




# Relationships and Sexuality Education 1

Activities to  
support the  
teaching of the  
updated Junior  
Cycle SPHE  
Curriculum 2023



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Department of Education



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## Introduction

The aim of the SPHE as set out in the NCCA SPHE specification for Junior Cycle is to:

*“build students’ self-awareness and positive self-worth; to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and values that will enable them to lead fulfilling and healthy lives: empower them to create, nurture and maintain respectful and loving relationships, with self and others; and enhance their capacity to contribute positively to society”.*

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is an integral part of SPHE and is of particular importance for young people at this stage of their lives. They are making sense of their own life experiences, messages, images and information about relationships and sexuality from a range of informal sources such as their peers, family, the media and online sources. Having the opportunity to think about and discuss relationships and sexuality with their peers within a safe classroom setting with a skilled teacher is vitally important learning at this stage in their lives. Relationships and social awareness are two key elements of Social and Emotional Learning programmes.

This unit of learning mainly links to **Strand 3: Relationships and sexuality** and also addresses some of the learning outcomes from Strand 1: Understanding myself and others. This unit of learning introduces the students to relationships and sexuality education, it first looks at what constitutes human sexuality and then specifically focusses on three different aspects; gender stereotyping, gender identity and sexual orientation. It then looks at relationships with family and friends, and some of the attitudes, skills and behaviours needed to maintain relationships. Finally, it provides some material for the revision of the changes in adolescence and human reproduction, should that be necessary for your class group.

It is advised that activities 1–4 be taught in sequence and that the students’ previous learning experiences with regard to puberty and reproduction are assessed to inform planning for activities 8, 9 and 10. Explanation of terms in sessions 1–3 are simplified, based on: UNESCO (2018) International technical guidance on sexuality education. An evidence-informed approach 2018; UNFPA (2020) International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School CSE and WHO (2015) FAQ on Health and Sexual Diversity: An Introduction to Key Concepts. Our understanding of various aspects of sexuality, including gender and sexual orientation, and the associated language, is changing all the time. The terms and explanation are offered as a snapshot of some of the ways people identify currently.

There are suggested video clips listed throughout the unit. It is essential that these are previewed and used in accordance with the students’ learning needs and school policies. It is advised that this unit is taught in either Term 2 or Term 3 of first year.

These activities are designed to be taught with reference to the SPHE/RSE Toolkit, developed by the NCCA. It includes guidance on teaching SPHE in a safe and effective way and includes an explanation of the experiential learning cycle that is recommended for use in SPHE and is the framework used in the activities in this resource. <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-Cycle/Short-Courses/SPHE/SPHE-RSE-toolkit/Teaching-SPHE-RSE/>

All learning in SPHE is underpinned by three cross-cutting elements that are foundational for effective teaching and learning in SPHE; awareness, dialogue, and reflection and action. It is important that the teacher is consciously creating opportunities for the students to become more self-aware and aware of others; creating lots of opportunities for classroom dialogue and prompting students to reflect on what they are learning and what it means for their lives now or in the future.



The activities presented here are a guideline only. Every classroom is different and teachers are best placed to decide on what will be most effective in their classroom.



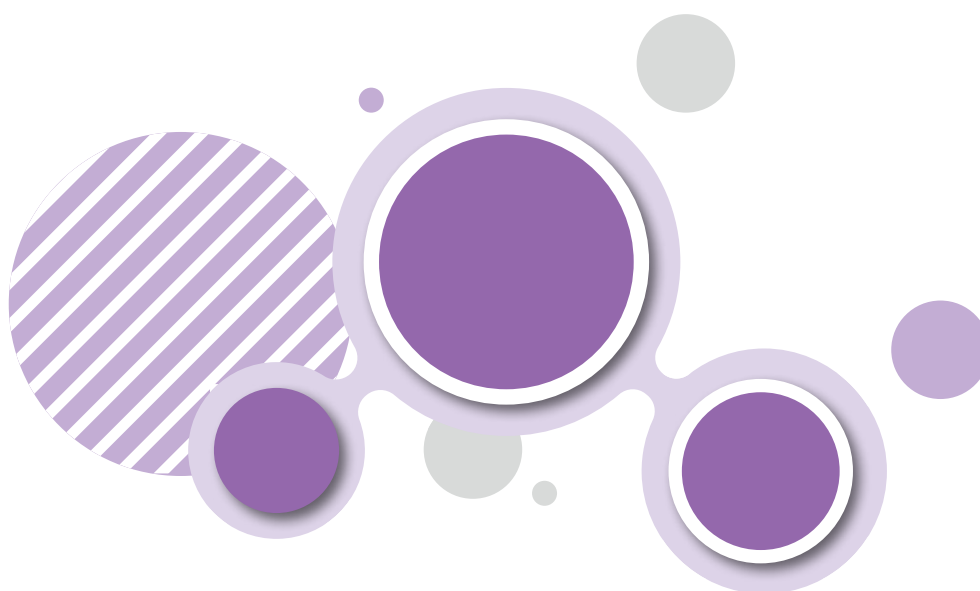
Strand	Learning outcomes
<b>1. Understanding myself and others</b>	<p>1.1 explore the physical, social and emotional changes that happen during adolescence</p> <p>1.4 recognise the factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity, such as family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnic background, dis/abilities, religious beliefs/world-views</p> <p>1.5 reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact on expectations, behaviour and relationships</p> <p>1.6 discuss experiences/situations of bias, inequality or exclusion and devise ways to actively create more inclusive environments</p> <p>1.7 communicate in a respectful and effective manner and listen openly and sensitively to the views/feelings of others</p>
<b>2. Making healthy choices</b>	<p>2.1 consider the multifaceted nature of health and wellbeing, and evaluate what being healthy might look like for different adolescents, including how food, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to health and wellbeing</p>
<b>3. Relationships and sexuality</b>	<p>3.1 reflect on the values, behaviours and skills that help to make, sustain and end relationships respectfully (friends, family and romantic/intimate relationships)</p> <p>3.2 examine the benefits and difficulties experienced by young people in a range of relationships - friendships, family relationships, and romantic/intimate relationships</p> <p>3.3 identify signs of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships</p> <p>3.4 appreciate the importance of setting healthy boundaries in interpersonal relationships and consider how to show respect for the boundaries of others</p> <p>3.5 consider the importance of taking care of their reproductive health</p> <p>3.6 appreciate the breadth of what constitutes human sexuality, and how sexual orientation and gender identity are experienced and expressed in diverse ways</p>

## Learning activities

- **In activity 1, What is RSE?**, (LO 3.6) students explore what RSE means to them. Students learn what it is to experience and express our sexuality in its broad, holistic sense. Our sexuality is an intrinsic part of our humanity. It includes our gender identity, our sexual orientation, our relationship with ourselves and our relationships with others.
- **In activity 2, Gender stereotypes**, (LOs 1.4, 1.5) students look at stereotyping in relation to men and women and its impact on society. Using a unique take on a well-known fairy tale and various examples from the media, students explore gender stereotyping and consider the consequences of constant exposure to gender stereotyping messaging. Through processing the activities, students discuss the pressure on young people to conform to gender stereotypes.
- **In activity 3, Gender identity**, (LOs 1.4, 1.6, 3.6) students learn that some people's gender identity is different to the gender associated with their sex at birth. Students will hear the experiences of young people who identify as transgender, as well as the experiences of their parents. Students will be introduced to some of the terms commonly used to describe various gender identities. Our understanding of gender identity and the associated language, is changing all the time. The message here is that it is okay not to know all the latest terms, but it is important to use language respectfully when talking about any aspect of a person's identity.
- **In activity 4, Sexual orientation**, (LOs 1.4, 1.6, 3.6) students learn about sexual orientation. Using the medium of video clips, the class will learn that sexual orientation refers to who a person is attracted to. That it is an integral part of a person's identity regardless of whether they are sexually active. The class will discuss the impact of living in a heteronormative society and what steps they can take to create an inclusive environment in their friendship groups and in the classroom.
- **In activity 5, What makes a family**, (LOs 3.1, 3.2) students look at different types of family structures. Regardless of their composition, most families are an important source of support. It is important that students appreciate that all family members can make a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of the family and of the individuals within the family.
- **In activity 6, Healthy connected relationships**, (LOs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) students explore how the health of a relationship can be assessed based on the way in which those involved respond to challenges. There is an emphasis on balance within a relationship and how it's necessary for all people in a relationship to contribute to each other's wellbeing and the over-all health of the relationship. While there is no such thing as a perfect relationship, healthy relationships are, for the most part, rewarding, fulfilling and fun for the people involved, regardless of whether the relationship is a friendship or a romantic relationship.



