

Session 6

Personal safety in private places

Rationale

Children have been taught through generations to listen to their elders and to obey them. This kind of conditioning helps abusers take advantage of children as they know that children will not disobey them. People who violate Personal Safety Rules, in most cases target those children who they believe will not resist or report them. In such a scenario it is important that children are taught to express their feelings assertively even in the face of fear. The goal is not to remove fear, as fear helps children know that something is wrong, but to build the courage to act despite the fear.

Sometimes what the children fear is repercussions from the potential offender or from their parents/caregivers. Sensitive caregivers would encourage children to be assertive and say that they do not like certain things for their safety. They would not punish or blame the child or call the child rude or misbehaved! This is accomplished by building a sensitive and knowledgeable support system. When children are encouraged to develop a feelings of self-confidence they will be less at risk to be abused and possibly more able to stop any violation of their personal safety rules by saying, 'No' and going away from the scene.

Sexual abusers may blame the child or put the onus of the abuse on the child and make him/her feel guilty. The child may feel that it was his/her fault that the abuse took place and may not report instances of abuse thereby keeping the cycle of abuse going. To prevent this from happening it is important that children believe strongly that it was not their fault. Otherwise, when they grow older, they may experience unease or they may also experience guilt, shame and self blame. Even children who have learnt that they should report matters of abuse to their elders start feeling a huge sense of guilt if they had not reported the matter earlier. They also start blaming themselves for keeping quiet about the matter. They may also think that since the abuse took place long time ago they need not reveal it as it will not help them. Due to these factors children find it difficult to report matters of ongoing or previous abuse. It therefore becomes important to let them know that no matter what the reasons are/were it is still not their fault. They were never taught personal safety rules, they were not given the vocabulary to report abuse by their elders, they were not encouraged to talk about private body parts. Shame and dirt was wrongly instilled in parts of the body. How could they report? Hence it is also never too late to report matters of abuse.

Materials required

- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)
- Session 6 Worksheets/posters/charts

Objective of session 6

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

Core Message 1: I can shout/say 'No' for my safety.

Core Message 2: Safety guide to follow when someone breaks a safety rule: NO. GO. TELL.

Core Message 3: There is no shame in any part of our body.

Core message 4: It is not my fault if someone troubles me. The trouble maker is to be blamed.

Core Message 1: I can shout/say 'No' for my safety.

We follow body safety rules – for ourselves and we do not deliberately break other people’s safety rules. All of us know that it is never alright for someone to touch, look at or talk about our private body parts except to keep them clean and healthy.

But what if someone breaks your body safety rules, touches, looks at or talks about our private body parts? What will you do then? Give time for responses.

If students look puzzled and are unable to answer, elicit a response by giving the following example:

Imagine you are playing with your favourite toy and some person suddenly tries to take away the toy from you without your permission. You don’t want that person to take the toy because it is your personal toy. What will you do?

After getting the responses from students, tell students that when someone tries to take away our toy we hold it tightly and say, 'No' to the person and also run away from that place.

In the same manner, when some person tries to touch, look at or talk about our private body parts we can say, 'No' and go away from that person.

Role plays:

1. A bigger child comes to the playground and wants to play a secret touching game.
2. A coach/teacher hugs a child too tight and she / he does not like it.
3. An older friend wanted to take pictures of you with no clothes?

Refer to Annexure 6:1 for more examples for role plays and what-if questions.

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins /
Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster,
Blackboard, Charts/flash cards for
safety Rules

Tips for Trainers

- When demonstrating ‘Saying No’, you should stand straight and look into the eyes of the other person and say ‘No’ emphatically.

Making Connections

Teaching students that it is okay to say "No" is essential. It may, in some cases, help prevent or mitigate abuse to some extent.

Core Message 2: Safety guide to follow when someone breaks a safety rule: NO. GO. TELL.

Role Plays:

A child is trying to tell an adult that someone had broken his/her safety guideline but they are too busy / did not pay attention.

How to repeat and keep telling/ telling another trusted adult till someone listens and takes care of the child's safety.

Discussion: Say “No” loudly. Leave the place, Go and tell someone you trust about the trouble maker. Keep telling people until someone listens and helps.

Ask the class to shout “NO” loudly. Teaching students that it is okay to say ‘No’ is essential as it would, in some cases, help them prevent abuse.

Different Ways of Assertively Asking a Person to Stop

Is saying, ‘NO’ the only way to ask a person to stop breaking the personal safety rule? (No) What are the different ways of telling a person to stop breaking the safety rule? (No. Don’t. I don’t like that. Go away. I’m going to tell on you. Stop. Please don’t. Don’t touch me.) Write responses on the board.

