may be compromised, stop immediately and find an excuse to leave (or to have the other person leave). If you feel threatened, don't hesitate to call 911.
- To make sure that you're not being treated like a sexual object, it's important to choose the right partner (Gaudet-Lebrun, 2021). Being with a sensitive and respectful person who makes you feel important (whether in a romantic context or not), with whom it's easy to open up and share your expectations and desires, but also set your boundaries, allows you to feel considered and enjoy shared sexual intimacy (Gaudet-Lebrun, 2021).
- However, you have to be able to clearly identify what you like and don't like and communicate that.



Answer sheet: Situational Exercise: Bianca and Collin

Concerns and issues regarding sexual performance for young people

- It's normal to hope for enjoyable sexual activity, without anything unexpected. However, some people want to feel that they're always in control and able to perform.
- Sexual performance anxiety involves putting a great deal of pressure on yourself to experience pleasure at all costs or achieve a specific sexual feat, and consequently being anxious about the prospect of failure. Some people believe that it's important to:
 - Always be available and ready for sex, and have sex frequently
 - Adopt a variety of sexual positions and preferably simultaneously orgasm (using stereotypical scenes in porn movies as a reference). Orgasm often becomes the goal, which adds pressure when it comes to sexual performance (Bessaïh and La CORPS féministe, 2019; Forrest, 2000).
 - Make sex last as long as possible (e.g., concern about maintaining an erection or staying lubricated; concern about premature ejaculation).
 - Etc.

(Duquet, 2005; Duquet and Quéniart, 2009; Forrest, 2000; Lavoie, Joyal-Lacerte and Hartog, 2014; Marsan, 2013)
- Why is there such an obsession with sexual performance? Doesn't it take away from spontaneity and simple pleasure?

Is pleasure during sex more complicated for girls?

- Collin obviously feels pressure and worries about sexual performance, but he also wants to please Bianca.
- He has the impression that pleasure during sex is more complicated for girls. Although there are similarities regarding sexual desire and pleasure for boys and girls (e.g., concerns, the body's responses, sensitivity), Collin is preoccupied, and some of his concerns are related to his lack of knowledge about female sexual anatomy, his lack of awareness of the different ways of arousing desire, his inexperience with regard to touching, etc.

- In terms of vaginal penetration, there is the concern that the first time will be painful. It's important to know that the first vaginal penetration is not necessarily painful. If there is pain, it may be because of poor vaginal lubrication, stress, fear of the unknown or slight bleeding of the hymen (a thin membrane at the vaginal opening) (Larivière, 2013). It's important to take it slowly, one step at a time, without rushing things, while checking to see how the other person is feeling, if everything's OK and if it's enjoyable.
- For some women, penetration can produce pleasant sensations without ever leading to orgasm (Bessaïh and La CORPS féministe, 2019).
- According to a "Sex in Canada" survey of 119 women and 76 men aged 19 to 66, 87% of men revealed having had an orgasm during their last heterosexual encounter, while that was the case for only 63% of women (Andrejek and Fetner, 2019). This discrepancy can be explained by the negative vision that society has of satisfying sex for women (Brune and Ferroul, 2010), in which, for example, it is thought that sex for women should involve exclusively vaginal penetration (Andrejek and Fetner, 2019).
- Satisfying sex is not limited to penetration (Éducation sensuelle, 2010c) and ejaculation is not a sign that sex is over. There are other sexual practices that generate pleasure and that can lead to orgasm (e.g., manual or oral stimulation of the clitoris). The clitoris is a very sensitive organ with approximately 8,000 nerve endings (Palais de la Découverte, 2022) and its primary function is sexual pleasure (Malépart-Traversy, 2016; Palais de la Découverte, 2022). However, it's not a magic button.
- You have to take your time, use a delicate approach, look for sensitive areas, vary the types of touch (Éducation sensuelle, 2010c), and touch gently or according to your partner's wishes, whether you're in a heterosexual or homosexual relationship.
- The clitoris, an erogenous zone, is not the only body part that produces pleasure when stimulated. Stimulating the breasts, neck or feet can also arouse extreme pleasure (Palais de la découverte, 2022).
That said, just because the other person doesn't reach orgasm doesn't mean there's a problem (Bessaïh and La CORPS féministe, 2019).
- To sum up, Collin should have a conversation with Bianca and share his concerns, which will decrease his performance anxiety, the pressure that he's putting on himself. Bianca may be feeling the same type of pressure. Both would benefit from just being in the moment, taking their time, laughing about the little things that happen along the way, using sexual protection, etc. These are all ways of lowering stress and savouring the moment.



