

Session 3_Boys

Learning about my body: Adolescence

Rationale

Pubertal changes begin around 9 -10 years in girls and around 11 years for boys. Acknowledging the mental, emotional, and physical changes that adolescents go through helps put them at ease with themselves, satisfies their curiosity and allays any fears regarding bodily functions.

Materials required

- Cuts of different feelings
- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)
- Lesson 1 - Worksheet 1-
Worksheet 2 –

Objective of session 3

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind.

Core message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings

Core Message 3: Being a girl or a boy is not a choice. We are born that way.

Core Message 4: At this age I experience feelings of attraction towards another person. I can learn to be aware of my feelings of attraction and take responsible decisions.

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind

Methodology: Ask children if they feel the same as when they were 6 year olds. What is different now?

Make a list of mental and emotional changes that they have noticed.

Discuss: Feelings – shy, excited, anxious and happy; self-conscious as we are growing up. Feeling of independence, rebelliousness, courage, confusion, extra awareness and consciousness about our body. Mood changes: Angry Happy Crabby. Wanting to be a part of a group, teasing Attraction towards another person.

All of the above feelings are connected with mental, emotional and physical changes in our body. What causes these changes? Special chemicals called hormones. Estrogen and testosterone are hormones which are released in the body and cause changes in our bodies. .

What are the physical changes that happen in boys? Ask for responses and list them down.

Physical changes: weight, height, hair growth (pubic hair and axillary hair, body hair, facial hair), voice changes, pimples, night emission, wet dreams.

Height and Weight increase, muscle growth: To eat iron, calcium and protein rich food rather than junk food.

Voice change: child's voice to a slightly deeper voice – towards adult voice

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins / Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster, Blackboard,

Advance preparation:

Make a chart with different physical and emotional changes

Tips for Trainers

- Session 3 will be conducted separately for boys and girls.
- Put up a chart with the different changes
- Encourage children to speak up and participate by saying "Thank you for bringing that out/ pointing that out. Let us have more response"
- Be aware of your facial expression and body language. Children should not feel intimidated or rejected. Welcome each response, expected, unexpected or inappropriate.
- When answers are inappropriate, these should be discussed such that children realize why they are inappropriate.
- Incorporate 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 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind continued.....

Hair growth: Axillary and pubic hair: feeling of embarrassment: people don't usually talk about it. There is no medical or health reason to remove it. Smell comes from bacteria that break down body's secretions that collect on our clothing. Wash with soap and water to keep the area clean.

Pimples: Occur because of hormonal changes in the body, best way to take care of them. Eat a balanced diet, drink lots of water, keep the skin clean

Methodology: How do you feel about these changes?

An example of one child getting worked up and anxious because all his classmates have started shooting up and getting taller and suddenly he finds he is the shortest in the class. None of the exercises / eating / cycling/ playing basketball are helping.

Discussion: physical changes that happen in a body during puberty vary from person to person. Each person's body is unique. The changes which happen in puberty and the time when the changes start can vary from person to person. The whole process takes almost around 10 yrs. The body will grow at its own pace. So there is no need to worry if your friend has started growing taller and you are still short, or if your voice has already started breaking but not yet for the rest of the boys in your group. This is the time to make sure that your body gets enough exercise, sleep and nutritious food so that the changes happen as required for your body.

Tips for Trainers

One of the tasks of growing up is discovering who you are and what that means about what you like. Every person goes through this process of exploration, but what happens when it leads to feeling different, confused or even alone and there is nobody to talk to about it? Hence, give children ample time to raise questions and clear their doubts.

Refer to the diagram in the Annexure 3: 1 and 3:2 of modules for age group 9-12 years for diagrams of reproductive system and pubertal changes.

Core message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings

Explain regarding two main functions of the human body: survival and reproduction. Once the child is capable of surviving on its own, the body gets ready for reproduction. The child slowly develops into an adult.

Puberty is the phase when the child changes into an adult, for e.g. tadpole to frog, larva to butterfly. In different animals, this phase takes different times. For the human, this whole change takes around 12 to 14 yrs; from 9-10 yrs to 22-24 yrs. This is a long time and changes will happen gradually. The body will mature first and then the brain being more complex, will take longer.

