
Sexuality Education Program
for ages 12 to 17

A dark, textured silhouette of two people in a dynamic, possibly dancing or embracing pose. The figure on the left is leaning back with one arm raised, while the figure on the right is leaning forward towards them.

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

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SECONDARY 3



Secondary 3 - Session 1

Body image

Body Representation in the Entertainment Industry

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)

Identity, gender stereotypes, roles and social norms

Analyze different representations of sexuality in the public space

Messages and images in media: advertising, reality TV, movies, music, social media and other interactive technologies, Internet, sexually explicit material

Explain how representations of sexuality in the public space can influence the expression of your sexuality

- › Norms and values conveyed in the public space and by the people around you.
- › Expression of your sexuality in the public space (expressing your identity, relationships), intimate space (shared with a few chosen people) and private space (personal feelings and experiences).

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

Broad areas of learning

Health and Well-Being: Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good lifestyle habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.

Media Literacy: To enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgement with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights.

Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities: To Encourage students to develop an active relationship with their environment while maintaining a critical attitude toward consumption and the exploitation of the environment.

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

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 <p>Methodological competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information and communications technologies
Subject areas	Personal development subject area:	
Subject-specific competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › English (language of instruction) › Read and enjoy a variety of texts › Write a variety of texts › Communicates orally, using different methods 	

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: Culture and Symbolic Productions (Secondary 4)

Disciplinary competencies	<p>Studies a cultural reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establishes the scope of the object of study › Evaluates elements of knowledge › Analyzes social relations › Demonstrates a more complete understanding 	<p>Reflects on an ethical question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation › Examines a variety of points of view › Develops a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	<p>Understand representations of sexuality in a variety of spaces (Secondary 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Positive and negative representations of sexuality in the public space and the influence of these representations › Norms, values and messages on sexuality from family, peers and the media › Expressions of sexuality in public, intimate and privacy spaces 	<p>Reflect on the ethical issues that may exist with respect to the norms and values related to the legal frameworks applicable to romantic and sexual life, especially regarding appropriate consequences and legal actions that can be taken against violence (Secondary 4)</p>



Educational Goals



Session length:
75 minutes

Become aware of the sexualized and standardized representation of bodies in the entertainment world and how this influences body image in adolescence.

- 1. Analyze** how bodies are represented in entertainment media, including video games, reality shows and social media.
- 2. Compare** photos of celebrities taken when they were teens and after they had become famous and identify significant changes, especially changes related to sexualization.
- 3. Discuss** the influence of celebrities and their relationship to their image on their teenage fans.
- 4. Recognize** the potential effects on teens of comparing themselves with adult celebrities.
- 5. Identify** the advantages and disadvantages of using photo editing technologies.
- 6. Discuss** the importance of being critical toward celebrities and others in media who have an unnatural look.
- 7. Discuss** the advantages of seeing greater body and physical diversity, and discuss how sexualization in the media impacts one's body image.



Sequence



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

15 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Brainstorming: Entertainment world and body image › Discussion and Presentation
15 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation › Discussion and Presentation <p><i>Sheets 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.1c, 1.1d, 1.1e: Video games characters and celebrities</i></p> <p><i>Sheets 1.2a, 1.2b, 1.2c, 1.2d, 1.2e: Answer sheet: The stereotypical bodies of certain video game characters and celebrities</i></p>
20 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team Activity: Before and after photos analysis › Discussion and Presentation <p><i>Sheet 1.3: Before and after photos analysis table</i></p> <p><i>Sheets 1.4a, 1.4b, 1.4c, 1.4d, 1.4e: Before and after photos</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.5: Answer sheet: Before and after photo analysis</i></p>
15 min.	ACTIVITY 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Brainstorming: Entertainment world and body image <p><i>Sheet 1.6: Photos of celebrities looking natural</i></p>
10 min.	Session CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: “Developing a positive body image” › Discussion and Presentation: key messages from the session <p><i>Sheet 1.7: Public awareness campaigns and posters</i></p> <p><i>Sheet 1.8: Self-Evaluation: Who am I on social media?</i></p>

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/>)



Activity 1



SLIDESHOW (PPT)

BLACKBOARD, CHALK OR MARKER



15 MINUTES



BRAINSTORMING



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by telling the students that you'll be discussing body image and body representation in the entertainment industry.
- › **Remind** the students 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).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Students may talk to you about problems with their body image (e.g., weight problems, dissatisfaction with their appearance), or you may suspect that they are having these body image issues. Refer them to professionals at the school for help and support. It's important to protect their confidentiality.

BEFORE leading this session, it's 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 (e.g., difficult personal situations, violence) 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.



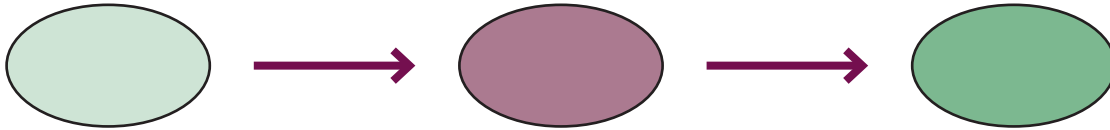
Brainstorming

- › **Start** the session by drawing three circles on the blackboard. In these circles, you'll write down the students' answers to the questions below.

1. Entertainment media

2. Body representation in some entertainment media

3. Impact on body image



- › **Fill** in circle #1 with the answers the students give to the following question:

- **What type of media do you use for entertainment or passing the time?**

Get the students' answers and write them in circle #1.

Presentation

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Circle #1

- › Entertainment media refers to:
 - Video games and virtual reality
 - Social media and the internet (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, web series, video clips, podcasts, blogs, private websites.)
 - Film and television (movies, television series, sports broadcasts, cultural programs, variety shows, cartoons, etc.)

- › **Write** in circle #2 the answers the students give to the following question:

- **How is the body presented in the different entertainment media listed in circle #1 (video games, social media, internet, television and movies)?**

Get their opinions.

- › **Explain** to the group that circle #3 on the blackboard focuses on the impact that these body representations can have on your body image.

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Circle #3

- › *“Body image is how you see your body, and how you think others see your body. Your body image may be based on your weight, height, skin colour and any other physical traits”* [translation] (CHU Sainte-Justine, 2018).
- › The way you see your body can be influenced by a number of factors, including the onset of puberty, peer pressure, name-calling, bullying and messages from your environment (Kids Help Phone, 2022).

- › **Tell** the students that circle #3 will remain empty for the moment, and that you’ll return to it later in the session.



Activity 2



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



15 MINUTES



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Presentation

- › **Tell** the students that you're going to look at how celebrities' bodies are represented in entertainment media and on social media, as well as how bodies are represented in video games. **Start** by sharing the following interesting facts about video games, celebrities and social media.
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Video games

- › There are many types of video games, including shooting games (FPS/TPS), fighting games, role-playing games (RPG), action games, adventure games, puzzle games, etc. (Stuffgaming.fr, n.d.).
- › According to the Entertainment Software Association of Canada (2020):
 - 95% of male teens ages 13 to 17 play video games, and do so for 21 hours per week on average.
 - 79% of female teens aged 13 to 17 play video games, and do so for 9.5 hours per week on average.
 - Teens' favourite games are *Fortnite*, *Call of Duty*, *Minecraft*, *Mario Kart*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Sims 4*.
- › There are minimum ages for some video games (ESRB, 2022):
 - For *Minecraft*, the minimum age is 10 years and up.
 - For *Fortnite* and *Sims 4*, the minimum age is 12 years and up.
 - For *Grand Theft Auto* and *Call of Duty*, the minimum age is 17 years and up because they contain many scenes of violence. These games also have a lot of sexual content, which is why they are intended for people 17 and older.

Celebrities

- › Celebrities are often seen as being out of reach and universally loved, as they represent an ideal figure in modern society (Dubois d'Enghien, 2020).

- › They achieved success and popularity thanks to their talents and/or career (singer, musician, professional dancer, actor/actress, model, comedian, entrepreneur, influencer, etc.).
- › Celebrities use social media as a giant megaphone to stay in direct contact with their fans (Côté, 2016), as well as to reveal and share details and photos of their private lives, which helps them to maintain a close relationship with their fans and offer them new content (Côté, 2016).

Social media

- › According to 2021 data:
 - 2 billion people use Instagram® (Asselin, 2022b).
 - 1.93 billion people use Facebook® every month (Asselin, 2022a).
 - 500 million use Snapchat® every month (Asselin, 2022c).
 - 396.5 people use Twitter® (Dean, 2022).
 - 1.2 billion people use TikTok® every month (Asselin, 2021).
- › The platform TikTok® is very popular with teens. About 41% of users are ages 16 to 24 (Beer, 2019) and over one-third of them are under 14 years of age (Radio-Canada, 2020).
- › The minimum age to use Instagram®, Facebook®, Snapchat®, Twitter® and TikTok® is 13 (Instagram, 2022; Meta, n.d.; Snap Inc., 2022; Twitter, 2022; TikTok, 2022).
- › According to a 2019 Quebec study by NETendances, 26% of youth between the ages of 6 and 12 use social media to look at or post content or to interact with friends and family, and 22% of them have an online profile and are active on social media (CEFRIO, 2019).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Keep in mind that teens' favourite games can change over time. You can check the internet to see which video games are currently most popular among certain age groups. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (2022) is a non-profit organization that, since 1994, has been committed to helping parents and consumers make informed choices about video games by setting the minimum age for playing each game (<https://www.esrb.org>).

Additionally, TikTok® includes a parental control tool called “Family Pairing,” which allows parents of teens ages 13 and up to supervise their teens' use of TikTok® more effectively (TikTok, 2020). This parental control (<https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktok-introduces-family-pairing/>) allows parents to link their accounts to their children's accounts so that they can, for example, set restrictions on screen time and direct messaging (TikTok, 2020).

Another platform that teens use a lot is YouTube®. In 2019, 86% of youth ages 6 to 17 watched videos on the internet, particularly on the YouTube® platform. This is the most popular online activity for young people (CEFRIO, 2019).



- › **Tell** the group that you're going to look at the physical traits of video game characters and celebrities. **Mention** that some of the examples will focus on stereotypical physical traits that do not promote body diversity.
- › **Tell** them what is meant by stereotypical physical traits and body diversity.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Definition of sexual stereotype

- › Some media in our public space (e.g., ads, video games, reality shows, social media) present youth and adults with unnuanced messages and a narrow perspective on what it means to be a boy and a girl. These are referred to as sexual stereotypes.
- › Stereotypes are preconceived notions and caricatural images that negatively influence how we perceive, interact with and treat other people (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022).
- › We can sometimes notice that these stereotypes influence our attitudes, our preferences or our appearance. Note that gender stereotypes may change over time.
- › In today's society, when we talk about stereotypical bodies, generally we're referring to the following physical traits (Gouvernement du Québec, 2022; MEES, 2019):
 - **For girls:** Long hair, slim figure, thin waist, full lips, curves (large breasts, round buttocks), tanned skin, etc.
 - **For boys:** Short or medium-length hair, tall, athletic and muscular body, broad shoulders, square jaw, facial hair (beard), etc.

Body diversity

- › In recent years, there has been a movement in North America to stop promoting just one type of beauty that presents very slim, digitally altered bodies as representing beauty standards.
- › This movement is advocating for more body diversity in the media—in other words, the representation of various body types that don't reflect conventional beauty standards (Bernier, 2021a).
- › Here are some examples (Bernier, 2021a):
 - People of colour (non-white)
 - Fat people
 - (Note: Although this term can have negative connotations, it has been reclaimed by people fighting against fatphobia. Fatphobia refers to discrimination or hostility toward people who are fat, overweight or obese [Bernier, 2021b])
 - Very tall or very short people
 - People with disabilities or with physical limitations (e.g., someone who uses a wheelchair, someone with an intellectual disability, someone with Down's syndrome)
 - People with skin conditions (e.g., vitiligo, eczema, rosacea, psoriasis, acne)
 - People with aesthetic preferences that others may not typically associate with their gender (e.g., nail polish, makeup, hair colour, baggy clothing, jewelry)



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

You can tell the students that, in 2009, the Quebec government introduced the Quebec Charter for a Healthy and Diverse Body Image [Charte québécoise pour une image corporelle saine et diversifiée (CHIC)], which aims to reduce social and cultural pressure associated with the beauty ideals presented in the public space and media and to promote a safe, equal society (Secrétariat à la condition féminine, 2015). Working alongside the government, the fashion, advertising, media, music and video communities developed the following general principles, addressed primarily to the public space and media:

1. Promote a diversity of body images, including different heights, proportions, and ages.	4. Refuse to subscribe to esthetic ideals based on extreme thinness
2. Encourage healthy eating and weight-control habits.	5. Remain vigilant and diligent so as to minimize the risks of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and unhealthy preoccupations with weight
3. Discourage excessive weight-control practices or appearance modification.	6. Act as agents of change so as to promote healthy eating and weight-control practices and realistic body images
7. Promote the Quebec Charter for a Healthy and Diverse Body Image among partners, clients, and others while actively respecting and adhering to its principles	

Source: Secrétariat de la condition féminine. Gouvernement du Québec. http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Documents/Stereotypes/Charte_8.5X11_CHIC.pdf

The Quebec Charter for a Healthy and Diverse Body Image sets out what is expected of organizations and people in the public space and in media; however, as these principles are not enforced, they are not always complied with. Given this, it's important to encourage young people to have a critical attitude toward representations of bodies in society and, at the same time, to make them aware that they have the power to change things—that their voices count and that they deserve to be heard and respected when it comes to body image and body diversity.

Discussion

› **Ask** the following question:

- **In what ways are the bodies of certain video game characters and celebrities on social media (e.g., singers, influencers, actors and actresses) stereotypical?**

Get their opinions.

› To help them answer the question, **show** them images of video game characters and celebrities (see Sheets 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.1c and 1.1d: *Video game characters and celebrities*).

› **Add** to their answers using Sheet 1.2a, 1.2b, 1.2c and 1.2d: *Answer sheet: Stereotypical bodies among video game characters and celebrities*.

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Video game characters

- › They often have very stereotypical bodies (e.g., female characters are very thin and male characters have perfect muscles [Martins & al., 2011]).
- › This can cause video game players to feel insecure about their own bodies (Martins & al., 2009; Martins & al., 2011).

Celebrities

- › Celebrities belong to the entertainment world (e.g., singers, influencers, actors). They get a lot of public attention and want to remain popular.
- › They then feel pressured to maintain their public image.
- › As a result, some celebrities will have stereotypical physical traits: a perfect body (thin, muscular), a sexy or glamorous appearance, etc.

› **Lead** a discussion using the question below:

- **Are there, on the other hand, video game characters and celebrities that contribute to greater body diversity in media?**

Get their opinions.

- › **Tell** the students about a video game artist who's helping to promote body diversity.
 - 2D artist Loukia Kyriakidou (character designer for the game *Battletoads*) has said that, despite there being a fair amount of diversity in the *Battletoads* characters, she thinks it's unfortunate that all the female characters have hourglass figures (Simard, 2019), which also accentuates their thin waists.
 - She says that the industry has made some progress, but feels that more needs to be done to include more body diversity in video games (Simard, 2019).
 - To promote more body diversity in video games, Loukia Kyriakidou has some tips for other character designers:
 - Create a moodboard, as this forces you to research different images, colours, etc.
 - Start from scratch and don't base your designs on preconceived notions.
 - Expand your definition of beauty.
 - Have your work and your creations reviewed to avoid stereotypes.

- › Next, **share** with the students the names and photos of celebrities who contribute to more body diversity.
 - Some celebrities are quite willing to show who they are and are critical of the ideal body image that others try to impose on them.
 - **In Quebec:**
 - Greg Beaudin (Snail Kid) (singer and actor)
 - Mélissa Bédard (singer and actress)
 - Martin Deschamps (singer and musician)
 - Jay Du Temple (comedian and host)
 - Jean-François Guevremont [Rita Baga] (drag queen and host)
 - Justine Legault (plus-size model)
 - Khate Lessard (first trans woman on a Quebec reality show and speaker)
 - Christine Morency (comedian and radio host)
 - Safia Nolin (singer and musician)
 - Chantal Petitclerc (track and field Paralympic champion)
 - Dave Richer (actor)
 - **Around the world:**
 - Ashley Graham (American plus-size model)
 - Winnie Harlow (Canadian model with a skin condition [vitiligo])
 - Daniel Dias (most decorated Paralympic swimmer in the world)
 - George Robinson (British actor in the series *Sex Education*)
 - RuPaul Andre Charles [RuPaul] (American drag queen, host, actor, author and model)



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

This is a non-exhaustive list of celebrities who represent body diversity. As times goes on, there will be other celebrities to mention. Feel free to add them to the list and talk about them with the students.

- › **End** the activity by asking the students the following question:
 - **What are some other examples of video game characters and celebrities who promote body diversity?**
- › Next, **provide** the following information to conclude:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › There should be more body diversity in entertainment media, as we are typically shown body types that few of us actually have (Greenberg & al., 2003).
- › We always appreciate the people and organizations that show NON-STANDARD body types in media. Of course, in real life, body diversity IS STANDARD.
- › This goes to show that a lot of work still needs to be done to make those in the media industry aware of the role they play in sending messages to consumers about the diversity of bodies and their beauty.
- › In the next activity, we'll discuss how the media industry influences young celebrities in their appearance.



Activity 3



SHEETS 1.3 AND 1.4 (A,B,C,D,E)
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MINUTES



TEAM ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of three or four people.
- › **Hand out** to each team Sheet 1.3: *Before and after photos analysis* table and one of the five Sheets 1.4 (a, b, c, d, e) “*Before and after photos*” presenting different public figures:
 - *Sheet 1.4a: Before and after photos: Ariana Grande*
 - Singer, musician and actress, born in 1993
 - Began her career at the age of 15 (Wikipedia, 2022a)
 - *Sheet 1.4b: Before and after photos: Drake*
 - Actor, musician and rapper, born in 1986
 - Began his career as an actor at the age of 16 (Wikipedia, 2022b)
 - *Sheet 1.4c: Before and after photos: Kylie Jenner*
 - Reality television personality, sister of Kim Kardashian, owner of a cosmetics company, born in 1997
 - Began her career at the age of 14 (Wikipedia, 2022c)
 - *Sheet 1.4d: Before and after photos: Selena Gomez*
 - Musician, singer and actress, born in 1992
 - Began her career at the age of 7 (Wikipedia, 2022d)
 - *Sheet 1.4e: Before and after photos: Justin Bieber*
 - Singer and musician, born in 1994
 - Began his career at the age of 13 (Wikipedia, 2022e)
- › **Tell** the students that on Instagram® alone, these public figures are followed by hundred of millions of people, many of whom are teens.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



As of May 9, 2022, these celebrities have this many Instagram® followers:

- › Ariana Grande: 335 million @arianagrande
- › Drake: 119 million @champagnepapi
- › Kylie Jenner: 372 million @kyliejenner
- › Selena Gomez: 351 million @selenagomez
- › Justin Bieber: 235 million @justinbieber

Statistics on Instagram® followers change rapidly, so feel free to verify how many social media followers these celebrities have or check how many followers newer celebrities have.

These numbers were taken directly from these celebrities' Instagram® accounts.

› **Give** the following instructions:

- On your Sheet, there will be two photos of a celebrity: a photo taken when this person was a teenager, and a more recent photo (adult).
- You will have 5 minutes to analyze these photos and fill out Sheet 1.3: *Before and after photo analysis table*.
- When the time is up, you'll share your answers with the rest of the group.

Discussion

- › **Lead** a discussion with the students by showing them the images on Sheets 1.4a, 1.4b, 1.4c, 1.4d and 1.4e: *Before and after photos*, and ask the teams to share their answers.
- › To add to the students' answers on the physical appearance, clothing and look, attitude and other features (e.g., posture) of the five celebrities, refer to Sheet 1.5: *Answer sheet: Analysis of celebrities' before and after photos*.
- › **Continue** the discussion with the questions below:
 - **What did you learn from this exercise?**
 - **How do you explain the differences between the BEFORE and AFTER photos?**
 - **Do the AFTER photos of these celebrities have anything in common? If so, what exactly?**

Get their opinions.

Presentation

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Differences between the BEFORE and AFTER photos:

- › We can see that these celebrities underwent many changes, and these changes fall into various categories.
 - **Their appearance:** These changes may be partly attributable to their age, as they were teenagers and have now become adults. But there are additional factors that may explain the changes in appearance.
 - **Their clothing or their look:** At times “sexy,” stylish, professional, casual, etc.
 - **Their attitudes:** Celebrities are used to being in front of cameras. As a result, their image is often calculated and lacks spontaneity (unnatural postures, intense stares, etc.).
- › Setting aside Drake’s photo, we can see that some of the AFTER photos are more sexualized—in other words, certain physical traits are emphasized in these photos. For example: clothing that reveals certain parts of the body (e.g., low-cut shirts, bare chest); “duck face” (a facial expression made by pushing forward the lips so that they resemble a duck’s beak) (Duckface, 2021), which accentuates the lips; postures that accentuate certain sexual attributes (e.g., buttocks, chest, abs); etc.
- › Selena, Kylie and Ariana have similar facial features, which correspond to what is known as “Instagram face” (RAD, 2020).
 - “Instagram face” refers to facial features (e.g., plump lips, slender nose, arched eyebrows, small forehead, large eyes with no dark circles) that were popularized on Instagram®, primarily by women whose appearances are shaped by the beauty industry (e.g., actresses, celebrities, influencers).
- › Some people (mostly girls and women) want to permanently change how their faces look based on the changes they can make in photo editing and filter apps like Snapchat®, and they seek plastic surgery to achieve this appearance (RAD, 2020). This results in unrealistic expectations (Telle est la question, 2021).
- › This isn’t about judging whether cosmetic surgery is good or bad, but rather examining what motivates celebrities to invest so much money in their appearance when they become rich and famous. Plus, with cosmetic surgery, isn’t there the risk of everyone looking the same (e.g., full lips, thin nose, prominent cheeks)?
- › There is also a financial incentive to conforming to beauty standards. Take the story of Kylie Jenner, a celebrity with hundreds of millions of followers on Instagram® (Legendre, 2019):
 - In 2015, Kylie Jenner admitted that she had gotten injections that made her lips fuller. Seeing the popularity of her photos and posts on social media showing her full lips, she explored how this same result could be achieved without injections. This led to her launching her own cosmetics company.
 - The first products her company launched were 15,000 “Lip Kits,” and these sold out in under a minute. Her celebrity status made it much easier to sell the product, which was associated with her NAME!

- › The word “showbiz” is short for “show business.” (Notice the word “business.”) We shouldn’t be naive about or blind to the intentions of the entertainment industry. The more you grow your audience or user base, the more money you make. For example, in April 2021 alone, the video game industry brought in an estimated \$300 billion in revenue (Agence France-Presse, 2021).
- › Note: The entertainment industry is vast. It includes actors and actresses, singers, people working in television, film, theatre and technology (e.g., video games), influencers, producers and others.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



According to a statistical report by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (2020), over 220,000 cosmetic surgeries were performed in the United States on individuals between the ages of 13 and 19. The most popular cosmetic surgeries were laser hair removal (47 850), laser skin resurfacing (47 979), nose reshaping (44 686), ear surgery (17 340), Botulinum Toxin (e.g., Botox injections) (12 767), eyelid surgery (5 301), breast augmentation (3 233) and cheek implant (3 033). Just note that there were 879 labiaplasty.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the following question:
 - **In your opinion, what influences celebrities or public figures to change their appearance, demeanour or conduct?**

Get their opinions.
- › **Add** to their answers if necessary with the information below:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

What influences someone to change their appearance or conduct

Appearance

- › It’s normal and fine for someone to want to change their appearance or look, whether they’re a teen, adult, public figure or celebrity.
- › When the person is well known or famous, they’re often concerned about maintaining a good image in the eyes of their admirers and conforming to a beauty ideal.

- ▶ Beauty ideals are generally based on a sexualized image of people with white skin. Among female models, this means having big eyes, full lips, round buttocks, shapely hips, large breasts and a thin waist (Laforte, 2017; RAD, 2020). Although these beauty ideals may vary between countries and time periods, and today there is much more openness to body diversity, “*the influence of white culture on beauty is definitely still dominant*” [translation] (Laforte, 2017).
- ▶ Among male models, beauty ideals involve having a very muscular build, little chest hair and no belly fat (LaPresse, 2018).
- ▶ For public figures and celebrities, it can be very profitable for them to conform to beauty standards in order to get noticed and advance their career.
- ▶ Social media, which is such a big part of our lives, often shows us only one beauty ideal (Telle est la question, 2021). There can be a big difference between the photos we see posted on social media and what people look like in real life (Telle est la question, 2021). If we compare ourselves with these photos, we may be unsatisfied with our appearance and want to change it to fit these beauty ideals (Telle est la question, 2021).
- ▶ However, it’s important to distinguish between “*looking after your appearance*” and/or wanting to be “*fashionable*” AND being constantly dissatisfied with your body and wanting to improve your appearance at all costs to fit a beauty ideal.

Influences that cause someone to adopt sexualized behaviours and attitudes

- ▶ Plus, some celebrities like to present a more sexualized image of themselves. While there’s nothing wrong with artists wanting to develop the “*sexy*” side of their personality, it’s important to consider the reasons motivating them to showcase these sexualized attitudes and behaviours.
- ▶ Some media show women as having a very “*sexy*” and seductive attitude—i.e., a suggestive look, low-cut top, tight-fitting clothing, etc., which can give the impression that women are valued mainly for their bodies and their sexuality (RQASF, 2006a; RQASF, 2006b).

Reasons for adopting sexualized behaviours and attitudes

- ▶ Some people use sexuality to advance their careers. However, this can have negative consequences. For example, these people may be trapped by the one image others have of them, which is as a sex object.
- ▶ Sexualized images sell and are popular in the entertainment world. We can see this, for example, with participants on reality shows, when they have to “*show off their charm*” and become popular right away without demonstrating any artistic talent (RQASF, 2006a; RQASF, 2006b).

- ▶ To sum up, some celebrities and public figures may change their appearance and adopt sexual behaviours as a result of certain influences. Since these celebrities are looked up to as role models, some people will use photo editing and filter apps to try to look like them and conform to the beauty standards on social media. Others even opt for cosmetic surgery as a way to permanently change their bodies (RAD, 2020).

- › The next activity focuses on how photo editing and filter apps are used to make faces conform to these beauty standards.

Presentation and Discussion

- › **Tell** the students that the next activity will be done as a class.
- › Next, **show** them the following photos:



Image source: https://www.terrafemina.com/article/reseaux-sociaux-ce-photographe-expose-les-consequences-des-filtres-chez-les-ados_a348047/1



Image source: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249521>

- › **Explain** that these images represent photos in which someone's facial features were altered to conform to beauty standards on social media.
- › **Ask** the students the following question:
 - **Which facial features have been digitally altered in the photo of the female model?**
 - **And in the photo of the male model?**

Get their opinions.

Presentation

- › **Add** to the students answers with the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Facial features of the female model:

- › Pale complexion
- › Smooth skin
- › Eye colour a deeper blue
- › Makeup around the eyes
- › Thin, straight nose
- › Pink, full lips
- › Ears closer to the face
- › More slender face
- › Etc.

Facial features of the male model:

- › Slightly tanned complexion
- › Smooth skin and freckles less visible
- › Lines and wrinkles less visible
- › Thin, straight nose
- › Eyebrow piercing removed
- › Moles removed
- › Etc.

- › After identifying which facial features were digitally altered in the two photos, **add** the observation that the changes to the female model's facial features are much more obvious, and that the digitally altered photo hardly resembles the original.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the students the follow question:
 - **Photo editing and filter apps: Are they useful or harmful?**
Get their opinions.

- › **Add** to the students' answers using the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Arguments for HARMFUL...to your self-esteem

- › The beauty ideals and body types that we see everywhere in media, starting from childhood, become a social norm (Es-tu malade, 2019), and we feel pressured to conform and follow the norm.
- › It's during adolescence that we build our identity and cultivate the look or image we want to put forward. This is no small matter. In fact, it's very important. When we are only shown "perfect" bodies and pictures that have been enhanced with photo editing and filters, we can begin to feel very dissatisfied and insecure about OUR appearance.
- › This can cause us to have an unrealistic idea of what our body should look like, and we may idealize a digitally altered version of our face (Reilly and Keon, 2020).

Arguments for USEFUL...for having fun

- › Some people use filters to have fun with their friends (Moyens I/O, 2020). Filters can also be used to create and act as funny characters.
- › Plus, most of these filters are free and easy to use.

Arguments for USEFUL...or are they?

- › Filters and photo editing apps can be used to present an enhanced image of ourselves, which may help us feel more beautiful and more comfortable in our own skin (Apple Store, 2022).
- › We may feel satisfied with the image of ourselves we see reflected in these apps.
- › But is this really an advantage, given that we risk hurting our self-esteem?

But... THINGS ARE CHANGING!

- › Some companies and magazines are making efforts to talk about fatphobia (fatphobia refers to hostile attitudes and discrimination toward fat people (Grossophobie.ca, 2021)) and are showing models with different bodies, without using filters. For example, the magazines *Elle Québec* (2017) and *Châtelaine* (2018) were the first magazines in Quebec to address the topic of fatphobia (Grossophobie.ca, 2021).
- › Since then, some companies have refused to use Photoshop to digitally alter the photos used in their ads. One example is the company *Dove* (Es-tu malade, 2019).
- › Plus, some Instagram accounts aim to promote different body types or even to humorously criticize ads that reinforce beauty ideals (Es-tu malade, 2019).



Activity 4



SHEET 1.6
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



15 MINUTES



BRAINSTORMING



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Tell** the students that you're going to examine some photos of celebrities taken while they're looking NATURAL. Using Sheet 1.6: *Photos of celebrities looking natural*, show the different photos of celebrities.
- › Next, **ask** the following question:
 - **What do you notice?**
 - **In your opinion, how does comparing oneself with these grown-up celebrities impact the body image of teens your age?**
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Comparisons with celebrities

- › During adolescence, we go through major changes, including changes in body weight and shape (NousTV, 2016).
- › At this age especially, we want to follow the norm and be like others, and for this reason we compare ourselves with our friends, our classmates and celebrities.
- › However, we need to keep in mind that most celebrities and public figures are already adults so their bodies have already fully developed.
- › Plus, they have an entire team of professionals helping them enhance their image (e.g., makeup, hairstyle, clothing style), not to mention that some of them have had cosmetic surgery to conform to beauty standards.

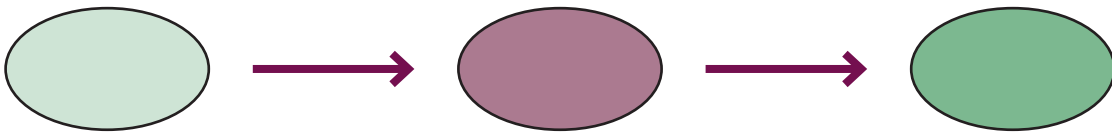
Brainstorming

- › **Return** to the three circles from Activity 1 and tell the students that they will fill in circle #3 based on what they learned during the session.
- › **Remind** the students that circle #3 corresponds to how our body image is impacted by body representations in some entertainment media.
 - Body image refers to how we perceive our body and how others perceive it. Our body image may be influenced by our weight, height, skin colour or any other physical traits (CHU Sainte-Justine, 2018).

1. Entertainment media
(e.g., video games, social media,
internet, television, film)

**2. Body representation in
some entertainment media**

3. Impact on body image



- › **Ask** the following question:
 - **During this session, we saw how stereotypical bodies in entertainment media (e.g., movies, ads, web series, video games) can impact the body image of people your age. What other impacts can you think of?**
- › **Write** their answers in circle #3.
- › Next, **share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Impact of seeing stereotypical bodies in entertainment media

- › The consumption of entertainment media plays a key role in influencing our body image and tends to be associated with body dissatisfaction because we may start to devalue our body, see it in a negative light and feel a sense of disappointment (Fardouly & al., 2015; Fardouly and Vartanian, 2016; Franchina and Lo Coco, 2018; HabiloMédias, n.d.; Holland and Tiggemann, 2016; Telle est la question, 2021).
- › Comparing oneself to these unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards can cause teens (as well as adults!) to feel dissatisfied and frustrated because they feel like they don't measure up. They may even get discouraged and may not feel like themselves (Raymond and Lebel, 2021).
- › A study looking at Instagram found that this app "easily makes girls and women feel as if their bodies aren't good enough" (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017).
- › For some people, this may also increase their risk of developing an eating disorder (Bachner-Melman & al., 2018; Chang & al., 2019; Cohen and Blaszczynski, 2015; Rousseau and Eggermont, 2018).