- **In activity 7, Maintaining healthy relationships**, (LOs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) students will consider and discuss what is required in order to maintain a relationship and when it might be appropriate to end a relationship. They will identify the qualities that nurture relationships – such as compromise, listening, mutual trust, honesty, and respect – and recognise the importance of developing these qualities and investing them in their own relationships.
- **In activity 8, Changes in adolescence**, (LO 1.1) students review the physical, emotional and social changes that occur during adolescence, and are reminded that everyone is different and develops at their own pace.
- **In activity 9, Human reproduction – The journey of the egg and sperm**, (LO 3.5) students revise how the female and male reproductive systems work, the correct names of the reproductive and sexual organs, and how conception takes place.
- **In activity 10, Personal hygiene**, (LOs 1.7, 2.1) students learn the importance of good hygiene habits. As part of this activity, students will also be taught that people's hygiene habits can suffer depending on what is going on in their lives, and that it is important to show empathy and be supportive of any peers who are struggling with their hygiene.



### Suggestions for assessment

1. Identify an image of gender stereotyping within an advertisement. If possible, take a screenshot and save it to your phone. Imagine that you are working for the advertising agency responsible for developing this advertisement. How would you 'unstereotype' it? Either create your own advertisement using your phone or computer, or document the plot line you would use to advertise this product without gender stereotyping.
2. Individually or in a group, compile a list of the most important characteristics in a friendship or romantic relationship. These will vary for everyone, but if you are working in a group, try to reach a consensus within your group. During lunchtime, survey as many students as you can and ask them to select from your list the five characteristics they believe are most important in friendships and romantic relationships. Having analysed the results you obtained from the students, create a poster to be hung in the classroom which highlights the five qualities that are most important in friendships and romantic relationships, as identified by the students in your school.



## Activity 1 – What is RSE? (LO 3.6)

In this activity, students learn that RSE is about more than sex and sexual orientation. It is about relationships, values, attitudes, behaviours, sexual health and much more. Students will also review the SPHE ground rules, with RSE in mind.

### Step 1: Brainstorm

Divide the students into pairs or small groups, or have them work individually, and ask them:

- What is Relationships and Sexuality Education?

Encourage the class to think about relationships and sexuality as broadly as they can in an attempt to move them away from the limiting notion that this is the 'sex class'.

Document feedback from the students, and check the Teacher's note if students' responses are limited.

Use the Sexuality Wheel graphic and the accompanying notes to initiate a discussion on the many aspects of human sexuality.

Encourage the students to give their opinion on what each label on the Sexuality Wheel refers to, in the context of sexuality, before revealing the answer. Using the Sexuality wheel, introduce the idea that sexuality is not just about sex or sexual orientation; it involves lots of different elements, and although sexual activity is an important part of most people's sexual expression in adult life, relationships and sexuality are first and foremost about our relationship with ourselves, and from that, our relationships with others.

It may be helpful to indicate the topics that you are planning to address this year in RSE. If a number of students indicate an interest in other topics, you may wish to review your planned SPHE programme for first year in partnership with colleagues, in order to include topics that are of interest to the students if appropriate.

## Teacher's note

The following words can be used to describe topics addressed in RSE: sex; reproduction; friendships; gender; sexuality; sexual orientation; sexually transmitted infections (STIs); contraception; romantic relationships; girlfriend/boyfriend /partner; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT); love; marriage; attraction; conflict; communication; peer pressure; pregnancy; consent; sexting; body image; feelings; emotions; and decision-making. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

The Sexuality Wheel, referred to in the activity, is one model of the elements that can contribute to human sexuality. It is not definitive or exhaustive but is useful to stimulate discussion.

## Suggested discussion points

- What is the value to the individual, and to society as a whole, of students learning about RSE in school?
- What topics are you most interested in learning about?



## Step 2: Reflection

Review the SPHE ground rules to see if there is anything that students wish to add in relation to having discussions about relationships and sexuality.

Highlight that the ground rules will be referenced at the beginning of each class, so that everyone is reminded about the importance of maintaining safety in the group.

Remind students that while confidentiality is important, there are limits to confidentiality. If you as their teacher become aware or concerned that someone in the class – or a child, young person or vulnerable person outside of the class – has been harmed, is being harmed or potentially could be harmed, you must talk to your school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

### Suggested discussion points

- Why do we have ground rules for SPHE?
- How can the class help you to be comfortable with participating in these classes?
- What would make it uncomfortable for you and prevent you from participating?
- Do you think these rules go far enough to cover the sensitive topics discussed within RSE, or should more rules be added?

### Teacher's note

There should always be a rule regarding respectful communication and an explanation of what this means in terms of using the correct or agreed terms, e.g. "I will use respectful language". If the students do not know what words to use, they can ask for clarification.

### Step 3: Home activity



Ask the students to complete the following stem sentences and bring their answers on a page to the next lesson. Explain to the class that their will not be read out or shared individually but you may respond in a general way to patterns that emerge from the class. At the next lesson place a box at the top of the room so the class can put their answer sheets in anonymously. This is to give you a good indication of where the students are in relation to RSE, and it may give you the opportunity to address concerns and meet their expectations in relation to RSE.

During our RSE classes:

I expect that...

I am a concerned about...

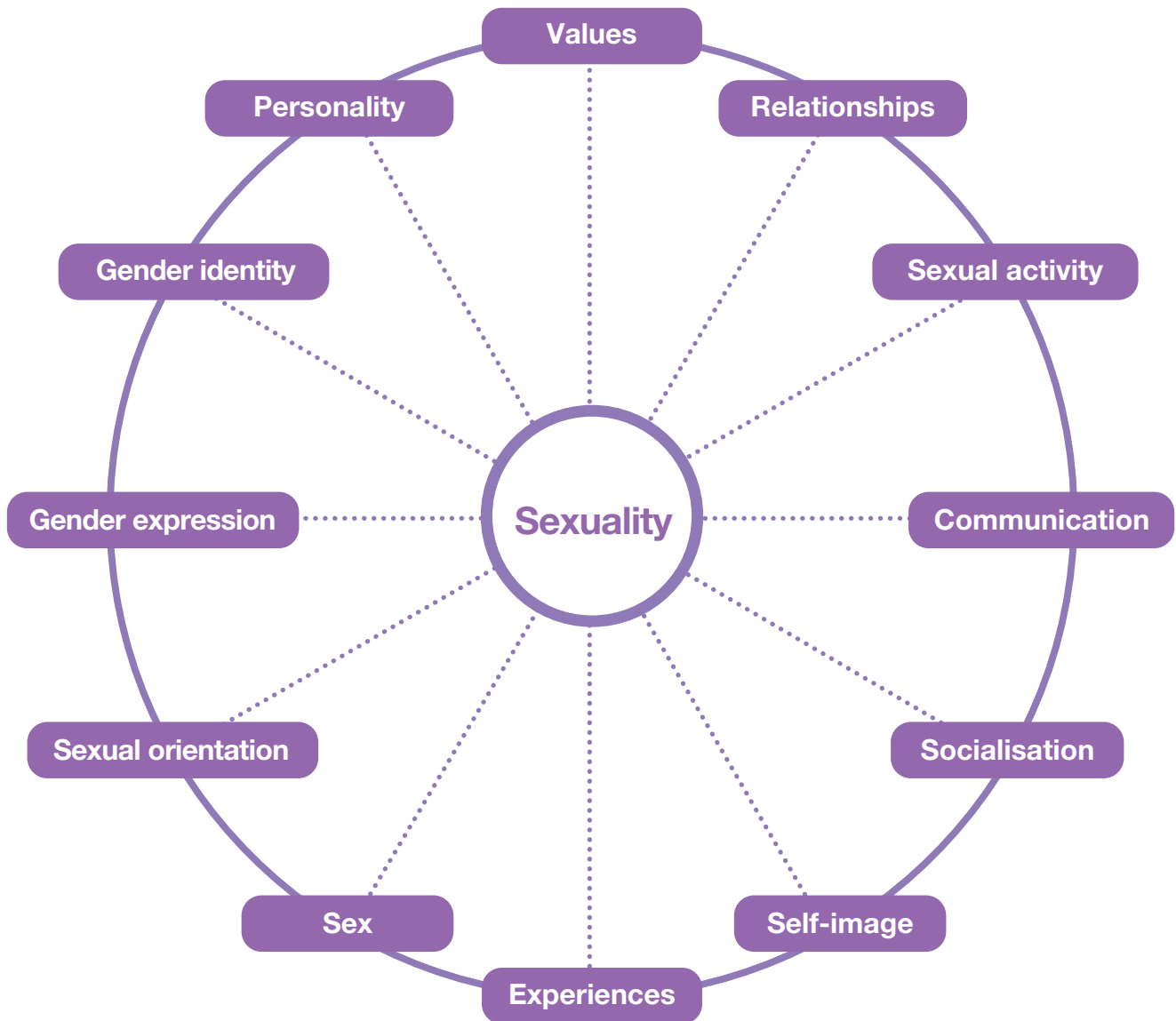
I really hope that...