Have students practice saying all the above responses together.

Ask everyone to stand up tall and look into your eye and then turn to their seatmate and look into their eyes alternatively.

Tell the students that it is important to sound confident while saying, ‘NO’. People who break Safety Rules like it children are afraid. So, you must practice to look and act confident.

Loudly say each of the responses you wrote on the board.

In some cases students might say that they would use some form of aggressive means to stop the boy. However you should emphasize the fact that aggressive behavior like, pushing that person can only be used when no other options are available. Aggressive behaviour should never be used unless absolutely necessary.

Refer to Annexure 6:2 for stories on Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Communication

Tips for Teachers/ Trainers

- Please discuss as everybody is special and unique all of us have different understanding of personal space. However personal body safety rules need to be followed by all
- **Being Assertive** means to express your feelings and views firmly and confidently, without insulting the other person or becoming violent. For example if someone breaks safety rules you assertively tell the person, “This is not right. Stop it.”
- **Being Aggressive** is when you harm the person by physically hurting or saying cruel things or making threatening or ridiculing gestures.
- **Being Submissive or Passive** is when you do not express your feelings or views, even though you actually want to. This can be out of fear or a feeling that your views and feelings are not as important as the feelings and views of the other person.

Core Message 3: There is no shame in any part of our body

Blame the person who deliberately breaks rules.

Draw two stick figures – A and B

- 1) Two people, A and B. A steals B's pencil box. Who is to blame? Who should be punished? Whose shame is this?
- 2) Two people A and B. B is following all body safety rules. A deliberately breaks B's body safety rules. Who's to blame? Who should be punished? Who's shame is it?

B has not done anything wrong, so it is not his blame or shame.

The blame and shame is that of A. There is no shame in our body. Our behavior may be shameful. To purposely trouble someone and break their safety rules is shameful.

Anecdote: In a primary school, a boy pulled another boy's pants down and started laughing at him. Many other boys joined him in making fun of this child.

What do you think about this situation? Who did the wrong thing? Who broke the rules? Who should be reprimanded? Whose behavior was shameful?

Tips for Trainers

Children may want to talk about their experience of violations that they have faced; or they can talk about how they always thought it was their fault.

Support the child through the disclosure, if any.

Refer appropriately taking the child into confidence.

Handle such situations separately rather than in the group.

In case a child has shared in the session, remind children the ground rules of maintaining confidentiality and being empathetic.

Making Connections

A quick recap of all the previous lessons will be useful in building up a strong base for this session.

Sexual abusers may blame the child or put the onus of the abuse on the child and make him/her feel guilty. The child may feel that it was his/her fault that the abuse took place and may not report instances of abuse thereby keeping the cycle of abuse going on. To prevent this from happening it is important that children believe strongly that it was not their fault. They were never taught personal safety rules, they were not given the vocabulary to report abuse by their elders, they were not encouraged to talk about private body parts. Shame and dirt was wrongly instilled in parts of the body. How could they report? Hence it is also never too late to report matters of abuse.

Core message 4: Blame: It is not my fault if someone troubles me. The trouble maker is to be blamed.

Reena was colouring a picture when suddenly Ravi dropped some ink on it and her painting got spoilt. Do you think it was Reena's fault that her painting got spoilt? (No) Whose fault was it then? (Ravi's) If Ravi had not dropped ink on Reena's painting, it would not be spoilt.

In the same manner, if someone breaks Personal Safety Rules is it ever your fault? (No) Give time for responses.

No, if someone touches your private body parts it is never your fault. It is always the fault of the person who broke Personal Safety Rules by touching you.. Remember if anyone breaks Personal Safety Rules then it is always that person's fault and not your mistake.

Say loudly, clearly and confidently, "It is never my fault if someone else breaks Personal Safety Rules". Give time to repeat this if necessary.

There could be times when a person breaking Personal Safety Rules may make you believe that they meant no harm to you and that it was only for fun. Even if you think the person was right at that moment, you must still remember that it was not your fault. And you can still tell.

Repeat again, "It is not my fault" loudly, clearly and confidently. Use gestures while stating, 'It's not my fault'. Encourage students to repeat the same as often as possible to instill the concept firmly in their minds.

What if you felt shy or scared and so did not say, 'No' to the person? Is it then your fault? Give time for responses.

It is still not your fault, if a person breaks Personal Safety Rules. It is always that person's fault for breaking the rule.