- › Fortunately, we're starting to see more and more body diversity in media. Seeing different body types should help us to see our own bodies and others' bodies in a more positive light (Paul, 2018).

- › **Lead** a discussion using the following question:

- **In your opinion, why is it important to have a critical attitude toward the highly stereotypical body types we see in media?**

Get their opinions.

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › The photos of celebrities that we see in the media are staged photos—in other words, the clothes are carefully selected, and the poses are practised beforehand.
- › There's a team of professionals making sure that these photos are flattering. Everything has to be perfect, from the makeup and hair to the lighting. However, like us, these celebrities have normal moments in their everyday lives when their makeup and hair weren't done by their team. So it's important to keep in mind that most of these staged photos aren't taken in realistic, natural settings, unlike the photos we take ourselves.
- › It's normal to want to improve our appearance, but some changes made with photo editing and filter applications go far beyond this. When we use these apps frequently, it becomes difficult to present ourselves in any other way, as this technology completely alters our image and appearance. For instance, we can change the shape of the face, the nose, the cheekbones and silhouette.
- › For some people, the use of these technologies causes them to idealize and/or trivialize body alterations, and this may lead them to permanently change their bodies in extreme ways.



Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MINUTES



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION



VIDEO

Discussion, Presentation and Video

› **Share** the following with the students:

- **More and more now, we're seeing a willingness to change the stereotypical or unrealistic beauty standards conveyed in media or on social media and to show more body diversity.**

› **Show** the following video:

Developing a positive body image (Paluumimi, 2019)

Length: 2 min., 25 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQ7rVSu0qDM>



Video



› After the video, **ask** the following questions:

- **What are your takeaways from this video?**
- **This video presents some advice for developing a positive body image. What are some other things you could do to develop a positive body image?**

- › **Share** with the students some ways to develop a positive body image:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Ways to develop a positive body image

- › Try to have a positive view of yourself, of your strengths and qualities (Tel-Jeunes, 2017).
- › Do things that make you feel good and that you're passionate about (Tel-Jeunes, 2017).
- › Surround yourself with caring, positive people who value you (Tel-Jeunes, 2017).
- › Be yourself: for example, dress in a way that makes you feel comfortable with yourself, try different looks, etc. (Kids Help Phone, 2022).
- › Challenge or question messages, ads and photos that make you feel bad or that promote unrealistic body representations (Kids Help Phone, 2022).
- › On social media, choose to follow people, artists, companies and organizations that promote body diversity and a positive body image (Kids Help Phone, 2022).
- › Etc.

- › Next, **show** the students examples of public awareness campaigns aimed at promoting self-acceptance and a positive body image. Refer to Sheet 1.7: *Public awareness campaigns and posters*.
- › **Ask** them to pay attention to which message speaks to them the most.
 - **Which message speaks to you the most in the public awareness campaigns and posters on positive body image?**
 - **Why that one in particular?**
- › **Tell** the students the following: *“Commit to memory the message that spoke to you the most. That way, when you have days or moments when you don't feel good about who you are, you can remember this message and repeat it to yourself!”*
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
Get their opinions.
- › **Show** the students a succession of images of teens in their living environments who represent body diversity as well as ethnic diversity, religious diversity and disability diversity.
- › **Conclude** the meeting by telling the students that by “being true to themselves” and appreciating their body the way that it is, they're helping to spread the message that body diversity is beautiful!

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Depending on the mood in the classroom and the student's interest, you may choose to hand out Sheet 1.8: *Self-Evaluation: Who am I on social media?* You would do so at end of the session, or before the students leave the classroom. Explain to the students that this is an individual, personal exercise that gets them to think about the photos they post on social media. The sheet won't be collected; the students can keep it.





SHEET

1.1a

FOR THE GROUP

Video game characters: Mario Bros.

I. VIDEO GAMES - MARIO BROS.

Princess Peach	Mario
	
<p>Image source: https://play.nintendo.com/themes/friends/princess-peach/</p>	<p>Image source: https://www.corriere.it/tecnologia/videogiochi/21_settembre_25/super-mario-film-cast-392bddbe-1d44-11ec-a854-dd0bdfa3385.shtml</p>



SHEET

1.1b

FOR THE GROUP

Video game characters: Sims 4

2. VIDEO GAME - SIMS 4

Sims



Image source: <https://www.jeuxactu.com/les-sims-4-la-creation-du-personnage-en-video-93107.htm>






SHEET

1.1c

FOR THE GROUP

Video game characters: Fortnite

3. VIDEO GAMES - FORTNITE

Sorana	Ranger	Penny
		
<p>Image source: https://www.deviantart.com/vasiaklimov/art/Fortnite-Sorana-834728918</p>	<p>Image source: https://progameguides.com/fortnite-cosmetic/ranger/</p>	<p>Image source: https://www.deviantart.com/joecalzon/art/SFM-Fortnite-Female-Constructor-Penny-739385896</p>



SHEET

1.1d

FOR THE GROUP

Celebrities: Kim Kardashian and Miley Cyrus

4. CELEBRITIES

Kim Kardashian (influencer)



Image source: <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/style-beauty/fashion/a19713484/kim-kardashian-met-gala-2018/>

Miley Cyrus (singer)



Image source: Miley Cyrus' Instagram® account (2022)



FICHE SUPPORT

1.2a



FOR SESSION LEADERS

Answer sheets: Video game characters: Mario Bros.

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Here are the answers to share with the students about the stereotypes in certain video game characters and celebrities.

I. VIDEO GAMES - MARIO BROS.

	Princess Peach	Mario Bros
		
Answers	<p>Stereotypical traits: Slim figure, lots of makeup, “princess” stereotype, etc.</p>	<p>Stereotypical traits: Mario doesn’t represent a specific body stereotype. His appearance is funny and cartoonish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The scenario of “Super Mario” is full of stereotypes. For example, we see the damsel in distress stereotype (Princess Peach) (Lanctot, 2020). Also, in several Mario Bros. Games, Princess Peach is kidnapped by Bowser, who embodies malice and evil (Lanctot, 2020). Mario’s quest is to free the princess. Peach his reward. This is an example of the stereotype of the helpless woman (Lanctot, 2020).



Answer sheet: Video game characters: Sims 4

2. VIDEO GAMES - SIMS 4

Sims



Answers

Stereotypical traits: Although players get to create their own characters in The Sims game, these characters can have stereotypical traits. The character on the left has chiselled abs and a very muscular build. The person on the right has a very slim waist and broader hips, giving her an “hourglass figure.”






FICHE SUPPORT

1.2c

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer sheet: Video game characters: Fortnite

I. VIDEO GAMES - FORTNITE

	Sorana	Ranger	Penny
			
Answers	Stereotypical traits: Tight-fitting clothes, high-heeled boots, lots of makeup, very slim waist, etc.	Stereotypical traits: Very muscular build.	Stereotypical traits: Tight-fitting clothes, low-cut top, large breasts, curvy figure, sexy look, etc.



FICHE SUPPORT

1.2d

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer Sheet: Celebrities: Kim Kardashian and Miley Cyrus

2. CELEBRITIES

Kim Kardashian (influencer)



Stereotypical traits: Lots of makeup, full lips, high-end manicure, tight-fitting clothing, large breasts and a low-cut dress, accentuated buttocks, etc.

Miley Cyrus (singer)



Stereotypical traits: makeup, visible tattoos, full lips, high-heeled shoes, sexy outfit, skimpy clothing, etc.

Answers



SHEET

1.3

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photo analysis table

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Write down the name of the celebrity whose photo you will be analyzing.
- › As a team, look carefully at the before and after photos and, in the table below, write down what you notice about the person's (a) physical appearance, (b) clothing and look, (c) attitude and (d) other features.

Name of the celebrity: _____

	Before Photo	After Photo
› A) Physical appearance		
› B) Clothing and look		
› C) Attitude What attitude do these photos convey? (e.g., a sexy, glamorous, confident, reserved or natural attitude)		
› D) Other features (posture)		



SHEET

1.4a

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photos: Ariana Grande



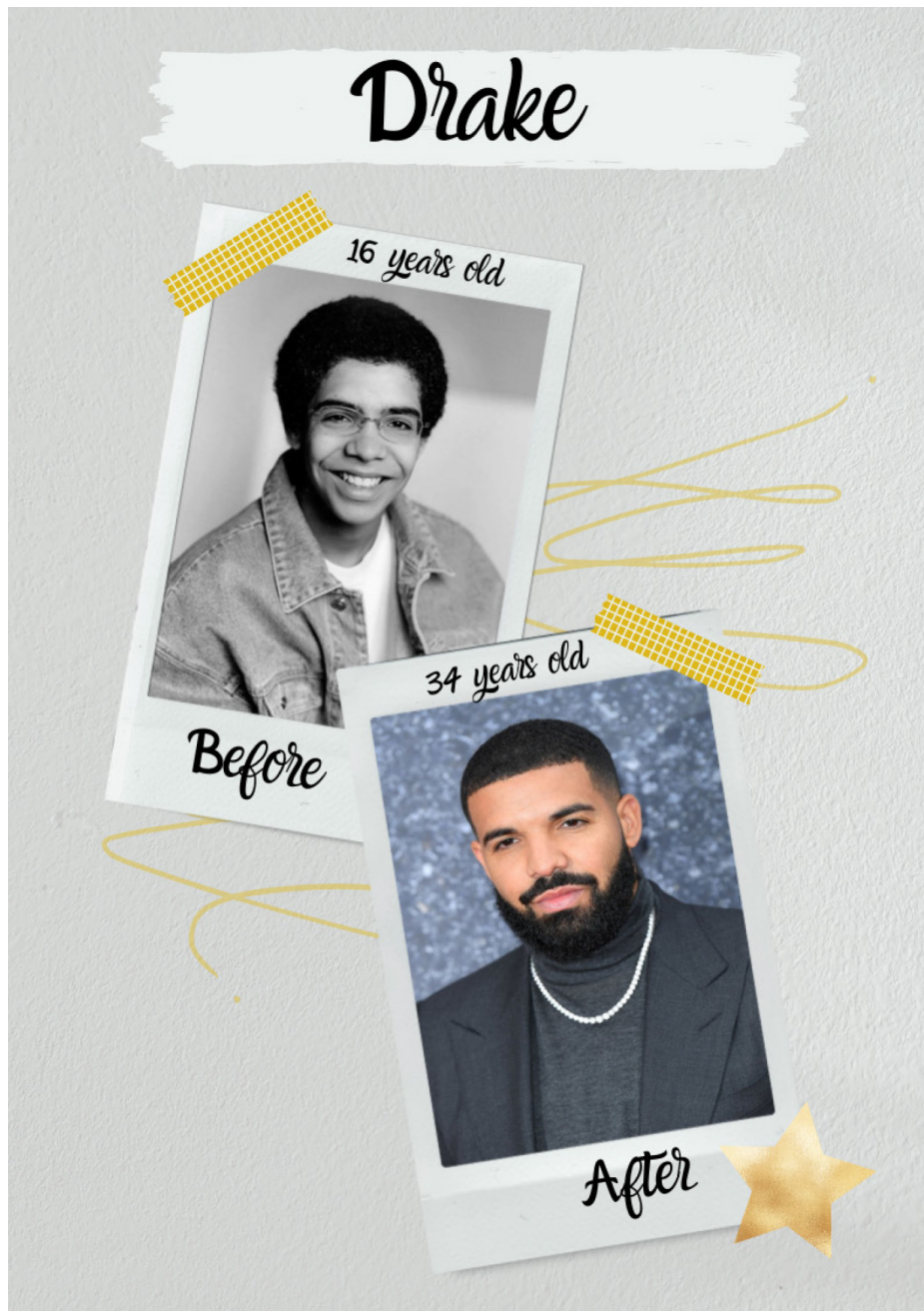


FICHE SHEET

1.4b

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photos: Drake





SHEET

1.4c

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photos: Kylie Jenner





SHEET

1.4d

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photos: Selena Gomez





SHEET

1.4e

FOR THE GROUP

Before and after photos: Justin Bieber





FICHE SUPPORT

1.5

FOR SESSION LEADERS

Answer sheet: Analysis of before and after photos

INSTRUCTIONS

- Using the answers below, lead a discussion with the students by showing Sheet 1.2a (Ariana Grande) and 1.2b (Drake) and asking the teams to share their answers.

	A) Physical appearance	B) Clothing and look	C) Attitude <i>What attitude do the photos convey?</i> E.g., a sexy, glamorous, confident, reserved or natural attitude?	D) Other features (posture)
Name of the celebrity: Ariana Grande				
Before photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural hairstyle Light makeup More natural eyebrows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual clothing Youthful look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Cheerful and relaxed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural posture
After photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straightened, long hair Lot of eye makeup Fuller lips Better defined eyebrows using makeup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much fancier clothing, like you would see at a show or gala Sexy, low-cut outfit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intense stare Similar to the “duck face,” which accentuates the lips. (A facial expression made by pushing forward the lips so that they resemble a duck’s beak.) (Duckface, 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unnatural posture, profile photo
Name of the celebrity: Drake				
Before photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glasses Natural hairstyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual clothing Youthful look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheerful Confident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural posture
After photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No glasses Buzz cut Moustache and beard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fancier clothes Jewelry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident Serious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural posture

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Using the answers below, lead a discussion with the students by showing Sheet 1.2c (Kylie Jenner), Sheet 1.2d (Selena Gomez) and Sheet 1.2e (Justin Bieber) and asking the teams to share their answers.

	A) Physical appearance	B) Clothing and look	C) Attitude <i>What attitude do the photos convey?</i> E.g., a sexy, glamorous, confident, reserved or natural attitude?	D) Other features (posture)
Name of the celebrity: Kylie Jenner				
Before photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural hair colour › Natural lips › Natural nose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Low-cut dress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Cheerful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Straight, natural posture
After photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Coloured hair › Lengthened eyelashes › Arched eyebrows › Plump lips › Thinner nose (cosmetic surgery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Casual clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Intense stare › Similar to the “duck face,” which accentuates the lips › (A facial expression made by pushing forward the lips so that they resemble a duck’s beak.) (Duckface, 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Head tilted to the side › Filter seems to have been used
Name of the celebrity: Selena Gomez				
Before photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Light makeup › Natural eyebrows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Casual clothing › Youthful look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural › Cheerful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural posture
After photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Lengthened lashes › Arched eyebrows › Light makeup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Jewelry › Sexy outfit, low-cut top 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Intense stare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Unnatural posture, with her hands on her collar
Name of the celebrity: Justin Bieber				
Before photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural hair colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Casual clothing › Youthful look 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Cheerful › Relaxed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Natural posture
After photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Coloured hair › Tattoos › Muscles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Little clothing › Sexy outfit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Intense stare › Context: photo for an ad for Calvin Klein underwear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Showing off his body › Sexy posture, with his shirt lifted so that his abs are visible.



SHEET

1.6

FOR THE GROUP

Photos of celebrities looking natural

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Look at the different photos of celebrities *looking natural*.





SHEET

1.7

FOR THE GROUP

Public awareness campaigns and posters that promote a positive body image

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Ask yourself which message speaks to you the most in the following public awareness campaigns and posters.

#1 Poster to raise awareness about the importance of body diversity

Text:

No wrong way to have a body



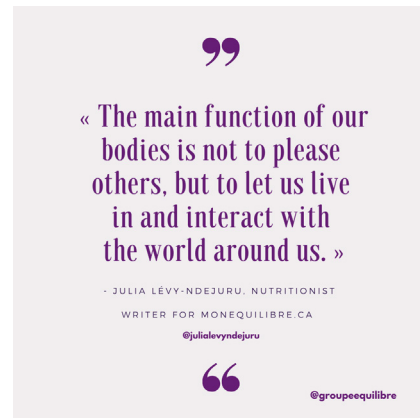
Inspired by Redbubble

<https://www.redbubble.com/fr/i/poster/Pas-de-mauvaise-fa%C3%A7on-dand-39-avoir-un-corps-par-glorifyobesity/16446689.LVTDI>

#2 Poster by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on the main function of the body (2021)

Text:

“The main function of our bodies is not to please others, but to let us live in and interact with the world around us.”



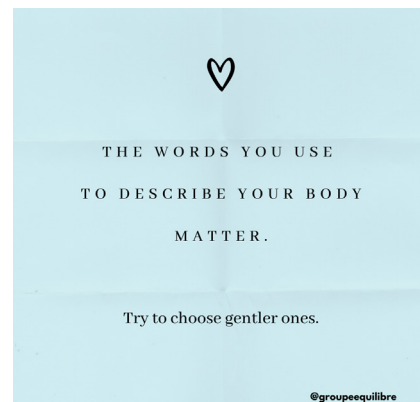
ÉquiLibre. (February 22, 2021). [Instagram post].

#3 Poster by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on the words we use to describe our body (2021)

Text:

The words you use to describe your body matter.

Try to choose gentler ones.



ÉquiLibre. (February 25, 2021). [Instagram post].

#4 Poster by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on what we need to be (2022)

Text:

I need to be:
~~good-looking~~
~~thin~~
~~attractive~~
~~sexy~~
~~perfect~~
Myself.

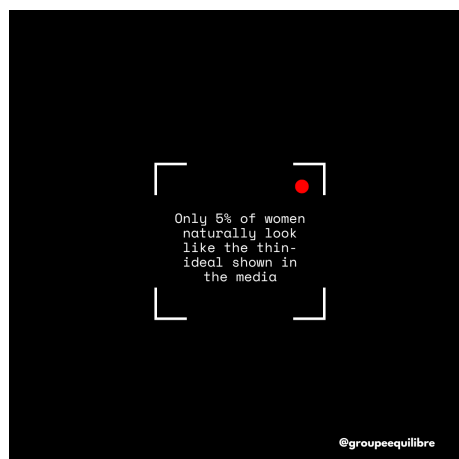


ÉquiLibre. (March 4, 2022). [Instagram post].

#5 Publication by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on how many women naturally meet the thinness ideal (2021)

Text:

Only 5% of women naturally meet the thinness ideal shown in the media.



ÉquiLibre. (March 16, 2021). [Instagram post].

#6 Poster by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on tips for accepting parts of your body (2021)

Text:

Learning to accept your body doesn't mean thinking that every part of it is perfect. It means recognizing your value even if there are certain parts of your body that you like less!



ÉquiLibre. (December 21, 2021). [Instagram post].

#7 Poster by the organization **ÉquiLibre** on what our body allows us to do (2021)

Text:

My eyes let me appreciate the beauty of the world
 My arms let me hold the people I love
 My head lets me dream big
 My stomach lets me laugh so hard it hurts
 My thighs are powerful and let me push my limits
 My nose lets me smell my favourite smells
 My legs let me walk, run and jump
 My feet let me express myself through dance
 How does your body let you achieve your goals and express yourself?



ÉquiLibre. (November 12, 2021). [Instagram post].



SHEET

1.8

FOR THE GROUP

Self-assessment: Who am I on social media?

INSTRUCTIONS

- › This exercise is done individually. You don't need to share your answers if you don't want to. It's a personal exercise.
- › As you examine the photos that you posted on social media, what do you notice regarding (a) your physical appearance, (b) your clothing and your look, (c) your attitude and (d) other aspects or features.
- › For each of the questions below, indicate the FREQUENCY at which this behavior occurs .

Self-assessment: Who am I on social media?

	NEVER 1	SOMETIMES 2	OFTEN 3	ALWAYS 4
				Write the number that corresponds to how often you do these things
My physical appearance		I use a filter before posting a photo/video on social media.		
		Before posting a photo/video on social media, I digitally alter it with an app.		
		I smile in the photos/videos I post. 😊		
		I make silly faces in the photos/videos I post.		

Self-assessment: Who am I on social media?

	NEVER 1	SOMETIMES 2	OFTEN 3	ALWAYS 4
				Write the number that corresponds to how often you do these things
My clothing and my look		I spend several hours choosing my look before taking a photo to post on social media.		
		I try to replicate the looks of my favourite celebrities in the photos I post.		
		In the photos I post on social media, I wear clothes that I wouldn't wear in my everyday life.		
		I put on makeup when taking photos that I plan to post on social media.		
My attitude		I make pouty faces in the photos/videos I post on social media (nonchalant look, etc.).		
		I do a "duck face" (a facial expression that accentuates the lips, like a duck's beak) in the photos/videos I post on social media.		
Other factors or features		Photos of me on social media taken by my friends in which I'm "tagged."		
		I do the same poses and postures as my favourite celebrities.		
		If I don't get many "likes" on a photo I post, I remove it from social media.		

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Secondary 3 - Session 2

Romantic relationships - “Loving and Being Loved: Not Always Easy!”

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 the benefits of a romantic relationship based on mutuality

- › Consideration of each partner’s needs: to love and be loved, to assert yourself and be listened to, to recognize the other and be recognized, to feel safe, to have space for yourself and leave space for your partner in the relationship, to respect your sexual needs and those of your partner

Identify the importance of healthy conflict management in a romantic relationship

- › Difficulties in a romantic relationship: sharing time between your friends and your partner, jealousy, cheating, violence
- › Behaviours that promote conflict resolution: listening, communication of feelings, proposal of mutually satisfying solutions, compromise, seeking of help from the people around you and from school personnel
- › Separation: reasons to separate and ways of separating

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

Broad areas of learning	Health and Well-Being: Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good lifestyle habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality.	
Cross-curricular competencies	Intellectual competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Solves problems › Exercises critical judgment 	Personal and social competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieves his/her potential › Cooperates with others Communication-related competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately
Subject areas	Personal development subject area	
	› <i>Quebec citizenship and culture</i>	
Subject-specific competencies (MEES, 2009)	Reads and enjoys a variety of texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Builds meaning › Exercises critical judgment Writes a variety of texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses creativity 	Communicates orally, using different methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Gives oral presentations › Adopts a critical attitude

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: Autonomy and Interdependence (Secondary 2)

Disciplinary competencies	Studies a cultural reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establishes the scope of the object of study › Evaluates elements of knowledge › Analyzes social relations › Demonstrates a more complete understanding 	Reflects on an ethical question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation › Examines a variety of points of view › Develops a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	Understand romantic relationships in adolescence (Secondary 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Diversity of possible relationship paths › Positive and negative norms and social pressures › Importance attributed to being in a romantic relationship › Breakups and heartbreak Understand healthy conflict management in a romantic relationship (Secondary 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Difficulties experienced in a romantic relationship › Behaviours that promote conflict resolution › Reasons and ways to break up › Support resources and solutions 	Reflect on tensions between own feelings and the feelings of others in first dating relationships (Secondary 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Divergent expectations, needs, motivations and limits Reflect on tensions experienced while managing conflict in romantic relationships (Secondary 2)



Educational Goals



Session length:

75 minutes

Develop skills to deal with various possible outcomes in an adolescent romantic relationship (e.g., conflict management, breakup, heartbreak).

- 1. Discuss** the aspects that make an adolescent romantic relationship *work, go downhill or fall apart*.
- 1. Identify** the possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship (e.g., relationship is going well, conflict, breakup).
- 2.** Based on situations that illustrate different sources of conflict in an adolescent romantic relationship, **indicate** the behaviours and attitudes that promote conflict resolution.
- 3. Discuss** the various questions that a romantic breakup raises.
- 4. Analyze** the consequences of an adolescent romantic breakup for the person being broken up with and the person doing the breaking up.
- 5. Suggest** respectful and kind ways of breaking up, including in the era of technology.
- 6. Respond** to clichés about heartbreak and acknowledge the importance of self-care when you experience heartbreak.
- 7. Recognize** that loving and being loved is an essential need, and that it can be expressed and experienced in different ways.



Sequence



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

10 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship › Presentation: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship when “the relationship is going well” <i>Sheet 2.1: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship</i> › Discussion and Presentation: Aspects that make a romantic relationship work, go downhill or fall apart <i>Sheet 2.2: Aspects that make a romantic relationship work, go downhill or fall apart</i> › Videos: “Obsession” and “Isolation”
20 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation: “There’s a conflict” <i>Sheet 2.1: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship</i> › Team Activity: Romantic conflict: how to respond <i>Sheet 2.3: Romantic conflict: how to respond</i> › Discussion and Presentation: Behaviour that promotes conflict resolution with your partner
25 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation: “We broke up” <i>Sheet 2.1: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship</i> › Team Activity: Situations involving romantic breakups <i>Sheet 2.4a: Situational exercise: Clémentine and Hugo</i> <i>Sheet 2.4b: Situational exercise: Delia and Jacob</i> <i>Sheet 2.4c: Situational exercise: Charles and Dimitri</i> <i>Sheet 2.5: Answer Sheet: Situational exercises</i> › Discussion and Presentation

10 min.	ACTIVITY 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation: Stages of heartbreak <i>Sheet 2.1: Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship</i> › Raised Hand Survey: Heartbreak <i>Sheet 2.6: Heartbreak</i> › Discussion and Presentation
5 min.	Session CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: “Teens Talk About Love” › 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/>)



Activity 1



SHEETS 2.1 AND 2.2
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



VIDEOS



**TEAM
ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by reminding the group about the rules presented in the introduction or in the companion slideshow (e.g., taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).
- › **Explain** to the group that today's session is about romantic relationships, more specifically the possible outcomes and difficulties of an adolescent romantic relationship.

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.

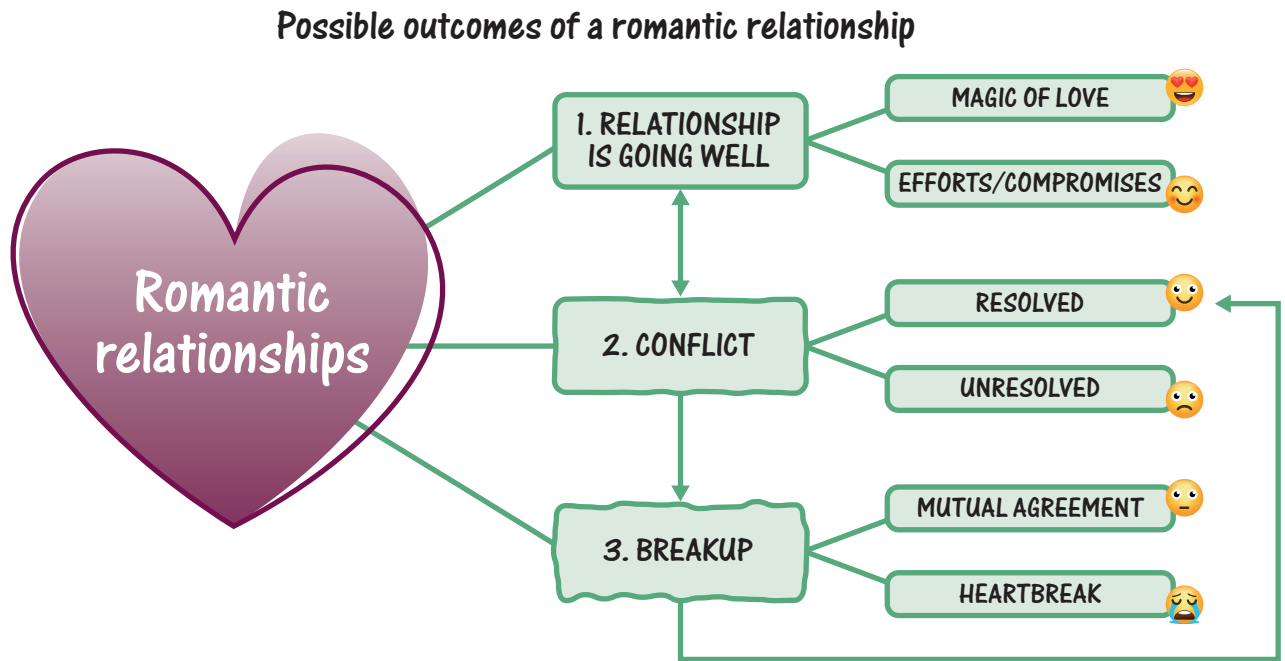
Discussion

- › **Ask** the group to identify the possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship, namely the various ways that it can change over time.
 - **How do you think a romantic relationship can change over time? In other words, what can happen? What are some possible scenarios?**

Get their opinions.

Presentation

- Following the discussion, **add to** the answers using the image and the proposed information (see Sheet 2.1: *Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship*). The possible outcomes are: “The relationship is going well”; “There’s a conflict”; “We broke up.” Since, for each of these outcomes, others are added, it’s important to follow the order in which they are presented.



Discussion and Presentation

- Continue** by creating two columns on the blackboard titled as follows:
 - “Romantic relationship that is working”
 - “Romantic relationship that has gone downhill or fallen apart”
- Discuss** as a group the aspects that make an adolescent romantic relationship work, go downhill or fall apart. To do so, **address** the class as two distinct groups: Group 1, on the left side of the classroom, will answer the first question and Group 2, on the right side of the classroom, will answer the second question.
 - Group 1: What do you think makes a romantic relationship work?**
 - Group 2: What do you think makes a romantic relationship go downhill or fall apart?**
- Write** their answers on the blackboard.
- Go over** the information related to the first section entitled “*The relationship is going well*” on Sheet 2.1: *Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship*.
- Add to** the answers using the detailed information on Sheet 2.2: *Aspects that make a romantic relationship work, go downhill or fall apart*.

- *Aspects that make a relationship work:* respect for the needs of both people, trust and emotional intimacy, kindness with respect to yourself and the other person, communication and conflict management
- *Aspects that make a relationship go downhill or fall apart:* presence of dominant, possessive, demeaning or manipulative behaviour

Videos and Presentation

- › End the activity by **showing two 15-second videos** that illustrate situations in which a given behaviour makes the romantic relationship seem appropriate or inappropriate.

Obsession (JoinOneLove, 2016)

Length: 0 min., 15 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtdqEllsSQ4>



Video



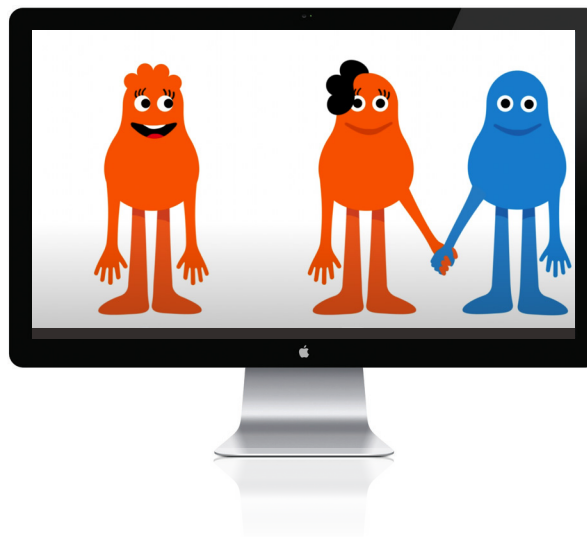
Isolation (JoinOneLove, 2016)

Length: 0 min., 15 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PCsnO2oWV0>



Video



› After viewing these two short videos, **get** their opinions:

- **What are your takeaways from these short videos?**

Get their opinions.

› **Conclude** the activity with the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

In these videos:

- The boyfriend or girlfriend makes strong demands on and exerts control over the other person.
- Too much intensity and a desire to control the other person harm the relationship and, in particular, limit the freedom of the person being controlled.
 - For example: following someone you like on Instagram is very different from constantly texting the person to always know where they are.
 - For example: not being available to do an activity with your friend because you've already planned to spend time with your boyfriend or girlfriend is very different from never seeing your friend because your boyfriend or girlfriend insists that you always be together.
- It's important to be aware of these signs to ensure your well-being (physical, psychological and emotional) and safety in a romantic relationship.

› **Explain** that the upcoming activities will deal specifically with conflict resolution in a romantic relationship, the consequences of a breakup, how to be kind when breaking up and how to get over heartbreak.



2

Activity 2



SHEETS 2.1 AND 2.3
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MIN.