SHEET

3.7

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Specialized resources in STBBIs and unplanned pregnancies and safe sexual behaviour promotion

INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Share the following resources with the students, as needed. They specialize in safe sexual behaviour promotion, STBBI prevention and everything related to unplanned pregnancies.**

- › **When you think about it** (Santé et Services sociaux du Québec and Tel-jeunes, n.d.): A website that provides information on STBBI prevention, and the promotion and use of methods of protection and/or birth control, and STBBI screening
https://www.itss.gouv.qc.ca/accueil_en.html
- › **Info-Santé** (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022): A free telephone consultation service that offers referrals for STBBI screening services
Telephone: 811
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/finding-a-resource/info-sante-811>
- › **Government of Canada** (2020): A website that provides information on STBBI prevention and screening, and the effects and symptoms of STBBIs
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/booklet-sexually-transmitted-infections.html>
- › **L'Anonyme** (2022): An organization whose goal is to promote safe behaviour and prevention with regard to STBBI transmission
<https://www.anonyme.ca/en/>
- › **The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada** (2022): A professional healthcare organization in the field of sexual and reproductive health that also offers the general public a website with information on such topics as STBBIs, contraception and pregnancy
<https://www.sexandu.ca/stis/>

- › **Saskatchewan Prevention Institute** (n.d.): A website that provides information on STBBI prevention and screening, as well as the promotion and use of methods of protection and/or birth control
<https://skprevention.ca/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/#top>
- › **Tel-jeunes** (2022e): An organization that provides young people aged 20 or under with support and offers the general public a website that provides information on a range of topics including STBBIs and adolescent pregnancy
<https://www.teljeunes.com/Tel-jeunes-en/All-topics/sex/bbstis>



SHEET

3.8

FOR THE GROUP

Myth or fact?

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Individually identify whether the statements below are **MYTH** or **FACT**, by placing an **X** in the appropriate column.

Statements	Myth	Fact
1. You have to have a perfect body to arouse desire.		
2. It's possible not to find your partner sexually desirable.		
3. Ensuring your partner's sexual pleasure is more important than respecting your personal boundaries. It's a sign of love.		
4. Masturbation is for people who don't have sex.		
5. Porn movies can lead to feelings of inadequacy (e.g., high-performance body, multiple orgasms). Comparing can cause you to feel that you're not desirable enough.		
6. If your partner doesn't reach orgasm during sex, it's a sign that they didn't feel sexual pleasure.		
7. By the time they reach adulthood, most people have had oral, vaginal and anal sex.		



SHEET

3.9

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer sheet: Myth or fact?

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Share the answers and explanations for the **MYTH** or **FACT** activity with the students.

Statements	Myth	Fact
<p>1. You have to have a perfect body to arouse desire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- When it comes to desire, a great deal of importance seems to be placed on appearance, in particular in the media. It's true that a beautiful body is attractive and can be pleasing.- But most people don't look for "perfection" as a criterion for finding someone attractive or sexy, and feeling sexual desire or even falling in love.- Appearance is not the only thing that determines sexual desire.	X	
<p>2. It's possible not to find your partner sexually desirable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It's important to distinguish between "occasionally not finding your partner sexually desirable" and being "asexual," which is rarer. Let's look at both situations.- In a relationship, desire is not always mutual. Just because one partner feels desire doesn't mean that the other will at the same time. Then there's always context and a person's mood, which increase or decrease desire. Being charmed by the other person, and kissing and touching can help arouse desire that wasn't there initially. Communicating how you feel is essential, especially since it can change quickly. And, if the other person indicates that they're not in the mood, either verbally or through non-verbal signs (e.g., looking away, avoiding touching), it's important to respect their choice and not insist.- Asexual: Some people (approximately 1% of the population) have no sexual desire or sexual attraction to others and have no need for sex. They are known as asexual. Asexuality is a sexual orientation, like heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality (Bouchard, 2018; Tel-jeunes, 2022c). However, this does not mean that they cannot develop a romantic attraction to or intimacy with their partner (Tel-jeunes, 2022c).		X