I would be interested in learning more about...



## Sexuality wheel

Adapted with kind permission of Teachingsexualhealth.ca



## Sexuality wheel – continued

### Values

A collection of ideas that people see as important; a set of assumptions about how things are.

### Relationships

The way people are connected and how they act towards one another.

### Sexual activity

One way people experience or express their sexuality. Sexual activity includes kissing, sexual touching and sexual intercourse.

### Communication

The way people connect and share information, goals, and ideas, and create understanding.

### Socialisation

Learned behaviours that include customs, attitudes and values that are acceptable to a social group, community or culture.

### Self-image

How a person thinks about or sees themselves, including their personality, their appearance and their values.

### Experiences

What people have done, gone through or been exposed to in their life. Personal experiences help form people's values.

### Sex

Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female.

### Sexual orientation

A person's emotional and sexual attraction to other people.

### Gender expression

How a person presents their gender. This can include appearance, name, pronoun and social behaviour.

### Gender identity

A person's felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with their sex at birth.

### Personality

A combination of traits or characteristics that make up a person's unique character.



## Activity 2 – Gender stereotypes (LOs 1.4, 1.5)

In this activity, students will examine gender stereotyping and consider its impact on everyday thinking and behaviour. Students will discuss the pressures to conform to gender expectations. It is advised that you read the Teacher's note before engaging in this activity.

### Teacher's note

**Gender** refers to “the socially constructed characteristics ascribed to women or to men, such as norms, roles, attributes, and relationships between groups of women and men and girls and boys. These characteristics are learned through socialization processes <sup>1</sup>.” In other words, gender refers to the characteristics that a society associates with being a man and a woman. Individuals learn how to dress and behave as a man or woman, including the roles and jobs they should take on, from the society and culture around them.

**Stereotype:** “a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality and may cause hurt and offence <sup>2</sup>.”

**Gender stereotypes** are “preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender <sup>3</sup>.” According to the Council of Europe gender stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys, women and men, as well as their educational and professional experiences and life opportunities in general <sup>4</sup>.

**Challenging gender stereotypes** is not intended to disrespect or undermine an individual's choice to adopt traditional gender expression and roles; rather, it is intended to highlight the difficulty in making truly free and informed choices when we are exposed to a steady stream of overt and covert stereotyping messages from all elements of society.

The strength of gender stereotyping is such that many young people who transgress these gender norms, whether through their clothing, self-expression or interests, can experience verbal, physical and/or psychological retribution.

While many gender stereotypes are culturally inherited, they are also promoted and perpetuated through the media.

In recent years, there is a growing movement within the advertising industry to promote messaging that doesn't confine people to traditional roles but shows them as modern, authentic and multidimensional.

<sup>1</sup> UNFPA (2020) International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School CSE

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Learners' Dictionary

<sup>3</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1222>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-stereotypes-and-sexism> footnote

## Step 1: The Limits of Labelling

Show this video clip of a Danish television advertisement that promotes the inherent commonalities of people despite apparent differences. (Duration: 3 minutes).



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc>

Have the students divide into pairs or small groups, and ask them:

- What do you think is the purpose of the video? *(To challenge the notion of putting people in boxes and to discourage stereotyping and discrimination. The video clip also shows that you often have more in common with people than you think.)*

Inform the students that gender is another aspect of life that has strong associated stereotypes.

Ask students if they can explain what gender is and clarify the definition of gender from the Teacher's Notes above, before moving on to the next task.

## Step 2: Cinderella

Project the story *Cinderella* onto the whiteboard and allow the students a few moments to read it themselves before reading it aloud to the class in your best 'fairy tale' voice. Ask the students to pay attention to their reactions as they listen. Allow time for them to process the storyline and ask the class to notice the words that are used to describe Cinderella and the words that are used to describe Princess Charming.

Invite the class to divide into small groups or pairs to answer the questions at the end of the story. Take feedback and discuss.

Show one of the two video clips below to further explain gender stereotypes and its limiting effects. Discuss.



European Institute for Gender Equality (Duration: 1 min, 23 seconds)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrZ21nD9I-0>



AMAZE.org (Duration: 1 minute, 47 seconds)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ulh0DnFUGsk>

## Step 3: Gender stereotyping in the media

Source a range of gender stereotyped advertisements in advance of the lesson (easily available online) or ask students to bring examples. Ensuring that each group has an advertisement, ask them to critique it for gender stereotyping (a traditional and narrow message about how men and women should look and behave) and the possible impact on those who are exposed to this advertisement. Ask the students to consider the images, the colours, and the language and tone used in these advertisements.



Alternatively, project a selection of the advertisements onto the whiteboard and engage in a whole-class activity.

### Suggested discussion points

- At what age does gender stereotyping begin? *(Often from birth, with the pink and blue clothing for babies.)*
- What is the impact of receiving these messages from such a young age?
- What response might individuals get from people their own age, and from society in general, if they challenge gender stereotypes and do not look and behave according to these masculine and feminine stereotypes, as may be expected of them?
- What impact might this have on how individual girls and boys, and men and women, feel about themselves if they feel that they do not fit neatly into either the male or female box that has been created?
- Can you think of any examples of where young people might experience pressure to fit into gender stereotypes? *(Young people may feel like they need to conform and not dress or behave as they want to.)*

Ask the class to see if they can find examples of gender stereotyping in the advertisements they see around them – on bus shelters, in newspapers or magazines or on the internet. They can either describe them or, if appropriate, take screen shots to share and discuss with the class.

### Teacher's note

Point out to students that although gender stereotypes are still strong, there is more and more acceptance that men and women shouldn't be defined by narrow notions of how different genders should present themselves and the roles they should take on. It is important that individuals have opportunities to explore the possibilities and see what fits for them in terms of their gender expression and life choices.

## Cinderfella

There once was a young boy called Cinderfella who lived with his two lazy brothers. Cinderfella did all the housework, while his two lazy brothers hung about the house, trying on clothes and messaging on social media. Cinderfella was as good and obedient as he was attractive. He could be heard singing sweetly as he cooked and cleaned for all the family.

Cinderfella's brothers lost no opportunity to make his life miserable. When their friends came around, Cinderfella was forced to run around after them, applying hair gel and checking their outfits in readiness for the selfies which they posted online in the hope of finding wives.