PRESENTATION



**TEAM
ACTIVITY**

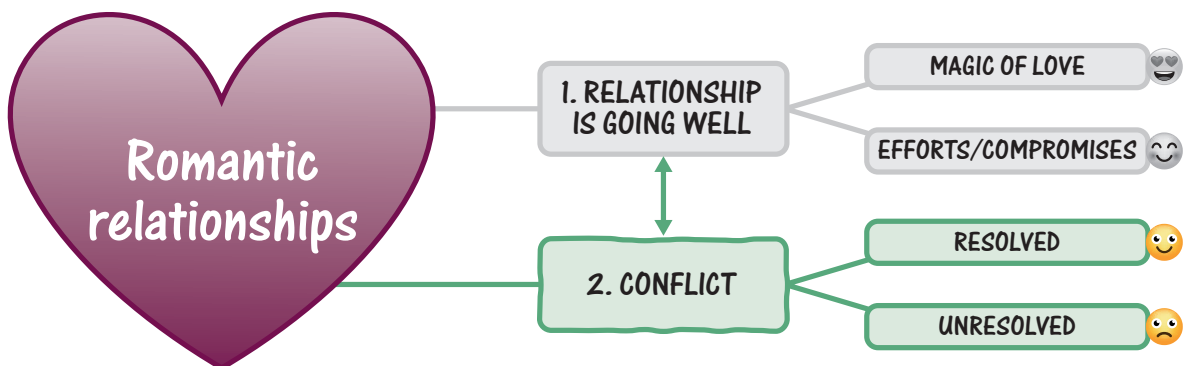


**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Presentation

- › **Continue** with the question of conflict in a romantic relationship. **Go over** all the information in the “Conflict” section of Sheet 2.1.

Conflicts



Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of three for a brief activity.
- › Before the start of the activity, you will have cut out all the statements from Sheet 2.3: *Romantic conflict: how to respond*, in order to hand one out to each team.
- › **Give** the group the following instructions:
 - The following activity deals with conflict situations that may be experienced in an adolescent romantic relationship. You will be presented with a conflict that may be experienced in a romantic relationship and the source of that conflict.
 - The team must read the statement that they were assigned and answer the related question.
 - Each team will need to choose a spokesperson to share the answers with the group.

- › **Give** them five minutes to complete this task.
- › Once the five minutes are up, **ask** the spokesperson for each team to share their answers for each question.
- › **Add to** their answers by **sharing** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Behaviour that is conducive to resolving a conflict

- **Managing your emotions:** A conflict (an argument) or a misunderstanding can sometimes lead you to experience intense emotions, which is entirely normal. However, reacting strongly can cause you to say things that you don't really mean and that you might regret afterwards (Tel-jeunes, 2022c). To avoid disrespecting or hurting your partner, you can use several strategies to manage your emotions, whether that's taking some time for yourself to calm down (e.g., doing breathing exercises, writing in a journal, doing sports, listening to music) or reflecting on the conflict and possible ways of resolving it (MEES, 2019). By putting these strategies into practice, you become more comfortable with communicating your concerns and thoughts to the other person in a respectful way.
- **Communicating and listening:** Non-violent communication in which respect, kindness and honesty are key is essential if you want to resolve a disagreement or a conflict. Using "I" statements, you can identify specifically what you observed or heard that bothered or hurt you (e.g., "The other day, it hurt my feelings when you told me you didn't like my new haircut," instead of saying: "You never think I'm pretty.") It's an effective way of expressing and making the other person understand why you're angry or disappointed (Tel-jeunes, 2022b). It gives both people the chance to explain and clarify their point of view, while still being heard by the other person (MEES, 2019).
- **Choosing the right time:** When a conflict erupts with your partner, it's important to choose a time when both people feel ready to discuss it (open to listening to the other person), safe and free from pressure (free from the scrutiny of others) and comfortable sharing their opinions/perceptions of the situation (Tel-jeunes, 2022c).
- **Looking for shared solutions:** The solutions should be suitable for both partners. It's not a real compromise if one person feels that their solutions or needs are often disregarded when a difficulty arises (MEES, 2019).
- **Seeking help from family, friends and school staff:** Sometimes, talking to a trusted person can help you see a situation differently, and consider the possible options/solutions in order to make the best decision for you, namely for your physical, psychological and emotional well-being and safety (MEES, 2019). Online resources, such as Tel-jeunes, Kids Help Phone and Interligne, are also available to provide information and assistance.

Discussion and Presentation

› **Lead** a discussion using the following question and **get** their answers:

- **Why do you think it's important to resolve conflicts with your boyfriend or girlfriend?**

› **Add** to their answers by sharing the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of resolving conflict with your boyfriend or girlfriend:

- Resolving a conflict shows that you place importance:
 - on your romantic relationship,
 - but also on your partner's concerns and boundaries
- Seeking common ground is an opportunity for both people to express themselves, but also to hear what the other person has to say.
 - It allows you to correct a situation that may have upset the other person.
 - It allows you to better understand how the other person perceived the situation, and how they felt about it.
 - It may help prevent another similar conflict from arising.

› **Explain** that the next activity will deal with breakup.

3

Activity 3



SHEETS 2.1, 2.4A, 2.4B, 2.4C AND 2.5
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



25 MINUTES



PRESENTATION



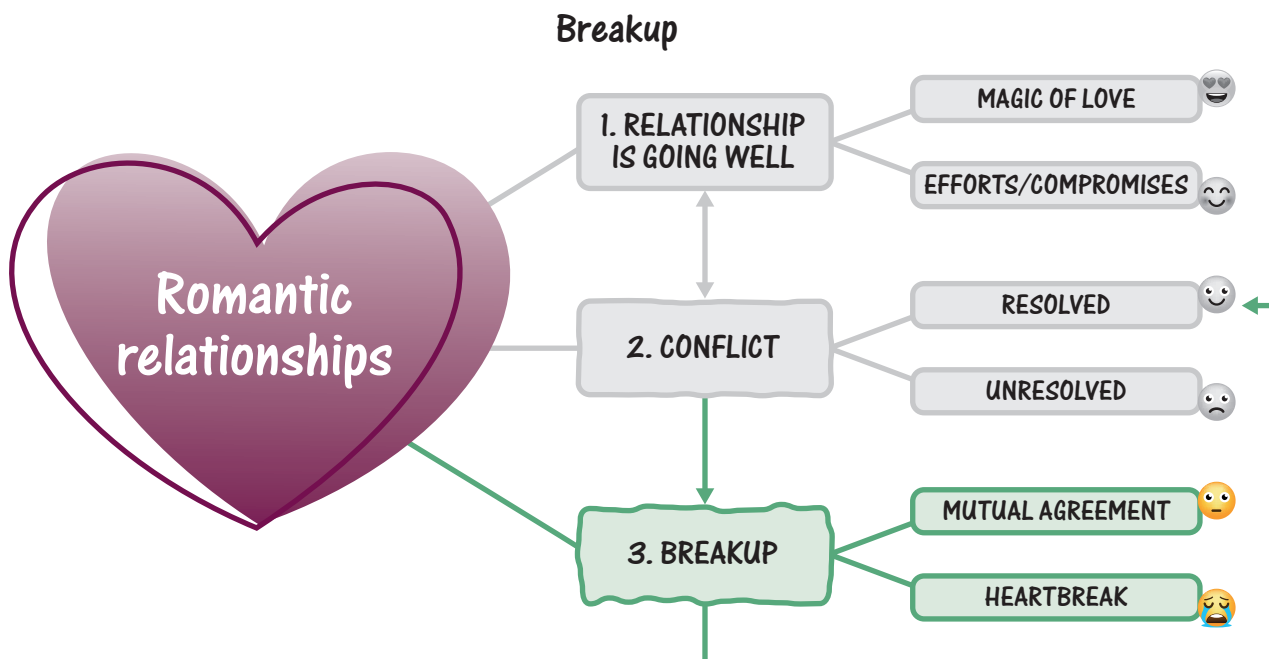
TEAM ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

Presentation

- › **Go over** the information in the “Breakup” section of Sheet 2.1, leaving out the part that deals with heartbreak (which will be covered in Activity 4).



Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion on breakup using the following questions, and **get** their answers:

- **How do you think you might feel:**
 - **BEFORE** a breakup?
 - **AFTER** a breakup?

Get their opinions.

- › **Add** to their answers by sharing the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Feelings BEFORE/AFTER a breakup

- Everyone experiences a romantic breakup differently. It can be minor/liberating for one person and painful for the other (Tel-jeunes, 2022a). The end of a romantic relationship can cause several different emotions and raise many questions (before and/or after the breakup).

a. BEFORE the breakup

Emotions you might feel: discomfort, depression, sadness, relief, eagerness, etc.

Questions you might have:

- Do I really love him or her?
- Do I still love him or her?
- Am I with him or her to avoid being single or to be like everyone else?
- How do I feel when I'm with him or her?
- Does my partner really love me?
- What will happen if we break up? Will I have a bad reputation?
- How will our friends react when they find out we broke up? Will I see them less often? Will they take sides?
- Is it better to maintain some type of relationship? What type of relationship would be best (e.g., friendship in the real world or on social media)? Would it be best to cut ties or at least put some distance between us for some time? Why or why not? (MEES, 2020)
- Etc.

b. AFTER the breakup

Emotions you might feel: sadness, depression, relief, freedom, discomfort, regret, etc.

Questions you might have:

- Did I really love him or her?
- Do I still love him or her?
- How do I know whether he or she really loved me?
- What will I do without him or her?
- What did I do wrong that led to this breakup?
- Will I eventually stop thinking about him or her?
- How do I get over my heartbreak?
- Why? Why didn't our relationship work out?
- How should I act if I run into my ex in the hallway at school? in class? on my way to catch the bus? at the youth centre?
- How will I react if I see him with a new girlfriend or boyfriend?
- Etc.

Discussion and Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group the following question:
 - “What do you think are the possible consequences of a breakup?”
Get their opinions.
- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of three.
- › **Hand out** one of the three situations proposed for this activity (Sheet 2.4a: *Situation: Clémentine and Hugo*; Sheet 2.4b: *Situation: Delia and Jacob*; or Sheet 2.4c: *Situation: Charles and Dimitri*).
- › **Tell** the group that they will have 10 minutes to respond to the situation, namely to say what they think about that way of breaking up and the possible consequences of that type of breakup and suggest a kind way of breaking up. Each team will need to choose a spokesperson to share the answers with the group. You can read over the instructions on Sheet 2.4a with them.
- › Once the 10 minutes are up, **ask** the spokespeople for the teams that had situation 2.4a (Clémentine and Hugo) to share their answers for each of the questions. Do the same for situation 2.4b (Delia and Jacob) and then for 2.4c (Charles and Dimitri).
- › After examining all the situations, **add** to their answers using the information proposed for each situation (see Sheet 2.5: *Answer Sheet: Situations*, which consolidates the information and examples for each situation).

Discussion and Presentation

- › After the brainstorming, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and get their answers:
 - **What do you think about using technology to break up (e.g., text message, phone call, FaceTime®, social media)?**
 - **Do you think there are advantages to using technology to break up?**
 - **If so, which ones?**
 - **Are there advantages to breaking up in person?**
 - **If so, which ones?**
 - **Why is it important to be kind when breaking up?**
Get their opinions.

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **Advantages of using technology (e.g., text message, phone call, FaceTime®, social media) to break up**

- Since there's no face to face, it can be less embarrassing, less intimidating.
- Being able to tell the person in writing what you think and feel gives you the impression that you can say whatever you want, without worrying about being interrupted.
- When you have a long-distance relationship (e.g., your boyfriend or girlfriend lives in another city, has moved away or is on a student exchange), it can be easier for the person who wants to break up to do so using technology rather than wait to see the other person face to face.

- › **Advantages of breaking up in person**

- When you choose to break up face to face, there's less room for interpretation, both for the person doing the breaking up and person being broken up with. You see how the other reacts to what you are saying and you can respond to that wave of emotions.
- In addition, there's less of a chance that rumours will spread since both people have taken the time to discuss the situation together before telling their family, friends and classmates.

- › **The importance of being kind when breaking up**

- Even if the relationship at that moment is no longer working for you, you've still shared memories, confidences and intimate moments with the other person, which is why it's important to be respectful when the time comes to break up.
- Breaking up in person (e.g., face to face, FaceTime®, Zoom®) lets the other person know that they are still important enough for you to take the time to offer explanations and listen to what they have to say in return (e.g., feelings, emotions).
- Being kind when breaking up doesn't mean you don't take your own well-being into account, but it does mean being sensitive to the other person vulnerabilities.

- › **Explain** that the next activity will deal with heartbreak.



Activity 4



SHEETS 2.1 AND 2.6
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



RAISED HAND
SURVEY



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

Presentation

- › Start the activity by **explaining** to the group the stages of heartbreak (Shock, Denial, Sadness, Acceptance) on Sheet 2.1: *Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship*.

Raised Hand Survey

- › **Tell** the group that they will have to answer a show-of-hands survey on heartbreak in which they indicate whether they agree or disagree.
- › For each statement, **share** the information on Sheet 2.6: *Heartbreak*, which concludes this activity.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Lead** a discussion using the following question and **get** their answers:
 - **Why do you think self-care is important when you experience heartbreak?**
- › **Add to** their answers by sharing the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of self-care when you experience heartbreak:

- Self-care means making your needs a priority.
- Doing things that you enjoy, discovering new interests and surrounding yourself with people who make you feel good are all ways of getting over heartbreak.
- Expressing how you feel allows you to break the isolation and get advice and support from your family and friends (MEES, 2020).
- It's not about pretending that the heartbreak doesn't exist, but rather choosing when to give in to it and when to turn your attention to something else (Tel-jeunes, 2017).



Session Conclusion



10 MIN.



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
Get their opinions.
- › **Show** a video that illustrates the fact that loving and being loved is an essential need in a person's life, and that it can be expressed and experienced in different ways.

Teens Talk About Love (KidsHealth, 2013)

Length: 2 min., 5 sec.

[https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/Patients-Families/Health-Library/HealthDocNew/Teens-Talk-About-Love-\(Video\)](https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/Patients-Families/Health-Library/HealthDocNew/Teens-Talk-About-Love-(Video))



Video



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

- › **Add** to their answers with the following **KEY MESSAGES**.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Being in love is very enjoyable and uplifting, and makes you feel important and special in the eyes of the other person.
- › In a relationship, small conflicts can occur without you immediately thinking about breaking up or calling into question your love for the other person.
- › However, when things are no longer going well, it can be hard to decide to break up. It's understandable to want to end a relationship that doesn't make you feel good, but you have to prepare your "exit strategy" and understand that the other person may be shocked and saddened.
- › Similarly, the person who is being broken up with has to try to understand the other person's decision (even if it makes them sad). And, although breaking up is painful, doing it with respect, consideration and kindness will likely cause fewer bitter memories.
- › One thing's for sure, romantic relationships help us learn about ourselves and about how we connect with others.



SHEET

2.1

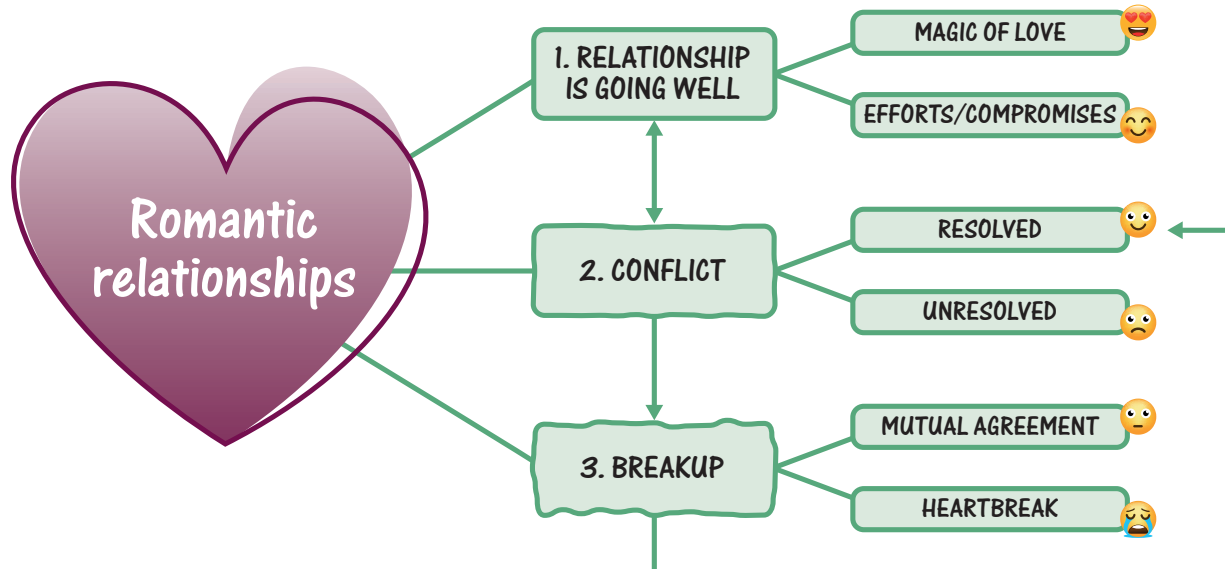
FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship

INSTRUCTIONS

- › During the brainstorming, get the information provided by the group. Suggest the items of information specified below, one after the other.

Possible outcomes of a romantic relationship



1. The relationship is going well

- › One of the possible outcomes of an adolescent romantic relationship is that it's going well, and you want it to continue.
- › When you're with your boyfriend or girlfriend, you have several things going on in your **MIND** (e.g., "I'm always thinking about him"; "What activity would she enjoy?"), your **HEART** (e.g., "I like her"; "I feel safe with him") and your **BODY** (e.g., "I get chills/butterflies in my stomach when I'm around her"; "I always want to cuddle up to him").

The magic of love

- › The magic of love is at play when everything's going well in the relationship that you're building with the other person, and it's easy and light: you feel good with the other person; you don't have to make any major efforts/compromises; you never argue because you're comfortable discussing any problems that come up and you manage to resolve minor frustrations; you like the same things; you feel like you have space in the relationship, etc.

Efforts/compromises

- › Even when the romantic relationship you're in is going well, both people have to do their share by making efforts and compromises. A compromise is an arrangement involving mutual concessions [Translation] (Le Robert, n.d.)
- › In other words, both people have to strike a balance in the relationship, whether by making sure to place importance on what matters to each person (e.g., plans, ideas, values, expectations), but still allowing each person to make decisions (Tel-jeunes, 2022b).
- › The following are a few examples of possible efforts/compromises in a romantic relationship: accompanying your boyfriend or girlfriend to an event that is important to them; willingly discussing their interests and concerns; understanding that your partner prefers spending an evening with her friends, even if you really want to see her; going to dinner at his family's, even if you're really shy; coming up with activities that she would really enjoy, etc.

2. Conflict

- › One of the possible outcomes associated with an adolescent romantic relationship is conflict.
- › Disagreements, misunderstandings or conflict in a romantic relationship are completely normal, and not necessarily associated with something negative (Fernet, Hébert, Moreau, St-Hilaire, Blais and équipe PAJ, 2016). In fact, a conflict can be a perfect opportunity to reiterate your expectations, needs and boundaries in a romantic relationship (Fernet and al., 2016). Conflict resolution also helps you learn how to communicate.
 - Examples of possible needs: “How do I want us to show affection?” “How often do I need to be connected to my partner?” “What am I not prepared to share with my partner?” (Healthy Relationships Initiative, 2019)
 - Examples of boundaries that you can communicate: “To feel independent, I need to have activities where we’re not always together. We’re at choir together, but I want to do kickboxing on my own.” “I like it when we text, but not 24/7.” (Healthy Relationships Initiative, 2019)
- › It’s not helpful to fly off the handle during a conflict, which will likely only make the situation worse. It’s best to just give your opinion in a respectful way, without hurting or putting down the other person.
- › Be careful! A conflict is an indication of a disagreement, irritation, etc. The tone of the conversation may not be pleasant, but there’s discussion. If it turns into endless shouting, disparaging comments and vicious remarks, it’s no longer simply a conflict, it’s violence. If the situation becomes abusive and degrading for you, don’t hesitate to go get help to ensure your physical, psychological and emotional safety.

Resolved

- › During a conflict, one person can be disappointed, frustrated or angry with the other person, but decide to put the romantic relationship first, which is their reason for wanting to resolve the problem.
- › Conflict resolution requires that both people take the time to identify where they went wrong in the situation, show openness and be prepared to calmly discuss the problem (Tel-jeunes, 2022c).

Unresolved

- › Sometimes, an unresolved conflict can lead to a romantic breakup, even if both partners made a real effort to find common ground (MEES, 2020).

3. Breakup

- › A breakup, whether or not it's the result of a mutual agreement, occurs when a romantic relationship ends.
- › That said, a breakup does not necessarily lead to heartbreak or feelings of intense loss. Depending on the context, a breakup can be entirely welcome (by one or both people), and even seen as liberating (e.g., getting out of a relationship in which you did not feel good, or you just weren't in love) (MEES, 2020).
- › There are several reasons why one or both people decide to end a relationship. According to a Quebec study on adolescent romantic relationships (Lavoie and al., 2015b) conducted on young people aged 14 to 18, the main reasons for breakups are a lack of shared interests or different values, and infidelity.
- › However, other reasons lead adolescents to want to end their committed relationships. In a Canadian study (Connolly and McIsaac, 2009) of young people aged 15 to 18, the main reasons used to justify a breakup were as follows (in order of importance): geographic distance, lack of time together, infidelity, boredom, different personalities, lack of love, distrust/dishonesty, lack of shared interests and conflict. Sometimes the romantic relationship ends following a conflict, even after genuine efforts were made to try to resolve it (MEES, 2020).
- › What is important when you decide to break up is adopting a kind/respectful attitude toward the other person.

Mutual agreement

- › When both partners agree to end the relationship, the breakup is said to be the result of a mutual agreement. The partners may have realized that the relationship they were building was no longer working for them, and they decide to break up.
- › Even if both partners agree to end the relationship, they may still feel sad, have doubts, be fearful and/or experience feelings of emptiness (Tel-jeunes, 2021a). It's normal to feel unsettled and confused when a romantic relationship ends, since it can represent a significant loss for you (MEES, 2020).

Heartbreak

- › The emotional period that follows the end of a romantic relationship is what is referred to as heartbreak (On parle de sexe, 2018).
- › The intensity with which someone experiences this heartbreak depends on several things, such as the length of the relationship, the intensity of the feelings for the other person and the context in which the breakup occurs (e.g., reasons for and ways of breaking up) (Morin, 2009).
- › The stages of heartbreak are comparable to those that a person may experience with mourning. Each of these stages can be experienced differently, that is, in an order and to an extent that is specific to each person (MEES, 2020; On parle de sexe, 2018). The stages generally include the following: **1) Shock:** you don't understand what's happening and you feel powerless to deal with the situation; **2) Denial:** you can't believe that the relationship is really over, which can lead you to want to get back together with the person; **3) Sadness:** you're convinced that you'll never be able to love anyone the way you loved this person and you believe that you're incapable of being loved by anyone else; you may feel abandoned and alone; and **4) Acceptance:** you understand why the relationship was no longer working and you're able to identify the positive aspects (here, the hope of ever loving and being loved again gradually returns) (Morin, 2009).



SHEET

2.2

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Aspects that make a romantic relationship work, go downhill or fall apart

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Get the information provided by both groups and suggest the information below.
- › First, it's important to know that no romantic relationship is perfect. However, you have to keep in mind that specific aspects must be there for it to work (in the short, medium or long term) and for you to feel good about it.

Aspects that make a romantic relationship <i>WORK</i>	Definition	Examples
The needs of both partners are listened to and respected	<p>In general, taking the needs of both partners into account makes it possible to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› “Love and be loved (and feel loved)› Assert yourself and be listened to by the other person› Acknowledge the other person and be acknowledged (be appreciated for who you are and feel it in a tangible way)› Feel safe (physically and psychologically)› Have space for you and leave space for the other person› Respect your sexual needs and those of the other person (e.g., expectations, boundaries) (MEES, 2019).” <p>In other words, partners, as well as their interests and desires, must be equal in the relationship.</p>	<p>“The other evening, my girlfriend mentioned that she felt like spending the evening with her best friend. I was happy for her and told her that we’d see each other this weekend.”</p> <p>“Étienne and Sandrine are really in love, and it shows when they’re together. However, for now, Étienne isn’t ready to go any further and engage in sexual activities. Sandrine told him that she loved him, and that she’d be ready whenever he was.”</p>

<p>Trust and emotional intimacy</p>	<p>Trust develops as the relationship with your partner grows. It's about knowing that you can count on the other person at any time, regardless of day-to-day events or situations that come up (One Love Foundation, 2021a; PREVNet, 2019), but it's also about trusting the other person's honesty and believing that they will keep their promises (Kids Help Phone, 2018). When the romantic relationship is based on trust, both partners protect and support one another, and are easily able to share emotional intimacy (Kids Help Phone, 2018).</p> <p>Emotional intimacy is a safe space (e.g., respect, non-judgment, active listening) that is created as a relationship develops between two people and in which it is possible to open up to the other person (e.g., experiences, feelings for the other person, concerns) (MEES, 2019). This space allows both partners to express and assert themselves, and to take their needs and boundaries into account (MEES, 2019).</p>	<p>"I'd never talked about that with anyone. With her, I feel like I can. She doesn't judge me. I feel like she really listens to me. And, I'm there for her when she needs me." (MEES, 2019).</p>
<p>Kindness toward yourself and the other person</p>	<p>Kindness is what allows relationships to contribute to well-being (PREVNet, 2019). It is the quality of being generous, friendly and considerate toward others in a selfless and comprehensive way (LInternaute, 2021).</p> <p>Being kind to yourself in a romantic relationship means, for example, taking the time to recognize and listen to your inner voice (e.g., your needs, feelings, boundaries, values). Moreover, being affectionate (e.g., holding your partner's hand, hugging, kissing) toward your partner and taking an interest in their world, namely their interests, dreams and fears, are examples of kindness.</p>	<p>"My best friend Cassie's girlfriend Laura has been coming to watch our soccer games ever since Cassie told her that it was important to her."</p> <p>"Rose likes that Philippe takes the time to compliment her. Having Philippe hug or kiss her makes her feel good, like she was floating on a cloud."</p> <p>"I worry about her. I ask her questions when I see that she's not feeling well." (MEES, 2019)</p>
<p>Communication and conflict management</p>	<p>Good communication between partners is one of the key components to building and maintaining a romantic relationship. Whether verbal (e.g., words) or nonverbal (e.g., gestures, actions), communication allows partners to express what they feel is important, while listening to what is important to the other person (Kids Help Phone, 2018).</p> <p>It's also being able to explain problems honestly, respectfully and kindly (PREVNet, 2019), namely without hurting the other person. The use of nonviolent communication makes it possible to manage and/or resolve conflict calmly and in a way that shows respect for the other person (Tel-Jeunes, 2021b).</p>	<p>"I love it when we're together: I feel so good by your side, but I don't understand why, as soon as we're with your friends, you change your attitude toward me. I feel alone then, and I get the feeling that you'd prefer if I weren't there."</p> <p>"Thanks for not insisting that I come over tonight. I really have to study for my exam."</p>

- After a while, you may realize that the romantic relationship that you're in no longer meets your needs or is affecting your well-being. The following are some of the signs that a romantic relationship has gone downhill or fallen apart.

Aspects that make a romantic relationship GO DOWNHILL OR FALL APART	Definition	Examples
Dominant behaviour	When one partner has more power than the other in a relationship, that partner is said to exhibit dominant behaviour. For example, when one partner exhibits dominant behaviour over the other, it can give an impression of superiority, in particular by putting pressure on the person and/or forcing the person to do things that they don't want to do, such as have sex (Murphy, 2011).	"My girlfriend often puts pressure on me to send her nude photos, sexy videos or sexts."
Possessive behaviour	Generally, possessive behaviour occurs when one partner is jealous and/or has very intense feelings for the other person to the point of wanting to control various aspects of their partner's life (e.g., social circle and frequency of get-togethers, way of dressing) (One Love Foundation, 2021b). In other words, the person who exhibits this type of behaviour believes that they own the other person.	"Mathis says he gets jealous when his girlfriend Léa talks to other boys in her class. He even refused to let her team up with one of them for a visual arts project."
Belittling behaviour	Belittling behaviour occurs when one person attempts to diminish or demean the other person through the use of words or actions (One Love Foundation, 2021b). The use of insults, criticisms or hurtful comments is an example of belittling behaviour (One Love Foundation, 2021b).	"Nathan often says that his boyfriend Lucas is good for nothing because he has trouble in school."
Manipulation	Although difficult to see most of the time, manipulative behaviour occurs when one partner tries to control the other one's feelings, thoughts and actions (One Love Foundation, 2021b).	"The other day, my boyfriend said that if I didn't sleep with him, he'd leave me." "Katia's boyfriend Lewis said that he'd hurt himself if she left him."

- If you experience these behaviours in a romantic relationship, or if you witness them, you should never hesitate to get help from the people around you (e.g., family, friends, school professionals, community organizations or teachers). Sometimes, talking to a trusted person can help you see a situation differently, and consider your options/possible solutions in order to make the best decision for you (MEES, 2019). In cases of violence, you should never downplay the situation or isolate yourself.
- It's important to keep in mind that the only person who is responsible for these words and actions (e.g., dominant, possessive, belittling or manipulative behaviour) is the person who uses them, not the person who is subjected to them.



SHEET

2.3

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Romantic conflict: how to respond

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Cut out the various statements and hand one out to each team.
- › Tell them that they will have to read about a conflict that might occur in a romantic relationship and identify the way in which the main character can resolve the conflict.
- › Get the information provided by the teams.

Source of conflict: Lack of shared interests

Felix's girlfriend Jade says she doesn't like climbing, which is Felix's favourite hobby. She often tells him that she finds he spends too much time at the climbing centre, which is a source of conflict between them. She insists they cycle together. For some time now, Félix has been distant with Jade because he feels torn between his passion for rock climbing and Jade's repeated demands.

- In this situation, how could Félix respond to resolve this conflict?

Source of conflict: Pressure to send explicit sexual content

Béatrice's girlfriend, Claire, often puts pressure on her to send nude photos, sexy videos of herself or sexts. Since Béatrice is uncomfortable with these requests, she refuses to respond. The situation is really starting to bother her because she feels that Claire isn't hearing her refusal.

- In this situation, how could Béatrice respond to resolve this conflict?

Source of conflict: Difference of opinion on sex

Zoé's boyfriend Anthony often tells her that he's ready for them to have sex, since they've been together for over six months. Zoé says she wants to take things slow and doesn't feel the need right now. The situation is starting to worry her because she's afraid that Anthony will leave her if she refuses to have sex with him.

- In this situation, how could Zoé respond to resolve this conflict?

Source of conflict: Jealousy regarding partner's choice of company

Mathis says he gets jealous when his girlfriend, Léa, talks to other boys in her class. He even refused to let her team up with one of them for a visual arts project. Disappointed by Mathis's reaction, Léa wonders whether her boyfriend will often forbid her from hanging out with boys. She doesn't want to be subject to such ridiculous bouts of jealousy.

- In this situation, how could Léa respond to resolve this conflict?

Source of conflict: Difficulty accepting the other person's ex-partner

Zack's boyfriend, Thomas, often tells him that he doesn't like the relationship that Zack has with his ex. Since Zack plays on the same elite soccer team as his ex, he chose to stay on good terms with him, out of respect for his other teammates. However, Thomas thinks that Zack still has feelings for his ex.

- In this situation, how could Zack respond to resolve this conflict?



SHEET

2.4a

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Clémentine and Hugo

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Clémentine and Hugo

After a year together, **Clémentine** texts her boyfriend **Hugo** to say that she's leaving him. She tells him she doesn't love him anymore and prefers to spend more time with her friends. The following week, Clémentine is seen walking through the school hallway holding hands with Hugo's best friend **Théo**, whom she's had a crush on since the beginning of her relationship with Hugo. A few days later, Hugo finds out from a classmate that his best friend and ex-girlfriend have been texting for the past two months. Since learning this news, Hugo has felt confused, and often cries when he's alone. He was absent from school three days this week.

- › What do you think of this way of breaking up (by text)?

- › What do you think the consequences would be of this type of breakup for ...

- the person being broken up with (Hugo)?
- the person doing the breaking up (Clémentine)?

- › What do you think would be a respectful and kind way of breaking up?



SHEET

2.4b

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Delia and Jacob

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Delia and Jacob

While checking out her boyfriend **Jacob**'s profiles (Instagram®, Facebook® and Twitter®), **Delia** notices that he has deleted all photos of them together and changed his relationship status from “in a relationship” to “single.” In shock, Delia tries calling Jacob, but he ignores her calls and won't answer.

A few hours later, Delia gets about twenty messages from friends and classmates, who noticed the same things as her. Panicked about this rejection, she quickly posts a sexy selfie on her Instagram account, with the following comment: “Stronger than ever!” Although she gets a lot of “Likes” and flattering comments, Delia can't stop thinking about the situation with Jacob.

- › What do you think of this way of breaking up (via social media)?

- › What do you think the consequences would be of this type of breakup for ...

- the person being broken up with (Delia)?
- the person doing the breaking up (Jacob)?

- › What do you think would be a respectful and kind way of breaking up?



SHEET

2.4c

FOR THE GROUP

Situational exercise: Charles and Dimitri

INSTRUCTIONS

- › As a team, read the situation and answer the questions.
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.