Statements	Myth	Fact
<p>3. Ensuring your partner's sexual pleasure is more important than respecting your personal boundaries. It's a sign of love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although it's perfectly reasonable to want to please your partner, you're not obliged to do anything sexually that crosses your personal boundaries and that displeases you or even turns you off. Agreeing would not be a sign of love, but a failure to consider your own needs. - Similarly, you should not insist or force (= assault) someone to overstep their personal boundaries in order to satisfy your own desires. - Boundaries are based on an individual's personal history (e.g., a sexual act can evoke painful memories or simply disinterest for some people). There are all kinds of reasons why someone might enjoy a specific sexual act and not another. - To please their partner, some people agree not to use a condom, putting their own health at risk. Conversely, for others, having sex without a condom is out of the question. Some partners may have difficulty with such a requirement, claiming that the use of a condom decreases their sense of pleasure. However, using a condom is a sign of respect, for both your own sexual health ("I'm worth protecting") and that of your partner ("It's cool to suggest using a condom"). 	X	
<p>4. Masturbation is for people who don't have sex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is entirely possible to have an active sex life with your partner and to masturbate from time to time. You can choose to satisfy your own needs, since desire in a couple is not always mutual. - That doesn't necessarily mean that the relationship isn't going well or that your desire for the other person is waning or absent. The other person should not feel in any way threatened. - Masturbation (alone) helps you learn more about your own body, and discover your sexual preferences and how you like to be touched. It's completely normal to masturbate (and it's perfectly OK not to), whether you're going out with someone or not. In a Quebec study of 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 81% reported masturbating (alone), more boys than girls (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022). - The pleasure you experience through masturbation can differ from pleasure from sex. During sex, simply being in contact with the other person's body and enjoying their touch can be extremely exciting and enjoyable, even incomparable. However, for others, autoerotic pleasure (alone) may be more easily achievable. - There are times and contexts that favour pleasure through masturbation alone and others that favour pleasure from sex. 	X	

Statements	Myth	Fact
<p>5. Porn movies can lead to feelings of inadequacy (e.g., high-performance body, multiple orgasms). Comparing can cause you to feel that you're not desirable enough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pornography features high-performance bodies in different sexual positions. These sex scenes are designed specifically to sexually excite viewers (Crooks and Baur, 2003). The focus is on appearance and sexual performance rather than feelings and sensuality. - The sex is often crude, with people portrayed as veritable “sex machines.” - Comparing yourself to porn actors can lead to feelings of inadequacy, given the intensity or disproportionate nature of certain aspects: size and shape of sex organs (Forrest, 2000), continuous sexual excitement, length of sexual encounters, number of sexual partners, orgasms and screams of pleasure, domination, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: porn movies place a great deal of emphasis on penis size, which is allegedly the key to sexual pleasure (Bourgault, 2021). However, it's wrong to think that sexual pleasure (and the quality of a “good lover”) is based solely on penis size. The genital organs (penis and vulva) come in all shapes and sizes, and this in no way affects a person's ability to give or receive pleasure. - Similarly, comparing your partner to porn stars can create unrealistic expectations. In real life, your partner may not be as willing and sexually expressive as the men and women in porn movies. Consequently, your partner may fake an orgasm out of fear of being judged if they don't have one. - Keep in mind that pornography is a commercial industry and that it's important to be critical when it comes to the unrealistic and even spectacular models that they try to sell us. This can range from a lack of sexual protection to the normalization of violence. In fact, porn stars rarely use condoms, and they don't seem especially concerned with obtaining their partners' consent. In some cases, the other person is treated like an object that you can do whatever you want with (e.g., humiliation, violence). 		X
<p>6. If your partner doesn't reach orgasm during sex, it's a sign that they didn't feel sexual pleasure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orgasm is an intense feeling of pleasure. However, as we saw previously, some intimate touching or sexual activity can provide sexual pleasure without orgasm. - Similarly, when sharing this type of intimacy, just cuddling up to your partner or kissing, embracing, touching or being touched, enjoying the gentleness of words or gestures, being in a stress-free situation or laughing together can be pleasurable. - Given that sensitive erogenous zones are not the same for everyone (INPES & al., 2007), touching can be perceived differently from one person to the next. In addition, since the sex organs (e.g., head of the penis, penis, clitoris) are very sensitive body parts, rough touching can be unpleasant or even painful. Conversely, sexual touching at a pace that suits someone can facilitate orgasm. But, once again, there's no magic formula. - Lastly, pleasure goes hand in hand with the use of sexual protection (e.g., a condom) and/or a form of birth control (in a heterosexual relationship). It allows you to let go more easily, without having to worry about those things. 		X