One day, news came that the queen was having a party for her daughter, Princess Charming, at which the princess would choose a husband. Princess Charming was a handsome girl, known throughout the land for her courage, intelligence and physical strength. It was generally thought that she would be a worthy successor to her mother as ruler of the queendom. All the boys across the land went into a frenzy of preparations, ordering new clothes and taking the family jewellery out of the vaults so that they could outshine each other.

On the night of the party, Cinderfella sat crying in the kitchen. All of a sudden, a fairy godfather appeared and with a twirl of his sparkly wand, Cinderfella found himself in a fabulous party outfit, fully groomed with a crown glittering on his head. Cinderfella set off, having been warned that he must return by midnight, as bad things can happen to boys who stay out too late.

At the party, the princess only had eyes for Cinderfella and decided to dance with him all evening. As midnight struck, Cinderfella remembered his fairy godfather's words and ran home, leaving one of his shoes behind.

Princess Charming searched the land, looking for the beautiful young boy she had fallen in love with at the party. Eventually, she ended up at Cinderfella's house. The lazy brothers fought each other to try on the shoe, but it fit neither one. Just as the princess was leaving, she spotted Cinderfella and asked him to try the shoe. Shyly, Cinderfella came forward and to everyone's surprise, the shoe fitted perfectly. The princess recognised him immediately and swept him up on her horse, taking him back to the palace. She married him and they lived happily ever after.

### Questions about Cinderfella

- What words are used to describe the way Cinderfella looks and behaves? These are words traditionally used to describe women. What does it say about how women were traditionally expected to look and behave?
- What words are used to describe the way Princess Charming looks and behaves? These are words traditionally used to describe men. What does it say about how men were traditionally expected to look and behave?
- This story is a twist on a well-known fairy tale; many fairy tales are equally gender stereotypical. Do you think fairy tales have any impact on how children think and behave in real life?
- Do you think fairy tales impact on adult thinking and behaviour?



## Activity 3 – Gender identity (LOs 1.4, 1.6, 3.6)

In this activity, students learn that gender identity is a person's felt internal and individual experience of gender. It is advisable to familiarise yourself with the terms in the **Handout - Gender word list** before engaging in this activity.

### Teacher's note

Our understanding of various aspects of gender and the language associated with it, is changing all the time. Is it okay not to know all of the latest terms, but it is important to use language respectfully when talking about any aspect of a person's identity.

**Sex** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined as being male and female.

**Gender** Refers to the characteristics that a society associates with being a man or a woman. Individuals learn how to dress and behave as a man or woman, including the roles and jobs they should take on, from the society and culture around them.

**Gender Identity** is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. Most people's gender identity matches the gender associated with their sex at birth (cisgender). Some people's gender identity is different to the gender associated with their sex at birth. These people may identify as transgender or non-binary.

**Transgender** refers to people with a gender identity that is different to the gender associated with their sex at birth.

**Non-binary** refers to people whose gender identity does not fit into the two categories of boy/man or girl/woman.

When discussing gender, the terms 'Drag Queen' and 'Cross-dresser' may be mentioned by the students. Being a 'Drag Queen' or 'Cross dresser' is separate to a person's sexual orientation and gender identity.

**'Drag queen'** refers to a person who assumes a female persona for performance.

**'Cross-dresser'** refers to a person who dresses in clothing typically worn by members of a different sex.

**Guidance for Teachers on Learning Outcome 3.6** developed by the NCCA provides additional direction for teachers in how to address the topic of gender identity in the classroom.

## Teacher's note

Adolescence is a particular time of growth and exploration as young people establish their identity in many aspects of life (L.O. 1.4) including with regard to their gender identity and expression. Questioning and exploration is common. Encourage students to look for any necessary support from family and other trusted adults as they navigate this journey.

## Step 1: Gender identity

Ask students to define gender based on their learning from the previous activity.

Take feedback with reference to definition of gender in the Teacher's Note. Clarify that gender is different to sex (biology) although these words are sometimes used interchangeably.

Explain that this activity will look at 'Gender identity'. Ask students if they know and can explain what the phrase means, and supplement the response as necessary with the teacher's note.

## Step 2: Transgender experience

Show the video clip 'What Is Transgender?' from BeLonG To's YouTube channel, where transgender young people and their parents talk about their experience of being transgender and having a transgender child. (Duration: 1 minute, 13 seconds).



What Is Transgender?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSjVWizgqoQ>

### Suggested discussion points

- What is the key message that you took from this video?
- What struck you about how the people in the video explained being transgender or transgender issues?
- Are sexual orientation and gender identity linked? (*Gender identity and sexual orientation are both very important components of who we are and how we live our lives, but they are not the same thing. Sexual orientation is your romantic or sexual attraction to other people, and gender identity is your innermost belief about your gender.*)

Show the second video clip from BeLonG To's YouTube channel, 'Name and Pronoun', which talks about the importance of using people's preferred names and pronouns. (Duration: 1 minute, 22 seconds).



Name and Pronoun

<https://youtu.be/kVxdlkt8zMs>

### Suggested discussion points

- What is the key message that you took from this video?
- How might you feel if somebody consistently called you by the wrong name?
- How would you explain the difference between 'gender identity' and 'gender expression'?
- Using the correct pronoun shows respect and acceptance. In what other ways can we, within the school environment, ensure that we are respectful of everyone's gender identity.

You might choose to show a third BeLonGTo video, 'Being an ally', at this point. (Duration: 1 minute, 14 seconds).



Being an ally

[https://youtu.be/3\\_52-hUf7MM](https://youtu.be/3_52-hUf7MM)



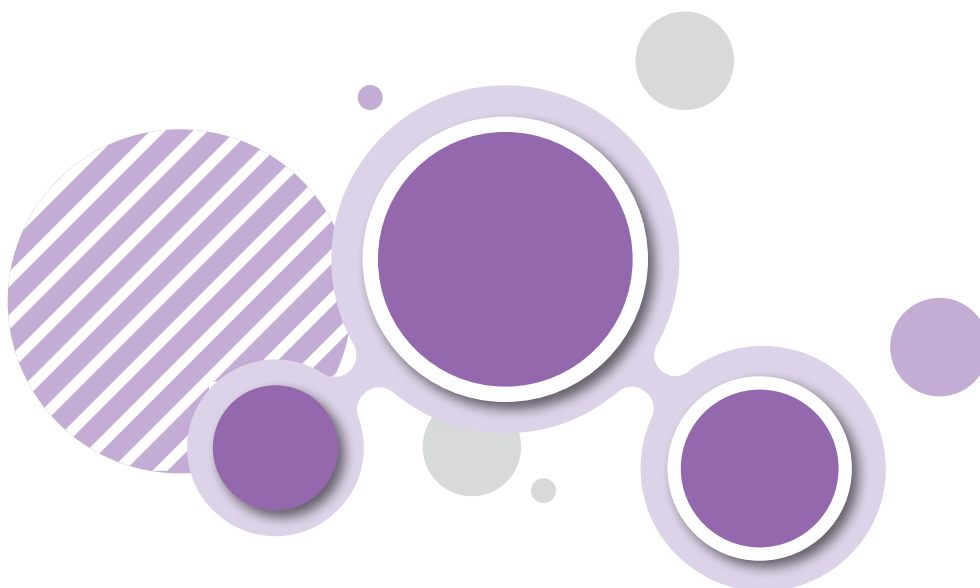
Project the **Handout – Gender word list** onto the whiteboard and read through all of the terms and their explanations with the class.

Point out that our understanding of various aspects gender and the language associated with it, is changing all the time. It is okay not to know all the latest terms, but it is important to use language respectfully when talking about any aspect of a person's identity.

### Step 3: Home activity



From what you learned in today's class describe, using your own words, what the terms gender, gender identity and gender non- binary mean to you.



## Handout - Gender word list

These are just some of the ways gender, gender identity and gender expression are described.