Charles and Dimitri

Dimitri and **Charles** have been going out for six months. Dimitri finds out from his best friend that Charles wants to break up with him. Charles apparently told friends on his hockey team that he and Dimitri don't have the same interests or the same circle of friends, which is bothering him more and more. Sad and disappointed by this news, Dimitri tries to reach Charles several times, but is unsuccessful. Instead, Dimitri decides to send the following message to all his Instagram followers: "Charles texted me to say he was leaving me for someone else. He didn't even bother telling me face to face." In fact, Charles is not with anyone else, but it's true that he's been thinking about breaking off the relationship. That said, the rumour has already gone viral on social media and the following comments start circulating: "Charles is really disgusting. He cheated on his boyfriend. Hockey players are such 'players.'" "Charles is totally out of line. He should have talked to Dimitri directly."

- › What do you think of this way of breaking up (through a friend)?

- › What do you think the consequences would be of this type of breakup for...
 - the person being broken up with (Dimitri)?
 - the person doing the breaking up (Charles)?

- › What do you think would be a respectful and kind way of breaking up?



SHEET

2.5

FOR THE GROUP

Answer Sheet: Situational exercises

INSTRUCTIONS

- › The teams read the situation that was assigned to them (Clémentine and Hugo, Delia and Jacob or Charles and Dimitri) and answer the questions.
- › A spokesperson will share their answers.

› Consequences of this type of breakup for ...

a. the person being broken up with (Hugo, Delia and Dimitri)

In a romantic breakup, the person who is being broken up with can experience the following difficulties: trouble at school, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, loss of friends that they had in common with their ex-partner, dark thoughts.

However, the type of consequences related to a breakup, and their intensity and duration vary from person to person.

The following are some of the consequences that Hugo, Delia and Dimitri might experience.

- › Not really understanding the reason why they were broken up with, since they didn't take the time to discuss the situation together, and the decision seems rather sudden
 - For example, the situation that Hugo, Delia and Dimitri seem to be experiencing
- › Not feeling important in the eyes of their ex, who chose to break up using technology or through a friend
 - For example, the situation that Hugo, Delia and Dimitri seem to be experiencing
- › Feeling cheated on and deceived by their ex, but also by others in their peer group who were aware of the breakup before they were
 - For example, when Hugo realizes that Clémentine has had a crush on Théo (his best friend) since the start of their romantic relationship and that they have been texting for the past two months, without him knowing about it, he might feel betrayed.
 - For example, when Delia discovers that some of her classmates heard the news
 - For example, when Dimitri realizes that Charles's hockey team and his best friend were aware of the situation, but he wasn't

- › All-consuming feelings of sadness, anger, incomprehension and/or disappointment
 - For example, Hugo might feel sad and/or angry, not only because of the break up with Clémentine, but also because of the situation with his best friend, which might lead him to question the friendship that he had/will have with Théo (“Was he always being honest with me when he said that we couldn’t get together?”, “Will we continue to be friends?”, “Do I still want us to be friends?”).

› **Consequences of this type of breakup for ...**

a. the person doing the breaking up (Clémentine, Jacob and Charles)

The person who makes the decision to break up can also be affected by the situation. Ending a romantic relationship can cause the person to feel guilty of hurting their partner, and lead to changes in their social life (e.g., being judged negatively by others for ending the relationship; losing friends that they had in common) and habits (e.g., no longer writing to or confiding in their partner on a daily basis, having more time for themselves) (On parle de sexe, 2018).

The following are some of the consequences that Clémentine, Jacob and Charles might experience:

- › Being stressed and uncomfortable and/or feeling guilty for leaving their partner, since they didn’t take the time to explain the reasons for wanting to break up and are aware that their partner might feel hurt
 - For example, when Clémentine leaves Hugo to start a relationship with Théo
- › Being more comfortable and less embarrassed communicating their feelings in writing (e.g., text message, email) out of fear of forgetting to say specific things or seeing the other person’s reaction in person when they announce the breakup
 - For example, when Clémentine breaks up with Hugo by text
 - For example, when Jacob decides to break up with Delia by changing his relationship status and deleting all the photos of them together from his various profiles (Instagram®, Facebook® and Twitter®)

› **Consequences of this type of breakup for ...**

a. the person doing the breaking up (Clémentine, Jacob and Charles)

- › Being judged by their classmates, namely being seen as the “bad guy” in the situation, for leaving the person that way
 - For example, when various negative comments about Charles start circulating on social media
 - For example, when Delia’s classmates notice that Jacob deleted everything associated with their relationship from his various profiles (Facebook®, Instagram® and Twitter®)
- › Being happy to start a relationship with someone new
 - For example, Clémentine can now come out about her feelings for Théo, whom she’s had a crush on for nearly a year.
- › Having more free time for them, to do the things that they really enjoy (e.g., spending time with friends/family, doing their favourite activity)
- › Having a better understanding of their expectations, needs and boundaries when it comes to a future romantic relationship (in the short or medium term)
- › No longer being subject to the other person criticisms or demands
- › Etc.

› **Respectful/kind ways of breaking up with a partner:**

- › Breaking up is hard to do. However, the following are a few things to keep in mind when it comes to breaking up in a respectful and kind way:
- › **Try putting yourself in the shoes of the person being broken up with:** there's no point in being mean to your ex, or demeaning the romantic relationship in order to hurt the person and/or get revenge. That will likely amplify the person's feelings of sadness, anger, disappointment and/or incomprehension.
- › **Breaking up in person is the best choice,** even though this can result in feelings of incomprehension, tears, etc. However, if you have experienced violence in the romantic relationship, it's preferable to break up using technology in order to ensure your safety and well-being (MEES, 2019).
- › **Be honest:** There's no point in beating around the bush or making up reasons for wanting to end the relationship (Kids Help Phone, 2018). The important thing when breaking up is to listen to your inner voice and find a bit of courage to clearly explain why the relationship no longer works for you.



SHEET

2.2

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Heartbreak

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Tell the group that they will have to answer a raised hand survey on heartbreak in which they indicate whether they agree or disagree.
- › As a group, read the first statement.
- › Ask them: “Do you agree or disagree?”
- › Let them take a position and add to the information proposed below.
- › Repeat the same steps for the following statements.

Statement 1: Heartbreak should never last more than three months.

- › The duration and intensity of heartbreak varies from person to person. In fact, it depends on a number of things, including the way in which you broke up.
- › Heartbreak can cause you to experience all kinds of moods (e.g., having trouble concentrating on day-to-day tasks, feeling depressed or abandoned, feeling pain and/or a sense of emptiness) (Tel-Jeunes, 2022a).
- › If you feel that the heartbreak is overwhelming and that you’ve been isolated for too long, seeking help from a professional is a good way to get over this tough obstacle.

Statement 2: Adolescent heartbreak isn’t anything serious.

- › No matter how old you are, heartbreak is something serious, and it’s a difficult period to get through. It causes changes in your life since you have to drop some of the plan that you had together. It is normal to feel confused by it all.
- › Often, you imagine that you’re the reason for the breakup, that you weren’t “enough of this or that,” and you carry the weight of the separation on your shoulders.
- › There’s no point in being hard on or blaming yourself. That only increases the pain. What you have to remember is that the other person had their reasons for no longer feeling good in the relationship, and that it was no longer working for them.
- › Although that won’t stop you from feeling sad, it might keep you from shouldering all the blame.

Statement 3: When you go through heartbreak, you have to get rid of all the things associated with your ex (e.g., text messages, photos, gifts).

- › You don't have to get rid of all the items that remind you of your ex. Each person can decide what to do with the things that remind them of the other person.
- › Maybe for the time being, to help you get over your grief, you can just put all those things away (e.g., store them in a box) to put a bit of distance between you and the other person (SimonGIOfficial, 2015).
- › In other words, it's not about erasing, discarding or eliminating all the happy memories that you created and shared with the person, but rather about putting them aside until you feel better. Once you do, they will still be there if you want them.

Statement 4: A person going through heartbreak wants all the attention.

- › Often, a person going through heartbreak is more disconnected from day-to-day life, and therefore seems less well. At those times, you attract sympathy from the people around you, and that's OK, but you also have to learn to take care of yourself.
- › A difficult situation, like heartbreak, can turn into an opportunity to develop resilience, that is, your ability to deal with difficulties by drawing on your personal strengths (Lavoie and al., 2015a).
- › Doing things you enjoy, surrounding yourself with the right people and giving yourself time to heal are all strategies that allow you to bounce back from a difficult situation (Tel-jeunes, 2022a).

Statement 5: Anyone who is broken up with will necessarily go through heartbreak.

- › It's possible to leave on good terms, where both people agree that the relationship is over. It doesn't keep you from feeling disappointed that it didn't work out between you, but you avoid any suffering, intense crying or anger.

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Romantic relationships - “Loving and Being Loved: Not Always Easy!”

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Websites

- › Kids Help Phone: kidshelpphone.ca/
- › Tel-jeunes: teljeunes.com
- › Interline: interligne.co/en

Secondary 3 - Session 3 Part A - Part B

Sexual Consent “Consent: Facts and Acts”



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)
Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence	<p>Become aware of the active role you can play in preventing or reporting a situation of sexual assault</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Situations requiring the use of self-protection skills: with a friend, an acquaintance, a romantic partner or ex-partner.› Factors of vulnerability in each situation. <p>Understand the experience of people who are victims of sexual assault in order to react appropriately if a friend confides in you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">› Helpful attitudes: listening, empathy, non-judgmental attitude, believing the person, confidentiality, not insisting on hearing details of the assault, referral to a person who may be able to help (person at school or an organization).› Resources that can help: at school, in the community.

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: Enable students to take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity.</p>	
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"> › Ethics and Religious Culture (Cycle One) 	

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: Autonomy and Interdependence (Secondary 2)
Justice and the Law droit (Secondary 4)

Disciplinary competencies	<p>Studies a cultural reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establishes the scope of the object of study › Evaluates elements of knowledge › Analyzes social relations › Demonstrates a more complete understanding 	<p>Reflects on an ethical question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation › Examines a variety of points of view › Develops a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	<p>Understand the notion of consent in order to recognize a situation of sexual violence (Secondary 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Elements of consent and contexts in which consent is invalid <p>Understand the main legal frameworks applicable to romantic and sexual life (Secondary 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Consent in the Criminal Code › Sexual and domestic violence 	<p>Sexual violence may be studied, but it should not be the subject of normative ethical reflection, especially since the values and responses to be fostered have been determined and cannot be the subject of a critical examination.</p> <p>Reflect on the ethical issues that may exist with respect to the norms and values related to the legal frameworks applicable to romantic and sexual life, especially regarding appropriate consequences and legal actions that can be taken against violence (Secondary 4)</p>



Educational Goals



Session length:
130 minutes

Help young people develop skills to react if they find themselves in a situation involving the concept of sexual consent.

- 1. Identify** the non-verbal signs of unease and discomfort from a video so that they can go on to decode these signs during intimate activities.
- 2. Illustrate** the concept of sexual consent using the metaphor of road signs.
- 3. Decode** the verbal and non-verbal “signs” of consent or non-consent in different situational exercises.
- 4. Discuss** communication skills that they need to develop to:
 - i. Assert themselves in a situation they do not consent to.
 - ii. Respect someone else’s non-consent to a situation.
 - iii. React after witnessing a non-consensual situation.
- 5. Identify** the criteria of valid sexual consent (e.g. free and voluntary, informed, can be withdrawn at any time).
- 6. Discuss** the importance and benefits of getting their partner’s consent.



Sequence

Part A - Part B



This **130-min.** session has **two parts** and includes **three activities**.

Part A

55 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: “People stare at each other for 4 minutes – Social experiment.” › Discussion and Presentation <i>Sheet 3.1: Learn More About Consent</i> › Team activity: Traffic signs <i>Sheet 3.2: Traffic Signs</i> <i>Sheet 3.3: Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent</i> <i>Sheet 3.4: Answer Sheet: Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent</i> › Discussion and Presentation
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Part B

45 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activity: Situational Exercises on Sexual Consent <i>Sheet 3.5a: “Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony”: Situational Exercise</i> <i>Sheet 3.5b: “Christopher and Zach”: Situational Exercise</i> <i>Sheet 3.5c: “Noémie and Amir”: Situational Exercise</i> <i>Sheet 3.6a: Answer Sheet: “Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony”: Situational Exercise</i> <i>Sheet 3.6b: Answer Sheet: “Christopher and Zach”: Situational Exercise</i> <i>Sheet 3.6c: Answer Sheet: “Noémie and Amir”: Situational Exercise</i> › Discussion and Presentation
20 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Individual activity: The Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent <i>Sheet 3.7: Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent</i> <i>Sheet 3.8: Answer Sheet: Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent</i> › Discussion and Presentation › Video: “Sexualités et le consentement: la zone grise” (<i>Sexuality and Consent: a Grey Area</i>) › 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** 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

You can lead this session on sexual consent with another professional, for example, with the special education technician (SET), social worker, psychoeducator, psychologist, or sexologist at your school, as applicable.

Otherwise, **BEFORE** holding this session, it is a good idea to let a counsellor at your school or organization know that you will be discussing sexual consent with a group of young people. This way, if a teenager confides in you about a situation of concern about sexual consent or discloses a situation of sexual assault, you will know that someone is available to offer support. If a young minor is in danger or has been sexually assaulted, the Youth Protection Directorate or the service de police must be contacted.

You can also refer to the *Resources* section in the introduction to this program for the contact information of assistance and support organizations. Online resources are provided at the end of the slideshow (PPT) accompanying each of the *Be True to You* sessions.



Part A



Activity 1



SHEETS 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 AND 3.4

SLIDESHOW (PPT)



55 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION



VIDEO



TEAM
ACTIVITY

Session Introduction

- › **Start** the session by reminding the group about the rules presented in the introduction or the session slideshow (e.g. taking turns, respecting different points of view, keeping what others say to yourself).
- › **Explain** that today's session is on sexual consent.
- › **Explain** that the most important part of consent is verbal and non-verbal communication and the ability to decode other people's signals. This is what this session will be about.

Video

- › **Explain** that they are about to watch a video of people who don't know each other and who will look at each other for four minutes, face to face, without saying a word (not in a sexual way). This is an exercise in non-verbal communication. **Ask** them to pay attention to the reactions of the different people in the video and to think about how they relate to intimacy.
- › **Introduce** the video by instructing the group to pay attention to what the characters are communicating non-verbally.

People Stare at Each Other For 4 Minutes – Social Experiment (Facts, 2015)

Length: 2 min., 27 sec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqF1kWXUFwk>



Video



Discussion and Presentation

› After the video, **ask** the following questions:

- **In this experiment, people had to look at each other for 4 minutes without talking. How do you think they felt during the experience?**
- **What “non-verbal” signs support your answer?**

Get their opinions.

› **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

In the context of this experiment: people’s reactions and emotions

- › Simply looking into someone’s eyes can trigger different reactions and emotions. For example, some of them:
 - Took a deep breath before starting.
 - Giggled (nervous laughter).
 - Grinned.
 - Made noise with their feet.
 - Etc.
- › All of these reactions seemed like distractions from the discomfort of having to look at the other person.
- › Because even just looking into someone else’s eyes can be an intimate act, hence the embarrassment and discomfort.

In the context of more intimate situations:

- › Even for things as simple as kissing or cuddling, it is important to be in tune to the other person's non-verbal reactions.
- › If you pay attention, you will notice whether your partner is showing any discomfort signalling that they don't want to go any further.
- › It's always best to verbally ask the other person if they agree with (i.e. want to do) what you are doing before doing anything more intimate.

- › **Mention** that consent to sexual activity may seem simple on the surface, but in reality consent has many aspects that you have to consider. This includes learning to decode your partner's signs of consent or non-consent.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

For more information about sexual consent and sexual assault prevention, see Sheet 3.1: *Learn More About Consent*. You don't have to share all of this content with the group, but it may be helpful if they ask more in-depth questions about consent during this session. There is also information on how a teen could respond if a friend confides in them that they have been sexually assaulted.



Presentation

- › **Continue** with Sheet 3.2: *Traffic Signs*, which has a description of various traffic signs. The group will then be asked to link these signs (Transports Québec, 2013) to the different aspects of consent.



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Impact techniques are simple activities that use movement or objects and metaphors (in this case, traffic signs) to illustrate abstract concepts using an image. In this case, the technique facilitates learning since the group will have to make different associations between the traffic signs and consent. The goal is to help them retain the information more easily (Beaulieu, 2014). After the activity, and for the rest of the session, refer to the traffic sign activity as often as applicable.

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of two and **give** the following instructions:
 - Each team will receive **Sheet 3.3: Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent**, which has a table.
 - The left-hand column of the table shows the different traffic signs.
 - The right-hand column has short definitions of consent.
 - The teams have to match these short definitions of consent with the different traffic signs. This is a 5 minutes speed activity.
 - Since the teams only have 5 min. to complete the activity, they may not have time to match all of the definitions in the table (six traffic signs).
 - You can therefore ask half of the teams to start with the first three signs and the other half to do the last three signs on Sheet 3.3.
- › **Hand out** Sheet 3.3: *Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent* to the different teams so that they can start the activity.

Discussion and Presentation

- › Once the 5 min. is up, **ask** the teams to share their answers with the rest of the group. You can use the information on Sheet 3.4: *Answer Sheet: Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent* to add to their answers. **Provide** an initial definition of sexual consent and ask them which sign they would match it with, and so on.

This metaphor exercise will provide the group with a basic illustration of sexual consent to help them understand the importance of decoding signs and checking in with their partner. **Conclude** the activity:

“While it can seem like the road ahead is clear, in reality, we often have to slow down for obstacles, observe what is going on around us, take a different route, ask for directions, or stop altogether. If you aren’t paying attention, you may have an accident. To make your trip safe and enjoyable, you need to pay attention to and respect the rules of the road. The same goes for sexual consent!”

- › Then **tell** the group that in the next activity, they will analyze different situational exercises to test their knowledge about sexual consent.

Part B



Activity 2



SHEETS 3.5A, 3.5B, 3.5C, 3.6A, 3.6B AND 3.6C
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



45 MIN.



TEAM ACTIVITY



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Team Activity

- › **Explain** that in the next activity they will work in teams of four on a situation about sexual consent and decode things such as verbal and non-verbal signs to understand someone's response.
- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of four.
- › **Give** the teams one of the following Situational exercises: "Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony" (Sheet 3.5a), "Christopher and Zach" (Sheet 3.5b) and "Noémie and Amir" (Sheet 3.5c). **Give** the teams 10 min. to read the situations and answer the questions.
- › After the team activity, **go over** the situation exercise as a group and ask the teams to share their answers to the different questions.
- › **Add** to their answers with the content for the situational exercises (see Sheet 3.6a: *Answer Sheet: "Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony": Situational Exercise*; Sheet 3.6b: *Answer Sheet: "Christopher and Zach": Situational Exercise*; Sheet 3.6c: *Answer Sheet: "Noémie and Amir": Situational Exercise*).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

One situation in this activity is about two homosexual boys, which may or may not elicit responses from the group. If anyone says something, it is important to address the comments to foster a climate of respect and openness to sexual diversity. The idea is not to start a discussion or debate about sexual diversity (this can be done later if necessary) but rather to quickly intervene to protect any sexually diverse youths in the group from derogatory comments.

If someone makes a hurtful comment, simply remind them that we live in a society that values and defends the equality, freedoms and rights of every person. Our society aims to be open and respectful of differences, whatever they may be. In fact, Quebec has a Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms that protects the rights of every person and



prohibits against discrimination and harassment. “Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap” (Tribunal des droits de la personne, 2020, p.50).

The idea is to get the group to think about why some people might react so negatively to sexual diversity (e.g. lack of knowledge, prejudice, unfounded fears).

This is why the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms is in place: to protect everyone and promote equality among all individuals.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

A Quebec study of over 3,000 people aged 17 to 29 found that most had not experienced a first penetrative sexual encounter by the age of 12 to 14 (Lambert, Mathieu-Chartier, Goggin, Maurais and the PIXEL team, 2017).

- ▶ One in twenty people (6%) of all genders combined had had their first penetrative sexual encounter before the age of 14 (Lambert and al., 2017).
- ▶ Ten out of twenty females (50%) and eight out of twenty males (40%) had experienced their first penetrative sexual encounter before the age of 17 (Lambert and al., 2017).
- ▶ Youths aged 12 to 14 experiment more with sexual activities such as kissing and fondling the body on and below the waist (Médico and Levy, 2008; Williams, Connolly and Cribbie, 2008).

Some specialists (e.g. pediatricians, psychologists, sexologists) consider sex before the age of 14 or 15 to be premature and are concerned about whether these young people have the necessary maturity for a positive experience. Also, people at this age may feel pressure to have sex.

It is therefore important to discuss the meaning of sexual consent and motivations for sexual activity in the early years of high school before young people start becoming sexually active. Young people generally have their first sexual encounter spontaneously without planning it (e.g. at a party) (Lieberman, Goldfarb, Kwiatkowski and Santos, 2017). They must therefore have the tools to act in a way that truly aligns with their needs, values and limits while respecting those of their partner.



Discussion and Presentation

- › After going over the situational exercises as a group, **lead** a discussion using the questions below. **Split** the blackboard in half and **write** down the participants' responses about which verbal or non-verbal signs correspond with "consent" or "non-consent."
 - **What are some concrete verbal and non-verbal SIGNS that indicate a person is CONSENTING?**
 - **What are some concrete verbal and non-verbal SIGNS that indicate a person is NOT CONSENTING?**

Get their answers.
- › **Share** the following content (not an exhaustive list):

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › **VERBAL signs indicating that SOMEONE IS CONSENTING:**
 - The person clearly says: "Yes"; "I agree"; "I really want to"; "Sure"; "That would be fun"; "I like it"; "I want to"; "I'm enjoying this, let's keep going"; etc.
- › **NON-VERBAL signs indicating that SOMEONE IS CONSENTING:**
 - Looking relaxed.
 - Smiling while looking the other person in the eyes.
 - Nodding.
 - Physically approaching the person; cuddling; kissing.
 - In a more intimate setting, the person may respond to their partner's advances by caressing them back, etc.
- › **VERBAL signs indicating that a PERSON IS NOT CONSENTING:**
 - The person clearly says: "No"; "I don't want to"; "I don't feel like it"; "Maybe some other time, but not now"; "I can't tonight"; "I don't have time"; "I don't feel good"; "I don't feel ready"; "I know we planned this, but I've changed my mind"; "I'd like to stop," etc.
 - Expressing things that show hesitation: "I'm not sure"; "Ummm, okay"; "Maybe" said in a shy way.
 - **A hesitation is not a YES. A hesitation is actually a NO** (Teen Talk, n.d.)
- › **The NON-VERBAL signs that tell us that a PERSON IS NOT CONSENTING:**
 - Being quiet; wincing; hesitating; avoiding eye contact; staying still or freezing; backing away; removing the other person's hand or, conversely, lying/sitting right next to the person to avoid their gaze and trying to change the subject; being very nervous; moving away or leaving the room; etc.
 - Non-consent that is expressed non-verbally can be difficult to detect. It is important to distinguish between signs of enthusiasm and signs of shyness that may hide discomfort. For example, a person can smile sweetly and still be shy, or they can be nervous on the inside yet seem very enthusiastic on the outside. In neither case is this person's behaviour an expression of consent to sexual activity.
 - To know whether sexual consent is "valid," you need to consider both what someone says (verbal) **AND** what they do (non-verbal).

› **In concrete terms, what can you do to make sure your partner is consenting?**

- To make sure your partner is consenting, it is important to...
 - Ask how they feel and verbally ask for their consent:
 - “Do you want to...?”
 - “What do you feel like doing?”
 - “Would you like to... ”
 - “Are you still comfortable with this?” (Tel-jeunes, 2022).
 - “I understand if you don’t feel ready. You just have to tell me.”
 - “Are you okay?”
 - “Do you want to keep going?”
 - “You seem nervous; do you want to stop?”
 - “Don’t hesitate to tell me if you want to keep going or to stop” (Tel-jeunes, 2022).
 - “We can stop if you want.”
 - “I don’t want you to feel like you have to.”
 - “It’s okay if you change your mind.”
 - “I feel nervous; how about you? Maybe we should do this another time?”
 - Etc.



Activity 3



SHEETS 3.7 AND 3.8
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MIN.



**INDIVIDUAL
ACTIVITY**



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**



VIDEO

Individual Activity

- › **Begin** by telling the group that they will be doing an activity on their own to identify the key elements of “valid” sexual consent, i.e. consent that is “free and voluntary,” “informed” and “can be withdrawn any time.” It can also be “enthusiastic.” **Give** the following instructions:

- **Explain that each person will receive Sheet 3.7: Key Elements of Valid Sexual Consent.**
- **Box 1 presents short statements that illustrate “valid” sexual consent.**
- **They must match each statement to one of the boxes below that identify an aspect of “VALID” sexual consent:**

According to the law:

- 1. Free and voluntary.**
- 2. Informed.**
- 3. May be withdrawn at any time.**

In general:

- 4. Enthusiastic.**

- **The group will have 5 minutes to match each statement to the box that they think is the most appropriate.**
- › **Hand out** Sheet 3.7: *Key Elements of Valid Sexual Consent* so that the group can start the activity.

Discussion and Presentation

- › Once the 5 minutes are up, have everyone come back into a group and **ask** them to share their answers. You can use the information on Sheet 3.8: *Answer Sheet: Key Elements of Valid Sexual Consent*.

- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

› **Free consent:**

- The person isn't pressured to say yes. If the person seems very withdrawn or doesn't say anything or says they are unsure or don't want to, the other person doesn't insist, doesn't make them feel guilty, and respects their decision.

› **Voluntary consent:**

- Consent is not obtained through the use of physical coercion, blackmail or threats (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- The person isn't pressured to say yes. They must therefore feel free to accept, refuse or change their mind without fearing the other person's reaction.

› **Informed consent:**

- The person must be in a state to give consent (Éducaloi, 2022a). By law, a person who is asleep or unconscious cannot consent to sexual activity (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- For example, under the law, a person who has consumed alcohol or drugs can consent to sexual activity unless their condition makes it impossible for them to remember what they are doing (highly intoxicated state) (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- You have to be careful when alcohol or drugs are involved. It can be difficult to know for sure whether your partner is aware of what they are doing. You need to take reasonable steps to check that the other person is consenting. They must always check that the other person is in a condition to consent.

› **Consent may be withdrawn at any time:**

- The person who initiates the activity (e.g. kissing, fondling) must pay particular attention to the other person's reactions before going further (e.g. do their words [verbal signs] or behaviour [non-verbal signs] indicate consent and interest) (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- Even if a person says yes, they also have the right to change their mind at any time and say no. During intimate activities, consent must be obtained for each new sexual act. A person may also say yes to one thing but no to another.

Overall, as per the **LAW**, consent must be free and voluntary, informed and given freely and may be withdrawn at any time (Éducaloi, 2022a).

› **Consent can be enthusiastic:**

- Another possible sign that is not a legal concept is the concept of enthusiastic consent: the person is actively participating in the activity and responding to the other person's advances (e.g. gets closer, smiles, hugs back).
- However, you have to be careful and still get consent because someone can respond like this and still not be "enthusiastic."
 - For example, someone may smile awkwardly and say "Yes" but with a tone of discomfort ("Ummm, yeah I guess"), etc.

Video, Discussion and Presentation

› Show the following video:

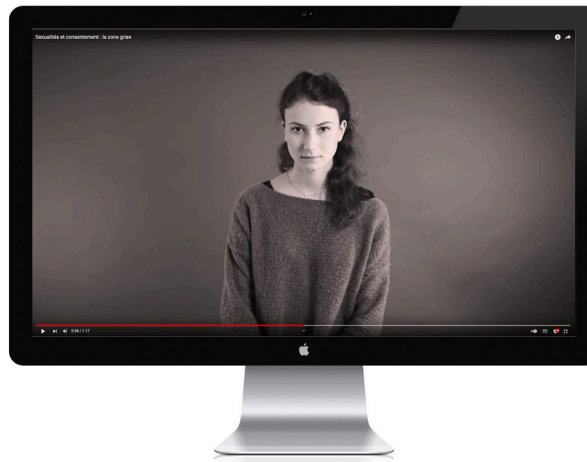
**Sexualités et consentement: la zone grise (Sexuality and consent: a grey area)
(Espace Santé Étudiants Bordeaux, 2017)**

Length: 1 min., 17 sec.

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



Video



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Although most of the characters speak French, it is still easy to grasp the message of the video. To help the group understand, here are some of the statements translated into English:

0:20 seconds (Character A): *“Sure, if that’s what you want.”*

0:26 seconds (Character B): *“If you insist.”*

0:42 seconds (end text) : *“Not really a yes? Not really a no? When it comes down to it, consent isn’t always simple... If you aren’t sure what your partner wants, ask them!”*

› After the video, **ask** the following questions:

- **What do you think about this video?**
- **What is the main message?**

Get their opinions.

› **End** the activity with the following **KEY MESSAGES**:

- **Consent isn’t always simple.**
- **Hesitation should be understood as a “No.”**
- **If you aren’t sure whether the other person is really consenting, ask them.**



Session Conclusion



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

- › **Ask** the group:
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
Get their opinions.
- › **End** the session with the following **KEY MESSAGES**:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Sexual consent is an agreement that:
 - A person clearly expresses freely and voluntarily and in an informed way.
 - Can be withdrawn at any time.
 - Must be given for each sexual activity.
- › Some circumstances make sexual consent impossible or invalid:
 - Depending on the age of the partner (e.g. being under 12 years of age or if the age difference between partners is too great).
 - Depending on the relationship with the partner (e.g. relationship of dependency or authority).
 - Depending on the person's ability to "physically" give consent (e.g. intoxicated or asleep or unconscious).
- › It is our responsibility to get our partner's consent by being aware of their:
 - Verbal signs
 - Non-verbal signs
- › Whether the person is your girlfriend or boyfriend, a "date," a new acquaintance, or your ex, you need to make sure they also want to be intimate. If not, it is important to respect the person's "No" without pressuring them or making them feel guilty.

- › **DISAPPOINTMENT?** It is possible to not like an experience that you have **consented** to (e.g. a kiss that is too wet, an awkward caress, feeling embarrassed throughout). Experiences that aren't great (without being traumatic) will help you learn about yourself, your preferences, your limits, etc.
- › **DISCOMFORT?** When you're in a situation that makes you uncomfortable and that you **have not consented to**, it is important to react by respecting your own limits (e.g. speaking up that you don't like something; deciding to leave the room without saying a word and without justifying yourself; if the other person insists, making up an excuse to get out of the uncomfortable or worrying situation).
- › **FEAR?** You may feel trapped and have trouble speaking up and reacting. In this case, you can call for help (e.g. friends in the next room, your parents or other trusted adult or 911).
- › **ASSAULT!** Anyone who has experienced situations of sexual violence (e.g. humiliating comments, harassment, unwanted touching, sexual assault) should not be left alone or keep the experience to themselves. Trusted adults and professionals can help victims regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, religion or age.
- › No matter what the situation, the person who perpetrated the sexual assault, not the victim, is the one responsible. However, this person also needs help to stop this violent behaviour from happening again.

Remember:

- › **CONFIDENCE.** We agree to engage in sexual activities (e.g. kissing, fondling, intercourse) because we really want to and feel confident and ready. The important thing is for each partner to experience sexual activity at their own pace so that the experience is enjoyable for both people.
- › **SAFETY and WELL-BEING.** Both partners must consent to sexual activity and this consent is important because it gives each person:
 - A feeling of respect and safety.
 - A sense of well-being.
- › **IT'S YOUR DECISION.** You don't have to have sex right now. You can think about it and when the time is right, discuss it with your partner and decide what is right for both or you.
- › **Remember: To really say yes, you have to learn how to really say no.**



SHEET

3.1

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Learn More About Consent

This sheet provides essential information about sexual consent all in one place. You don't need to share all of this content with the group, but it may help you answer their questions. You will find this same sheet in all sessions on consent in the *Be True to You* program, i.e. those in Secondary 2 and 4. This sheet provides key legal definitions and information but does not replace legal advice.

Also, please note that this sheet was created in 2021; this means that it may not account for any legal changes that occur following the publication of the *Be True to You* program.

Sexual consent is associated with different criteria in the literature on this topic. For example, there is a distinction between sexual behaviour that is neither desirable nor acceptable in society and behaviour that is punishable by law. This sheet therefore provides the legal and social definitions.

SEXUAL CONSENT:

Legal criteria:

Free, voluntary, informed consent that can be withdrawn at any time.

