

# Sexuality Health Education

## Grade 4 (9-10 years old)

### Identity Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and social norms

Children will be encouraged to make connections between gender inequalities and how this can affect the relationships between boys and girls. They will explore both the positive and negative attributes associated with each gender. They will explore the social norms that influences how one might express themselves and a boy or a girl.

**Why?** Being aware of and understanding one's sense of self as a male or female is vital to children's psychosexual development. Children become aware of guidelines - in some cases stereotypes - associated with gender roles of boys/girls as they grow up. These guidelines shape their views of what is appropriate/inappropriate with regards to behaviour, attitudes and appearance thus affecting their growing identity. Stereotypes can help children differentiate what is considered socially feminine or masculine but they can also create a divide between boys and girls that hinder their harmony when together. These same stereotypes also help perpetuate sexist attitudes and beliefs.

**Approach...**encourage gender equality by exploring stereotypical messages and their negative impact on children.

Comprises many dimensions



...biological, social, cultural, ethical, moral physical, etc.

Many sources of information



...peers, family, media, etc.

Present from 0-99



...develops over ages.

1

#### POSITIVE ROLE

not just focus on the "risks" or prevention

2

#### LEARNING LEVELS

prepare students for learning content over the different ages

3

#### ESTABLISH TRUST

that is conducive to sharing and discussions

## SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE

### Knowing the changes that occur during puberty and developing a positive body image

Children will learn how the main changes associated with puberty are a natural part of growing up. They will explore the main physical signs of puberty in girls, boys, the psychological changes and understand that these changes can occur at different rates. They will be encouraged to discuss their feelings about growing up, both positive and negative and encouraged to share those feelings with people they trust.

**Why?** Puberty is a part of development that comes with physical, emotional and social changes. These changes are visible and may sometimes lead those around us to consider someone more mature than they are thus modifying how we might interact with them or our expectations of them. Puberty takes place for all with individual variations and is essential in the steps towards romantic feelings and emerging sexual behaviours. Students adjust to these changes depending on when the changes first emerge, the rate the changes occur, and social norms that dictate the ideals of beauty. At this stage students may be starting to experience the first changes of puberty.

**Approach...**to familiarize children with the starting changes of puberty in order to demystify the physical and emotional changes that will arise as they grow up. Take into account students who might enter into puberty earlier without being prepared as this can result in a negative experience of puberty.

## EMOTIONAL AND ROMANTIC LIFE

Children will discuss their representations of love and friendship. This will include definitions of love and friendship, perceptions of love and friendship (ex: characteristics of a friend, importance of friendships, etc.). They will discuss what they are looking for in their interpersonal relationships and the differences between camaraderie, friendship, love and attraction.

**Why?** Children of this age value harmonious friendships, are more concerned with peer acceptance, develop an understanding of belonging and attempt to manage their emotions around their peers. They become more aware of social hierarchy and their feelings of aggression can be more damaging emotionally than physically. They associate with same sex peers but start to open up to the idea of a potential romantic partner. It is only during puberty that strong emotional feelings take on a sexual desire that can lead to an interaction with a potential partner. Half of children who are 8-11 years old report having a boyfriend or girlfriend. It is often feelings not returned and at this age children are limited by their cognitive development. Some children mistakenly interpret the friendship as a romantic feeling and for some just feeling romantic towards a peer is enough for them to classify the feelings as being involved in a relationship.

**Approach...**help students understand the skills needed for interpersonal relationships, especially managing conflicts. Help them to improve their social skills, especially empathy, in order to manage their emotional relationships.



**Understanding the influence that gender stereotypes can have on your life as a girl or a boy and in establishing harmonious relationships between girls and boys**