

## Session 2

### Building a positive body image and gender sensitization

#### Rationale

People often comment on a child's looks and tease or taunt them; or in some way hold them responsible for how their body looks/ the biological sex they are born with. This erodes their self-esteem and can make them vulnerable to sexual abuse. It is important children internalize that the structure of our body is made by nature – we do not choose our bodies. On the other hand we do have control over what we say and do. We can take pride in our behavior. Our behaviour brings us pride or shame and not how the body looks. We respect every part of our body. We can take pride in how we take care of our body and help it grow. This core message helps build self-respect and self-confidence. It helps children respond positively to taunting and bullying.

Gender sensitization is about instilling empathy for each human being, and building respect into the views that we hold about our own and other genders. This is critical for treating self and members of other sexes with respect

#### Materials required

- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)

#### Objective of session 2

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

**Core Message 1: Our bodies are made by nature.**

**Core Message 2: Everyone is unique. It is good to be different**

**Core Message 3: There are many things we can do. What we do is more important than our looks**

**Core Message 4: Being a girl or a boy is not our choice. We are born that way**

**Core Message 5: Girls and boys can do many different activities – and that is what matters more than being a girl or a boy**

**Core Message 1: Our bodies are made by nature. We do not make it.**

**Anecdote:**

I want to share something with you. Today when I was getting ready to come here, I looked at myself in the mirror. I looked at my nose and felt that it was too big / thin. I remembered my cousin who used to call me 'potato / bhindi nose'.

Do people say anything about your body? Tease you in any way?

Wait for responses

How does it make you feel? Wait for responses.

**Discussion:**

We may feel bad when someone teases us about our body. But who made our body?

Our Body is the work of nature / God. We did not make our body.

A person who is teasing us about our body is actually, making fun of God / nature.

Since we did not make our body, should we feel ashamed of it? Should we feel proud of it?

**No, we will not let it impact us.**

**Tips for Trainers**

- Children might share that even after knowing this they feel sad when people tease them. Please affirm their feelings and talk to them post the class if children are still overwhelmed.
- Even if children have not given right answers to the questions asked, you need to take all responses. A nod for answers given by each child can add validity to the contribution of the students.
- When answers are wrong or inappropriate, these should be discussed such that children realize why they are inappropriate. In this way children will not internalize incorrect responses as correct. Be aware of your facial expression and body language especially when incorrect responses are given. Children should not feel intimidated or rejected. This will prevent them from sharing further. Welcome each response.
- Encourage children to speak up and participate by saying "Thank you for bringing that out/ pointing that out. Let us have more response"
- Incorporate a lot of hand gestures and voice modulation to capture the interest of the students.
- It would be advisable to keep your language simple and also to intersperse some words from the local language during your session as it will help students feel comfortable and understand concepts better.

## **Core Message 2: Everyone is unique. It is good to be different**

In the first session we discussed that each one of us are unique and special. What would happen if everyone looked the same? What would happen if there was only one type of fruit/Flower/Bird?

Discussions: Each person is unique and looks different. Mangoes, apples and bananas are very different from each other. Each is made by nature. It is good to be different.

### **Activity: Chain of Diversity**

This activity focuses on differences and similarities among children:

- 1) Pass bundles of different colored strips around the room. Have a similar colour i.e. blue for all participants and multi colored strips for all participants. Ask each participant to take 2 strips – one blue and any other colour from the variety of colour.
- 2) Ask participants to think of ways in which they are similar to and different from the other people in the room (excluding looks). On blue strip, children should write down one similarity and on the multi colour strip children would write one difference.
- 3) When completed, each person should have written 1 way in which they are similar and 1 way in which they are different from the other people in the room
- 4) Tell participants to be prepared to share what they have written on two of their strips with the whole group.
- 5) Start a chain by overlapping and gluing together the ends of all strip i.e. blue in colour. Similarly, add all the multi-colour strips. Pass a glue stick to each person and ask the participants to add all of their strips to the chain.
- 6) Continue around the room until all participants have added their strips to the two chains.

Reflection: Ask children to reflect on the many things they have in common, as well as the ways that each person in the group is different. How it is their difference that is adding colour. Like the multi colour strips their **differences are also colorful.**

### **Tips for Trainers**

- Children might share that they feel left out as they are different. Validate their feelings. Address this issue as it is faced by many children. You can say ‘Sometimes the group we want to belong to is doing something we don’t want to do/ can’t do. In such a situation we have a choice. We can choose to join the group and learn the activity; or we can join another group that is doing what we want to do.’
- You may also meet the child after the session
- For the activity, if children are not comfortable to write one similarity/difference they can project it through drawing.

### **Material Required**

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins / Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape, glue, multicolor paper

### **Advance Preparation**

Have different coloured papers cut into strips for the activity.

**Core Message 3: There are many things we can do. What we do is more important than our looks.**

How we use our body is more important than how the body looks.