Explain that the body has not changed much during the past 45,000 yrs. But we have moved out of the jungles and started living in villages and towns and cities. Here we have to buy our food with money - there are no trees to pluck fruits from! So even though by 12 -14 years of age our body becomes capable of reproducing, our ability to survive in a village or city in a comfortable manner, requires us to learn special skills. Those skills take time to learn. Hence adults tell children “get married and have children only after you can take care of your needs and can earn for yourself.”

Tips for Trainers

- First ask the question to a single child and then put it forth to the other children. This helps giving every child an opportunity to answer as well as provides opportunities to clear doubts if necessary.
- If any child gives a different answer from the expected response, do not correct the child; rather ask the child to state the reason and use such incidents as points for discussion.

Making Connections

Understanding that these changes are normal and it's a phase which is unique for each one will have a calming effect on children's anxiety about growing up.

Core Message 3: Being a girl or a boy is not a choice. We are born that way.

Need for different sexes.

Question: Why do we have different sexes? Why can't we have only one sex and have asexual reproduction like the amoeba?

Discussion: In asexual reproduction, the offspring are mere clones of the parent. In sexual reproduction, each offspring is different, improving the chances of survival of complex organisms ranging from an ant to an elephant.

Methodology: How do you feel about you being a girl or a boy? Check and see if there are any responses where they feel / they have been told that their gender could have been different. Or if they feel that due to the way people treat them due to their gender, they wish their gender could have been different.

Discussion: Explain that our gender is determined by our genes when we are born: XX genes for girl & XY genes for boy. Mother's egg has the X gene. The father's sperms are of two types, half have X gene and half have the Y gene. No one has control over which sperm will fertilize the egg. Saying that a girl or a boy should have been of the opposite sex is like saying that a mango should be a guava. It is like color red saying that it wants to be blue. Both the fruits / colors are beautiful and perfect in their own way, it is not possible to compare the two and say one is better than the other.

But sometimes we can feel upset or sad about being a particular gender because of the way others treat us or comment on us. Then what can one do? We can think in this manner: If a person is colorblind and can't see red, it is not the fault of the red colour. It does not reduce the redness of the red colour. The person who can't see red is missing something. If a person can't tell a diamond from a stone, it does not reduce the value of the diamond. My value, my skills, my qualities are not reduced because someone else can't see them/ or refuses to acknowledge them.

Tips for Trainers

- Children who have been discriminated on the basis of gender might feel overwhelmed.
- Affirm them and validate their feelings.
- Say that "Sometimes people can't 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 children after the session

Core Message 4: At this age I experience feelings of attraction towards another person. I can learn to be aware of my feelings of attraction and take responsible decisions.

Methodology: What do you think is the definition of love? Ask for responses.

Discussion: Allow an interacting of ideas and acknowledge every response.

Methodology: Do you think love between teenagers is true love? Ask for responses.

Discussion: Explain that since their body and brain is changing from that of a child to an adult, they are in the process of forming their identity, their ideas, preferences, tastes will keep changing during this stage. Their values are developing. Ask them if there was an instance where a friend they liked very much a few years ago has 'changed' and they don't like that person anymore?

Explain that this is because that friends and their values are developing and may not be matching anymore. You change and so does the other person. You may not like the 'changed' person anymore.

Early relationships are based on emotions – feelings of physical attraction dominate any saner advice or feelings. Also what they may want to do in their life is not certain. They may go separate ways in a few years' time. Making long term commitments are difficult at this stage.

Think of your very close friend. Would you like it if a close friend pressurized you to doing something you do not like to do? Would your close friend put you down or make you feel lesser?

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins /
Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster,
Blackboard, Box for collecting
questions, white chits

Tips for Trainers

- As children do not get opportunities to discuss issues related to puberty and reproduction, there might be a lot of questions. In order to streamline it you can do an activity called "WORRIES IN A HAT":
Children are given time to think about questions or doubts. They write these on chits and put in the box that will be passed around.
- Facilitator to ensure all questions are answered in due course of the sessions.