- › **An agreement that a person expresses clearly** through both their words and actions (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- › **Must be free:** This means that consent during a sexual relationship is not obtained through the use of physical coercion, blackmail or threats (Éducaloi, 2022a). Both people in a relationship must have equal power to decide whether they want a sexual relationship or not. Each person must therefore feel free to accept, refuse, or change their mind without fearing the other person's reaction.
- › **Informed:** The person must be in a state to give consent (Éducaloi, 2022a). The law states that a person who is sleeping or unconscious cannot give consent. When it comes to intoxication with drugs or alcohol, legally a person must be in a very advanced state of intoxication to be unable to consent to sexual contact. For example, a person who has consumed alcohol or drugs can consent to sexual activity, unless their condition makes it impossible for them to remember what they are doing.
- › **Can be withdrawn at any time** (Éducaloi, 2022a): Even if you consent to sexual activity, you have the right to change your mind at any time.

- › **Is not valid if one of the partners is in a position of authority or trust or if there is a situation of dependency or exploitation** (Éducaloi, 2022a): For example, even if adolescent is of the legal age to consent to sexual activity, they cannot consent to sexual activity with a coach or teacher since this person is in a position of authority over them.
- › **Must be given for each individual sexual act:** The person who initiates the sexual activity must always check how the other person feels about each sexual act (e.g. kissing, fondling) (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- › **May not be presumed:** This means that you can never assume that the other person is consenting. You cannot decide on your own whether the other person consents without checking with them first. In the case of sexual assault, the offender cannot defend themselves by saying that they thought that the other person had consented.
- › **Failure to obtain sexual consent from your partner can result in sexual assault, which is a criminal offence that can be punishable by law** (Éducaloi, 2022a). Whether you're in a relationship with someone or dating them or they are just an acquaintance, it's important to make sure the person also wants to have sexual contact.

Social Criteria: Enthusiastic Consent

- › **Must be expressed in an enthusiastic way:** The act of showing enthusiasm is a criteria that is often described in relation to consent (Duquette, Soubeyrand-Faghel and Paume, 2019; Gouvernement du Québec, 2022). Showing enthusiasm (or not) can help a partner pick up on signs of consent or non-consent. However, this criteria is not included in the sections of the law that relate to consent. It is more of a social criteria. Some signs can indicate a person's enthusiasm: they may respond to the other person's advances, smile, hug them, caress them. Even adults can find it hard to distinguish between signs of enthusiasm and signs of discomfort or shyness in a partner. That's why it's important to be attentive to the other person at all times when you are being intimate and check in to see how they are feeling.

Ages to remember:

- › **12 years minus one day:** Consent is never valid.
- › **12 years old:** The age at which a youth can be charged with a crime (Éducaloi, 2017).
- › **16 years old:** The age of sexual consent in Canada (Éducaloi, 2022b; Royal, 2008).
- › **Important to explain:** Although the age of consent is 16, the law does set out exceptions for sexual encounters (e.g. kissing, fondling, sexual relations) between young people of about the same age before they turn 16 (Éducaloi, 2022b).

The following table from Éducaloi (2022b) describes the exceptions for consent between young people under 16 years of age. It gives the age difference that cannot be exceeded in order for consent to be valid.

Age of younger partner	Age difference allowed
Less than 12 years (i.e. 12 years minus one day)	Consent is NEVER valid.
12-13 years old	Less than 2 years
14-15 years old	Less than 5 years

Definitions that may be useful:

Behaviour that may lead to legal consequences:

- › **Sexual offences:** Refers to all crimes of a sexual nature, including sexual assault (Éducaloi, 2022c).
- › **Sexual assault:** Sexual assault is when one partner does not consent (agree) to sexual touching. Sexual touching can be a kiss, a caress or any other type of sexual act (Éducaloi, 2022a).

Behaviours that do not always have legal consequences but that are neither desirable nor acceptable in society:

- › **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment is not a crime, but it is prohibited in the workplace.

The term “harassment” usually refers to repeated acts. However, there may be cases in which the severity or intent could result in the act being considered harassment, even if it only occurred once.

Sexual harassment can take many forms:

- **Verbal:** Sexist, crude or degrading jokes; remarks about physical appearance; remarks about someone’s private life; use of slang or degrading, homophobic or sexist terms; use of insinuation; repeated invitations of all kinds; explicit sexual propositions; veiled or open promises in exchange for sexual favours.
 - **Non-verbal:** Whistling; looks with sexual connotations; display of degrading or pornographic material; signs with explicit sexual connotations; the harasser is constantly around; messages of a sexual, sexist or homophobic nature.
 - **Physical:** Intentional touching; physical touching such as slapping someone’s buttocks; tickling; pinching; kissing; pushing into a corner, etc. (Duquette, Soubeyrand-Faghel and Paume, 2019).
- › **Sexual misconduct:** In the media, we have heard the term “sexual misconduct” used a lot in reference to public figures who have made headlines for questionable sexual behaviour. In an everyday context, sexual misconduct usually refers to behaviour that society considers inappropriate or undesirable. This term can also refer to sexist or sexually degrading comments, homophobic comments and profanity. Overall, this is a very vague term used in many ways to describe all sorts of behaviour. While sexual misconduct is not a crime defined in the criminal code, it may technically include behaviours that are punishable by law.

- › The term “sexual misconduct” is used in professional codes to refer to prohibited behaviours between professionals and the people they help. In these cases, legal proceedings may be initiated against the offending professionals.

How a teen could respond if a friend confides in them that they have been sexually assaulted

- › **Listen to your friend without judging them.** Let them speak at their own pace and in their own words; avoid bombarding them with questions or cutting them off. You don’t need to know the details about the assault. The important thing is to focus on the person’s feelings and what they need (CALACS Trêve pour Elles, 2019).
- › **Believe what the person says** (CALACS Trêve pour Elles, 2019). Even if the assailant is someone you know and this brings up many emotions for you, it is important not to question what the victim has told you. It takes a lot of courage to tell someone about sexual assault.
- › **Validate their emotions** (CALACS Trêve pour Elles, 2019). If the person tells you that they feel angry or guilty about the assault, you can tell them that it is normal to have these emotions about a sexual assault and that you understand what they’re feeling.
- › **Tell the person that they have no need to feel guilty** (CALACS Trêve pour Elles, 2019). Often people think that a sexual assault is their fault. You can tell them that it is not their fault. The assailant was the one who did not check with the person about how they felt and whether they really consented to the act. Some people who sexually assault simply have bad intentions, do not want to hear a “no” from their victim and ignore any signal that shows a lack of consent.
- › **Keep what they say confidential.** Do not repeat it to anyone else so that the person feels safe. However, do not keep the secret at all costs. Do not repeat the story to other kids your age or to your family; however, it is important to tell a trusted adult who can help (e.g. teacher, counsellor, Tel-jeunes, Kids Help Phone).
- › **Refer the person to resources** (CALACS Trêve pour Elles, 2019). You can tell the person that there are trusted adults who can help. If the person is afraid, you can offer to go to the resource with them. For example, you can go with them to see a trusted school counsellor. You can also be there when they call an assistance organization for help.



Traffic Signs

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Present the images (Transports Québec, 2013) to the group and ask them why we have traffic signs on the roads.



“Emergency Parking” indicates an off-highway parking area for emergencies.



“Stop” means you have to stop at an intersection.



The “Bicycle Boulevard Ahead” sign indicates that a bicycle lane is coming up.



“Slippery Pavement” indicates that the pavement may be slippery in some areas.



“Pedestrian Detour” indicates the direction pedestrians have to walk due to construction work.



A “Signals Ahead” sign indicates in advance that an intersection up ahead has traffic lights.

Why do we need signs?

Regulatory signs

(White, black or red background)

- Indicate something you either must or must not do.
- A reminder of the law.

Danger ahead

(Yellow background)

- Warns of something on the road ahead you must pay attention to for everyone’s safety.
- Tells you to slow down, stop or even change lanes.

Consistent understanding

- The consistent design helps everyone on the road understand the signs.

Possible connections to consent

Signs that we should not go down a particular road because there may be legal consequences if we do:

- Sexual consent is governed by the law (Government of Canada, 2017).
- To protect younger people, the age of consent for sexual activity is 16.
- There are exceptions that allow people under the age of 16 to engage in sexual activity, and the allowed age differences are set out under the law (Government of Canada, 2017).
- Regardless of age, it is a criminal offence to engage in sexual activity without someone’s consent, and doing so can lead to penalties (Government of Canada, 2017).

Signs that we should watch out for the risks of inappropriate behaviour:

- The ways in which people act can be similar to road signs (Beaulieu, 2013).
- You have to show caution and look for the signs telling you to slow down or stop.
- You need to get the other person’s consent while avoiding pressuring them, making them uncomfortable, or jeopardizing their safety.

Social responsibility

- Consent is everyone’s responsibility.
- You must ensure you have your partner’s consent before engaging in any sexual activity with them (e.g., kissing, fondling, having sex).



SHEET

3.3

FOR THE GROUP

Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent

INSTRUCTIONS

- › In the previous exercise, we saw that traffic signs give us specific directions on how to drive safely. We made possible connections with these signs (in the left column) to consent to sexual activity (e.g. kissing, fondling, intercourse).
- › Match the correct sign in the left-hand column with the description of consent in the right-hand column by drawing an arrow from the sign to the definition.

Traffic signs

	<p>"Pedestrian Detour" indicates the direction pedestrians have to walk due to construction work.</p> <input type="radio"/>
	<p>The "Bicycle Boulevard Ahead" sign indicates that a bicycle lane is coming up.</p> <input type="radio"/>
	<p>"Emergency Parking" indicates an off-highway parking area for emergencies.</p> <input type="radio"/>
	<p>"Stop" means you have to stop at an intersection.</p> <input type="radio"/>
	<p>"Slippery Pavement" indicates that the pavement may be slippery in some areas.</p> <input type="radio"/>
	<p>A "Signals Ahead" sign indicates in advance that an intersection up ahead has traffic lights.</p> <input type="radio"/>

Definitions of consent to a sexual activity

BEFORE engaging in any sexual activity (e.g. kissing, fondling, intercourse), you need to remember the signals for recognizing consent: a real yes (keep going) or a hesitation or no (put on the brakes or stop).	<input type="radio"/> 1
If your partner tells you or shows you that they aren't comfortable, you have to stop and make sure you have their consent.	<input type="radio"/> 2
When you try to initiate sexual activity with your partner but aren't sure they are into it, you risk having an "accident."	<input type="radio"/> 3
When one partner does not respect consent (e.g. through aggressive behaviour or attempts to humiliate) or doesn't follow limits or rules, it is important to stop and call for help ("S.O.S.").	<input type="radio"/> 4
To respect consent, we sometimes have to wait longer and take a "longer" but safer route to respect our partner's choice.	<input type="radio"/> 5
To respect consent, both partners need to ensure that they want to go in the same direction when it comes to sexual activity. For example, they have to agree on what they want to do and at what pace and how far they want to go.	<input type="radio"/> 6



SHEET




3.4

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer Sheet: Traffic Signs and Sexual Consent

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Using this sheet, add to the information.

Traffic signs	Consent
<p>5</p>  <p>“Pedestrian Detour” indicates the direction pedestrians have to walk due to construction work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› To respect consent, we sometimes have to wait longer and take a “longer” but safer route to respect our partner’s choice.› Respecting personal choices and consent will make it more likely for sexual activity to be pleasurable for both people.› You have to know how to listen to your own signs and the signs of the other person. If you don’t feel comfortable with what’s going on, you need to let the other person know.
<p>6</p>  <p>The “Bicycle Boulevard Ahead” sign indicates that a bicycle lane is coming up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› To respect consent, both partners need to ensure that they want to go in the same direction when it comes to sexual activity. For example, they have to agree on what they want to do and at what pace and how far they want to go.› You cannot decide on the other person’s consent without checking with them.
<p>4</p>  <p>“Emergency Parking” indicates an off-highway parking area for emergencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› When one partner does not respect consent (e.g. through aggressive behaviour or attempts to humiliate) or doesn’t follow limits or rules, it is important to stop and call for help (“S.O.S.”).› Resources are available to help you learn to pay attention to your own signs and those of other people to ensure that both partners are consenting!

Traffic signs

Consent

2



“Stop” means you have to stop at an intersection.

- › **If your partner tells you or shows you that they aren't comfortable, you have to stop and make sure you have their consent. It's important to respect their NO.**
- › As soon as the other person says a word or does something indicating they aren't comfortable, you have to stop and get their consent before continuing.

3



“Slippery Pavement” indicates that the pavement may be slippery in some areas.

- › **When you try to initiate sexual activity with your partner but aren't sure they are into it, you risk having an “accident.”**
- › If in doubt, think of the situation like an area of slippery pavement: if you go too fast and pressure the other person, you run the risk of not respecting your partner's consent.
- › Not respecting consent can have severe consequences, meaning that one or both partners can get hurt.

1



A “Signals Ahead” sign indicates in advance that an intersection up ahead has traffic lights.

- › **BEFORE engaging in any sexual activity (e.g. kissing, fondling, intercourse), you need to remember the signals for recognizing consent: a real yes (keep going) or a hesitation or no (put on the brakes or stop).**
- › **Green:** I have gotten consent **BEFORE and DURING** the activity; this means we can keep going.
- › **Yellow:** I'm not sure if my partner is consenting, so I want to slow down to make sure.
- › **Red:** My partner is not consenting and is expressing this with both non-verbal and verbal signs. I must stop and respect their decision.



SHEET

3.5a

FOR THE GROUP

“Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

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

Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony

For **Lily-Rose**'s 14th birthday, her best friend **Yasmine** has organized a party at her house. During the evening, **Anthony** dares them to make out in front of everyone. Uncomfortable, Yasmine looks away and says, “Why would we do that?” Anthony replies: “Come on Yasmine, you’re no fun. It’s no big deal.” Lily-Rose, who is just as embarrassed as her friend but wants to seem older and more mature, says, “Come on Yasmine, it’s not a big deal, it’s just for laughs.” Yasmine blushes, freezes and avoids looking at everyone else. She doesn’t want to do it and doesn’t know how to react.

- › What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** showing that Yasmine does not want to kiss Lily-Rose?

- › What do you think of **Anthony and Lily-Rose’s REACTIONS** to Yasmine’s decision not to kiss Lily-Rose?

- › Anthony and Lily-Rose are not paying attention to Yasmine’s discomfort.

What **COULD Yasmine SAY or DO** to let them know she doesn’t want to play this “game”?

- › How **COULD others** witnessing this scene **REACT** to Anthony and Lily-Rose insisting that Yasmine do this?



SHEET

3.5b

FOR THE GROUP

“Christopher and Zach”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

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

Christopher and Zach

It's Saturday and 15-year-old **Christopher** is spending the evening watching an action movie at the home of his 17-year-old boyfriend. After the movie is over, **Zach** asks Christopher to stay over. While cuddling against him, Christopher tells him that he has to go home. Zach says, “You could stay over for once. My parents aren't home.” Christopher hesitantly avoids his gaze and adds, “I can't. My parents wouldn't want me to stay over.” Zach continues to insist and says, “If you really loved me, you would stay. We can make up a story so your parents don't worry.” Christopher doesn't want to disappoint him and feels nervous. He doesn't want to stay and doesn't know how to react.

- › What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** indicating that Christopher does not want to stay over at his boyfriend's house?

- › What do you think of **Zach's REACTION** to Christopher's hesitation and refusal?

- › What **COULD Christopher SAY or DO** to make Zach understand that he won't be sleeping over?

- › How **COULD Zach REACT** to Christopher's reluctance to sleep over?



SHEET

3.5c

FOR THE GROUP

“Noémie and Amir”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

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

Noémie and Amir

Amir, 15, is heading to the park with his friends. On the way, he tells them that he hopes **Noémie** will be there. “I finally kissed her at the party last week. I’m going to do everything I can to ‘hit that.’” For fun, his friends tell him that if he can score with her, they will be impressed. After arriving at the park, Amir sees Noémie and sits down next to her on the bench without realizing that she doesn’t seem too happy about it. The more she moves away from him, the closer he gets to her. Noémie seems shy and looks away. Amir’s friends watch him, intrigued to know what he’ll do. Amir puts his hand on Noémie’s thigh. She pushes his hand away and tries to get away, seeming uncomfortable. He whispers into her ear, “Don’t be such a tease, you liked it last time.” Deeply embarrassed, Noémie doesn’t know how to react. The other kids around don’t dare intervene.

- › What do the expressions “hit that” and “to score” mean? What does this say about Amir’s intentions?

- › What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** indicating that Noémie isn’t interested in getting close to Amir?

- › What do you think of Amir’s **REACTION** to Noémie’s discomfort and withdrawal?

- › What **COULD** Noémie **SAY OR DO** to indicate to Amir that she doesn’t want to get close to him?

- › How **COULD** Amir’s friends and the other young people at the park **REACT** to Amir’s insistence on getting closer to Noémie, who is visibly uncomfortable?



SHEET

3.6a

**FOR SESSION
LEADERS**

Answer Sheet: “Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situation and ask each team to share their answers.
- › Add to their answers with the information below.

Yasmine, Lily-Rose and Anthony

For **Lily-Rose**'s 14th birthday, her best friend **Yasmine** has organized a party at her house. During the evening, **Anthony** dares them to make out in front of everyone. Uncomfortable, Yasmine looks away and says, “Why would we do that?” Anthony replies: “Come on Yasmine, you’re no fun. It’s no big deal.” Lily-Rose, who is just as embarrassed as her friend but wants to seem older and more mature, says, “Come on Yasmine, it’s not a big deal, it’s just for laughs.” Yasmine blushes, freezes and avoids looking at everyone else. She doesn’t want to do it and doesn’t know how to react.

- › What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** showing that Yasmine does not want to kiss Lily-Rose?

- **Verbal signs:**

- She contests the idea of kissing her best friend by asking why they should do that.

- **Non-verbal signs:**

- Uneasiness (you could also imagine the nervousness in her voice).
- Averts her eyes and avoids the gaze of others.
- Blushes.
- Freezes; etc.

- › What do you think of **Anthony and Lily-Rose’s REACTIONS** to Yasmine’s decision not to kiss Lily-Rose?

Get their opinions.

- › **Anthony and Lily-Rose are not paying attention to Yasmine’s discomfort.**

What **COULD Yasmine SAY or DO** to let them know that she doesn’t want to play this “game?”

- **Yasmine can show that she does not want to kiss her friend by:**

- Clearly saying that she doesn’t want to do it.
- Refusing to do it. Saying: “No, I’m not interested.”
- Asking Anthony how he would react if she insisted that he kiss his best friend.
- Saying that she doesn’t want any activities or games at her party that make people uncomfortable.
- Deciding to leave the room where the game is taking place.
- If the situation is too much to handle, she can discreetly ask her parents to tell everyone that the party will end soon.
- Etc.

- › **How COULD others witnessing this scene REACT to Anthony and Lily-Rose insisting that Yasmine do this?**
-

- **They could intervene in several ways, i.e. by:**

- Telling Anthony that he should stop insisting, since Yasmine doesn’t want to do it and insisting is only making her more uncomfortable.
- Asking him how he would react if he were forced to do something he didn’t want to do in front of everyone.
- And whether he would agree to do the same thing with his best friend.
- Telling Yasmine that she has the right to say no and that she doesn’t have to play this “game” if she doesn’t feel like it. Besides, kissing is intimate, so it’s understandable if she finds it uncomfortable.
- By telling Lily-Rose that she must respect Yasmine’s refusal. Otherwise, she’s not respecting her friend’s right not to consent.
- Etc.



Answer Sheet: “Christopher and Zach”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situational exercise and ask each team to share their answers.
- › Add to their answers with the information below.

Christopher and Zach

It's Saturday and 15-year-old **Christopher** is spending the evening watching an action movie at the home of his 17-year-old boyfriend. After the movie is over, **Zach** asks Christopher to stay over. While cuddling against him, Christopher tells him that he has to go home. Zach says, “You could stay over for once. My parents aren't home.” Christopher hesitantly avoids his gaze and adds, “I can't. My parents wouldn't want me to stay over.” Zach continues to insist and says, “If you really loved me, you would stay with me. We can make up a story so your parents don't worry.” Christopher doesn't want to disappoint him and feels nervous. He doesn't want to stay and doesn't know how to react.

- › What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** indicating that Christopher does not want to stay over at his boyfriend's house?

- **Signs that he might want to:**

- His body posture (cuddling up to him) (non-verbal)
- Etc.

- **Signs that he doesn't want to stay:**

- He is hesitant; he doesn't want to disappoint his “boyfriend.”
- He avoids his gaze.
- He feels nervous.
- He finds reasons other than telling his boyfriend that he doesn't feel like it (e.g. “My parents won't want me to stay over.”) (verbal)
- He makes it clear twice that he doesn't want to stay. He says once that he has to go home and a second time he says, “I can't” when Zach invites him again.

• **A hesitation is really a “no”!**

- Sometimes you feel torn between two choices. When this happens, it can be even harder to give a clear answer. The other person may interpret this as a yes, but it isn't really.
- Christopher may feel torn between not wanting to disappoint his boyfriend and not wanting to disappoint his parents.
- Also, we don't know much about Christopher and Zach's relationship. Have they been together for long? Have they engaged in sexual activity before? Christopher may also not feel ready to engage in sexual activity right now, as he doesn't want his first sexual encounter to be something he decides on at the spur of the moment; perhaps he doesn't have protection (a condom); or he may fear the reactions of his parents who are expecting him to come home; etc.
- However, even if Christopher has had sex with his boyfriend before, he may still not want to stay over or even have sex that night.
- No matter what his reasons are, whenever a situation is ambiguous and one person hesitates, this is considered a no!

› **What do you think of Zach's REACTION to Christopher's hesitation and then refusal?**

Get their opinions.

› **What COULD Christopher SAY or DO to make Zach understand that he won't be sleeping over?**

-
- Christopher could say he doesn't like it when Zach insists like that. He doesn't feel listened to and doesn't feel comfortable because he is afraid of disappointing him.
 - Christopher could tell Zach that he's not ready to stay over or doesn't want to sleep over and would appreciate it if Zach respected his choice.
 - Christopher could repeat that his parents don't want him to stay at his boyfriend's house and that he wants to go home.
 - Christopher could tell Zach that he's worried that he doesn't have the same expectations given their difference in age or experience. He's worried that his invitation to stay over is like an invitation to “have sex” and that he doesn't feel ready for that right now.
 - Christopher could tell him that he would like to sleep over some other time when he doesn't feel rushed. Etc.
 - We don't know whether Christopher's parents know that he is romantically involved with Zach. If his parents aren't aware, this makes it more difficult for him to spend the night away from home with his boyfriend. But even if his parents know about and accept this relationship, that doesn't mean they would let their son spend the night at his boyfriend's place, given that he is only 15 years old.

› **What do you think of Zach's REACTION to Christopher's hesitation and refusal?**

Get their opinions.

› **How COULD Zach REACT to Christopher's reluctance to sleep over?**

- Simply accept his refusal without pressuring him by stating that he was happy to spend the evening with him.
- It's understandable that Zach wants to be with his boyfriend, but it is unacceptable to use emotional blackmail to convince him to stay.
- Try to understand why Christopher doesn't want to or can't sleep over, such as his parents' concern, his embarrassment. Are there any other reasons? Maybe he doesn't feel ready to sleep with his boyfriend or to engage in sexual activity? Maybe he is wondering if their expectations and experiences are different (15 years old compared to 17). Have they ever talked about having sex? Etc.
- Given that Zach is two years older than Christopher, he is expected to be the one to make sure his boyfriend doesn't feel pressured and he must respect his partner's decision.

- **What does the law say about the age of consent for sexual activity?**

- "A teenager may consent to sexual activity. However, their consent is invalid if they're considered too young to consent or if they're in a position of vulnerability with respect to the partner" (Éducaloi, 2022a).
- In Canada, the legal age of consent to sexual activity is 16 (sexual activity is defined as kissing, fondling and sexual intercourse). The age of consent, also known as the "age of protection," is the age at which young people can "legally" consent to sexual activities (Royal, 2008).
- The law does set out exceptions for sexual encounters before the age of 16, but with specific age differences.
- The law also specifies that anyone under the age of 12 (12 years minus 1 day) cannot consent to sexual activity (Éducaloi, 2022a).

Age and Sexual Consent

Age of younger partner	Age difference allowed
Less than 12 years	Consent is NEVER valid.
12-13 years old	Less than 2 years
14-15 years old	Less than 5 years

- For 14- to 15-year-olds, the legal age difference for consenting to sexual activity is less than five years (Éducaloi, 2022b). This means that a 14-year-old cannot consent to sexual activity with a 19-year-old, and a 15-year-old cannot consent to sexual activity with a 20-year-old.
- It is important to know that even if the teenager wants to have sex and says yes, their consent is not valid if it does not respect these legal age differences. This is true even if the parents agree. The older person could be charged with sexual assault.

- The two-year age difference between Christopher and Zach is within the legal age gap for consent to sexual activity.
- If the person has a relationship of trust or authority over the adolescent, the adolescent cannot legally consent even if he or she is of legal age (16) and gives consent (Éducaloi, 2022a). For example, you can't engage in sexual activity with a coach, teacher or another employee who is your superior.
- Consenting to one type of sexual activity (e.g. kissing) does not mean consenting to all types of sexual activity (e.g. fondling, having sex). You can say NO to any new sexual act at any time (Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick, 2017).
- Christopher, for example, might want to kiss his boyfriend and cuddle with him but not want to consent to anything else. He has the right not to feel ready for any other type of sexual activity. Even during sexual activity that both of them consented to, Christopher may agree to one sexual act but not another.
- Similarly, a person can consent to sexual activity and then change their mind even once they have started. In this case, the other partner must immediately stop the activity (Éducaloi, 2022a).



SHEET

3.6c

**FOR SESSION
LEADERS**

Answer Sheet: “Noémie and Amir”: Situational Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situational exercise and ask each team to share their answers.
- › Add to their answers with the information below.

Noémie and Amir

Amir, 15, is heading to the park with his friends. On the way, he tells them that he hopes **Noémie** will be there. “I finally kissed her at the party last week. I’m going to do everything I can to ‘hit that.’” For fun, his friends tell him that if he can score with her, they will be impressed. After arriving at the park, Amir sees Noémie and sits down next to her on the bench without realizing that she doesn’t seem too happy about it. The more she moves away from him, the closer he gets to her. Noémie seems shy and looks away. Amir’s friends watch him, intrigued to know what he’ll do. Amir puts his hand on Noémie’s thigh. She pushes his hand away and tries to get away, seeming uncomfortable. He whispers into her ear, “Don’t be such a tease, you liked it last time.” Deeply embarrassed, Noémie doesn’t know how to react. The other kids around don’t dare intervene.

- › What do the phrases “hit that” and “to score” mean and what does this say about Amir’s intentions?

- The phrase “hit that” can mean using another person for personal pleasure and seducing them for the sole purpose of having sex.
- “Scoring” means having sex with someone and generally in the sense of a “conquest.”
- The expressions “hit that,” “score,” and “a tease” are disrespectful ways to refer to a sexual activity or someone in particular. No one enjoys being used by another person or being the target of sexual insults.

› **What does this say about Amir’s intentions?**

- This gives the impression that he only wants to be with Noémie to satisfy his own sexual needs and desires without considering what Noémie wants. There is no indication that he wants to have a relationship with her and that he cares about her “consent.”
 - How does he perceive Noémie? Or girls in general?
 - What exactly does he want? Physical contact? Attention?
 - Is the way he talks about Noémie simply clumsy or his way of trying to impress people?
 - Is his behaviour due to a lack of knowledge about how to attract someone? Or is this a “macho” vision related to how he was brought up?

One thing is certain, this is not the right way to get Noémie to like him.

› **What are the verbal and non-verbal **SIGNS** indicating that Noémie isn’t interested in being close to Amir?**

• **Non-verbal signs**

- She pulls away from him when he tries to get closer.
- She blushes and looks away when he tries to get closer.
- She pushes his hand away when he tries to touch her.
- She’s uncomfortable.
- She freezes at his advances.

• **Verbal signs**

- None.
- She says nothing. She is too intimidated to say something even when he calls her a “tease.”

› **What do you think of Amir’s **REACTION** to Noémie’s discomfort and withdrawal?**

Get their opinions.

› **What *COULD* Noémie SAY or DO to indicate to Amir that she doesn't want to be close with him?**

- Tell him she doesn't want him to get close to her.
- Tell him to stop (when he tries to touch her).
- Say that she isn't interested in his advances.
- She may also decide to leave the bench and go sit somewhere else.
- Although Noémie does not “verbally” say that she doesn't want Amir to get close to her, many non-verbal signs clearly indicate that she isn't comfortable with the situation. Amir should quickly realize that she doesn't want to be near him and respect her refusal right away.

› **How *COULD* Amir's friends and the other people at the park REACT to Amir's insistence on getting closer to the Noémie?**

- Sit between Amir and Noémie on the bench to make Amir understand that what he's doing isn't right.
- Invite Noémie to come and sit next to them (so that she's safe) and asking her if she needs help.
- Instead of just watching them, his friends could tell Amir to stop insisting with Noémie, who is obviously uncomfortable and not interested. His friends could ask themselves how they would react if this were happening to someone close to them, like their own sister? Would they have the reflex to quickly protect her?
- One of his friends could take Amir aside and explain that just because he and Noémie kissed once doesn't mean she has to do it again (and we don't know the context of that kiss: did he act the way he's acting now?).
- If things get too intense, they can go find an adult (e.g. parents, school or youth centre staff member). If they are concerned about the person's safety, they need to tell a trusted adult quickly.

› **It is *important to REACT* to:**

- Show your disagreement with what is happening.
- Empower the non-consenting person and disempower the person who is insisting or who doesn't realize that the other person is not consenting.
- Prevent a possible situation of harassment or sexual assault. However, remember that the person who commits the assault is the only one RESPONSIBLE for their actions.
- There are major consequences for the victims of sexual violence and for those who engage in these behaviours (sexual assault is a crime punishable by law).
- As a society, we want these behaviours to stop.



SHEET

3.7

FOR THE GROUP

Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Sexual consent **MUST** be “free and voluntary,” and “informed”; it “may be withdrawn at any time” and it can be “enthusiastic.”
- › Read the sentences below, which represent different ways of giving or not giving consent to sexual activity.
- › Write the sentence number in the box that you think corresponds to the type of consent.

Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I really want to kiss the person. | 5. I was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs when my partner and I decided to have our first sexual encounter. |
| 2. I know and understand what I’m getting into. | 6. Before we had sex, I told my partner that I had been tested for an STI (sexually transmitted infection). |
| 3. I wanted to cuddle at first, but I don’t want to anymore. | 7. We were kissing, but before we went any further, I asked my partner if they wanted to. |
| 4. I don’t feel obliged to sleep at their place. | |

FREE AND VOLUNTARY



INFORMED



CAN BE WITHDRAWN AT ANY TIME



ENTHUSIASTIC





SHEET


3.8

FOR SESSION LEADERS

Answer Sheet: Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent

Key Components of Valid Sexual Consent


- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I really want to kiss the person. | 5. I was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs when my partner and I decided to have our first sexual encounter. |
| 2. I know and understand what I'm getting into. | 6. Before we had sex, I told my partner that I had been tested for an STI (sexually transmitted infection). |
| 3. I wanted to cuddle at first, but I don't want to anymore. | 7. We were kissing, but before we went any further, I asked my partner if they wanted to. |
| 4. I don't feel obliged to sleep at their place. | |



4 I don't feel obliged to sleep at their place.

5 I was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs when my partner and I decided to have our first sexual encounter.