<b>Gender</b>	Gender refers to the characteristics that a society associates with being a man and with being a woman.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Gender identity is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. Most people's gender identity matches the gender associated with their sex at birth (ie. people with female genitalia identify as a girl/woman and people with male genitalia identify as a boy/man). Some people's gender identity is different to the gender associated with their sex at birth. These people may identify as transgender or non-binary.
<b>Gender expression</b>	How a person expresses their gender to the world, e.g. through their name, clothes, style, movements and gestures, speech and communication, roles and their general behaviour.
<b>Transgender or trans</b>	A person whose gender identity is different to the gender associated with their sex at birth.
<b>Cisgender</b>	A person whose gender identity matches the gender associated with their sex at birth.
<b>Gender non-binary</b>	A person whose gender identity does not fit into the two categories of boy/man or girl/woman.





## Activity 4 – Sexual orientation (LOs 1.4, 1.6, 3.6)

In this activity, students consider the wide range of sexual orientations. It is advised that you be aware of the terms used in the Teacher's note, and the LGB+ words and definitions, before engaging in this activity.

### Teacher's note

**Sexual orientation** describes who a person is attracted to. The phrase 'sexual orientation' is often used just to refer to non-heterosexual orientations, but it is important that students understand that everyone has a sexual orientation and that this is an important part of their sexuality and its expression.

- Sexual orientation describes who we are attracted to – how we feel about *other people*.
- Gender identity describes a person's internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not match the gender associated with their sex at birth.

**Coming out** is a process of: a) understanding and accepting one's own sexual orientation and b) developing the confidence to tell another person or other people about it.

Research has found that the most common age at which young people realise their sexual orientation is 12, but that most will not disclose this at the time. The study also found that the period in between realising one's sexual orientation and coming out was often the most difficult for young people: they were afraid of being rejected by family and friends and they were anxious about experiencing isolation and/or harassment in school.

### Step 1: Brainstorm

Have the students divide into pairs, and ask them to discuss what is meant by the term 'sexual orientation'.

Document their feedback and emphasise that everyone has a sexual orientation. Sexual orientation refers to who we are attracted to romantically and/or sexually, and may want to be in a relationship with. This is one of the many elements of sexuality. (Remind the class of the sexuality wheel from activity 1).

Show this short video clip from AMAZE.org which explains sexual orientation. (Duration: 2 minutes 2 seconds ).



What is Sexual Orientation? LGBTQ+  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrUYs2FnrgA>

## Step 2: Sexual orientation words and explanations



Invite the class to divide into small groups or pairs and hand out the **Worksheet - Sexual orientation words and definitions**. Ask the students to match up each word with its closest correct definition.

Bring the whole class back together to go through each word. Remind students that these are words and meaning used commonly but it is up to individuals to describe their own sexual orientation.

### Teacher's note

The following are the answers for the **Worksheet – Sexual orientation words and definitions**.

**Asexual:** A person who rarely or never feels sexual desire. They may feel romantic attractions.

**Bisexual:** A person who is sexually/and or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.

**Homophobia:** Negative attitudes and feelings towards people who are, or who are thought to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or any other sexual orientation other than heterosexual.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.

**Gay:** A man who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other men. Some women use 'gay' instead of 'lesbian' to describe their sexual orientation.

**Heterosexual:** Someone who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the opposite sex.

**Pansexual:** A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of all gender identities.

**LGB+:** A collective name for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, and people of other sexual orientations apart from heterosexual.

**Coming out:** Understanding and accepting your sexual orientation and telling others about it.

**Heteronormativity:** The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is "the norm".



## Worksheet – Sexual orientation words and explanations

The terms below are some of the words used about people's sexual orientation. Can you match these words to their closest explanations in the table below? These are just an example of the different terms people use and their common meaning. It is always up to an individual as to how they describe their sexual orientation.

**Bisexual, gay, asexual, heterosexual, lesbian, pansexual, coming out, LGB+, homophobia heteronormativity.**

	A person who rarely or never feels sexual desire. They may feel romantic attractions.
	A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.
	Negative attitudes and feelings towards people who are, or who are thought to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or another sexual orientation other than heterosexual.
	A woman who sexually and/or romantically is attracted to other women.
	A man who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other men. Some women use 'gay' instead of 'lesbian' to describe their sexual orientation.
	Someone who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the opposite sex
	A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of all gender identities
	A collective name for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, and people of other sexual orientations, apart from heterosexual.
	Understanding and accepting your sexual orientation and telling others about it.
	The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is "the norm".



### Suggested discussion points

- Are there any terms on the list that you had not heard of before?
- What does this activity show you about sexual orientation?
- What do you think the impact is on individuals, and on society, of the increasing variation in the ways people describe their sexual orientation.

Ask the class what they understand about the term 'coming out'.

Show this video clip that describes a young man's coming out experience. (Duration: 5 minutes 8 seconds).



Coming out to others- Riyadh

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWfdQ-5NU4g>

### Suggested discussion points

- Why is it necessary for people to come out as LGB+ when they do not have to come out as heterosexual? (*e.g. because many people assume you're heterosexual until you say otherwise.*)
- What might be the benefits to a young person of coming out? (*To be true to themselves and to fully be who they are.*)
- What are some of the reasons why a young person might delay coming out, or not come out at all?
- What could we do in our class and in our school to make this a safe place for students to be who they are without fear of discrimination.

## Step 3: Reflection

Considering what I learned in today's lesson:

- What really made me think was...



## Activity 5 – What makes a family (LOs 3.1, 3.2)

In this activity, students reflect on the diversity of families within the community, the roles and responsibilities of adults and children within a family, and appropriate caregiving and receiving within a family.

### Teacher's note

This activity prepares students for later discussions about relationships, as the attitudes, values and beliefs they have about relationships are significantly influenced by their family.

Many students come from non-traditional families. For example, families can be headed by married or cohabiting parents, by adults parenting alone for a variety of reasons, by same-sex parents, by transgender parents (parents whose gender identity is different than that assigned at birth based on their biological sex), or by step-parents. Families can be adoptive, foster, extended (involving relations outside of the parents and children), or blended (a couple with a mix of children, possibly from both their current relationship and previous relationships). Families can have children of varying numbers and ages, or no children. All family structures should be acknowledged and affirmed.

### Step 1: What is a Family?

Divide the students into pairs or small groups, and ask them:

- What does the word 'family' mean to you?
- How many family structures can you think of?

Take the students' feedback and document it. If responses are limited, see the second paragraph of the Teacher's note.

Referencing the words that the students have come up with to describe a family, introduce the following definition: At best, a family is a group of people who support each other, take care of each other, love each other and often, but do not always, live together.

## Step 2: Being in a family



Distribute the **Worksheet – Being in a family** and, using the Teacher’s note, briefly introduce Maslow’s theory on the hierarchy of human needs.

Invite the students to complete the worksheet in pairs. Ask half the class to focus on the children’s contributions to family life and the other half to focus on the parents’/ carers’ contributions to family life.

Take feedback from each pair, asking them to highlight if they have listed anything different than the previous pair.

### Teacher’s note

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a model of human needs proposed by psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943, which comprises biological and physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. Maslow suggested that the drive to meet these needs provided the motivation for human behaviour, and that the more basic needs have to be met before people can be motivated to pursue higher-level needs.

### Suggested discussion points

- What do you think are the most important contributions that parents/carers can make? *(love and affection, food, a home, rules and boundaries, support and encouragement, opportunities to develop skills and become independent.)*
- What do you think are the most important contributions that children can make? *(love and affection, helping around the home, respecting the home and its contents, respecting the rules and boundaries, taking opportunities to develop skills and become independent.)*
- What did you learn about families from this activity? *(While there are many different family structures, families are alike in that they are a group of people who should love and support each other.)*
- In what cases might children or teenagers have more responsibilities than would normally be expected? *(Their parents may be sick, absent, or have other significant commitments related to work or caring for other family members. In these families, the young people may have additional responsibilities, such as caring for siblings, cooking and looking after themselves. While extra responsibility may add stress and pressure to a young person’s life, it can also help develop resilience and independence. When the level of responsibility is inappropriate for the age of the young person and it is negatively affecting their health or schooling, it may be necessary for the school to raise a child protection concern with Tusla.)*



## Worksheet – Being in a family

Give two examples in each level of how parents or children can contribute to meeting each other's needs and to the needs of the family as a whole.