7. By the time they reach adulthood, most people have had oral, vaginal and anal sex.

X

- References to sexual practices are very present in some media (e.g., social media, videos, movies), which creates the impression that you have to do everything or try anything when it comes to sexual practices. In fact, that's simply not true.
- There's nothing wrong with doing various sexual activities or exploring different sexual positions, but believing that you absolutely have to try them all can become a problem.
- It has to be a personal choice. Feeling obliged to try everything may lead to sexual behaviour that you're not really interested in, resulting in disappointment, as well as discomfort or disgust, in some cases.
- All sexual practices require the engagement and consent of both partners, trust and communication (Savoie, 2004).
- Keep in mind that there are risks of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBIs) associated with sexual practices. It's important to use sexual protection if you're sexually active. In the case of a heterosexual relationship, the combined use of a condom and birth control pill remains the most effective way of preventing STBBIs and unplanned pregnancy. In the case of homosexual relationships, the use of a condom is also recommended. Abstinence, namely the choice not to have sex, is also a means of protection.

Here are a few details regarding vaginal penetration, oral sex and anal sex.

- **What is vaginal penetration?** Penetration of an erect penis into the vagina.
 - During sexual excitement, the vagina gets wider and slightly longer, and becomes moister. This natural lubrication is a sign of sexual excitement and is an important step prior to penetration. In the same way that a boy wouldn't attempt vaginal penetration without having an erection (lack of sexual excitement), there is no reason to attempt penetration if the vagina is not sufficiently lubricated (Saint-Jean, 1993).
 - Even though the vagina can become a bit wider and lubricated to facilitate penetration of the erect penis, it is not a "gaping hole." Consequently, gradual and gentle movements will make penetration easier at the start. Similarly, the maintenance of an erect penis also has its time limitations.
 - There may be some pressure around vaginal penetration, as though it were not only proof that you're now sexually active, but also the "confirmation" of your heterosexual orientation.
 - The association with virginity is also very strong. Losing your virginity means having sexual intercourse for the first time, but can more broadly mean having your first sexual experience. Other sex acts (e.g., oral sex) that do not pose a risk of unplanned pregnancy (but that pose a risk of STBBIs) nevertheless constitute "sexual experiences." Do you really lose your "virginity" only through vaginal penetration?
 - In a Quebec study of 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 33% reported having already had "vaginal intercourse" (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022).
 - Nobody has to have sex if they don't want to. Some choose to engage in touching or petting, without going all the way to penetration. There are no musts. Some young adults in their twenties claim their right to be "virgins," in particular some young women, who see it as a sign of autonomy and independence: "I'm the boss of my own body and myself" (Knibiehler, 2012).

- **What is oral sex?** Using the mouth to stimulate the genitals. Types of oral sex include fellatio (contact with the penis) and cunnilingus (contact with the vulva).
 - The person that you're with, the context in which it takes place and the desire felt at the time contribute to making the experience pleasant. The experience can also be perceived differently depending on whether you're the person giving or receiving, regardless of your sex or sexual orientation.
 - For some people, oral sex doesn't generate desire or excitement, and there's no reason to worry about it or force the issue (Blanc, 2009). They simply may not be interested in that type of physical intimacy. Others may be uncomfortable with intimate hygiene (theirs or the other person's). Still others may associate it with an unpleasant or stressful past experience. Whatever the reasons, it's important to respect your partner's choice.
 - In a Quebec study of 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 33% reported having had oral-genital contact (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022).
 - To sum up, like any intimate act, oral sex can be an enjoyable experience, provided you're ready for it. Once again, there are no musts.
- **Anal sex** involves penetration of an erect penis into the anus. It's important to know, however, that the anus is not a membrane that lubricates naturally and that can become wider, like the vagina. Anal sex is a practice that requires the use of a lubricant. Movements that are too abrupt can irritate or damage the membrane.
 - Although often associated with male homosexuality, the practice remains taboo, especially in heterosexual relationships (Hensel, Fortenberry and Orr, 2009). Moreover, there is still a great deal of resistance when it comes to talking about it with young people (Hensel, Fortenberry and Orr, 2009). It's true that the practice is not usually part of adolescents' first sexual experiences, regardless of their sex or sexual orientation. In the previously cited study of 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 7% reported having had anal sex (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022).
 - In addition, the silence surrounding this practice can make some young people feel insecure.
 - **Example 1:** Sometimes, although more exceptionally, young people practise only anal sex in order to "preserve the girl's virginity" (no vaginal penetration). This raises important questions: Is it a matter of "satisfying the boy" at the expense of the girl's genuine desire and pleasure (and consent)? Is this practice used as a means of birth control since it poses no risk of pregnancy? Or is it the pretext put forward for "preserving the girl's virginity" and therefore giving the impression that certain cultural and religious values are being respected? Neither takes into account what this practice really represents in terms of the sensations or pain that can be associated with it and the risk of STBBI transmission or complications. Etc.
 - **Example 2:** Sometimes, young gay men are under the impression that all gay men necessarily practise and enjoy anal sex. It's important to distinguish between sexual orientation and sexual preferences. The latter can differ greatly from one individual to the next.