FREE AND VOLUNTARY



2 I know and understand what I'm getting into.

6 Before we had sex, I told my partner that I had been tested for an STI (sexually transmitted infection).


INFORMED



3 I wanted to cuddle at first, but I don't want to anymore.

7 We were kissing, but before we went any further, I asked my partner if they wanted to.

CAN BE WITHDRAWN AT ANY TIME



1 I really want to kiss the person.

ENTHUSIASTIC

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Secondary 3 - Session 4

Sexualized Behaviour and Social Activities

“Sex at Parties: Embarrassing, Shocking and... Risky? ”

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)	
Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms	<p>Explain how representations of sexuality in the public space can influence the expression of your sexuality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norms and values conveyed in the public space and by the people around you. Personal norms and values. Expression of your sexuality in the public space (expressing your identity, relationships), intimate space (shared with a few chosen people) and private space (personal feelings and experiences).
Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence	<p>Become aware of the active role you can play in preventing or reporting a situation of sexual assault:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situations requiring the use of self-protection skills: with a friend, an acquaintance, a romantic partner or ex-partner, a stranger in the real or virtual world. Factors of vulnerability in each situation.
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: Enable students to take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop an attitude of openness to the world and respect for diversity.</p>

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

Cross-curricular competencies

Intellectual competencies

- › Uses information
- › Exercises critical judgment
- › Solves problems

Personal and social competencies

- › Achieves his/her potential
- › Cooperates with others

Communication-related competency

- › Communicates appropriately

Subject areas

Personal development subject area:

- › *Quebec Citizenship and Culture*

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: Autonomy and Interdependence (Secondary 2)
Culture and Symbolic Productions (Secondary 4)

Disciplinary competencies

Studies a cultural reality

- › Establishes the scope of the object of study
- › Evaluates elements of knowledge
- › Analyzes social relations
- › Demonstrates a more complete understanding

Reflects on an ethical question

- › Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation
- › Examines a variety of points of view
- › Develops a point of view
- › Engages in dialogue

Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School

Understand the importance of empowerment to prevent and report a situation of sexual assault and to support the victim (Secondary 2)

- › Self-protection skills in different situations
- › Reactions and helpful attitude of a person acting as a confidant

Reflect on the ambivalence created by some contradictory norms, such as differentiated norms for sexual behaviour in adolescence (Secondary 2)

Understand the characteristics of sexual behaviour in adolescence (Secondary 2)

- › Norms and myths regarding adolescent sexual behaviour

Reflect on the tensions between feelings, values and norms related to sexual behaviour and on the elements that can support choices in order to have a positive experience (Secondary 2)

Understand the elements that can support choices related to sexual behaviour in order to have a positive experience (Secondary 2)

- › Reasons for accepting or refusing a sexual behaviour
- › Self-knowledge, self-assertion and negotiation
- › Anticipation of positive or negative implications
- › Real or perceived pressure

Understand representations of sexuality in a variety of spaces (Secondary 4)

- › Norms, values and messages on sexuality from family, peers and the media
- › Expressions of sexuality in public, intimate and privacy spaces

Reflect on tensions between the norms and values promoted in the media and by family and peers, and between own values and representations of the self (Secondary 4)



Educational Goals



Session length:
75 minutes

Inform the group about the different ways that they can respond to intimate acts in public (including sexual ones) that make them uncomfortable or that they think are risky.

- 1. Discuss** the reasons for discomfort with intimate or sexual acts in public (i.e. at a party), types of dilemmas in these situations, and possible ways to react.
- 2. List** the potential consequences for a person who engages in intimate or sexual acts in public (i.e. at a party) depending on how the people around them react.
- 3. Discuss** why it is important to do something when being asked to perform an intimate act in public (i.e. at a party) that could be uncomfortable or lead to risks.
- 4. Analyze** situations related to intimate acts in public and switch the genders of the main characters to **identify** double standards.
- 5. Determine** realistic ways to respond to these uncomfortable or risky situations based on rules they decide for themselves or to uphold or protect the privacy of their friends.
- 6. Identify** their own comfort level with different types of intimate acts in public.
- 7. Analyze** different factors explaining one's comfort or discomfort depending on whether the intimate or sexual act is in public or in private.



Sequence



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

5 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation: Parties › Personal reflection : Dilemma in parties › Presentation : Dilemma
40 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activity: Intimate and sexual acts at parties <i>Sheet 4.1: Situational Exercise: My Friend</i> <i>Sheet 4.2: Situational Exercise: At the Youth</i> <i>Sheet 4.3: Situational Exercise: My Best Friend</i> <i>Sheet 4.4: Answer Sheet: Situational Exercise: My Friend</i> <i>Sheet 4.5: Answer Sheet: Situational Exercise: At the Youth Centre</i> <i>Sheet 4.6: Answer Sheet: Situational Exercise: My Best Friend</i> › Discussion and Presentation: Possible responses
10 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Team activity: Strategies to help you and your friends protect yourselves and each other in high-risk situations at parties › Presentation: Protection strategies
15 min.	ACTIVITY 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Presentation: Intimacy › Individual quiz: Connection to private / public context <i>Sheet 4.7: Answer Sheet: Connection to private / public context</i> › Discussion and Presentation
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 or situations involving violence. It’s important to protect their confidentiality and provide the assistance and support that they need. If a young minor is in danger or has been sexually assaulted, the police or Youth Protection Directorate must be contacted.

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

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





Activity 1



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



5 MIN.



PERSONAL REFLECTION



PRESENTATION

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).

Presentation

- › Then **share** the following content with the group and tell them that this session will be about respecting privacy and specifically about how witnessing or engaging in intimate or sexual acts in a public context (particularly at parties) can cause discomfort:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Parties can be opportunities for young people to hang out with each other outside of school in a less formal setting.
- › Parties are where you are supposed to have fun with your friends. And that's usually what happens.
- › However, parties can also be places where young people engage in intimate or other behaviour that they would not necessarily do at school under adult supervision.
- › At parties, this behaviour can be:
 - Silly.
 - Funny (e.g. joking around, making silly mistakes without consequences).
 - Embarrassing (e.g. witnessing intimate acts).
 - This behaviour can also lead to unpleasant and hurtful situations (e.g. being ridiculed by everyone, receiving or witnessing sexual insults).
 - Situations that pose a risk of harassment and sexual violence (e.g. unwanted sexual contact).
- › Whether teens engage in these different types of behaviour can be influenced by the level of supervision (e.g. whether adults are there or not), the number of people at the party, their age, and the use of alcohol or drugs, which can affect judgment.

- › Parties can be fun times with friends, but you may also come across “uncomfortable” or “risky situations.”
 - An **uncomfortable** situation is one that surprises, embarrasses or shocks you.
 - A **risky** situation is one in which you perceive a risk to your safety or the safety of another person or other people.

Personal Reflection

- › **Ask** the group to answer the suggested questions. However, tell them that they don’t have to share their answers with the rest of the group. They just have to think about their answers on their own.
 - **Have you ever been at a party or with friends and witnessed outrageous sexual comments, sexual insults, or intimate acts in public, etc. that embarrassed, worried or shocked you?**
 - **If so, what made you uncomfortable?**
 - **Did you know how to react?**
 - **Were you reluctant to do something? If so, why?**
 - **What was the exact DILEMMA (or reluctance) that prevented you from responding?**

Presentation

- › **Define** the meaning of “dilemma.”
 - **A dilemma is “a difficult choice you have to make between two things you could do”** (Dilemma, 2021).
 - **“Situations of conflicting values and principles that make decisions difficult”** (CEST, 2020).
- › **Explain** the following to the group:

You may witness situations at a party or with friends (or on social media) that make you feel embarrassed, shocked, or unsafe.

- Many youths interviewed in one research study mentioned that it was hard for them to respond to these situations, especially when they witnessed sexual acts (Duquet and Quéniart, 2009).

These situations can make us feel uncomfortable: we don’t want others to judge us and we don’t want to disappoint them; we feel torn between different ways of responding (e.g. pretending you didn’t see or hear anything or deciding to say or do nothing **OR** deciding to react, to leave, etc.). These situations put us in a dilemma.

This is why the next activity will focus on the different responses that you may have to intimate or sexual acts that take place in public (i.e. at a party).



2

Activity 2



SHEETS 4.1 TO 4.6
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



40 MIN.



TEAM ACTIVITY



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

Team Activity

- › **Divide** the group into teams of two.
- › **Mention** that they will have to read a situation that describes intimate acts at parties. As a team, they will have to express their possible reactions to these situations (e.g. discomfort, ease, indifference, possible spontaneous responses/encouragement of the act).
- › **Hand out** one of the three situations to each team (see Sheets 4.1 to 4.3: *Situational Exercises: My Friend; Situational Exercise: At the Youth Centre; Situational Exercise: My Best Friend*). Give them about ten minutes to answer the questions.
- › **Read** each situation out loud and ask the teams to share their answers with the rest of the group.
- › If necessary, **add** to the group's answers with the information on Answer Sheets 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 (*My Friend; At the Youth; My Best Friend*).

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

In their answers, the group could mention that the people in the scenarios regret what they did. Remember that the actions themselves are not really the problem. Wanting to impress others is normal. However, someone may regret what they did because of the unpleasant and disproportionate consequences, even though the person who committed the disrespectful act (e.g. rumours, humiliation, sharing intimate photos of someone without that person's permission) or illegal act (e.g. sharing intimate photos of a minor, sexual assault) is the one at fault. At the same time, some behaviours can damage a person's reputation, as their actions may be considered morally or socially unacceptable. This can unfortunately have unpleasant impacts. The goal is to get young people to think about how to protect themselves and others.



Discussion and Presentation

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

- **At a party, why is it important to respond to a situation that makes you uncomfortable OR that could put you or someone else at risk?**

Get their opinions.

› **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Hanging out with your friends or going to a party is meant to be fun. Occasionally, “dumb things” may happen, especially when everyone has been drinking (and even though people under the age of 18 are not allowed to drink!); however, even something dumb should not have negative consequences!
- › If something happens that makes you uncomfortable or puts you or someone else at risk, it is important to respond, for various reasons:
 - To reduce the chance that the embarrassing behaviour is photographed or recorded and then posted online against the person’s wishes. People can easily photograph or record others without their knowledge using a cell phone.
 - To show support for your friends, i.e. doing for others what we would like others to do for us. You could one day find yourself in a situation that you didn’t expect or don’t want to be in, and you would want the people around you to “protect” you from insults or other types of public humiliation, including on social media.
 - To watch out for people who have been drinking (or taking drugs), as people may consent to sexual acts that they would not otherwise agree to when under the influence of substances. Being at a party and consuming alcohol (or drugs) can make it easier to sometimes go beyond your own limits or ignore those of others.
 - “A person who has consumed alcohol or drugs is usually able to consent to sexual touching, even if impaired. But their consent is invalid if they no longer realize what they’re doing or if they’re unconscious” (Éducaloi, 2022a).
 - To reduce the risk of negative or non-consensual sexual experiences, it is important for everyone to be aware that you must get consent from your partner before engaging in any sexual activity and to be vigilant when it comes to at-risk situations.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



Many people who have had non-consensual sexual experiences find the term “sexual assault” too strong to describe their experience and instead prefer “negative sexual experience” or “non-consensual sexual experience.” In fact, many people do not identify themselves as “survivors” or “victims of sexual assault” and find these terms pejorative. This appears to be particularly true for boys (Lin6, 2021). This is why it’s important to use all of these terms so that more people can identify with them, if applicable.

› **Continue** the discussion by using the same situation to ask the group the questions, but this time switch the gender of the characters. Here are the suggested questions:

- **If a girl were the one doing the striptease, would you have reacted in the same way?**
- **If two boys instead of two girls were dancing close together, would you have reacted in the same way?**
- **If, instead of a girl, it was a drunk boy who had been dragged into the room by a girl (or by a boy) he didn’t know, would you have reacted in the same way?**
- **In these situations, why is one gender often judged more severely than another for the same behaviour?**

Get their opinions.

› **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

› We often react in different ways depending on whether a boy or a girl is the one exhibiting a behaviour. Yet the issues at stake **are the same**.

› **Situation 1 (My Friend).**

- A girl doing a striptease will probably not be perceived the same as if a boy did it. Although the girl may get laughed at (just like a boy would), she would also likely generate a lot more curiosity, interest and “desire” than a boy would.
- Although the girl may be perceived as “down for it,” “hot,” etc., she is more likely to be labelled negatively. People may insult her and call her names (e.g. “slut”, “whore”) that could negatively impact her reputation.
- Boys, on the other hand, may also be perceived as “down for it” but also as fun, outgoing, sexy, hot, etc. These situations seem to have less impact on boys’ reputations.

› **Situation 2 (At the Youth Centre)**

- Two boys dancing closely may not be perceived in the same way as two girls doing the same thing. Two boys could be seen as just clowning around, but they could also be called “homos” or ridiculed as “fags” and then be harassed by other kids.
- However, many young people and people in general these days are more open to homosexuality, and this may not provoke homophobic reactions.
- Other people may think two girls kissing in public (e.g. at a party) is “hot.” They may also be the victims of sexual insults (e.g. “whores,” “sluts”) or homophobic insults.

› **Situation 3 (My Best Friend)**

- People will usually have different concerns if a girl drags a drunk boy into a bedroom and the boy barely knows her. For example, we generally wouldn't be afraid that the girl would take advantage of him. We wouldn't necessarily think of his regretting being sexually active in this context. Unfortunately, many people wouldn't think that he might experience this negatively or even be sexually assaulted.
- On the contrary, his friends may be happy for him, encourage him to go to the room with this girl, and congratulate him without worrying about it.
- Since the boy in this situation is very drunk, he cannot give informed consent; this would constitute sexual assault, and the girl could be charged (even if she did not initially have these intentions).
- The same would be true if it were another boy who took him into the room.

› Generally speaking, these situations show a double standard.

- A double standard means perceiving or judging a behaviour by a girl differently from how we would if the action were done by a boy (de Senarclens, 2017).
- For the same behaviour, people may:
 - Judge girls more harshly than boys (e.g. insult them).
 - And, conversely, may be less concerned about situations that put boys at risk (e.g. less concerned about their sexual consent).

› As we have seen, both boys and girls can have embarrassing or worrisome experiences in this situation, and it's important to RESPOND and not trivialize what happens to them.

› When we downplay a behaviour for either girls or boys and don't worry about what could happen to them, some teens who are the victims of violence (for example) may be less likely to talk about it or get help for fear of being ridiculed (Arel, 2020).

› Anyone is at risk of receiving sexual insults, having their reputations damaged, having negative sexual experiences, getting into situations of sexual exploitation, or experiencing sexual abuse.

› For example, at a party where people are drinking alcohol (or using drugs), limits may be less clear; hence the importance of being vigilant and helping everyone avoid situations that could pose a risk, for example, to someone's psychological health.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER



In a survey of Quebec youths, 16.8% of the girls and 5.4% of the boys reported having experienced sexual violence in a romantic relationship (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2018). Not being as concerned about boys' welfare compared to that of girls may make boys less likely to talk about a problem for fear of being ridiculed (Arel, 2020).

- › **Wrap** up the activity by **highlighting** the steps they went through to analyze the situations and develop empathy and support for others:
 - **Identify the emotion and feeling (comfort or discomfort).**
 - **Determine why the person is acting this way.**
 - **Name the possible consequences for your friend if no one does anything.**
 - **Describe how you could respond and determine the impact of your response on the situation.**
 - **Choose the best course of action so that your friend (or anyone else) doesn't get made fun of, harassed or even assaulted.**



Activity 3



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



10 MIN.



PRESENTATION



TEAM ACTIVITY

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the teams to discuss and identify three REALISTIC ways of responding to sexual situations at parties that could make them uncomfortable. A helpful tool is thinking about the rules that they and their friends have agreed to in order prevent negative and/or at-risk sexual experiences.
- › These can be rules recommended by adults they know, rules they already apply when they go out with friends, or rules inspired by the situations that the teams have worked on. You can also share these examples of responses from young people:

“We know boys who have taken advantage of drunk girls to have sex with them, and that worries me, so I’m careful about how much I drink.” (Tamara, 15)

“We guys help each other out. For example, if one of us has had too much to drink, we keep an eye on him so that he doesn’t do or say stupid things that could hurt him and come back to haunt him. We don’t take ourselves too seriously, but we’re a group of guys who do the right thing; we’re fed up that guys are always seen as irresponsible.” (Julien, 16)

- › **Tell** the teams that they will take turns sharing one of their rules with the rest of the group.

Presentation

- › If necessary, **add** to their answers with the content below:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Watch how much you drink.
- › Don't let anyone take a picture or video of you without your consent.
- › Allow yourself to tell those who make derogatory comments about other people that it is neither funny nor nice.
- › Avoid people whose behaviour you disapprove of.
- › Stay with at least one friend during the party and "watch out for each other" throughout the night.
- › If you see a friend who's very drunk and is with someone else who appears to be making sexual advances or is touching the person, intervene since your friend cannot give consent.
- › Don't hesitate to find someone you trust if you or your friends need help and you don't know what to do.
- › At the end of the night, leave with your friends or make sure that all your friends are safe before leaving, even if it means offering them a ride.
 - A golden rule: We came to the party as a group, and we're leaving the party as a group. We never leave someone alone at a party. If we do, we must at least make sure that everything is okay and that someone there will make sure they stay "safe."
- › Some of these rules may also apply to the use of social medias. When intimate and sexual acts are posted and create discomfort or put young people at risk of receiving sexual advances online: respond to derogatory comments or shocking images, tell an adult you trust, block the person online.



Activity 4



SHEET 4.7
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



15 MIN.



PRESENTATION



**INDIVIDUAL
QUIZ**



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**

- › **Tell** the group that this activity will be about intimate acts in public. We've seen that it can be embarrassing to hear or witness INTIMATE words or acts at parties. But what does "intimate" mean?

Presentation

- › **Clarify** what "intimate" means and the factors that may determine how comfortable or uncomfortable it is to witness acts considered intimate.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Intimacy

- › *"Intimacy" refers to our own private space where we keep our thoughts, dreams and desires. This is a part of ourselves that we only share with people who are very close to us and whom we trust.*
- › *Sex / sexuality is intimate: This means that parts of the body (e.g. private parts, being nude, etc.) as well as sexual acts are considered "intimate."*

Our comfort level with intimate acts depends on different factors

- › *Our comfort or discomfort with being intimate with others or seeing other people being intimate with each other will depend on different factors:*
 - **Where these acts take place:** It is important to distinguish between a PRIVATE and PUBLIC place. For example, making out with your boyfriend or girlfriend at home when you both are willing participants (private place) is perfectly acceptable, but the same thing in class at school (public place) would be very embarrassing.
 - **Nature of the acts:** Some acts are not as intimate as others. For example, there's a difference between holding hands and kissing. Similarly, there is a difference between kissing each other for a long time ("making out") and caressing each other on and under clothing.
 - **The intensity of the act:** Intensity may influence how comfortable someone is witnessing people being intimate with each other. For example, two people sitting next to each other

on the couch at a youth centre usually won't embarrass anyone; but if the same couple makes out for a long time while one sits astride the other can be embarrassing for other people. This isn't because these acts are wrong (it's normal to want to get close to your boyfriend or girlfriend) but because they are so intense that you get the impression that they should be done in private.

- **How we are raised and our personal values:** Our family's rules, our cultural or religious beliefs, our experiences, our personal sense of modesty, etc. will influence whether we are comfortable with some intimate or sexual acts both in public and in private.
- **The values of our society:** In Quebec, for example, the values of respect and equality as well as openness to sexuality are important. Things that we can and can't do in public (i.e. nudity or sexual acts that are deemed unacceptable) are dictated by the values of our society and are represented in our laws (Éducaloi, 2022b).

Individual Quiz

- › **Present** five situations to the group and ask them to determine their personal comfort with witnessing these situations.
- › **Go over** the following rating scale:



- › **Explain** that they will use this scale to determine how comfortable they are witnessing these situations. There are no right or wrong answers; everyone may have a different level of comfort in each situation. They don't have to share their answers with the group; they can just think about them in their heads. Everyone should exercise discretion.
- › **Read** each situation below and give everyone time to think about their comfort level and the reasons for their discomfort (if applicable) based on the information presented above:
 1. You are walking in a park and see an elderly couple sitting on a bench kissing on the mouth.
 2. You're at the mall and two men in front of you are holding hands.
 3. During a performance by the school's dance troupe in the auditorium, a couple of Secondary 4 students sitting next to you are making out, and you notice the boy's hand under his girlfriend's sweater.
 4. Your best friend, who has a girlfriend for the first time, asks you to go with him to her place to watch a funny movie. He's too embarrassed to go by himself. You're therefore alone with both of them. Throughout the film, they sit close together and hold hands.
 5. You're at a party at a friend's house. A small group has formed around a boy who is showing porn on his cell phone. Just for fun, he turns up the sound: everyone can hear sex noises and moaning.

- › Using Sheet 4.7: *Answers: Connection to private / public context*, **analyze** the five situations presented above based on the different factors listed.

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the following question:
 - **What would be the difference if these situations occurred in private versus public?**
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › Being intimate with someone is perfectly normal, acceptable, and enjoyable when both people are consenting. However, it is important to distinguish between intimate or sexual acts that are done in private or in public.
- › The same sexual acts in private would not have the same impact, and each of you would surely assess them differently.
- › Sexuality is part of everyone's private or intimate life, and witnessing this facet of someone's life in public can be embarrassing.
- › For example, an intimate or sexual act in private may not create discomfort, but it could if it takes place in public and you are there to see it.
- › In fact, laws exist to prevent certain sexual acts in public: *"An example of an indecent act is a man showing his genitals in public. Whether or not an act is indecent depends on the act and the situation. It's up to the courts to decide whether an act is indecent"* (Éducaloi, 2022b). Some laws are in place to ensure that generally agreed-upon rules in society are respected.



Session Conclusion



5 MIN.



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

Discussion and Presentation

- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
 - **Why is it important to do something when you or a friend is in an embarrassing situation?**

Get their opinions.
- › **Add** to what they say with the suggestions below.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › It's important to remember that an intimate and sexual act is not bad in itself. On the contrary, it feels good to know someone well enough to be intimate, and especially sexually intimate, with them.
- › But some media and online environments constantly bombard us with private and intimate acts (e.g. sexting, suggestive poses, nudity) that can give the impression that everyone is doing it, especially on social media (or at parties).
- › But there is a big difference between intimacy in private and intimacy in public. We have to consider various factors to determine whether being intimate with someone will create public discomfort and be perceived as appropriate or inappropriate.
- › When we feel uncomfortable with this type of situation, we may wonder why we feel this way:
 - Is it because some people use sex/sexuality to make fun of someone or humiliate them in front of everyone (sexual insults)?
 - Is it because we are witnessing something intimate that usually takes place in private and not in public?
 - Or is it because what's happening could put someone at risk of a negative or non-consensual sexual experience (sexual assault)?
- › You can respond in different ways when you witness an embarrassing or at-risk situation at a party (for example) to protect yourself or others.

- › If you find yourself in this type of situation and don't know what to do or if what you're doing isn't working, you can contact a trusted adult or call a helpline such as Tel-Jeunes (<https://www.teljeunes.com>) or Kids Help Phone (<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>) via chat, text message or phone.
- › Their counsellors can help you assess the situation and find other possible solutions.
- › **Enjoy the Party!... but remember: keep private acts private.**



SHEET

4.1

FOR THE GROUP

Situational Exercise: My Friend

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situation.
- › In teams of two, complete the sentences about your reactions to this situation. Emotions may vary from person to person.

“At a party, you and your friends are playing truth or dare. One of your friends is dared to do a striptease in front of everyone. When he starts to undress, someone starts recording with their cell phone.”

This situation
MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

OR

This situation
DOESN'T MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____


2. _____

3. _____

I think my friend is doing this because...

If no one does anything...

The following could happen to my friend...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something...

I could do something
in this situation by...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something,
my friend might...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

His reaction
could make me feel...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Overall...

I think that the **best thing to do** in this situation is to...



SHEET

4.2

FOR THE GROUP

Situational Exercise: At The Youth Centre

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situation.
- › In teams of two, complete the sentences about your reactions to this situation. Emotions may vary from person to person.

“At a party at the Youth Centre, where close dancing isn’t allowed, two of your girlfriends are ‘grinding’ against each other. They are giggling because they know it’s not allowed and that they’ll get attention.”

This situation
MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

OR

This situation
DOESN'T MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____


2. _____

3. _____

I think my friends is doing this because...

If no one does anything...

The following could happen to my friends...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something...

I could do something in this situation by...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something, my friends might...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Their reaction could make me feel...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Overall...

I think that the **best thing to do** in this situation is to...



SHEET

4.3

FOR THE GROUP

Situational Exercise: My Best Friend

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Read the situation.
- › In teams of two, complete the sentences about your reactions to this situation. Emotions may vary from person to person.

“At a party at your best friend’s house, you see that she is very drunk and going into her room with a guy she barely knows.”

This situation
MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

OR

This situation
DOESN'T MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

1. _____


2. _____

3. _____

I think my best friend is doing this because...

If no one does anything...

The following could happen to my best friend...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something...

I could do something
in this situation by...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I do something,
my best friend might...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Her reaction
could make me feel...



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Overall...

I think that the **best thing to do** in this situation is to...



Answer Sheet: Situational Exercise: My Friend

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Get everyone back in the group and go over each of the situations. Collect the teams' answers while highlighting the different reactions depending on whether the main character is a boy or a girl.
- › Add to their answers if necessary with the information below:

My Friend

"At a party, you and your friends are playing truth or dare. One of your friends is dared to do a striptease in front of everyone. When he starts to undress, someone starts recording the scene with their cell phone."

This situation
MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

- › My friend is probably not aware of what he's doing.
- › I'm surprised at his attitude.
- › It's embarrassing. I don't want to see him like this.
- › If he's recorded, he won't have control over where the video is posted.
- › My friend may regret doing this even though he's not responsible for someone else recording a video of him.
- › Etc.

OR This situation
DOES NOT MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

- › I don't mind. I think it's funny.
- › My friend likes to be the centre of attention.
- › It's just a dare.
- › We're with our friends.
- › Everyone is laughing and no one cares.
- › Lots of people show practically nude pictures of themselves on social media, including celebrities, so it's really not something to panic over.
- › Etc.

› **I think my friend is doing this because...**

- He's up for the dare and really not shy.
- He doesn't want to be seen as a coward or "chicken" in front of everyone.
- He wants to be popular.
- He wants to make people laugh. He wants to stand out and be the centre of attention.
- He couldn't refuse.
- He's not aware of what he's doing given how much he's had to drink.
- He doesn't care what people might say about him, although he doesn't know someone is recording him.
- Etc.

If no one does anything...¹

› **The following could happen to my friend...**

- Videos or photos of him could be posted online and on social media.
- He might not realize what he's done because he's had too much to drink.
- He might not remember what he did the next day.
- People might laugh at him.
- Others may give him a bad "reputation" and spread a rumour about him at school and on social media, even though he's not responsible for someone else recording a video of him.
- He might get harassed.
- He might regret what he did and feel embarrassed and even shame; his parents might find out, disapprove, and ground him.
- Etc.

› **The following could also happen:**

- He may become popular and be admired by others.
- He might make people laugh, which could make the party even more fun.
- He might go viral online.
- Etc.

If I do something...

› **I could do something in this situation by...**

- Going to see him and asking him directly what he's going to do.
- Taking him aside and telling him that I'm worried about him doing this and that he's had a lot to drink.
- Making him realize that he might not do the same thing if he hadn't been drinking.
- Making him realize that someone is recording him and he doesn't know where the video might end up.
- Saying in front of everyone, in as light a tone as possible, that this isn't something to dare someone to do and ask them to suggest something else.

¹ Note that the information in the "If no one does anything" and "If I do something" sections are not in the PowerPoint for this activity. It is up to the session leader to provide these answers.

- By preventing him from doing the striptease or insisting to others that it's ridiculous or "silly."
- Saying to the person who made the dare whether he would find it as funny if he were the one dared to do it?
- Asking the person recording to stop immediately because this isn't a game and telling the person to erase the video from their cell phone in front of you.
- Changing the mood by suggesting another dare or another game.
- Telling your friend that you need him (e.g. "I have an emergency") to create a distraction.
- Leave the game, say that you're uncomfortable seeing your friend strip down in front of others, and write him a text message to explain your reason for leaving.
- Etc.

› **If I do something, my friend might...**

- Not understand my reaction and tell me to mind my own business.
- Despite my intervention, decide to go ahead with the striptease.

› **But he might also:**

- Realize that he shouldn't go through with it as he's under the influence of alcohol and he's being recorded.
- Be happy and reassured that I intervened and even thank me (the next day!) for doing what I did.
- Etc.

› **I would feel...**

- Depending on my friend's reaction to what I did, my feelings might vary:
 - For example, I could feel bad and get down on myself that I didn't mind my own business and that I shouldn't have gotten involved; that I'm not open-minded enough; or be worried. Or I could feel reassured, satisfied that I did something, etc.

› **I think the best thing to do in this situation is to...**

- **DO SOMETHING.** It's important not to stay passive in these situations.
- But there isn't just one way to act. Regardless of my friend's reaction to what I say, the fact that I am doing something shows that I care about him and that I don't want anything to happen to him that he might regret (e.g. photos posted on social media).
- It's important that he know my fears about the situation. Because I would want him to do the same for me.
- I can also try to find help if my friend doesn't want to listen to me.
 - Note that the law prohibits people from sharing private images of someone under the age of 18. Therefore, you cannot share photos or videos of minors showing certain body parts of the body, like breasts or genitals or explicit sexual activity (Éducaloi, 2022c).
 - It's important to talk to a trusted adult to prevent a serious and illegal situation from occurring.



SHEET

4.5

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer Sheet: Situational Exercise: At the Youth Centre

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Get everyone back in the group and go over each of the situations. Collect the teams' answers while highlighting the different reactions depending on whether the main character is as a boy or a girl.
- › Add to their answers if necessary with the information below:

At the Youth Centre

"At a party at the Youth Centre, where close dancing isn't allowed, two of your girlfriends are 'grinding' against each other. They are giggling because they know it's not allowed and that they'll get attention."

This situation
MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

- › This kind of dancing isn't allowed. This is a rule at the youth centre.
- › This situation could be embarrassing because they are being intimate with each other in public.
- › I know they're doing this just to get other people excited and not because they are dating and want to be closer. Even if they were dating, dancing like that is too intimate in public (the same thing would be true if the couple were a boy and a girl).
- › Someone may be recording them without their knowledge and they would have no control over where the video is posted.
- › They may regret doing this even though they are not responsible for someone else recording a video of them.
- › Etc.

OR

This situation
DOESN'T MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE
because...

- › They have the right to do what they want. We're not at school.
- › It's none of my business.
- › It's just a dance like any other. They're just doing what you see in music videos.
- › They are getting other people's attention. It's "hot."
- › It's just something they're experimenting with.
- › They're just having fun.
- › Etc.

› **I think my friends are doing this because...**

- They just want to dance and have fun.
- They want to dance like they do in music videos.
- They want to have a new experience.
- They know it's not allowed and want to challenge authority.
- They want to attract attention.
- They want people to think they are popular.
- Etc.

If no one does anything...²

› **The following could happen to my friends...**

- They might get a warning from the youth centre counsellors and may even get kicked out of the dance or the Youth Centre for a while, if this isn't the first time they have violated the rules.
- People could make fun of them.
- People could spread rumours about them and give them a bad "reputation."
- They might get harassed.
- Someone could record them and post the video on social media. They may regret it.
- Etc.

› **The following could also happen:**

- They might not get a warning from the youth counsellors.
- They might like dancing together and kissing each other.
- They may really enjoy getting the boys excited and turning them on.
- They may be more successful with boys in the future.
- They may become more popular at school and on social media.
- Etc.

If I do something...

› **I could do something in this situation by...**

- Going to see them to ask them if they know they're not allowed to dance like that at the Youth Centre.
- Asking them directly what they're doing. Since I know them well, I could tell them that I find it embarrassing to see them dancing like this because they're doing something that should generally only be done in private.
- Taking them aside to tell them that I'm worried people will spread rumours about them and give them a bad reputation.

2 Note that the information in the "If no one does anything" and "If I do something" sections are not in the PowerPoint for this activity. It is up to the session leader to provide these answers.

- Going to dance near them and quietly leading one of my two friends off the dance floor.
- Suggesting another activity (e.g. going outside to get some air).
- Etc.

› **If I do something, my friends might...**

- Not understand my reaction and tell me to mind my own business and not to care what other people think of them.
- Make fun of me, say that I'm "out of it" or "old fashioned."
- Ignore me and continue what they're doing on the dance floor.

› **But they also might:**

- Realize that it's better for them to respect the rules and stop what they're doing, since this is not allowed at the Youth Centre.
- Be happy and reassured that I intervened and even thank me.
- Etc.

› **I would feel...**

- Depending on my friend's reaction to what I did, my feelings might vary:
 - For example, I might feel: uncomfortable and get down on myself for not minding my own business; that I shouldn't have gotten involved; that I'm not open-minded enough; be worried. Or I could feel reassured and satisfied that I did something, etc.

› **I think that the best thing in this situation is to...**

- Again, the best thing in this situation is to **DO SOMETHING**. It's important not to stay passive in these situations.
- But there isn't just one way to act. Regardless of my friends' reaction to what I say, the fact that I am doing something proves that I care about them and that I don't want anything to happen to them that they might regret (e.g., they might get suspended from the youth centre since this isn't the first time they have violated the rules; the youth centre may contact their parents; other people may post photos or video on social media, which will turn the experience into a bad memory, etc.). It's important that they know that I am worried about the situation. More than that, I would hope that they'd do the same for me.