	Parents'/carers' contributions	Children's contributions
<b>Physical needs</b> Food, water, rest, health		
<b>Security needs</b> A home, stability		
<b>Social needs</b> To be loved, belonging, inclusion		
<b>Emotional needs</b> Self-esteem and recognition		
<b>Creative needs</b> Development of interests and talents		

## Teacher's note

The family is a unit that everyone should contribute to. However, in some instances, children may have inappropriate burdens placed on them. If you become aware of such a situation, this would be a matter for the child protection system within the school, which can help the young people access appropriate supports.

This video clip from AMAZE.org, which highlights different family structures, may be used to consolidate the learning from this activity. (Duration: 2 minutes, 52 seconds).



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpCyiyNqzIE>

## Step 3: Home activity



Ask each student to draw a picture of their family, showing one contribution that this student makes to the entire family unit.

Encourage the students to find opportunities to notice and thank family members for their contributions and to record these incidents in their journals.



## Activity 6 – Healthy connected relationships (LO 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

In this activity, students are introduced to the analogy of a joint bank account in order to explore how ongoing deposits into a 'relationship account' can build capital against which the necessary withdrawals can be made. If there is enough jointly contributed capital in the account, then the odd individual withdrawal will not really have an impact. However, if one person in the relationship continually makes most of the deposits and the other makes most of the withdrawals, then the relationship is not balanced, has less chance of being sustainable, and is potentially unhealthy.

### Step 1: Healthy relationships

Show this short video clip from AMAZE.org which highlights the characteristics of a healthy relationship. Discuss the messages within it. (Duration: 2 minutes, 15 seconds).



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gn7ZQ2x0cOE>

### Step 2: The friendship of Alex and Sam



Project the story **The Friendship of Alex and Sam** on the whiteboard and read aloud, asking the students to indicate where within the story a withdrawal or a deposit is being made, and to give a reason for each answer.

### Teacher's note

For this activity to have more of an impact, try to make it visual. Have a supply of two different colour items e.g. ping pong balls, pegs etc . Assigning one of the colours to each character, half fill a jar with a roughly equal amount of the items to represent Alex and Sam's relationship account to date. As the story progresses items can be added or taken out of the jar depending on the class decision.

## Worksheet – The friendship of Alex and Sam

Alex and Sam have been friends since primary school. They often chat and laugh about things that happened when they were small. Among the many things that make the friendship work, Alex appreciates how the more socially confident Sam has always included Alex with other friends, and Sam appreciates how they can tell each other things they wouldn't tell anyone else.

Although Alex and Sam have common interests, they both also have interests that are independent of each other. Alex usually spends lunchtimes competing with the Chess Club, while Sam volunteers in the school shop a few times a week.

They are both passionate basketball players. A few weeks ago, Alex got a place on the school team, whereas Sam did not. Alex tried to talk to Sam about it, but Sam ignored the attempts, saying it wasn't a big deal. After that, Sam didn't seem to be around much, and Alex, suspecting that Sam was jealous, decided that they wouldn't be the one to make the first contact.

Last night, Sam was at home feeling miserable. Things had been tough at home lately, with mum losing her job. Sam knew that the reaction to the basketball team being announced was petty. Sam sent Alex a text, "sorry for being a plank" and was delighted when a text zoomed back, "me too, going to the gym?".





## The friendship of Alex and Sam

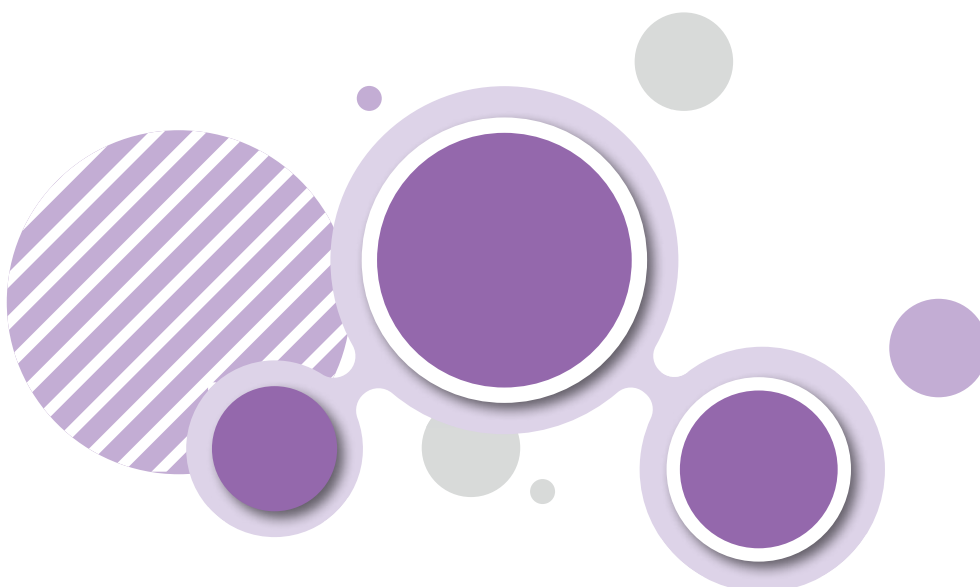
### Answer sheet for teacher reference

Alex and Sam have been friends since primary school. They often chat and laugh about things that happened when they were small (**deposit – positive shared history**). Among the many things that make the friendship work, Alex appreciates how the more socially confident Sam has always included Alex with other friends, and Sam appreciates how they can tell each other things they wouldn't tell anyone else (**deposit – they each have qualities that the other values in the friendship**).

Although Alex and Sam have common interests, they both also have interests that are independent from each other. Alex usually spends lunchtimes competing with the Chess Club, while Sam volunteers in the school shop a few times a week (**deposit – different interests/ healthy separateness**).

They are both passionate basketball players (**deposit – shared interests**). A few weeks ago, Alex got a place on the school team, whereas Sam did not. Alex tried to talk to Sam about it (**deposit – trying to engage on a difficult issue**), but Sam ignored the attempts, saying it wasn't a big deal (**withdrawal – refused to engage**). After that, Sam didn't seem to be around much, and Alex, suspecting that Sam was jealous, decided that they wouldn't be the one to make the first contact (**withdrawal – acting on what they imagined Sam was doing**).

Last night, Sam was at home feeling miserable. Things had been tough at home lately, with mum losing her job. Sam knew that the reaction to the basketball team being announced was petty (**deposit – acknowledgement of their own hurt, rather than blaming Alex**). Sam sent Alex a text, "sorry for being a plank" (**deposit – connection**) and was delighted when a text zoomed back, "me too, going to the gym?" (**deposit – positive reciprocal response**).



### Suggested discussion points

- What could the friends have done differently in order to try to prevent the situation from worsening? *(Communication is the cornerstone of all healthy relationships. To prevent this situation from occurring in the first place, Sam could have confided in a friend about how they were feeling. Alex, as a good friend, might have been there to support Sam.)*
- What might help an unhealthy relationship to improve? *(Communication between two people is key to finding out what is going wrong in a relationship. It is the first step to improving an unhealthy relationship.)*
- It is quite normal for relationships to be unbalanced at different times. Why might this be? *(Perhaps one person in the relationship is going through something that requires extra support. This might last hours, days or weeks, but when a relationship is unbalanced for a long period of time, this can take its toll on the relationship. It is not good for either person in a relationship if it's always the one person giving and the other receiving.)*
- Is it ever healthy to end a relationship? *(There are several circumstances where it may be better to end a relationship. For example, if your feelings for the other person have changed, if the relationship no longer makes you feel good about yourself, if you no longer feel good about the other person, if you cannot trust the other person or they do not trust you, or if you feel controlled or unsafe, then it may be best to end the relationship.)*
- What qualities and characteristics displayed here make for a strong, healthy relationship?
- What did you learn from this activity?