E.g. If someone says 'If you love me, you will let me ...', 'If you love me, you will show me how much you love me by doing....'. These are all conditions. True love is unconditional. Sometimes the boy/girl leaves the other person after 'getting' what they wanted from that person. Sometimes the boy/girl may judge their partner as 'immoral' or of a 'lose character' afterwards.

Explain: Love is wanting the best for another person. The other person wishes to see you comfortable, happy and considers you his/her equal.

So if someone is making you do or say things that you don't want to do or making you feel lesser than, it is ok to say 'No". It doesn't mean that you do not love the person. It only means that you respect yourself and that you stand up for your values. Some e.g. for values are loyalty, courage, fairness, freedom, truth, friendship, care.

Methodology: When is it a good time to have sex? What are the consequences of having sex?

Discussion: Sex has consequences – physical, emotional, social. It is not just an act.

Also what are the consequences if you get pregnant? Are you at an age to responsibly take care of the consequences of pregnancy? Explain that during earlier times when men lived in forests, by the time children were 13-14 yrs, they were capable of taking care of themselves and another child by hunting / gathering their own food. But now, can a 13-14 yr old take care of another child. Not until he / she is 22-24 when he/she is capable of earning well and buying food n shelter with his / her own money.

Refer to Annexure 3:1 and 3:2 for making children understand need for postponing sexual intimacy and ensuring correct decision making process

The activity 'Expressing Love Safely' given in Annexure of session 1 can be alternatively done here.

Tips for Teachers/ Trainers

- One of the tasks of growing up is discovering who you are and what that means about what you like. Every person goes through this process of exploration, but what happens when it leads to feeling different, confused or even alone as nobody talk about it. Hence, give children ample time to raise questions and clear their doubts.
- If you don't have answer to any question it is best to be honest with children. However, make an effort to find out the answer and share during the future s Apart from girl and boy, is there any other gender?
- Refer to Annexure 3:1 and 3:2 for making children understand need for postponing sexual intimacy and ensuring better decision making process

Concluding the session:

Ask students to do the blind walk – stand one behind the other with their hand on the other person's shoulder. The first person in the line keeps her eyes open. She walks the group around the room. After a while they stop and open their eyes. Ask how they felt during this exercise.

Summarize and review the key messages:

Ask children to share what they learnt today in the session

Reiterate:

Core Message 1: I am experiencing new changes in my body and mind.

Core message 2: Survival and reproduction are the main instincts of living beings

Core Message 3: Being a girl or a boy is not a choice. We are born that way.

Core Message 4: At this age I experience feelings of attraction towards another person. I can learn to be aware of my feelings of attraction and take responsible decisions.

I came here to help you learn more about yourself, how you interact with others and how to be safe. I will come again and we will learn some more things.

A. Postponing Sexual Intimacy

Students are divided into groups of 6-8 and asked to list down the benefits and risks of sexual activity during teenage. Responses are briefly discussed in the large group. Facilitator must ensure responses include both physical and emotional risks.

This is followed by individual reflection on personal and career goals and how the risks associated with sexual activity may affect these goals if the individual were exposed to them.

Think about all the personal and career goals that you want to achieve in the next 5 years and list them down in the table below. In the right column, list the potential risks that you may be exposed to through sexual activity. Circle the goals that you think may be affected negatively if any of the above risks came true at this stage.

GOALS	RISKS

Facilitator prompts:

- How would these potential risks fit into your planned life goals?
- In case of negative events like teen pregnancy, which goals would likely have to be cancelled, altered, or postponed?
- What other impact do you think there could be on your physical or emotional health?