SHEET

4.6

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answers: Situational Exercise: My Best Friend

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Get everyone back in the group and go over each of the situations. Collect the teams' answers while highlighting the different reactions depending on whether the main character is a boy or a girl.
- › Add to their answers if necessary with the information below:

My Best Friend

"At a party at your best friend's house, you see that she is drunk and going into her room with a guy she barely knows."

This situation

MAKES ME UNCOMFORTABLE

because...

- › My friend's alcohol consumption means she may not be fully aware of what is happening or what she is doing.
- › This boy she barely knows is taking her to a room even though she has been drinking heavily.
- › We don't know what's going to happen in her room.
- › I'm worried about my best friend.
- › I'm afraid that she will have a negative sexual experience or engage in a sexual act to which she is not in a condition to truly consent (sexual assault).
- › Etc.

This situation

OR DOES NOT MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE

because...

- › She knows him a little bit.
- › She's old enough to know what she's doing.
- › I'm not her mother; it's not up to me to tell her what to do.
- › He's someone she's probably had a crush on for a while, she just never told me about him.
- › She probably wants to.
- › Etc.

› **I think my best friend is doing this because...**

- She isn't fully aware of what she's doing (effect of alcohol).
- She doesn't want to disappoint the boy.
- She isn't able to say no.
- She feels like being alone with this boy.
- She feels like having sex.
- Etc.

If no one does anything...³

› **The following could happen to my best friend...**

- She might have sexual experience with someone she barely knows; it could even be her first time.
- She might not remember what happened with the boy the next day.
- Other people might give her a bad "reputation" and tell everyone at school and on social media.
- She might engage in sex without really wanting to just to please the other person.
- She might have unprotected sex (e.g. condoms, contraception); she is at risk of contracting an STI (sexually transmitted infection) or becoming pregnant.
- She might not be able to consent because she's had too much to drink.
- The boy might take advantage of her.
- She might have a sexual experience that she doesn't consent to, i.e. sexual assault.
- Etc.

› **The following could also happen...**

- She may simply spend time talking to the boy in her room.
- She may just fall asleep without anything bad happening to her, i.e. the boy may not take advantage of the situation to engage in sexual activity because she's not in a state in which she can consent.
- If my best friend has been drinking but she is not that intoxicated and can give her consent, she may have a good time with this boy (e.g. just hugging, kissing, engaging or not engaging in sexual activity).
- Etc.

³ Note that the information in the "If no one does anything" and "If I do something" sections are not in the PowerPoint for this activity. It is up to the session leader to provide these answers.

If I do something...

› I could do something in this situation by...

- Stopping her from going into her room while telling the guy to try again when she's not drunk and when she can remember him and the time they spent together.
- Telling the boy that obviously she is not in a condition to give consent to sexual activity and that engaging in sex with her would be sexual assault. He might be accused of something serious even if they both liked each other at first, had fun, and could have had a good time together. If they want to, they can see each other again another time.
- Going to see her and telling her that I'm worried about her going to her room with a boy she doesn't really know and that, on top of it all, she's had a lot to drink and can't consent.
- Finding an excuse to see my best friend and keep her from going to her room with this boy (e.g. "Your mom called," "I really need you," "If you go to your room, no one will be there to keep an eye on the party at your house.>").
- Etc.

› If I do something, my best friend might...

- Not understand my reaction and tell me to mind my own business.
- Get angry (since she is under the influence of alcohol).
- Decide to go to the room with the boy anyway no matter what I say.

› But she could also:

- Realize on her own that she shouldn't go to her room with the boy since she has had a lot to drink and that, indeed, she barely knows the boy. If they were already dating (boyfriend/girlfriend), the reasoning would be the same; she can't give real sexual consent in her current state.
- She might say that the party is at her place and that she has to keep an eye on things, so she has to be around (even if she isn't completely with it!).
- Be happy and reassured that I said something and even thank me for doing so (the next day!).
- Etc.

› I would feel...

- Depending on my best friend's reaction to what I did, my feelings might vary:
 - For example, I may feel bad and get down on myself that I didn't mind my own business; tell myself that I shouldn't have gotten involved; or be worried. Or I could feel reassured or satisfied that I did something in time, etc.

› **I think the best thing in this situation is to...**

- **DO SOMETHING.** It's important not to stay passive in these situations.
- But there isn't just one way to act. Regardless of my friend's reaction to what I say, the fact that I did something shows that I care about her and that I don't want anything to happen to her that she might regret, even if what happens isn't her fault.
- It's important that she know that I have fears about the situation. And I can only hope that she'd do the same for me.
- It's important for the boy to know that this situation is unacceptable (because my friend cannot give informed consent) and that this can result in legal action (even if he did not initially have bad intentions).
- I can also go find help if my friend doesn't want to listen to me.



SHEET

4.7

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answers: Connection to Private / Public Context

INSTRUCTIONS

- › When you bring everyone back as a group, go back over the five situations and add to them if necessary with the suggested content.

1.	You're taking a walk in a park and see an elderly couple sitting on a bench kissing on the mouth.
Location	Public place with lots of foot traffic. On a bench where people may sit close together and show affection for each other.
Type of intimacy	Whatever their age, a couple kissing on the cheek is a sign of affection; kissing on the mouth is more intimate. Not very disturbing in public - depending on the intensity.
Intensity	Act of love and tenderness. If this is a simple kiss on the mouth, which is more intimate than a kiss on the cheek, it's not necessarily shocking.
Family / personal values	Generally speaking, people are not going to pay much attention to it, especially if they kiss quickly and discreetly. However, some people may get embarrassed at seeing older people kissing.
Social values	In Quebec society, it is generally quite acceptable and rather touching to see seniors give this sign of affection in public.

2.	You're at the mall and two men in front of you are holding hands.
Location	A busy public place where it's common to see couples holding hands.
Type of intimacy	This is a perfectly acceptable thing to do. Sign of affection. Usually, holding hands is not considered all that intimate. It is therefore not at all disturbing to see this done in public.
Intensity	Sign of affection. Not particularly intense in nature.
Family / personal values	Most people won't even notice. However, some people may be embarrassed at seeing two men holding hands, and people may stare at them. Some people, depending on how they were brought up and their culture and beliefs, may be shocked not by the act itself (holding hands) but rather by the fact that two men are doing so.
Social values	In Quebec society, it is generally very accepted to see homosexual couples display affection in public. The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms prohibits anyone from harassing or discriminating against anyone because of their sexual orientation (CDPDJ, 2021).
3.	During a performance by the school's dance troupe in the auditorium, a couple of Secondary 4 students sitting next to you are making out, and you notice the boy's hand is under his girlfriend's sweater.
Location	Public place. A place where young people may strangely feel "alone in the world" and start being intimate with each other.
Type of intimacy	Very intimate gestures (making out and fondling under clothes). Can be disruptive in public.
Intensity	Young people may often engage in this type of behaviour in public places. However, the more "intimate" the touching, the more intense it will be considered in public. How appropriate this act is will be different depending on whether it is done in private or public. The goal is not to judge them for getting close or for touching each other or wanting to experience strong sensations or desire, etc. Instead, they should understand that people around them don't need to see them being intimate with each other like this, as they should be in private.
Family / personal values	How people feel about this type of situation can vary greatly. Some people will be embarrassed while others will be completely indifferent; few people would tell them to stop.
Social values	In Quebec society, in general, intimate touching should take place in private. However, some young people have a hard time finding a place to be intimate with each other. That's why it can sometimes be "tolerated" (e.g. in a movie theatre) but when it gets too intense, it can be offensive to others' sense of modesty.

4.	Your best friend, who has a girlfriend for the first time, asks you to go with him to her place to watch a funny movie. He's too embarrassed to go by himself. You're therefore alone with both of them. Throughout the film, they sit close together and hold hands.
Location	Private place.
Type of intimacy	Sign of affection. Act of love and tenderness.
Intensity	What they are doing is not really intense. The discomfort may be more associated with being the only person there and feeling like a third wheel.
Family / personal values	How people feel about this type of situation can vary greatly. Some people will be embarrassed while others will be completely indifferent, and few people would tell them to stop.
Social values	In Quebec society, being around a couple holding hands is considered entirely appropriate. Again, the fact of being a third wheel and feeling that you are “horning in” on their romance is what creates the discomfort.

5.	You're at a party at a friend's house. A small group has formed around a boy who is showing porn on his cell phone. Just for fun, he turns up the sound: people all around hear the sex noises and moaning.
Location	Private place. But the fact that a party is going on means that the place is more “public” in nature.
Type of intimacy	Very sexual acts. Pornographic images. Explicit sex sounds and moaning from the characters in the video that no one can ignore.
Intensity	Intense and sometimes violent sexual scenes where women and men are often presented as objects. Cyberpornography is illegal for minors.
Family / personal values	How people feel about this type of situation can vary greatly. Some people will be embarrassed to watch these sexual scenes; others will be very shocked. Some may laugh to deal with their discomfort. It can be a turn-on to watch these images in a group, but they can also create worries (e.g. <i>Do we have to do it like that?</i>), even if people were just curious at first and made jokes or enjoyed seeing the naked images.
Social values	In Quebec society, it is generally considered inappropriate to watch porn in public. It is also illegal to watch pornography before the age of 18 and to entice a minor to watch it. It may also be concerning that pornography is widely available to a young audience and that no adults appear to be around to intervene and simply talk to the young people about it. Pornography is a good example of the “commodification” of sex, and pornographic scenes can be very “raw” and explicit. Seeing images and hearing (often intense) sounds can also offend people's sense of modesty.

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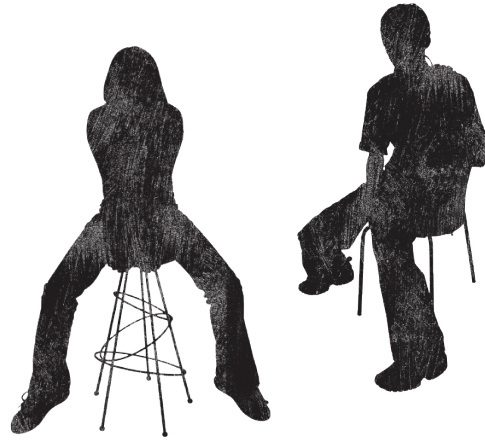
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Secondary 3 - Session 5

Sexual behaviour “Let’s Talk About It”



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)

Sexual behaviour

Reflect on the importance of desire and pleasure in sexual behaviour

- › Place of desire and romantic and sexual fantasies
- › Place of psychological and physical pleasure: positive feelings that go with sexual behaviours (feelings of closeness, intimacy, well-being), sexual response (desire, arousal, orgasm, relaxation)

Become aware of the factors that can influence sexual relations in adolescence

- › Internal motivations: to express your sexual desire, feel pleasure, release sexual tension, express love, explore, satisfy curiosity
- › External motivations: to keep up with your peers in terms of experimentation, to escape from your problems, to keep your partner, to please someone else, to impress others, to be popular, to reject parental norms, to acquire social status, to avoid conflict
- › Conditions for enjoyable sexual relations: to express your needs and limits (sense of self-efficacy), to respect them and respect those of the other person, to confront obstacles (perception of control: being able to stop sexual relations at any time if they are no longer desired), to be able to talk about it with someone you trust (people around you, school personnel, health professional), as needed

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

Broad areas of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Health and Well-Being: Ensure that students develop a sense of responsibility for adopting good lifestyle habits with respect to health, safety and sexuality. › Media: Enable students to exercise critical, ethical and aesthetic judgment with respect to the media and produce media documents that respect individual and collective rights. 		
Cross-curricular competencies	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Intellectual competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Solves problems › Exercises critical judgment › Uses creativity </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Personal and social competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieves his/her potential › Cooperates with others Communication-related competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately </td> </tr> </table>	Intellectual competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Solves problems › Exercises critical judgment › Uses creativity 	Personal and social competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieves his/her potential › Cooperates with others Communication-related competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately
Intellectual competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses information › Solves problems › Exercises critical judgment › Uses creativity 	Personal and social competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Achieves his/her potential › Cooperates with others Communication-related competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Communicates appropriately 		
Subject areas	Personal development subject area: <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: Culture and Symbolic Productions (Secondary 4)
Relationships and Caring (Secondary 4)

Disciplinary competencies	Studies a cultural reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establishes the scope of the object of study › Evaluates elements of knowledge › Analyzes social relations › Demonstrates a more complete understanding 	Reflects on an ethical question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identifies the ethical dimensions of a situation › Examines a variety of points of view › Develops a point of view › Engages in dialogue
Educational Aims of Sexuality Education in Secondary School	Understand representations of sexuality in a variety of spaces (Secondary 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Positive and negative representations of sexuality in the public space and the influence of these representations › Norms, values and messages on sexuality from family, peers and the media Understand the importance of desire and pleasure with regard to sexual behaviour (Secondary 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Place of desire and romantic and sexual fantasies › Place of psychological and physical pleasure › Phases of sexual response Understand the factors that influence sexual relations in adolescence (Secondary 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Context (sexual relations with or without commitment, planned or spontaneous, protected or unprotected sexual relations) › Internal and external motivations › Differentiated norms related to sexual behaviour 	Reflect on tensions between the norms and values promoted in the media and by family and peers, and between own values and representations of the self (Secondary 4) Reflects on tensions and ambivalence surrounding desire and sexual pleasure (Secondary 4) Reflect on the tensions between feelings, differentiated norms related to sexual behaviour and peer pressure related to sexual behaviour (Secondary 4)



Educational Goals



Session length:
90 minutes

Get young people to establish the essential criteria to make an informed decision whether or not to engage in sexual activity or have sex, given the possible contexts, influences and motivations.

- 1. Explain** the meanings of the terms “sexual activity” and “having sex,” and how to distinguish between affectionate behaviours, sexual behaviours and genital sexual behaviours.
- 2. Name** the societal and environmental influences (positive and negative) that can have an effect on teens’ decision to engage in sexual activities or have sex.
- 3. Identify** the personal reasons and motivations (internal and external, good and not so good) that can lead to the decision to engage in sexual activities or have sex.
- 4. Discuss** the “ideal” or desirable situation in which to engage in sexual activities or have sex for the first time (e.g., age, length of time, relationship of trust, romantic relationship, no pressure).
- 5. Discuss** the importance of identifying the questions and fears young people might have when engaging in sexual activities or having sex.
- 6. Identify** the place that desire and pleasure can have in teenage sexual behaviour.
- 7. Discuss** the importance of thinking about what one hopes to experience in sex or sexual activities and of asserting one’s beliefs and values.



Sequence



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

30 min.	ACTIVITY 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and Presentation › Team activity: Influences and motivations that can lead teens to decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex <i>Sheet 5.1: "Influences on sexuality!"</i> <i>Sheet 5.2: Answer Sheet: "Influences on sexuality!"</i>
45 min.	ACTIVITY 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Survey: Sex and sexual activity › Diagrams and demonstrations: Questions you might have... <i>Sheet 5.3: "Sex and sexual activity"</i> <i>Sheet 5.4: "Questions you might have..."</i>
20 min.	ACTIVITY 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Video: "Glitch" › Discussion and Presentation › Presentation: Desire and pleasure
15 min.	Session CONCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Discussion and key messages from the session <i>Sheet 5.5: "Personal reflection - Deciding to have sex: questions to ask yourself"</i>

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

The main topic of this session, sex and sexual activities, can be a delicate subject, because it has to do with personal intimacy. The topic will be discussed in clear terms, but participants will not have to talk about the details of their private lives or be asked any personal questions.

You can also tell the students that they don't need to have had a “boyfriend” or a “girlfriend,” or even to have had any sexual experiences to be informed on and talk about this topic. Everyone has an opinion on it and gets bombarded with different messages about it. That's why it's important for them to be able to talk about this topic and know what other young people think about it.

Certain parts will not apply to their experiences. That's normal. 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.





Activity 1



SHEETS 5.1 AND 5.2
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



30 MINUTES



TEAM
ACTIVITY



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

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).
- › **Explain** to the group that today's session is about sex and sexual activities, and the importance of thinking about the motivations and pressures (influences) to engage in sexual activities or have sex.

Discussion and Presentation

- › Then, **lead** a discussion about sexual activities and having sex, using the following questions:
 - **How do you feel about discussing this topic?**
 - **In your opinion, do “sexual activities” and “having sex” mean the same thing?**
 - **What is the difference between these two things?**

Get their opinions.

NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

During this activity, the students may say some vulgar things or refer to more specific sex acts (e.g., “anal,” “threesomes”). If this is the case, it will be important to take the time to calmly redirect the discussion using the instructions to ensure that the session goes smoothly. Instructions are presented at the start of the companion slideshow (PPT). Get the students to think about the expressions they use to talk about sexual activities (e.g., “screwing,” “fucking,” “giving a blowjob”) and the meaning behind these expressions. Using vulgar language does not paint a welcoming, safe or enjoyable picture of sexuality.



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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Emotions students might feel about discussing the topic of sexual activities and having sex

- › During this session on sexual activities and having sex, you may experience all kinds of emotions: enthusiasm, curiosity, comfort or discomfort, embarrassment, stress, anxiety, indifference, etc.
- › These feelings are all normal and valid. However, when we talk about these things with you, we're not trying to shock you. We hope to answer some of the questions people your age have about this topic and to talk about it simply and respectfully.

Differences between “sexual activity” and “having sex”

- › It's important to remember that **BEFORE any intimate activities, there are steps to go through.** That's when things like sense of humour, charm and kindness come into play... dating, basically.
- › When two people are interested in each other and want to show it, they will very often start with demonstrations of affection like hugging, cuddling, kind words, etc.) (MEES, 2019).
- › According to Éducaloi (2023a), **“sexual activity”** includes kissing, touching and having sex.
- › Meanwhile, “having sex” is typically associated with vaginal penetration, when a penis enters the vagina. However, this view of sex implies that only heterosexual couples (a man and a woman) can have sex, which is not the case.
- › It can also give the false impression that other kinds of touching or sexual acts don't count, because the people didn't “go all the way,” as if that one sexual behaviour were the ONE AND ONLY end goal. It can also put pressure on some people to experiment right away, even if they don't feel ready yet.
- › There are many different sexual behaviours, but it's not a “sex act to-do list” that you need to complete in a certain order. Everyone, teens and adults, has preferences and gets to decide what they do OR don't want to do and what they like OR don't like. Everyone gets to decide what level of intimacy they want to share with someone else.

Levels of intimacy

AFFECTIONATE behaviours	SEXUAL behaviours	GENITAL sexual behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kissing on the cheek • Holding hands or walking with your arms around each other • Putting your arm over their shoulder or around their waist • Cuddling • Kissing on the neck • Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kissing on the mouth • Touching certain body parts (neck, back, buttocks, breasts, thighs) over or under the clothes • Cuddling naked • Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fondling your own genitals (masturbation) • Touching your partner's genitals • Giving or receiving oral sex (mouth/genital contact) • Vaginal penetration • Etc.

Lower level of intimacy
←————→
Higher level of intimacy

(MEES, 2019a)

- › The important thing is “essentially feeling comfortable with the person you’re having this experience with, and having fun. And above all, feeling respected.” [translation] (Daguzan Bernier, 2019).
- › In other words, engaging in sexual activity or having sex means first and foremost doing that activity with a person, their sensitivities, their personal history, their body, their desires and their boundaries.

Team Activity

- › **Ask** the group to get into teams of three.
- › **Tell** them that the next activity is about the things that can lead teens to decide to engage in sexual activities or have sex. As a team, they will have to name the internal influences (from the self: values, religious principles, education, boundaries, etc.) and external influences (from outside pressures: friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, parents, media, online influencers, etc.), positive or negative, that can lead teens to decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex.
- › **Hand out** a copy of Sheet 5.1: “*Influences on sexuality!*” to each team. **Explain** that, for each category listed on Sheet 5.1, they are to write down the things that might influence them to choose to experiment with sexual activities as teens.
- › **Give** them approximately 10 minutes to complete this task.
- › **Review** the activity by naming each category given on Sheet 5.1 and asking the students to give their answers. **Correct** their answers as needed using Sheet 5.2: “*Answer Sheet: Influences on sexuality!*”.

Discussion and Presentation

› After the brainstorming, **lead** a discussion using the following question:

- **In your opinion, why is it important to recognize the things that can influence us in our decision to engage in sexual activities or have sex?**

Get their opinions.

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of recognizing the things that can influence the decision to engage in sexual activities or have sex

- Every day, we are exposed to images and messages about sexuality.
- In the **MEDIA**:
 - Body image: perfect bodies and retouched photos in ads, TV shows, video games, etc.
 - Dating and love stories: characters and celebrities on TV, in movies or on social media, etc.
 - Hypersexualization, access to images of nudity or sex: videos, pornography, etc.
 - Etc.
- Within our **FAMILIES**, we see how our parents and siblings react to certain topics related to sexuality, and these things might be discussed more or less explicitly.
 - You might have open, serious conversations related to specific events or simply hear comments or warnings about going out and dating.
 - Etc.
- With our **FRIENDS**, these conversations might be more intense and open, but they also might not, if we are afraid of being judged.
 - We comment on what our peers are doing (e.g., who's dating who?) and their how they look, and sometimes making sexual jokes. We might also share our feelings and emotions with true friends, but we also might just make jokes and crude comments about sexuality.
- All the messages we receive about sexuality combine to tell us:
 - What is desirable, what we should want...
 - What is attractive, what pleases people...
 - What is and isn't acceptable...
 - What we have to do...
 - Etc.
- We can see these messages as “expectations” from our peers, the people around us, our family and the media (MEES, 2019). These “expectations” (or external pressures) can influence our perceptions, attitudes and choices about sexual behaviour (MEES, 2019).
- External pressures have a big influence on the choices teens make, especially when it comes to engaging in sexual activities or having sex (MEES, 2020a).
- Knowing yourself is helpful for making informed choices about engaging in sexual activity or having sex, so that you can have the sexual experiences that feel right for you (MEES,

2019). Knowing your body and how it feels, what you want, what you like and what you prefer, as well as your worries and boundaries, will make it easier to experiment with sex or sexual activity in a self-respectful way. You'll feel ready, comfortable, trusting, heard and understood, etc.



2

Activity 2



SHEETS 5.3 AND 5.4
SLIDESHOW (PPT)



45 MINUTES



SURVEY



**DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION**



**DIAGRAM AND
DEMONSTRATIONS**

Survey and Presentation

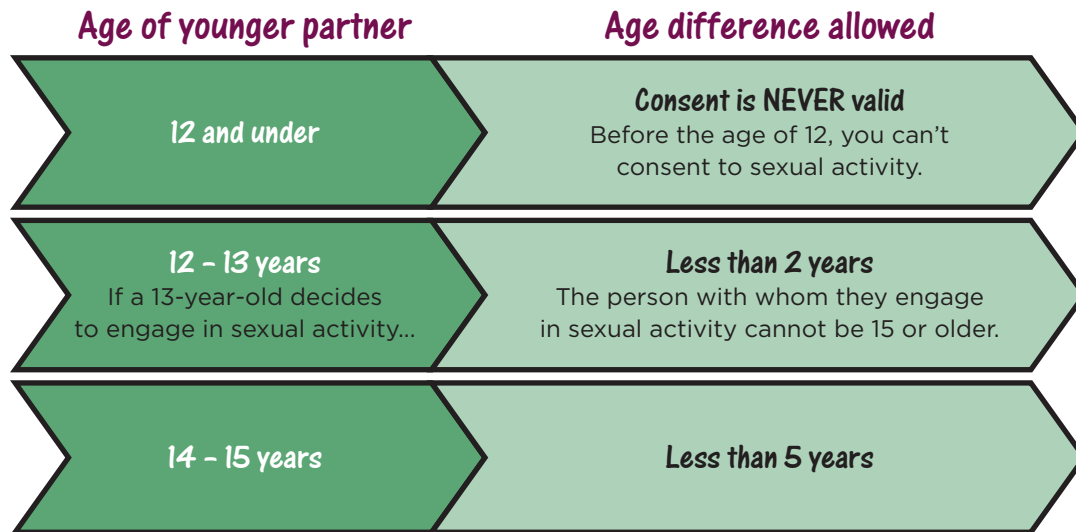
- › **Tell** the group that this activity will be about sexual activities and having sex.
- › **Specify** that the activity will be done individually and anonymously. The questions will include the topics of the “ideal” age to have sex for the first time, pressure that people their age may feel to engage in sexual activities, etc. They will not have to write their names on the sheet.
- › **Specify** that no one will be asked any questions about their private lives during the entire activity.
- › **Hand out** Sheet 5.3: *Sexual activities and having sex*.
- › **Give** the group about ten minutes to fill out the sheet.
- › As session leader, you **may** choose to collect the answer sheets after the survey to compile the results and generate statistics, OR you **may** choose not to collect them.
- › Once the 10 minutes are up, **share** the content overview below that match questions 1-4 from Sheet 5.3: *Sexual activities and having sex* (we’ll come back to questions 5 and 6 after the Diagram and Demonstrations activity).

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The “ideal” age to engage in sexual activities or have sex for the first time

- › There isn’t really any “ideal age” to engage in sexual activities or have sex for the first time; it’s different for everybody.
- › However, we can say that there is an “ideal moment” with “someone kind and respectful.” For some people, that ideal moment will happen when they are 15, 16 or 17 years old, but for others, it will be when they are 18, 20, 25 or even older.
- › It’s important to know though that according to Canadian law, it is IMPOSSIBLE for any person under 12 years old to consent to sexual activity (Éducaloi, 2023b). It is only at age 16 that a person’s sexual consent becomes legally valid (Éducaloi, 2023b). That doesn’t mean that you can’t engage in sexual activity before age 16, but there are certain rules you must follow:

- **Rule number 1:** Under age 12, it's ILLEGAL. People under the age of 12 cannot legally consent to sexual activities (Éducaloi, 2023b).
- **Rule number 2:** There is a maximum age difference between partners. There must be a specific age difference between the two partners in order for the younger person's consent to be POSSIBLE and VALID (Éducaloi, 2023b):



- “The older partner could be charged with a crime if the age difference exceeds the above, even if the younger partner expressed his or her agreement to the relationship and the parents agree as well.” (Éducaloi, 2023b).

The “ideal” amount of time between when two young people meet each other, when they start dating AND when they decide to have sex

- › It's hard to pinpoint an IDEAL amount of time between these two moments. Technically, engaging in a sexual activity or having sex is pretty simple. But feeling comfortable around the other person and trusting them is a little more complicated. It takes time. So there's no point in trying to race through all the steps.
- › How do you know for sure if you're ready to have your first sexual experience?
- › Two factors can help us make the decision:
 - 1. LENGTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP:** You've known each other for a while (Higgins & al., 2010; Smiler & al., 2005) (for example, you didn't just meet at a party), etc.
 - 2. RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST:** You feel that this person is safe, trustworthy, discreet and a good listener. You've built up this trust over time. Both of you want to be more intimate with each other.
 - **And don't forget to use some form of protection (like a condom) and/or a contraceptive (like the pill).**
 - These are important factors to consider to avoid feelings of regret or remorse later on about your first sexual experience.

Is it different to engage in sexual activities or have sex for the first time with someone you love and who loves you, versus someone who doesn't love you the same way you love them?

- › Yes, it's different! When you engage in sexual activities or have sex for the first time with someone you love and who loves you, you can create a space where you feel safe, heard and not judged, and that makes it easier to talk about your wants, preferences and worries.
- › It's true that you can still have fun or or like/have a crush on/be interested in someone who doesn't necessarily feel the same way about you (Harden, 2014), but sometimes it means that the trust bond and attachment isn't there, and that can make communication a bit harder (Widman & al., 2006).
- › In either one of these situations, it's important to make sure that the person you're sharing this experience with has agreed and wants to do it.

Pressure to engage in sexual activities or have sex at your age

- › Not all people your age will experience pressure to engage in sexual activities or have sex, but some of you will.
- › Whether it comes from your environment or the media (e.g., advertisements, social media, pornography), this real or perceived pressure can lead some young people to have their first sexual experiences when they don't really want to, for example, to do what their friends are doing, to be popular or "cool," to avoid losing their partner, etc.
- › You can say **NO** to sex or a sexual activity if you're not ready or if you feel embarrassed, uncomfortable or worried.
 - No one EVER has to agree to sex or sexual activity, no matter what (e.g., kissing, being naked in front of someone). You also never have to "go all the way" if you don't want to.
- › You can say **YES** to sex or a sexual activity if you feel that you can TRUST the other person. Saying YES to sex or a sexual activity should mean that you feel responsible and mature enough to use a contraceptive AND a means of STI protection.
- › **You have to know how to truly say NO to be able to truly say YES.** Truly saying YES means that you don't feel pressured by your partner or by others.

Diagram and Demonstrations

- › **Tell** the group that the pressure to engage in sexual activities or have sex—real or perceived, from the environment or media—can leave teens with a lot of questions.
- › **Tell** them that the next activity will be about the questions they might have at each stage that can lead to sexual experiences (attraction, expressing interest and making a first connection).
- › For this activity, **refer to** the information on Sheet 5.4 ("*Questions you might have...*").

Survey and Discussion

- › Then, **complete** the “Survey” activity (Questions 5 and 6 on Sheet 5.3 about the fears) by sharing the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Fears about the idea of having sex

- › There are different fears people can have about the idea of engaging in sexual activity or having sex. They can be related to things such as:
 - **Appearance** (e.g., fear of not pleasing the other person, fear of not having a good-looking enough body [thighs, stomach, penis, breasts, hair, muscles, vulva, etc.]).
 - It's important not to be too hard on yourself about your appearance! Beauty is found in body diversity!
 - **Being inexperienced** (e.g., fear of not knowing what to do, fear of showing my lack of experience).
 - There's a first time for everything. Maybe your partner is inexperienced too. Why not talk about it together?
 - **Sexual health** (e.g., fear of getting a sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBI), fear of pregnancy).
 - It's important to protect yourself from STIs and unplanned pregnancies! It's one less thing to stress about.
 - **“Technical difficulties”** (e.g., fear of not having an erection or lubrication, fear of ejaculating too fast).
 - This kind of thing can happen to anyone. You can use humour to break the tension.
 - **Being intimate** (e.g., fear that it will be too intimate, fear of being naked in front of someone else).
 - It's normal to be shy about being intimate with someone. With time and good communication, you'll grow less embarrassed.
 - **Your own reaction** (e.g., fear of being disappointed, fear of regretting it, fear that it will hurt, fear of hurting the other person, fear of not liking it).
 - All of these worries are valid. It can be reassuring to talk about it with an adult you trust.
 - **The other person's reaction** (e.g., fear of getting let down after, fear that the other person will tell their friends everything, fear that the other person will make fun of me).
 - Trusting the other person will make it easier to talk openly about your fears before being intimate with them.
 - Etc.

Importance of identifying the fears you might have BEFORE engaging in sexual activities or having sex

- › Taking the time to think about these fears can help you:
 - **Feel reassured.** It is completely normal and valid to have worries about having a new experience, and even more so when it involves being intimate with another person. Talking about your fears with someone you trust (e.g., a parent, sibling, friend, school staff member, sexologist, psychologist) can help you get more informed on the topic, which can mean that your fears don't take up so much mental space when it comes to engaging in a sexual activity or having sex.
 - **Trust yourself.** If some of these fears are taking up too much of your mental space, that means something (e.g., I'm not ready, I care about my sexual health, I don't feel comfortable with this person). In these moments, it's important not to ignore your inner voice, but to listen to it, whether that means waiting longer or talking about it with the other person.
 - **Think about how to talk to the other person about it.** Thinking about which fears you want to discuss with the other person and how you want to do it is an essential step. You don't want to list all your worries to them at once, as this can make you more vulnerable. But you do want to be true to yourself and be able to say what makes you uncomfortable BEFORE engaging in a sexual activity or having sex, so that you can enjoy it when you do. Taking the time to name your fears to the person you're engaging in sexual activity or having sex with has many benefits, such as creating a bond between you and fostering self-respect (respecting your own pace, boundaries, needs and wants, values, etc.).



3

Activity 3



SLIDESHOW (PPT)



20 MINUTES



PRESENTATION



VIDEO



DISCUSSION AND
PRESENTATION

Video

- ▶ Before playing the video, **explain** that it's an animated short film about the pressure that can be put on us to match societal expectations and ideals about people's traits and characteristics (e.g., appearance, personality) in order to be attractive and desirable. Although the people in the video are adults, the fears shown are things that can be experienced at any age, including as a teen.
- ▶ **Play** the video. The language is French (minimal dialogue), but you are recommended to play it with English subtitles (see Note to the Session Leader below).

Glitch (Esma Movies, 2021)

Length: 6 min., 26 sec.