Once again, if you're not comfortable with this sexual practice, there's no reason to force the issue. In fact, anal sex is not particularly recommended for young people who are just starting to be sexually active, for the following reasons: not being fully aware of your sexual anatomy or that of the other person; uncertainty about the other person's desire to have anal sex; failure to understand what this sexual practice involves; difficulty suddenly considering the anus as a pleasure zone; worrying about being clumsy or lacking finesse; having difficulty asserting yourself and discussing the topic, and even recognizing your own boundaries, etc.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Young people often ask what percentage of people engage in which sexual practices. However, it can be difficult to quote statistics out of fear of “normalizing” or, on the contrary, “stigmatizing” some sexual practices. Students were given some numbers in the previous paragraphs.

The idea here is to have a statistical portrait that can help you answer students’ questions, if necessary. According to the Enquête québécoise sur la santé des jeunes du secondaire (EQSJS) (2016-2017) of 62,277 young people, approximately 33% of secondary-school students aged 14 or over have already had consensual sex (oral, vaginal and/or anal) at least once in their lives (Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ), 2016-2017). More specifically, approximately 30% of students aged 14 and over have had oral sex at least once, 27% have had vaginal sex at least once and 6% have had anal sex at least once (ISQ, 2016-2017). As part of a study involving nine secondary schools in the Quebec City region (71 classes) and 1,584 young people aged 14 to 18, 33% of respondents reported having had vaginal sex, 33% had oral-genital contact and 7% had anal sex (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022). The results show that almost all participants are sexually active: 98.42% indulged in autoerotic practices and 74.70% had a partner. Engagement in sexual practices followed a linear progression, with autoerotic practices, and kissing and touching involving partners reported more frequently than genital contact (Kotiuga, Yampolsky and Martin, 2022).

With regard to the age of the first consensual sexual experience, EQSJS (2016-2017) results show that approximately 7% of students aged 14 or over had their first consensual sexual experience before age 14. The percentage of students aged 15 or over who had their first consensual sexual experience before age 15 is 17% (ISQ, 2016-2017). Among those aged 16 or over, 32% had their first consensual sexual experience before age 16, and nearly half the young people aged 17 or over had sex for the first time before age 17 (ISQ, 2016-2017).

Beyond statistics, it’s important to debunk various sexual practices and identify what such a choice implies for adolescents and adults. The idea is to provide correct information without trivializing it.

Once they are cognizant adults, adolescents will ultimately decide what interests them, what drives them, what they hope to experience, and the consequences and implications of their choices (e.g., life as a couple, celibacy, family life, occasional sexual partners). This idea of choices goes hand in hand with an analysis of the situation and honest self-reflection (which, admittedly, is neither simple nor obvious).

This idea of choice is not the same during adolescence. There are definitely some criteria that young people are asked to consider, but their vulnerability and appetite for risk and transgression at a time when they’re building their identity makes us want to “protect” them

even more when they're making choices that pose a greater risk to their development. It's important to teach them to make well-informed choices and equip them to use this skill as effectively as possible so that their choices don't launch them into a sexual universe that is inappropriate for their age or level of development, or that they find disturbing or that puts them at risk. There can be a few snags, some disappointments (that they will learn from), but there's no need to put themselves in emotionally charged situations in order to ultimately learn how to make choices that they find suitable and enjoyable.

