

May I?

May I- How to feel and protect your privacy and personal space. The lesson treats the topic of personal space and privacy needs and empowers children to recognize their own zone of comfort and safety as well as to respect other people's boundaries. It is based on physical and mental exercises but also includes verbal exploration/discussion.



Gender-based violence



Theatre, body movement



13+



20-24 participants



Computer/phone

Sound equipment, for playing the music (not obligatory)



A digital element which can be added to this exercise is the online consent video which can be used to introduce the concept of consent to the participants before the exercise. This animation video makes the metaphor of offering a cup of tea to someone who does not feel like having tea. The clear metaphor is consent for sexual activities, and through this, the concept of consent is made quite clear to the participants.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ)

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45 minutes



YOU.TH. Manual for youth workers
- 3.2.6 Body Language
<https://youth-theatre.eu/>



A room without distraction and noises, with enough empty space for all students to walk, relax and perform simple physical exercise (empty classroom or gym or even open space without distraction and noises).

Implementation:

Theory for facilitator

We live in mediatized culture, which on daily basis imposes to all of us, including teenagers, the patterns of an idealized body (female and male). As opposite to this, we want to encourage young person (girl and boy) to feel and accept her/his body as unique, live category, non-determined by imposed images, but deeply connected to the inner, emotional world. Knowing and loving your body (as it is) is an important topic for teenagers.

This body - which belongs only to them - also needs its space and privacy. Therefore, we intent to empower young people to set the boundaries of their personal space, and also to recognize social situations in which other people (strangers, but, sadly, possibly even close people - family members, pedagogues) don't respect these boundaries. Worldwide, recently we are witnessing the revealing of numerous cases of psychological and sexual abuses of children in school and artistic/scientific campuses, which were difficult to be recognized as such, being covered by "pedagogical methods". That's why we find important to empower children to recognize potential abuse and to say no to every intention they feel inappropriate.

Detailed description of teacher-led activities:

First part: "My body" (20-25 mins):

First part consists of physical activities structured by several tasks. The goal is to relax and warm-up participants and to bring them in the state of body and mind in which they can feel and then explore the subject of the lessons.

Task 1.1:

Choose your place in the room, so that you have enough space to feel free and comfortable. Take a deep breath, hold for a few second and then exhale. Repeat 5 times. Now, imagine that every time you exhale your body become smaller. Try, also physically, to make it as small as it can be. Try your "small body". How does it move, how does it sound? How does it feel to be small? You can move "small" and meet other "small bodies".

Task 2.1:

Now try to make your body as big as it can be (stretching your legs and arms). Try your "big body". How does it move, how does it sound? How does it feel to be big? You can move "big" and meet other "big bodies".

3.1. Sharing:

Come back to your normal size, sit in the circle. Briefly exchange the impressions: how does it feel to be big/small? Can you relate this experience to a real situation you had? When/why do/did you feel big/small?

Second part: "May I?" » (20-25 mins)

Task 2.1:

While still sitting in circle, count 1,2, 1, 2...All "ones" form one group, all "twos" form the other group. Now two groups should stand in two lines with the maximal distance in between (e.g. next to the two opposite walls in the room.)

Establish the eye contact with the participant standing on the opposite side. Slowly walk towards your partner and try to find the optimal closeness/distance.

The question is: how to come close to the other person and yet feel comfortable? Even more difficult question is: how to find the distance which is good enough for both persons?

Task 2.1: May I?

Chose a person and ask her/him: May I take your place? If she/he answer "yes", you take her/his place, and he/she should ask another participant to take his/her place. If the answer is no, ask another person.

Then the "May I" question can be developed:

May I touch your hand (shoulder, hair...?) May I hug you? May I say something nice to you?

The main rule is simple: if the answer is no, we have to respect that.

In following discussion, we explore the questions: Is it difficult to say no? How does it feel? Is it strange to ask about something which you would normally do without asking? How does it feel when someone say "no" to your question/proposal? Can you relate this exercise to a real experience you had/have in my life?

Tips and notes to the facilitator:

Sometimes teenagers feel awkward working with physical exercises, as they feel self-conscious about their body. Observe and see how your group might react, whether they are able to take these activities seriously. Teacher should also be aware that the subject of the lesson/workshop could be sensitive for some participants. If she/he notices that a child might have had traumatic experience related to the question of privacy/personal boundaries, the workshop should be moderated on the way to protect the child (i.e. changing the activity) In this case teacher should contact school pedagogue/psychologist, in order to find the way to give necessary support and help to the child.