### Step 3: Home activity



Consider characters from a television show you are watching, or a book you are reading, where a friendship or a romantic relationship appears to be unbalanced. Reflect on what makes it unbalanced. What advice would you give these characters?



## Activity 7 – Maintaining healthy relationships (LOs: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

In this activity, students consider the various difficult behaviours that may arise within relationships (either friendships or romantic relationships). It introduces the concept of unequal power within a relationship and the concept of consent. The class will also have the opportunity to identify the behaviours and values that are important in maintaining healthy relationships and those behaviours that make relationships unequal and unhealthy.

### Step 1: Brainstorm

Divide the students into pairs or small groups, and ask the students:

- What are some of the negative behaviours within relationships?

Document their feedback. Negative behaviours within relationships may include being unkind, giving someone the silent treatment, someone not communicating what is wrong with them, sneering, and being jealous.

### Step 2: Case Studies



Divide the class into small groups and allocate each group a case study from **Worksheet 1 – ‘Maintaining healthy relationships’ case studies**. Invite the groups to discuss their case studies and respond to the questions.

Take feedback from each group, encouraging discussion around the most appropriate ways to respond to each case study.



While the students are still in their groups, distribute the **Worksheet 2 - ‘Missing values’** and ask the students to consider the values that they think are missing from the case study they have. When taking feedback from each group, you may wish to invite other members of the class to contribute, as this can lead to a richer discussion.

## Worksheet 1 – Maintaining healthy relationships case study cards (page 1)



Daniel and Raj	Lee and Sam
<p>Daniel and Raj have been friends since they started secondary school last September. They are both jokers and get on really well. However, last night Daniel played a mean joke on Raj. He recorded the incident and uploaded the recording on social media. Everyone in the school has seen it and Raj is completely mortified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>	<p>Lee and Sam started secondary school together. They are in all the same classes and have become the best of friends. Lee has a larger group of friends than Sam and this group has recently started vaping around the back of the school in the mornings. Lee keeps on and on at Sam to join them. Sam really doesn't want to vape, but is afraid of losing Lee's friendship.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>
Zara and Jules	Harry and Mo
<p>Zara and Jules have been best friends since primary school. They always have something to talk about and they have the same sense of humour. They have fallen out because Zara saw a picture on social media of Jules kissing someone she fancies. Zara has unfriended Jules and doesn't want to talk to Jules again.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>	<p>Harry and Mo have been friends a long time. Almost every morning when they get on the bus, Harry copies Mo's homework. Mo has made a few protests, but Harry just laughs at him. This situation is really annoying Mo, but as it has been going on for so long, he doesn't know how to stop it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>



## Worksheet 1 – Maintaining healthy relationships case study cards (page 2)



Jamie and Kai	Jordan and Chris
<p>The school tour is coming up and everyone has paid their money. Jamie tells Kai one morning, when they're on their own, that he hasn't paid yet. He'd love to go, but he has no way of getting the money to pay for it. He jokes that Kai could easily steal the money from the shop where he works on weekends: "Sure €50 is nothing to them!" Jamie is one of Kai's best friends and Kai would love for him to go on the school tour. He feels under pressure to steal the money in order to help Jamie pay for the tour.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>	<p>Jordan and Chris have started going out with each other. They have been to the cinema a few times and spend most lunchtimes at school together. Chris is buzzing, having fancied Jordan since the start of first year!</p> <p>Chris's basketball team has been training during lunchtime over the last week, as they are competing this coming weekend. Jordan has become distant, not replying to text messages, and not being very happy when they are together; saying that Chris was putting basketball over their relationship.</p> <p>Chris is totally shocked and has skipped training in the days leading up to the game, to be with Jordan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the problem?</li> <li>2. Why might they be behaving this way?</li> <li>3. What needs to happen in order to make this situation better?</li> <li>4. Who could they seek help or advice from?</li> </ol>

## Worksheet 2 – Missing values

Consider each case study listed on the left and then link each one to the particular values that you think are missing in the relationship.



**Daniel and Raj**

**Lee and Sam**

**Zara and Jules**

**Jamie and Kai**

**Jordan and Chris**

**Harry and Mo**

**Kindness**

**Respect**

**Trust**

**Honesty**

**Patience**

**Compromise**

**Understanding**

**Reliability**

**Acceptance**

**Forgiveness**

**Thoughtfulness**

**Empathy**

## Teacher's note

The students may interpret the case studies presented in different ways. The function of these case studies is to allow the class to discuss difficulties and how they might be addressed. When taking feedback on these case studies – and in order to encourage the class to process the complex nature of different relationships – you may wish to ask whether the advice students have given for their case study would be any different if the couple within the case study were in a romantic relationship, were not in a romantic relationship, or were a same-sex couple.

In many cases, the characteristics of a healthy friendship are the same as those for a healthy romantic relationship, and this is regardless of the gender and sexual orientation of the couple in question. If the students argue for a lower standard of acceptable behaviour in a romantic relationship than in a friendship, this should be challenged, as it indicates an acceptance of an unequal power balance in romantic relationships.

It is important that students are given time to discuss the 'Who else might help?' question, and that all possibilities are considered: parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, friends, other relatives, and support services.

## Suggested discussion points

- Why do you think communication is an important value in a relationship?
  - Repeat the question above, replacing 'communication' with another value (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, patience, kindness, understanding, reliability, acceptance, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, empathy).
- Do you think it is easy to recognise if a relationship is an unhealthy one?
- Now that you have had an opportunity to reflect on what values, qualities and behaviours contribute to making a relationship healthy, can you choose one quality or behaviour that you would like to develop more in yourself in order to improve your relationships with other people (e.g. being a good listener)?

## Step 3: Home activity



Ask the class to practise, over the following week, the quality or behaviour they would like to develop more in themselves to improve their relationships, and then note their progress in their journals.

## Activity 8 – Changes in adolescence (LO 1.1)

In this activity, students review the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during adolescence, and are reminded that everyone is different and develops at their own pace.

### Teacher's note

If students in the class have not covered basic pubertal changes, including menstruation and how to manage it, then time should be spent addressing this using the Busy Bodies video and booklet.

Students may have already covered changes in puberty in primary school. Puberty is just one element of the changes that take place in adolescence.

You may wish to gauge their existing knowledge prior to doing this activity.

### Teacher's note

Adolescence can be a time of excitement and adventure, as well as a time of great change. During this activity, you can reassure the students that:

- There is a wide range of normal pubertal development and that people develop at their own pace.
- People's final height and body shape are largely dictated by genetics. However, eating well and exercising appropriately will help promote healthy physical and mental development.
- They can talk to their parents and other trusted adults about these changes.

## Step 1: Brainstorm

Ask the class what is meant by the word 'adolescence'. After a few moments of discussion, ask them what is meant by 'puberty'. Discuss any overlap from the feedback given for both words and then read the definitions below to the class:

**Adolescence** is the period of development between the start of puberty and the beginning of young adulthood.

**Puberty** is the name given to a stage of *physical development* where a child's body gradually becomes that of an adult.



## Step 2: Changes during adolescence

In this activity, students are asked if they can remember the likely changes that happen to young people during adolescence. Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group a large blank page. Ask them to draw four squares on the page and give each square the headings shown below.

Changes in ...	
Male bodies	Female bodies
Thinking and feeling	Relationships

Give the students ample time to write down any of the changes they can think of that fit under each heading.

Ask each group to give feedback on one particular heading. Once they have finished, ask the other groups if they have anything different on their pages to share with the class. There are many terms – such as ejaculation, menstruation etc. – that may need further explanation. For youth-friendly definitions of these terms, see the Busy Bodies booklet which can be downloaded from <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/for-parents/busy-bodies-english-language.pdf>



Show the **Worksheet – Changes in adolescence and puberty checklist** on the white board (or alternatively, give a worksheet to each student). Allow them a few minutes to read through the list and compare it against what they had written in their groups.

