

# Sexuality Health Education

## Elementary 6 (11-12 years old)

### General Understanding of Sexuality

- ▶ **Biological Dimension:** feeling positive about your body. Understanding the different changes in boys/girls bodies, knowing what physiological responses are and that they are normal, and understanding reproduction.
- ▶ **Psychoaffective dimension:** view of love (self and others), romantic feelings, body image, freedom, independence, exploration, etc.
- ▶ **Socio-cultural dimension:** norms, rules of society (ex: living together), laws, influence of others/stereotypes, expectations, media.
- ▶ **Interpersonal dimension:** the need for relationships with other. Negotiation/conflict resolution and communication with others.
- ▶ **Moral Dimension:** respect and open-mindedness, (un)acceptability, values, beliefs and choices.

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

### Identity, Gender Stereotypes and Roles, and Social Norms

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

This unit explains how sexism and homophobia can affect those targeted. The definition and manifestations of sexism and homophobia are presented. An exploration of how people who are bullied because of gender, or how they present themselves, might feel if they do not conform with social gender stereotypes.

Discuss the role one can play in respecting sexual diversity and

differences, and how respect towards another can be demonstrated. Empathy is explored in reference to injustice, discrimination and inequality for those experiencing the above or witnessing it. The concept of equality as a social value is explored and finally how to seek help.

**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...** foster gender equality by promoting awareness of the impact of stereotypical messages conveyed in the social environment about boys and girls.

## EMOTIONAL AND ROMANTIC LIFE

Become aware of the role that puberty plays in romantic and sexual awakening. Puberty and hormonal changes are factually presented. Romantic and sexual awakening is explored emphasizing on how a 11/12 year old's body might change. Factors such as romantic daydreaming/sexual desire, changes in relationships amongst peers and first romantic experiences are explored. Questions can be asked especially concerning gender and individual differences. Images and messages from media will be explored.

**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.

**Approach...** should take into account the gradual onset of puberty and the beginnings of romantic feelings. Help students understand the beginning signs of romantic and sexual awakening and reassure them about the range of feelings that can be associated with it.

## SEXUAL GROWTH AND BODY IMAGE

Discuss the importance of having a positive attitude towards your changing body as well as different body types. Understanding that changes will take place during puberty, the onset can vary amongst peers, there are many different body types and many things determine your appearance (e.g. genes, diet, etc.).

**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.

**Approach...** help students become aware of the changes that occur during puberty (students are more receptive while they are undergoing these changes). Help students accept the changes as this will help promote positive body image.

