

Life Skills, Sexuality and Personal Safety Program for Middle and High School Students

Life Skills enable the development of self-awareness, empathy, as well as the ability to cope with emotional stress. They help adolescents communicate better, and engage in creative and critical thinking before making decisions and resolving problems. Enfold's program encourages students to apply life skills in various day to day interactions and unexpected contexts, especially those related to self-confidence, friendship, relationships, health and safety.

Enfold presents evolutionary reasons for physical, emotional and mental changes during adolescence, which helps them understand, accept and regulate their desires, and instincts, and for nurturing affiliations. The modules have been researched and refined by Dr Sangeeta Saksena and Dr Shaibya Saldanha over a decade to be scientific, age-appropriate and value based. Enfold's Personal Safety Program is in keeping with WHO's and UNICEF's global objectives and implementation strategies for prevention of child abuse.

Many schools have incorporated this program in their academic calendar as it enables students to not only recognize sexual abuse, but also feel confident about reporting it to trusted adults. The program helps adolescents experience adolescence without guilt and express themselves with responsibility.

The program is available in English, Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, Telegu, Malayalam and Bengali.

Details and Value of the Program for Middle and High School

Session 1 for Middle School:

- a. Adolescence: mental and emotional changes – what and why?
- b. Building self-confidence: Multiple Intelligences
- c. Girls, boys and capabilities

Session 1 for High School:

- a. Towards Adulthood
- b. Intelligences and Survival
- c. Gender Sensitivity

Rationale

Self-esteem plays an important role in determining vulnerability of adolescents to abuse. The higher the self-esteem the lower is the vulnerability to different kinds of abuse, including sexual abuse. The intention of this session is to help the adolescent see the positive aspects of themselves – their qualities, abilities, skills and behaviour. This would help adolescents develop a strong sense of self-worth and they would be better able to present their point of view assertively and respectfully. They would be better able to protect themselves and report abusers.

Session 2 for Middle School:

- a. Body Image and Gender
- b. Building Self-Respect: Multiple Qualities
- c. Teasing, Bullying and Anger
- d. Fear and Sadness

Session 2 for High School:

- a. Body Image, Gender and Media Influence
- b. Qualities and Looks
- c. Peer Pressure and Anger

Rationale:

People often comment on an adolescent's looks and tease or taunt them, or in some way hold them responsible for how their body looks or the biological sex/gender they are born with. Media messages too erode their self-esteem. This session presents an empowering logic that moves their focus from how one's body looks to what one does. The root causes of disturbing emotions like anger, peer pressure, fear and sadness are also touched upon to help students deal with the same.

Session 3 for Middle School:

- a. Adolescence: physical, mental and emotional changes – what and why?

Session 3 for High School:

- a. Reproductive System

Session 4 for Middle School

- a. Myths, doubts and facts about the reproductive system

Session 4 for High School:

- a. Sexuality: myths and facts

Rationale: Sessions 3 and 4

Acknowledging and accepting 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. In the absence of clear and frank discussion and inputs from parents or teachers, they are likely to gather information from peers, magazines or the internet. This information may be

inadequate, confusing and at times scientifically incorrect. The inputs may be contrary to the values of respect and responsibility.

Explaining and clarifying adolescents' concerns and doubts helps clear confusion if any in their minds, and gives them an opportunity to discuss value based sexual expression with a responsible adult.

Session 5 for Middle School:

- a. Personal Space
- b. Body Safety Rules

Session 5 for High School

- a. Sexuality & responsibility in relationships
- b. Body Language and clothing
- c. Internet Safety

Rationale:

Generally, Indian parents do not discuss responsible sexual expression with their adolescents. They do not give rational reasons – instead they try to police their children or force them to follow rules in the name of tradition or ‘because I said so’. This fosters rebellion. Many adolescents get into trouble because no one had discussed romance, infatuation, clothing and sexuality with them in a reasonable and respectful manner.

In this session, we derive Personal Safety Rules in a logical manner and discuss the same. This helps students follow the same online as well as in the physical world and report those who break rules.

Session 6 for Middle School:

- a. Personal Safety
- b. Shame and blame
- c. Internet Safety
- d. Helping Each Other
- e. My Safe Adults

Session 6 for High School:

- a. Body Safety Rules and Personal Space
- b. Recognizing, resisting and reporting sexual abuse

- c. Helping Others
- d. My Safe Adults

Rationale:

According to Government of India study 2007, sexual abuse begins at around 5 years of age, peaks at around 12 to 14 years of age and then begins to decline. It can also continue into adulthood. Indian families have failed in teaching their children personal safety and how to recognize, resist and report perpetrators of sexual abuse. Adults may have attached shame to certain parts of the body in their attempt to teach children social

etiquettes about clothing and touching, resulting in hesitation on the part of the child to report sexual abuse.

In this session we discuss the dynamics of sexual abuse, and the erroneous beliefs that prevent people from reporting it. Through role plays we demonstrate how students can resist and report sexual abuse, as well as be proactive and help each other be safe.

At the end of the Course, the student would be able to:

- Demonstrate positive body image and self-esteem by becoming aware of their qualities, capabilities and values.
- Take informed decisions about the use of electronic and social media, and actively participate in nurturing their body and mind.
- Communicate better with their friends and family members; share feelings and disturbing events.
- Evaluate various ways in which gender bias is perpetuated and be sensitive to different genders.
- Recognize sexual abuse and know how to report perpetrators of the crime to trusted adults

Do call / mail us info@enfoldindia.org to conduct these programs at your institution