Even if you find it difficult to say, 'no' always think, 'no' in your head and keep telling yourself that it is not my fault. Think, 'no, I don't want this, I didn't ask for it, this is not my fault.' Thinking, 'no' even if we don't say, 'no' will give you the courage to tell someone at a later date. It is never too late to tell.

Show the Poster on 'Thinking Know' to give a visual representation of this concept (provided in the Annexure 6:3)

Making Connections

When children who have been abused grow older, they often experience unease or guilt, or shame. Very often they also blame themselves for being abused. Even children who have learnt that they should report matters of abuse to their elders start feeling a huge sense of guilt if they had not reported the matter earlier. They also start blaming themselves for keeping quiet about the matter. They may also think that since the abuse took place a long time ago they need not reveal it as it will not help them. Due to these factors children find it difficult to report matters of ongoing or previous abuse. It is therefore important to let them know that no matter what the reasons are/were, the abuse is still not their fault. The abuser had the advantage of age, power and social conditioning. He/she is to blame. It was the abusers fault. The shame this the abusers. Abuse can be reported at any time. It is never too late to report matters of abuse. The abuser may be abusing other children and needs to be stopped.

Concluding the session

Activity 1:

Drawing: Ask children to draw an animal they like. Point out that every animal has some safety mechanism – example horns/ shell/ fangs.

Activity 2:

Ask Children to complete the worksheet '**NO-GO**' either within the session or as Homework (**Worksheet provided in the Annexure 6:4**)

Summarize and review the key messages:

Core Message 1: I can shout/say 'No' for my safety.

Core Message 2: Safety guide to follow when someone breaks a safety rule: NO. GO. TELL.

Core Message 3: There is no shame in any part of our body.

Core message 4: It is not my fault if someone troubles me. The trouble maker is to be blamed.

Annexure 6:1

What if:

- Your friend's uncle touches her private body parts when no one is around. When she tells her father about it he does not listen to her. What must she do?
- Someone talks about your or others' private body parts?
- Your friend's uncle says to her, "We will play a fun game of seeing each other's private body parts", what should your friend do?
- One elder boy says, "I will teach you how to use the internet for finding information", and then shows you someone's private body parts, what should you do?
- Your friend's grandparent sleeps with him and tells him a nice bed time story every night. But one night while sleeping your friend realizes that his grandparent is touching his private body parts. What must he do?
- Your elder brother or sister shows you pictures of naked people and talks to you about them. When you tell your mummy about it, she does not believe you. What should you do?
- One of your friends tells you to watch a movie in which adult private parts are shown, what would you do?
- Your cousins plan to tease each other by peeping in the bathroom while the other cousin is having a bath, what would you do?
- A big boy says that he'll show you something cool about your private body parts. What must you do?
- Your dad's friend shows you movies of people without clothes and tells you that if you tell someone about it he will harm your brother or sister, what must you do?
- Your (tuition) teacher teaches you about private body parts while teaching you about the different body parts using pictures in your science text book, what will you do?
- Your cousins (tuition) teacher touches her private body parts while teaching her about private body parts and shows her pictures of others private body parts in some magazines, then what should she do?

Annexure 6:2

Story on Assertive communication

Objective: Introduce concepts of Assertive, Aggressive and Passive/Submissive

There were three girls crossing through a forest to meet their grandmother living on the other end of the forest. On the way, a hungry lion came. One girl closed her eyes and stood there out of fear, the lion ate her up. Another girl showed aggression and tried to fight the lion, the lion ate her up too. The third girl stood straight, looked the lion eye to eye and said that "I will come back after eating a lot from my grandmother's house, so you will get more meat". The lion let her go. When she reached her grandmother's place, she told her about the lion. The grandmother had a tomato garden. She told the girl to sit in a big tomato and go back as the lion would not recognise her. So she was saved. Through this story we told the children that since the first girl was passive in her response, she was eaten up, the second girl was aggressive and she was also eaten up but the third was assertive so she was saved.

Annexure 6:3 - Poster on Thinking Know



What good does “THINKING NO” do if it doesn’t stop the unsafe touch/look/talk?
“THINKING NO” helps us get clear in our own minds that we do NOT deserve to be
touched in ways that are not safe for us, and that it is never our fault.

Even if we couldn’t say no,
Even if we couldn’t get away,
Even if we couldn’t tell someone.

What happened was NOT my fault!
It was the abusers fault!
The abuser is to blame!
I CAN TELL AT ANYTIME! IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO TELL!

Colour the Picture: No Go Tell



GO