<https://youtu.be/ZwgWmmPpqjA>



Video



NOTE À L'INTERVENANT ET L'INTERVENANTE

To play the video with English subtitles, you must play the video on YouTube using the browser Google Chrome. In the video settings, select "Subtitles," "Auto-translate" and "English."



Discussion and Presentation

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

- **What do you think about this video?**
- **In this video, the fears and questions we ask ourselves and the pressure we feel to fit fashion ideals and have “perfect bodies” are represented by little creatures. In your opinion, what are the main character’s fears leading up to his date?**

› **Show** the group the different image sequences from the video.

› For each sequence, **ask** the group to identify the different emotions the character is feeling.

• Sequence 1

- Benji is getting ready calmly, listening to music that he likes.
- He seems happy about the outing he has planned.



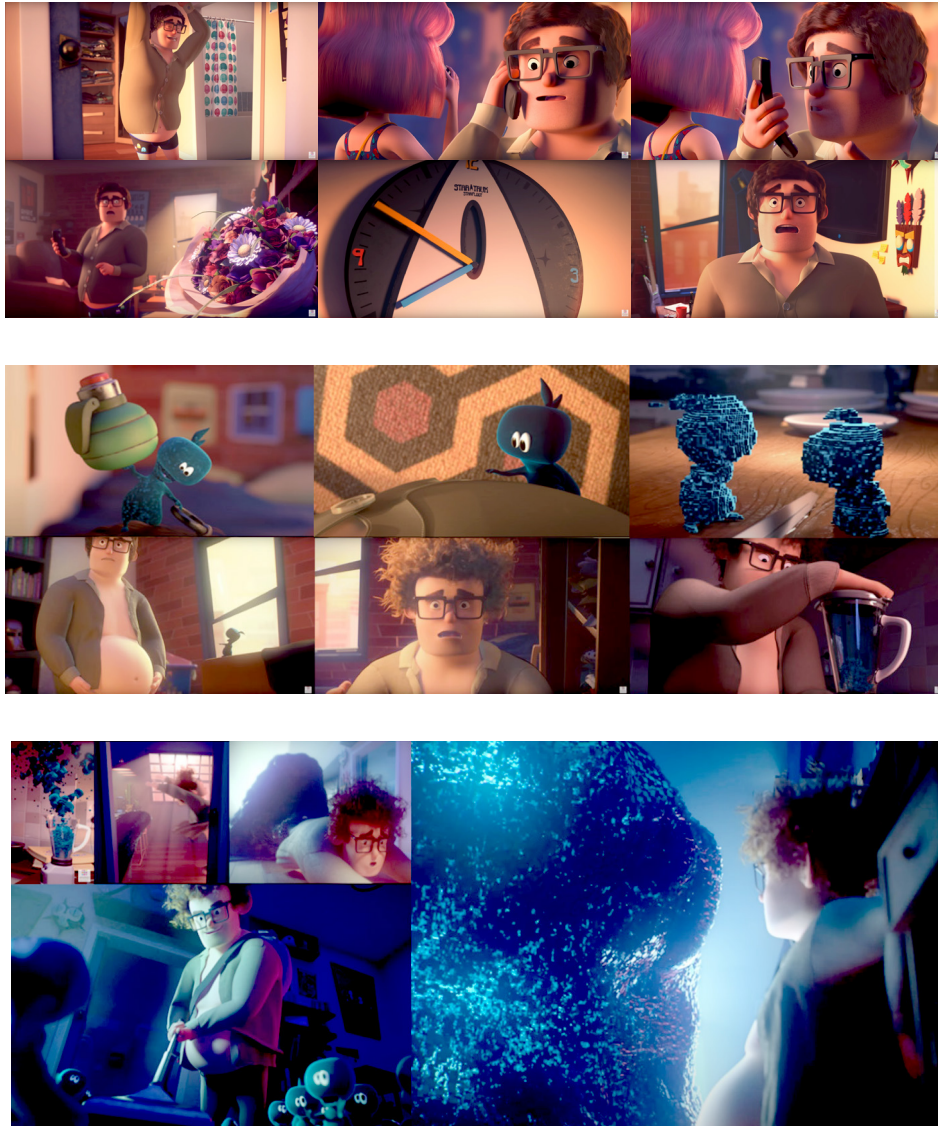
• Sequence 2

- He seems preoccupied about his appearance. He looks in the mirror and doesn't seem satisfied with what he sees.
- Benji then tries to change his appearance, imitating characters from movies, before finally deciding to wear a button-down shirt and gel down his naturally curly hair.



• **Sequence 3**

- Benji's plans for the night change suddenly, and he completely freaks out! Some of his fears start to materialize (appear physically) and he tries to shred them (suppress his fears).
- He can no longer contain his fears, and they keep multiplying, even as he tries to vacuum them up (push the thoughts from his mind).
- ...Eventually, he feels his fears will literally consume him.



• **Sequence 4**

- Then, Benji sees a photo of himself with his friends, a happy memory that reminds him of people who appreciate him the way he is.
- He decides to wear the same clothes he did on that fun day, which makes him feel comfortable and himself, rather than like a forced, edited version of him.
- He greets his date, who seems very comfortable in her own skin.
- At the end of the night, we see them get close. It looks like they had a good time and like each other.

- She motions for him to come into the bedroom, but he hesitates.
- We then hear the creatures buzzing again, implying that they might come back...



- › Then, **continue** the discussion using the following question:
 - **In your opinion, what are the possible outcomes of Benji's date?**
- › **Share** the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › At the end of the video, it is implied that Benji's fears are starting to come back, which seems to make him hesitant to respond to the advances of the woman he likes.
- › Benji could...
 - Decide to tell his date that he's feeling embarrassed. Sometimes, starting a conversation about your fears can bring you even closer to the other person. He could also use humour to lessen his embarrassment.
 - Decide that he doesn't want to go any further right now—you can always change your mind. Benji could suggest that they do something else, like watch TV and make some popcorn.
 - Choose to approach her and have an intimate moment. But he might not be fully in the moment, and his fears could get the better of him.
- › No matter what Benji chooses, if he decides not to talk to the girl he likes about his fears, they will probably not go away on their own and instead come back stronger than ever.
- › Whether or not you decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex, the important thing is that you have a good, enjoyable time together and don't feel like you have to agree to anything.
- › Also keep in mind that sometimes, you can get over certain fears, and that intimate moments don't have to be PERFECT (e.g., the perfect place, the perfect line, the perfect body, the perfect moment).
- › These moments can also be simple, light and humorous. Being with someone you trust can help you get over some of your fears.
- › This can help you have a good time and enjoy being intimate!

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

- › As we have just seen, engaging in sexual activities or having sex involves your **BODY** (sensations), **HEART** (emotions and feelings) and **MIND** (thoughts and questions).
- › Your **BODY**, **HEART** and **MIND** all send you messages about **DESIRE** (“Do I want to...?”) and **PLEASURE** (“Do I like this?”) This happens before, during and after engaging in sexual activities or having sex.
- › Before making the choice to engage in a sexual activity or have sex, you have to really want it (desire) for it to be enjoyable in the moment (pleasure).
- › But what are desire and pleasure in a **GENERAL** context? And what are desire and pleasure in a **SEXUAL** context?
 - **Desire in a general context**
 - A desire is a feeling that you want something or want to do something (Desire, 2022).
 - **Desire in a sexual context**
 - Sexual desire can start with attraction to a particular person. It can develop through actions, words, images, looks and attention and can look like wanting to be close to another person, to kiss or touch them, to engage in sexual activity or have sex with them, etc. (Télé-Québec, 2018). Feeling desire can mean wanting to be close to another person, wanting to date them and/or feeling sexually excited by them.
 - Signs of sexual excitement include erection of the penis or enlargement of the clitoris and lubrication of the vagina.
 - **Pleasure in a general context**
 - In general, pleasure is a feeling of happiness, satisfaction or enjoyment (Pleasure, 2022).
 - **Pleasure in a sexual context**
 - Experiencing sexual pleasure is related to discovering different sensations, particularly in sensitive body parts that react to touches that you find enjoyable (e.g., ear lobes, lips, breasts, lower back, back of the neck, head, scalp, inner thighs, lower stomach, feet, penis, vulva, buttocks, clitoris).
 - During sex or sexual activities, you may feel psychological pleasure (i.e., well-being) in the form of genuine positive feelings due to being very intimate with someone. You may also feel physical sexual pleasure from kissing and touching that you enjoy.



Session Conclusion



SHEET 5.5



15 MINUTES



DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

- › **Ask** the group about their takeaways from this session.
 - **What are your takeaways from this session?**
Get their opinions.
- › Then, **ask** the following questions:
 - **How do you feel about having discussed this topic?**
 - **Why is it important to talk about sex and sexual activities with people your age?**
Get their opinions.
- › Then, **add** to what they say with the following information:

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Importance of talking to people your age about engaging in sexual activities and having sex

- › You should know that the majority of people your age have not had sex or engaged in sexual activity. According to a study conducted in Quebec secondary schools, 24% of students in Secondary III had had consensual sex at least once (Street, 2018, in MEES, 2020a).
- › No matter your age and whether or not you've had a sexual experience or a boyfriend or girlfriend, it's normal to have questions about sex and sexual activity.
- › Talking and learning about this topic lets you not only identify your fears and take the time to address them but also find out what you like and find reassuring. That way, you can imagine how good the experience can be, as long as you feel confident in your ability to assert yourself.
- › When the time comes to engage in sexual activity or have sex with a partner you like and care about, it will be easier to stay true to yourself by confidently addressing your questions, boundaries and preferences.

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

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- › It can be hard to make the decision. It often comes with a fear of disappointing the other person or being judged. Talking about your worries with friends and trusted adults is important and can yield very helpful answers.
- › Whether it's "sexual activity" or "having sex," what matters most is everything to do with the relationship with the other person—and that's much more than just "sex."
- › It's also knowing yourself and each other (e.g., bodies, preferences), being intimate and sharing affection, having a sense of trust and non-judgement, respecting yourself and each other (e.g., sexuality-related values and beliefs, going at your own pace), asserting yourself and communicating, caring and making sure that both people really want to do it, are enthusiastic (sexual consent) and are enjoying it, etc. (Bérard, 2008).
- › No one EVER has to agree to sex or sexual activity, no matter what. You never have to "go all the way" if you don't want to. Saying NO to sex has benefits: it prevents unplanned pregnancy, reduces the risk of getting an STI and gives you time to think. Saying NO is always an option, even if you said YES before (Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, n.d.). You have to know how to truly say **NO** to be able to truly say **YES**.

- › **Conclude** the session by **giving** the group questions to answer individually (Sheet 5.5: *Personal reflection - Deciding to have sex: questions to ask yourself*), also available at this link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFGIdXtnMI/i0nqrO_a_qBrzWLW7wkHtg/edit?utm_content=DAFGIdXtnMI&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton
- › **Give** the group the following instructions:
 - Here are a few questions to get you started with thinking about the topic. You do not have to share your answers with anyone. All you have to do is think about them.
 - **If I'm going out with someone right now, do I feel pressured to engage in sexual activity or have sex?**
 - **What would be THE IDEAL AGE FOR ME to engage in sexual activity or have sex?**
 - **What would make me decide to have sex for the first time or with a new person?**
 - **What am I hoping for in the other person? What qualities would that person have to possess (e.g., good listening, respect, humour, gentleness, comfort, patience) for me to decide to be intimate with them (e.g., touching, nudity, sexual contact)?**
 - **What am I hoping for in that experience? What do I want to remember about it?**
 - **What do I definitely not want out of sex? What will I not agree to? Why?**



SHEET

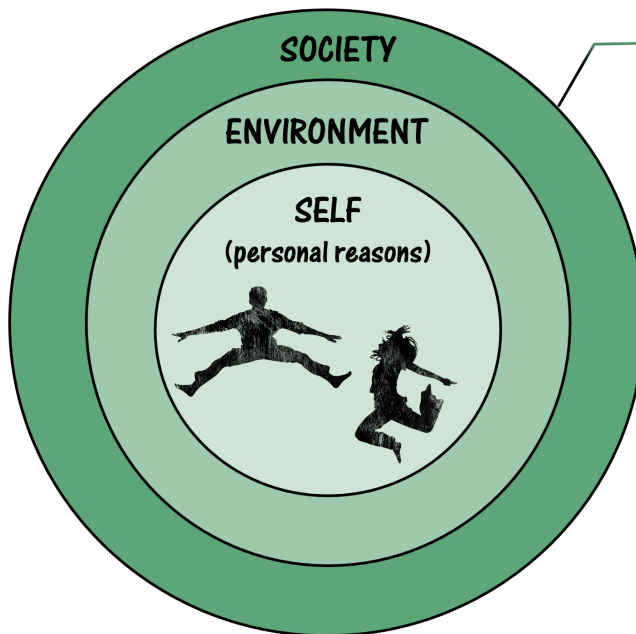
5.1

FOR THE GROUP

Influences on sexuality!

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Name four different kinds of influences (at least one in each category in the diagram below) that can lead teens to decide to engage in sexual activities or have sex. Refer to the questions below for ideas.
- › Choose a spokesperson to share your answers with the whole group.



How does **SOCIETY** (advertisements, influencers, video games, movies, etc.) influence people your age in choosing to engage in a sexual activity or have sex?

Examples : _____

How does **ENVIRONMENT** (family, friends, school, etc.) influence people your age in choosing to engage in a sexual activity or have sex?

Examples : _____

In your opinion, what are the **SELF-motivated** (personal) **REASONS** that people your age decide to engage in a sexual activity or have sex?

Examples : _____

Adapted from: Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (1979)

- › In your opinion, are there **GOOD** and **NOT SO GOOD** reasons?



SHEET

5.2

FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Answer Sheet: Influences on sexuality!

INSTRUCTIONS

- › **Review the activity by naming each category given on Sheet 5.1 and asking the students to give their answers. Correct their answers as needed using the information below.**

- › **SOCIETAL influences (advertisements, influencers, video games, movies, etc.) on teen's choice to engage in sexual activities or have sex**
 - We sometimes look to the media for examples of fashion, beauty, how to treat someone that you like, desire and pleasure, sex and sexual activity, etc. But the purpose of some media isn't to help you understand things, but to make money by selling products or entertainment.
 - Certain types of media (e.g., advertisements, videos, reality TV, social media, video games, pornography) often present exaggerated models of what men and women should be, whether in terms of: (1) Body image (e.g., perfect bodies), (2) Dating (e.g., being hot or sexy), (3) Romantic relationships (e.g., millionaires and top models) and (4) Sex and sexual activity (e.g., performance).
 - That's why it's important to be critical of what's presented to us in the media, and even be able to laugh at it. Otherwise, the build-up of messages can have an effect on how we view **(1) our bodies** e.g., undervaluing yourself or believing in the impossible); **(2) dating** (e.g., thinking that you always have to be hot and sexy); **(3) sexual activities and having sex** (e.g., thinking you have to do anything or want to do anything to please and be wanted).

- › **ENVIRONMENTAL influences (e.g., family, friends, school) on teen's choice to engage in sexual activities or have sex**
 - Although it may seem less obvious, it's important to know that your environment can also have an impact on whether or not you engage in sexual activity. Friends, family and school also send you different messages, whether implicit ("unspoken" rules, implications, things that aren't clearly explained) or explicit (things that are clearly explained, meaning that there are no grey areas), about the kinds of behaviour, attitudes and values you should adopt regarding sexuality (MEES, 2020b).
 - Everyone is affected by the messages that the media sends about sexuality.
 - In order to be accepted or please their friends or family, some people choose to act according to other people's ideas or imitate others, even if it goes against or beyond their own values (MEES, 2020b).

› **Self-motivated (personal) REASONS to decide to engage in sexual activities or have sex**

- Teenagers have many reasons for wanting to have their first sexual experiences. Some of these reasons come from the self (internal motivations), while others come from outside influences and pressures (external motivations) (MEES, 2020a). Here are a few examples:

- **INTERNAL motivations**

- Because I want to
- Because it's a good way to be close with my partner and express my love for them
- To try new things
- To have fun, to have a good time
- For the “thrill” of having done it
- To get attention
- To give or get affection
- To express my sexual desire (MEES, 2020a)
- To release tension, to relax (MEES, 2020a)
- To satisfy my curiosity (MEES, 2020a)
- Etc.

- **EXTERNAL motivations**

- To do what others are doing
- To prove that I can attract someone
- Because I don't know how to say no
- Not to disappoint my boyfriend or girlfriend, or lose them
- Not to look silly
- To be popular in the eyes of others
- To keep up with my peers in terms of experimentation (MEES, 2020a)
- To avoid conflict (MEES, 2020a)
- Etc.

› **GOOD and NOT SO GOOD reasons**

- How do you know if your reasons for engaging in sexual activity or having sex are GOOD or NOT SO GOOD? Sometimes, it can be different to tell the difference, but the IMPORTANT thing is to make choices “*that account for our needs, limits and values (personal motivations), in order to have enjoyable and positive sexual experiences.*” [translation] (MEES, 2020a).



SHEET

5.3

FOR THE GROUP

Sexual activities and having sex

INSTRUCTIONS

- › Individually answer the questions below. Don't write your name on the sheet.
- › You will not have to share your answers with others.

1. In your opinion, what would be the **IDEAL** age to engage in sexual activity or have sex for the first time?
Check **ONE BOX** only.

- 13-14
- 15-16
- 17-18
- 19 or older
- I don't know

2. In your opinion, what would be the **IDEAL** amount of time between when two young people *meet each other*, when they start dating and when they *decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex*?
Check **ONE BOX** only.

- A few hours
- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to a month
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6 months to a year
- More than a year
- I don't know

3. In your opinion, what would be the IDEAL amount of time between when two young people meet each other and when they decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex, without necessarily dating each other? Check ONE BOX only.

- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to a month
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6 months to a year
- More than a year
- I don't know

4. In your opinion, do people your age experience PRESSURE to engage in sexual activities or have sex? Check ANY or ALL boxes that BEST represent what you think.

- Yes, a lot. At our age, we're heavily influenced by what we see in the media, on social media, on the internet, etc.
- Yes, especially from friends.
- Yes, especially from our boyfriend or girlfriend.
- No, we don't experience too much pressure. Most people our age decide on their own to engage or not in sexual activities or have sex.
- No, not at all.
- No, we're too young to have a sex life.
- We mostly experience pressure from our parents, NOT to have sex at our age.
- I don't know

5. In your opinion, what FEARS might young people have about engaging in sexual activities or having sex?

6. In your opinion, why is it IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY our fears BEFORE engaging in sexual activities or having sex?



SHEET

5.4

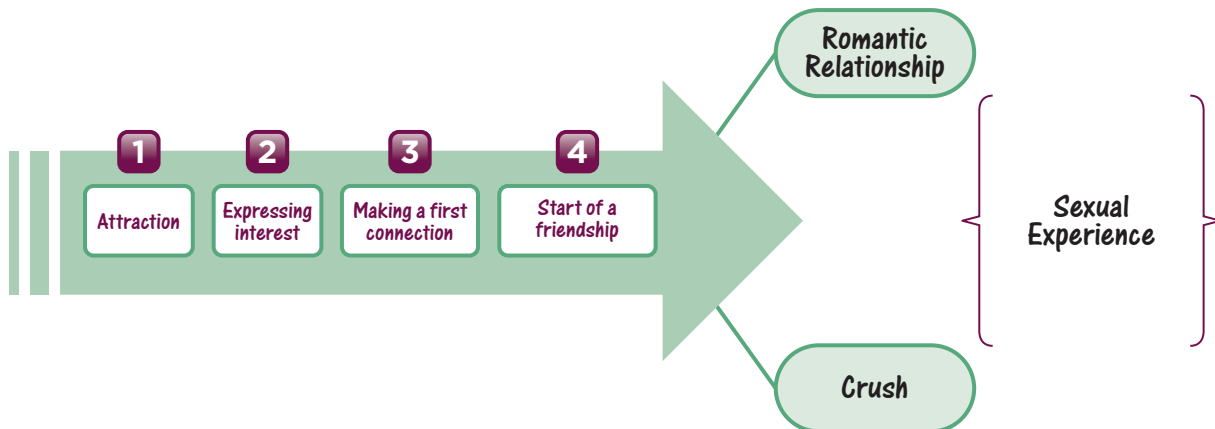
FOR SESSION
LEADERS

Questions you might have...

INSTRUCTION

- › Show the diagram of stages that can lead to sexual experiences and briefly explain each stage.

1



1. **Attraction:** “Wow, that person is so good-looking!” 😍
2. **Expressing interest:** “I hope they notice me. How can I get them to notice me?” 😬
3. **Making a first connection:** “I want to get to know them better.” 😊

- › Then, **using** the slideshow and the information below, **show** the questions that people might have at each of the aforementioned stages, and **ask** the group:
 - **What are some questions you might have BEFORE making the choice to engage in a sexual activity or have sex?**
Get their answers.
- › **Explain** to the group that these stages can lead to sexual experiences, but that they don't strictly have to follow this sequence.



NOTE TO THE SESSION LEADER

Sexual behaviour can be a delicate subject, because young people may have had many different experiences that they will not necessarily share in class or outside of it. Some young people may experience pressure to experiment sexually from their peers, the people around them or the media. But every young person is different, and some of them will not be interested in sexual behaviour or will not be at that stage yet. That's perfectly normal. It's also possible that some of them will have already had consensual sexual experiences. In your presentation, it's important not to be judgemental of any experience. The goal is to reinforce young people's ability to assert themselves in their choices, no matter what they have experienced previously.

In addition, some young people in your class may have suffered sexual assault in childhood or adolescence. So, be sure to talk about resources for victims of sexual violence and to remind the group that victims are not responsible for what was done to them and should not hesitate to seek the help they need (resources are provided on one of the last slides in the slideshow). There may also be people who have had difficulty with the idea of consent and have already pressured or sexually assaulted another person (child or teen), and they need help, too. This is a criminal act, and support can also be offered to people in this situation.

2

› **QUESTIONS you might have BEFORE making the choice to engage in sexual activities or have sex with someone you like**

- Each of these stages comes with its share of questions and worries.

1. Attraction

- Do they like me back?
- Did they notice me?
- Am I their type?

2. Expressing interest

- How do I approach them?
- What should I say?
- Why do I feel this way when this person is around me? Is it love, or do I just like feeling like this?
- How will they react if I talk to them?
- What if I blush?
- Am I going to stammer?
- And if they're not interested in me, what am I going to do?

3. Making a first connection

- Are they going to contact me (phone call, social media, text, email, etc.)?
- Do they think I'm funny? Interesting?
- Do they like spending time with me?
- What are their interests? What do they like?
- Do they want things to be more serious between us?
- Do they want to be my boyfriend or girlfriend? How do I ask them?
- Am I in love?
- Why do I want to be around them all the time?
- Do they feel the same way about me?
- Do they think about me when I'm not around?
- Can I trust them?
- Are they interested in other boys or girls?
- Are we going to kiss?
- Have they ever had a partner before? Have they had a lot of them?
- Are they only interested in having sex with me?

4. Sexual experiences

- Can people our age have a boyfriend or girlfriend without feeling pressured to engage in sexual activities or anything needing to happen?
- How can I tell them I don't want to engage in sexual activities at my age?
- Can we go out together without feeling like we have to touch too intimately?
- Does my boyfriend or girlfriend want to have sex with me?
- How will I be able to tell if they consent?
- Should I tell them I've never had sex before?
- Will my boyfriend or girlfriend think I don't love them if we don't have sex?
- Am I embarrassed to be naked in front of them?
- Do they (or will they) like my body?
- Will my boyfriend or girlfriend make fun of part of my body?
- Will I seem inexperienced?
- Do I have to do everything?
- Do I feel comfortable using or talking to them about using a condom? What about contraceptives?
- Does having sex hurt?
- Will I like the experience? Will they like it?
- How can I make sure that they don't tell all their friends?
- Etc.

› Then, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:

- **Do you think that it's difficult for someone your age to have the answers to all these questions and worries? Why?**
- **How can we find the answers to these questions?**

- › **Add to** what they say by sharing the following information:

3

- › **Do you think that it's difficult for someone your age to have the answers to all these questions and worries? Why or why not?**

- When you go through these stages one at a time and at your own pace, you start to notice the questions and worries that come with having this experience with someone you like.
- But, if you skip one of these stages or try to move past it too quickly, those questions and worries will start to pile up, and it becomes harder and harder to answer or even keep up with them all. This can make you feel overwhelmed, trapped, uncomfortable, alone, like you don't know what to do, etc.

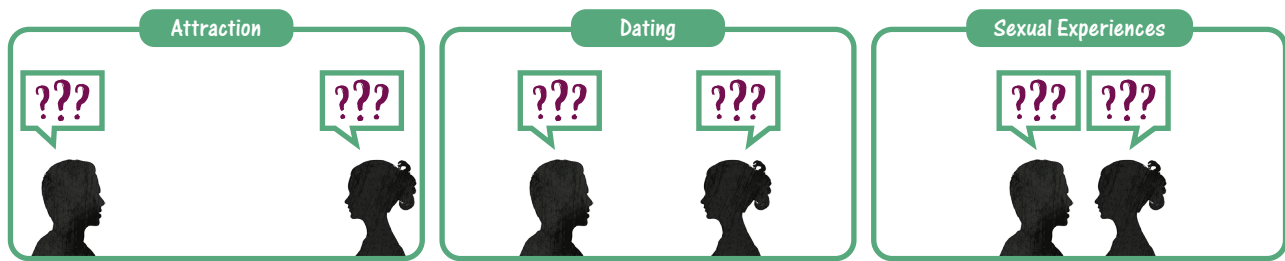
- › **How can we find the answers to these questions?**

- Take your relationship one step at a time, get to know each other and yourselves, tell each other what you're feeling and if there's anything you're concerned or worried about, etc.
- This can help you answer questions as they come up and prevent them from piling up and going unanswered, which can make you stressed, afraid doubtful, jealous, etc.
- You can also talk about it with close friends or an adult you trust, and ask them your questions. Unlike you, these people aren't personally affected by the situation and can help you take a step back, better understand what's happening and, hopefully, make better decisions.

-
- › Using the slideshow, **show** each of the demonstrations about the questions that can come up at each stage that can lead to sexual experiences.
 - › For each demonstration, **ask** the group the following question and **add** to their answers with the information below.

- **What did you notice?**

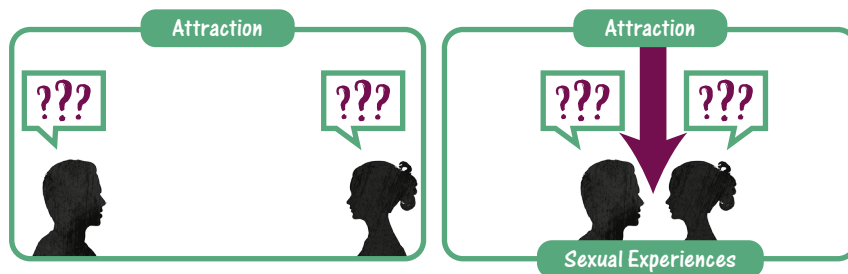
Get their answers.



› **Demonstration shown in the slideshow.**

› **What did you notice?**

- Once you've been going out together for a while, it's easier to talk about your questions and worries together, because you've already established a relationship of trust. That doesn't mean that you won't have any questions or worries at all, but you will feel more comfortable sharing them with each other.



› **What did you notice?**

- When we move quickly from the attraction stage (I've got a "crush" on them, I'm "crazy" about them) to the sexual experiences stage, we notice that the questions pile up and take up more and more mental space... sometimes ALL of it!

› To end this activity, **lead** a discussion using the following questions and **get** their answers:

- **Is it possible to go directly from the attraction stage to the sexual experiences stage? Is it a good thing?**
- **What are some questions to ASK YOURSELF BEFORE deciding to engage in sexual activities or have sex?**

- Yes, it's definitely possible! But, it's not necessarily a good thing.
- Some young people believe that, if they get to the sexual experiences stage quickly, the other person will fall in love with them. Which isn't necessarily true.
- Not to mention, in such a short time you can't get to know each other well enough. This can lead to disappointments, unrealistic expectations, performance anxiety, etc.
- That's why parents and other adults sometimes worry when people your age move quickly into engaging in sexual activity or having sex. They are afraid that teens feel like they have to and aren't able to assert themselves.
- Engaging in sexual activity or having sex can be fun, enjoyable, gentle and exciting. It can bring two people closer together. But, if you move too fast without getting to know each other well and trusting each other enough, it can lead to regrets.

› **Important things to keep in mind!**

- Not wanting or not bothering to answer the questions that you have can put you in a situation where things are left unsaid, which can lead to stress and negative thoughts.
- However, it's important to keep in mind that it can be hard for people your age to find the answers to all these questions. The reason is simple: as teenagers, you're experiencing and dealing with feelings of love and attraction for the very first time. So, you can't rely on past experiences to tell you whether you're in love or just attracted to someone.
- To figure it out, it's best to go through the stages that can lead to sexual experiences gradually, at your own pace, so that you can get to know yourself and the other person.

› **Questions to ASK YOURSELF BEFORE deciding to engage in sexual activities or have sex**

- With that said, BEFORE you decide to engage in sexual activity or have sex, here are a few questions you can ask yourself to help you make the choice:
 - Am I ready?
 - Do I really want to? Am I doing it for me, or just to avoid displeasing the other person?
 - Do I want to have this experience with this person?
 - Do I feel comfortable being intimate (e.g., naked) with this person? Do I feel safe?
 - Are we going to use contraception to prevent an unplanned pregnancy?
 - Do I feel comfortable talking about using protection (e.g., a condom) to prevent sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBI)?
 - Do I feel that this person will be respectful and sensitive, no matter what happens (e.g., it doesn't work, we're too embarrassed, there are certain sexual acts I don't want to do)?
 - Do I have any fears?



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Deciding to have sex: questions to ask yourself

It's great to have sex that matches your ideal perfectly, but keep in mind that you can still enjoy it even if it's not exactly what you expected. Sex often doesn't go quite the way we imagined—there might be funny situations, pleasant surprises, disappointments or other unpredictable things that can make you feel differently than you did at the start. Good sexual experiences are ones where you feel good together and trust each other. Keeping a good sense of humour can also help take some of the pressure off if you're feeling stressed.

- 1 Here are a few questions to get you started with thinking about the topic of "having sex." You do not have to share your answers with anyone. All you have to do is think about them.
- 2 For help with this reflection, you can refer back to the **summary from today's session**, which you'll find on the **back** of this page.

#1
**What would make me
decide to have sex for
the first time or with
a new person?**

#2
**What am I hoping for
in that experience?**

**What do I want to
remember about it?**

#3
**What am I hoping for in the
other person?**
**What qualities would that person
have to possess for me to decide
to be intimate with them
(touching, nudity,
sexual contact, etc.)**

#4
**What do I definitely
not want out of sex?**
What will I not agree to?
Why?

3

Here is a list of common fears about having sex.
Circles the ones that you relate to.

- a) Fear of not pleasing the other person
- b) Fear of not having a good-looking enough body (thighs, stomach, penis, breasts, hair, muscles, etc.)
- c) Fear of being disappointed
- d) Fear of not knowing what to do
- e) Fear of being rejected
- f) Fear of showing my lack of experience
- g) Fear of disappointing the other person
- h) Fear of the other person thinking I'm easy
- i) Fear that it will be too intimate
- j) Fear of what other people will think
- k) Fear of the other person wanting nothing but sex
- l) Fear of regretting it
- m) Fear that it will hurt
- n) Fear of hurting the other person
- o) Fear of being naked in front of someone else
- p) Fear of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- q) Fear of getting pregnant (or getting my girlfriend pregnant)
- r) Fear of not having an erection or lubrication
- s) Fear of ejaculating too fast
- t) Fear of not liking it
- u) Fear of getting let down after
- v) Fear that the other person will tell their friends everything
- w) Fear that the other person will make fun of me

Adapted from: « Dans les coulisses de l'intimité sexuelle », BCJ, 1980)

If you circled 10 or more fears, you're in the majority.

Don't isolate yourself. Talking about your fears can make them smaller.

- ✖ No one EVER has to agree to sex or sexual activities, no matter what. You also never have to "go all the way" if you don't want to.

You have to know how to truly say NO to be able to truly say YES.

- ✖ You can say YES to a sexual activity if you feel that you can TRUST the other person. Saying YES to a sexual activity should mean that you feel responsible and mature enough to use a contraceptive AND a means of STI protection.

Truly saying YES means that you don't feel PRESSURED by your partner or by others, and that you aren't putting expectations on yourself about your performance.

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*Sex Education Program
for 12 to 17 years old*



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*Duquet, F. et coll., 2023
Projet Outiller les jeunes face à l'hypersexualisation
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