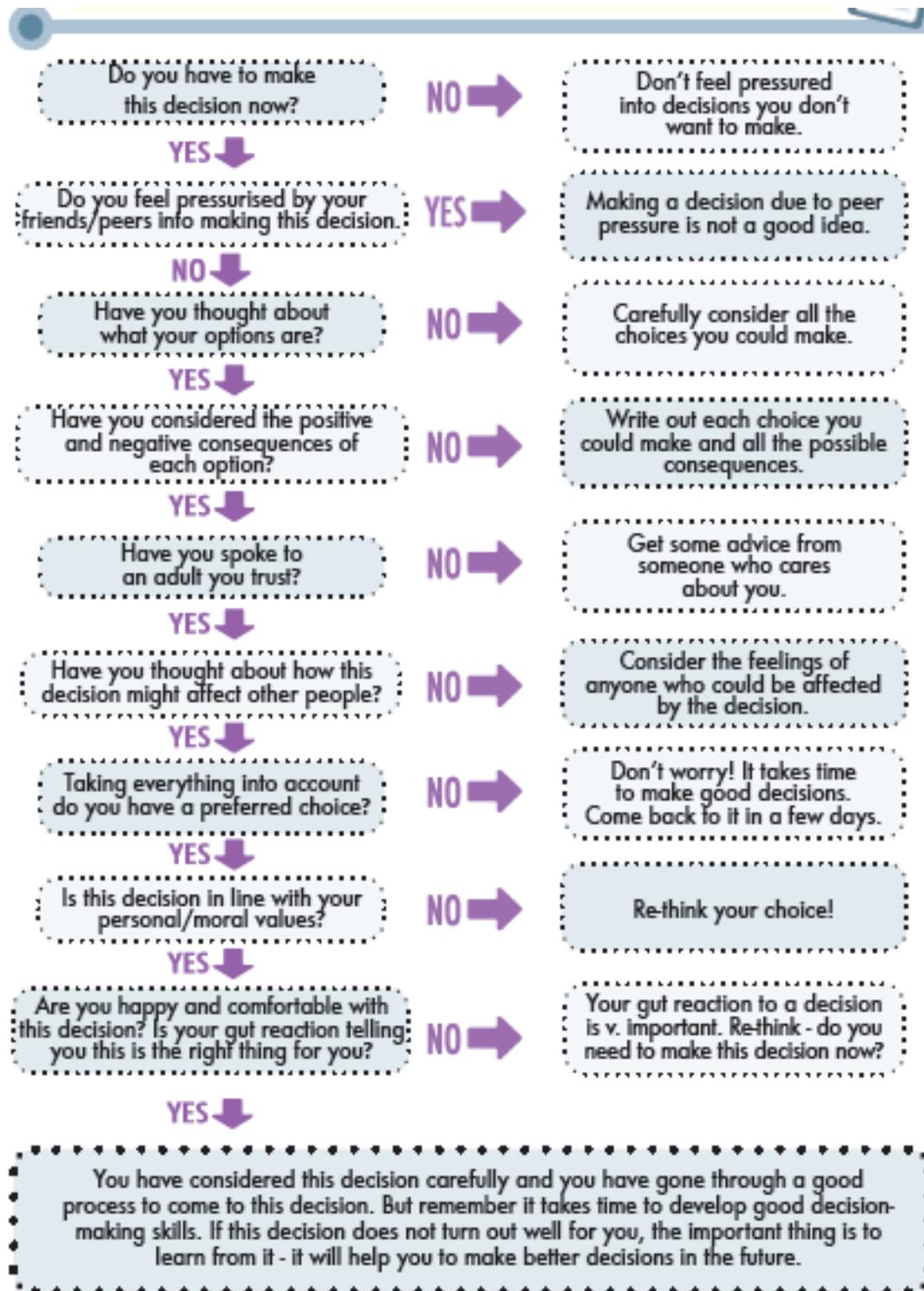
B. Activity on postponing sexual intimacy

Students are divided into 2 groups and given a mental and a physical task which is likely beyond their current ability, but easier for adults to handle.

1. Lift a heavy suitcase
2. Complex math problem

Their inability to complete the task is used to reflect on lack of physical and mental maturity various other tasks, including sexual activity.

Making Better Decisions



Annexure 3:5 Understanding Others' Feelings

Let's think about how others might feel.

- If you take your friend's toy without permission, how would your friend feel?
- If your friend was absent to school due to bad health and you help him/her by telling what the teacher taught in class, how would your friend feel?
- If you hit your classmate, how would he or she feel?
- If your caretaker cooks food for you after working hard the full day and you say that you don't want to eat it, how would she feel?
- If you ask for permission from your caretakers before going to play, how would they feel?