While sexuality can be a path to growth, it's not limited to an "active sex life." Similarly, sexual behaviour is part of the adolescent journey, but should not be a challenge to create the illusion of being an adult. One thing is certain: talking about sexual desire and pleasure is a perfect opportunity to debunk what may be associated with sexual performance, but also address the positive aspects of sexuality.



Examples of sexual communication (Before - During - After)

- › **Show students three examples of sexual communication (Before-During-After).**
- › **If you'd like and if there's enough time, ask two participants to role-play and read the dialogue (in particular example no. 1).**
- › **Since the first names of the characters aren't gender specific, the characters can be a boy and a girl, two girls or two boys. The same goes for example no. 3. You (or the students) can decide on the sex of the characters. Example no. 2, however, deals with the sexual anatomy of one of the characters.**

Example 1: Jessie and Alex Sexual communication - BEFORE

Jessie and Alex have been going out for a while. They're at a party at Jessie's house. Jessie's parents are away for the weekend. It's late and there are only a few people left. Jessie promised to take Alex home after the party and is already way behind schedule. But Jessie wants to encourage Alex to spend the night and take advantage of the parents' absence. Jessie says that this would be fun. Alex loves Jessie, but doesn't want to have sex under these circumstances, at the end of an evening, way past curfew and where it was never agreed that they would be spending the night together. Here's their conversation.

Jessie: Hey, c'mon. Let's go to my room where we can be alone.

Alex: Jessie, you said you'd drive me home.

Jessie: I want to be with you and cuddle. We couldn't be alone together all evening.

Alex: I'd like to be alone with you, too, but if I get home really late again, my parents are really going to let me have it and all that.

Jessie: Don't worry about your parents. I waited all evening for us to finally be alone together.

Alex: Jessie, you said you'd drive me home. I really have to get home!

Jessie: Don't you want to be with me? We could spend the night together.

Alex: I love you. I really love you, but it's late. We can be alone together the next time we see each other. Besides, we never talked about me staying over.

Jessie: I get the feeling you're not interested.

Alex: I'd just like you to stop insisting and putting pressure on me all the time. Look, I'm going home. Are you driving me, or should I find another way back?

Jessie: (They hug and Jessie kisses Alex on the neck).

OK. OK, I'll happily be your driver, but I'd like us to plan some time where we're alone together, just the two of us. I get that you feel pressured tonight and that my offer comes at a bad time. I don't want to be the one who's always insisting and makes all the moves. I'd also like it if it came from you sometimes and if we made some time to be alone somewhere that we both enjoy. But for now, I'll be nice and drive you home.

Alex: (With a smile)

Thanks, Jessie.

In fact, if YOU insisted less about having sex (when I say that I'm not in the mood) and if I took more initiative when I feel like it, without worrying about being judged (and that you really feel like it, and aren't going along just to be the person who's always ready to please), it should work out.

But right now, I "insist" that you get your car keys.

(Adapted from Brown, 1993)

Example 2: Sexual communication - DURING/AFTER

"I'd just started going out with a really great guy. We were alone in his parents' living room. While we were kissing, he kept putting my hand on his crotch. I'd take my hand away because I didn't want to go any further, but he'd put my hand back. I finally said: "Look, I know where your penis is, and if I wanted to touch it, I would" (Conrad and Milburn, 2002).

He kindly replied: "OK. I deserved that. Sorry." When we saw each other the next time, we laughed about it. We talked about consent and agreed that it could be communicated through non-verbal language. We both felt that we had reached a new level of trust. That meaningful incident and the discussion that followed brought us closer together and took us to the next step in our relationship."

Example 3: Sexual communication - AFTER

"With my head on Casey's shoulder soon after making love, I was thinking how simple, gentle, funny and really exciting it was. We did what we felt like doing. We even stopped at some point (I think we sort of fell asleep) and then we continued touching, without any pressure. The desire was there. It was really wonderful and easy. Nothing like when we started out and were really embarrassed. I get the feeling that we were forcing things too much the first times. We desperately wanted it to be intense right from the start. I should really tell Casey how I feel. I'll do that later. For now, I just want to be in the moment, nestled in Casey's arms."

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Desire and pleasure: “The key elements of desire and pleasure”

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