Ask children some activities that they like to do?

What do they feel after they have accomplished it?

When I do something I like to do, I feel happy.

Different people like to do different things.

The activities that I do are more important than how my body looks.

What would happen if a beautiful person just sat the whole day long and did nothing? How we use our body is more important than how the body looks. **Pride or shame comes from something we do or make and not from how the body looks.**

**Tips for Trainers**

- It is possible that some children will say they don't like to do anything. Give the child diverse options to make him/her aware that she/he might be liking something which he/she is not aware of as she has/he has not thought about it before. However once you have explored diverse options leave it at that rather than coaxing the child to say something. Often, children with history of abuse might be in a numb state and not be in a state to feel or like anything.
- It will be beneficial to ask students to repeat the following statements
  - There are many things we can do.
  - What we do is more important than how we look.
- Refer to Annexure for additional or alternate activities.

**Key Message to Communicate**

Our difference make us unique.

**Core Message 4: Being a girl or a boy is not our choice. We are born that way**

Thinking question: Which part of the body can you make?

Discuss: Take responses from children. There are no parts of our body that we can create. In the same manner being a boy or girl is not our choice. We are born the way we are.

Question: How do you feel about being a girl / being a boy?

Check and see if there are any responses where they feel / they have been told that their sex should have been different.

Discuss: They can contribute irrespective of being boy/girl.

What would happen if there were only boys/ girls in the world?

Discussions: Reiterate that our bodies are made by nature. We do not make or choose them.

**Each person is equally special and valuable and cannot be compared to anyone else.**

**Tips for Trainers**

- Children might share that they feel left out/discriminated being boy/girl
- Validate their feelings. Say that “Sometimes people cant see or appreciate the qualities and abilities of another person, whatever be the person’s gender. They may discriminate against people of a particular gender. This shows the nature and shortsightedness of those people – and not of the person they are discriminating against. Each one of us is equally human. Each one of us has equal rights – to be born and to live on this Earth with safety and dignity.
- You may also meet the child after the session

**Making Connections**

If children are able to identify that they did not do anything to be born as a particular sex; and that their bodies are made by nature, they will have better self-confidence as well as respect other sexes.

**Key Messages to Communicate**

Being a boy or girl is not our choice.

**Core Message 5: Girls and boys can do many different activities – and that is what matters more than being a girl or a boy**

**Activity:** Let us write a list of what boys do / what girls do.

Is there any of these which either of them can do?

Make 3 columns on the blackboard/chart paper with following heads:

Boys' activities/ Girls' activities/both boys' and girls' activities.

After the first two list is made, ask: would anyone here like to do what is in the other list. This makes up the third column.

Discussions: It becomes clear from that third column that most activities can be done by both. Each person is special and can do special things and that's what matters more than being a girl or a boy.

**Material Required**

Chart paper/marker/black/white board

**Tips for Trainers**

Children might share they have always been told about 'what they can't do as girls' (they cannot eat first/go out alone etc.) or boys (cannot cry). Talk to children about gender stereotypes in simple language.

### **Concluding the session:**

Summarize and review the key messages:  
What did you learn today? Ask students to share.

Reiterate:

**Core Message 1: Our bodies are made by nature.**

**Core Message 2: Everyone is unique. It is good to be different.**

**Core Message 3: There are many things we can do. What we do is more important than our looks.**

**Core Message 4: Being a girl or a boy is not our choice. We are born that way.**

**Core Message 5: Girls and boys can do many different activities – and that is what matters more than being a girl or a boy**

I came here to help you learn about your -self, your body and safety. I will come again and we will learn some more things.

### **Closure Activity:**

**Activity 1:** Rubbing the board: Use different parts of the body to rub an imaginary board in front of you. Imagines a board in front of you. Now rub the board with your head, with your cheeks, its still not clean! Rub with your elbow, your knee, your tummy, your buttocks, your nose... Aha, now it is clean!

**Activity 2:** Hockey Pokey Song with Actions

\*Tell the students that they will all now do the actions for the song Hokey Pokey (Trainer may either play the song on a music player or sing it. The lyrics of the song are provided in Annexure 2:1)

Point out that all of them were able to do the actions for the song because of their body. Our body helps us to do different and special things.

## **Annexure: 2:1**

### **Hokey Pokey Song**

You put your right hand in,  
You put your right hand out;  
You put your right hand in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your left hand in,  
You put your left hand out;  
You put your left hand in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your right foot in,  
You put your right foot out;  
You put your right foot in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your left foot in,  
You put your left foot out;  
You put your left foot in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your right side in,  
You put your right side out;  
You put your right side in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your left side in,  
You put your left side out;  
You put your left side in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your nose in,  
You put your nose out;  
You put your nose in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

You put your backside in,  
You put your backside out;  
You put your backside in,  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the Hokey-Pokey,  
And you turn yourself around.  
That's what it's all about!