### Suggested discussion points

- Was this a difficult task to do? Were some of the answers more obvious than others? (The physical changes are usually more obvious than thoughts and feelings.)
- What do you think the hardest part of going through puberty might be? (e.g. Young people going through puberty at a different rate than their friends.)
- Select a few statements from the checklist at random and encourage the students to discuss them.
- Ask the students to list three places or people that they could ask questions of or raise concerns with about something that's happening to them during puberty and adolescence. Document their feedback on the whiteboard. Encourage them to also think about websites and include any school services that they can access.

## Step 3: Home activity



Ask the students to document the following in their journals:

- One good thing for me about being an adolescent
- One difficult thing for me about being an adolescent
- Three places/people I could go to for help if I have a question or problem.

## Worksheet – Changes in adolescence checklist

The list below contains *some* of the physical, social and emotional changes that young people experience during adolescence.

Not everyone experiences adolescence in the same way, so not all young people will relate to all of the changes listed.

### Physical changes

#### Common to all

- Growth spurts (getting taller)
- Hair grows on legs, under arms and around the genitals
- Hair and skin may get oilier (may get spots/acne)
- Sweat glands develop and sweat starts to smell
- May feel hungrier



#### Female bodies

- Get periods (start menstruation)
- Produce a whitish vaginal discharge during the menstrual cycle
- Begin to ovulate (eggs released from ovaries)
- Hips widen
- Breasts develop

#### Male bodies

- Voice deepens
- Get facial hair
- Shoulders widen
- Get erections for no obvious reason
- Start making sperm
- Have wet dreams (ejaculate during sleep)

### Thinking and feeling changes

- May have sexual thoughts and feelings
- May feel self-conscious about looks
- May be more interested in masturbating
- May feel things intensely (experience mood swings)
- May want to try out new things
- May have more arguments with parents
- May worry that other people are talking about them
- May want more independence from parents
- May be more interested in social issues (e.g. sexism, racism, homelessness, etc.)
- May be a bit clumsy
- May think more about who they are in the world
- May be a bit more disorganised and forgetful
- May be able to argue opinions more clearly
- May be able to work out more problems for themselves



### Relationship and social changes

- Most adolescents want more independence from their family than they had as children
- Friendships are usually more important than previously
- May spend less time with parents and family
- May change friendship groups based on new interests
- May be with friends more, and organise their own social life rather than parents being involved
- May start a romantic relationship
- May try new ways of dressing, new pastimes, etc.





## Activity 9 – Human reproduction – The journey of the egg and sperm (LO 3.5)

The purpose of this activity is for students to fully understand how the female and male reproductive systems work. Students will learn the correct names of the reproductive and sexual organs, along with the description and role of the different parts, and they will develop an understanding of how conception takes place.

### Teacher's note

This topic may have been addressed in primary school. You may wish to gauge student's existing knowledge prior to doing this activity.

This activity may take two class periods depending on the length of classes, the students' previous knowledge, and the students' pace of learning.

It is important to preview all video material in full in order to ensure that you are familiar with the content and that the content meets the needs of students and is in line with your school's RSE policy.

It is advised that teachers pay particular attention to the female external genitalia, as there is often a lot of confusion and misinformation around the correct labelling of these parts.

## Step 1: The reproductive system



Divide the students into groups of at least three or four.

Give half of the class the **Worksheet 1 – Female reproductive system** and the other half of the class the **Worksheet 2 – Male reproductive system**.

Allow the students enough time to complete their worksheets, and then ask each group with **worksheet 1 – Female reproductive system** to swap worksheets with a group that has **worksheet 2 – Male reproductive system**.

Ask the groups to check the answers documented and, using a different coloured pen, make any changes they think are necessary.

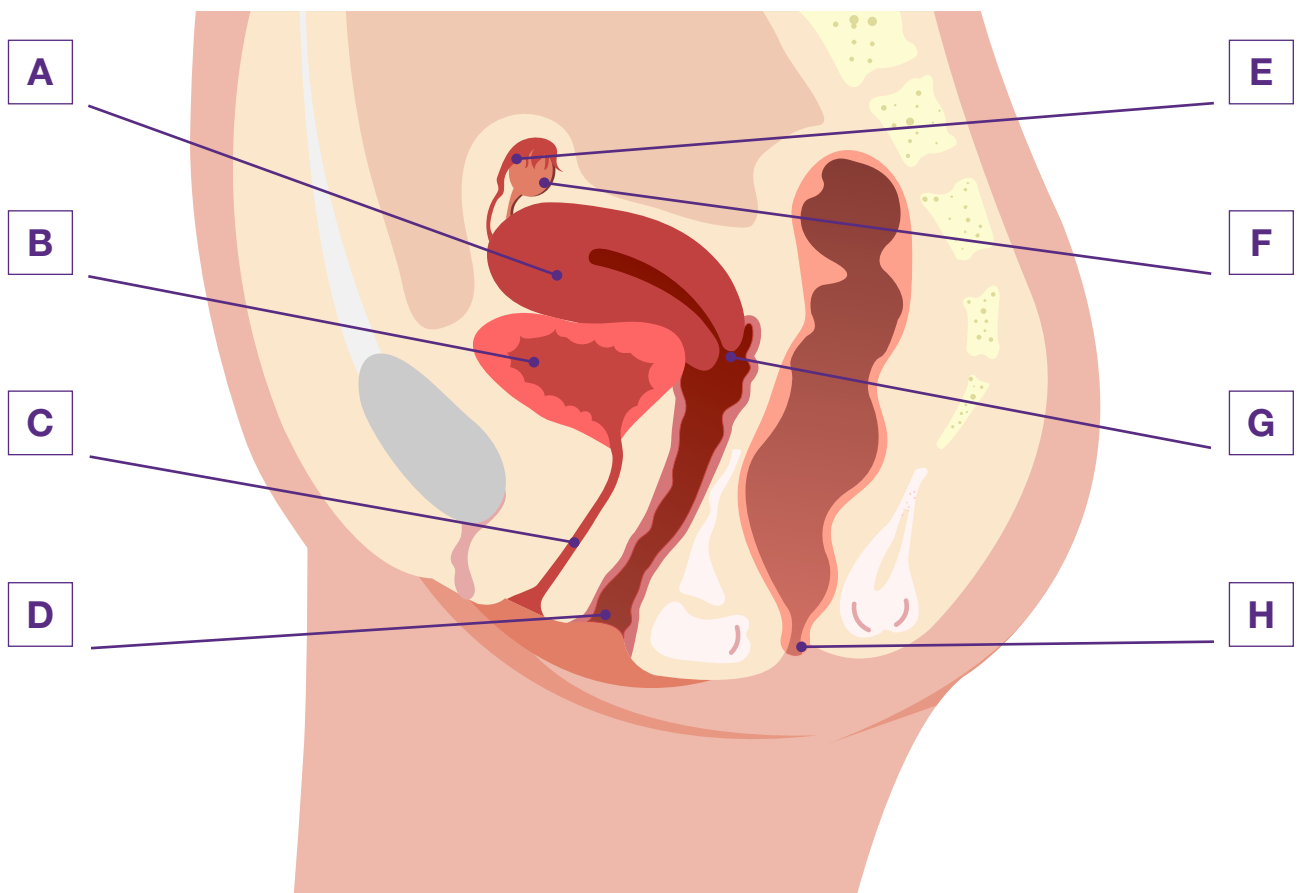


Allow each group to give feedback on some of the answers. Hand out (or project on the whiteboard) the **Handout 1 – Female reproductive system** and **Handout 2 – Male reproductive system** and go through the information briefly, using the Teacher's note.

## Worksheet 1 – Female reproductive system

Label the diagram below using the words provided.

**Cervix, Urethra, Vagina, Fallopian Tubes, Ovary, Anus, Bladder, Uterus.**



A.

E.

B.

F.

C.

G.

D.

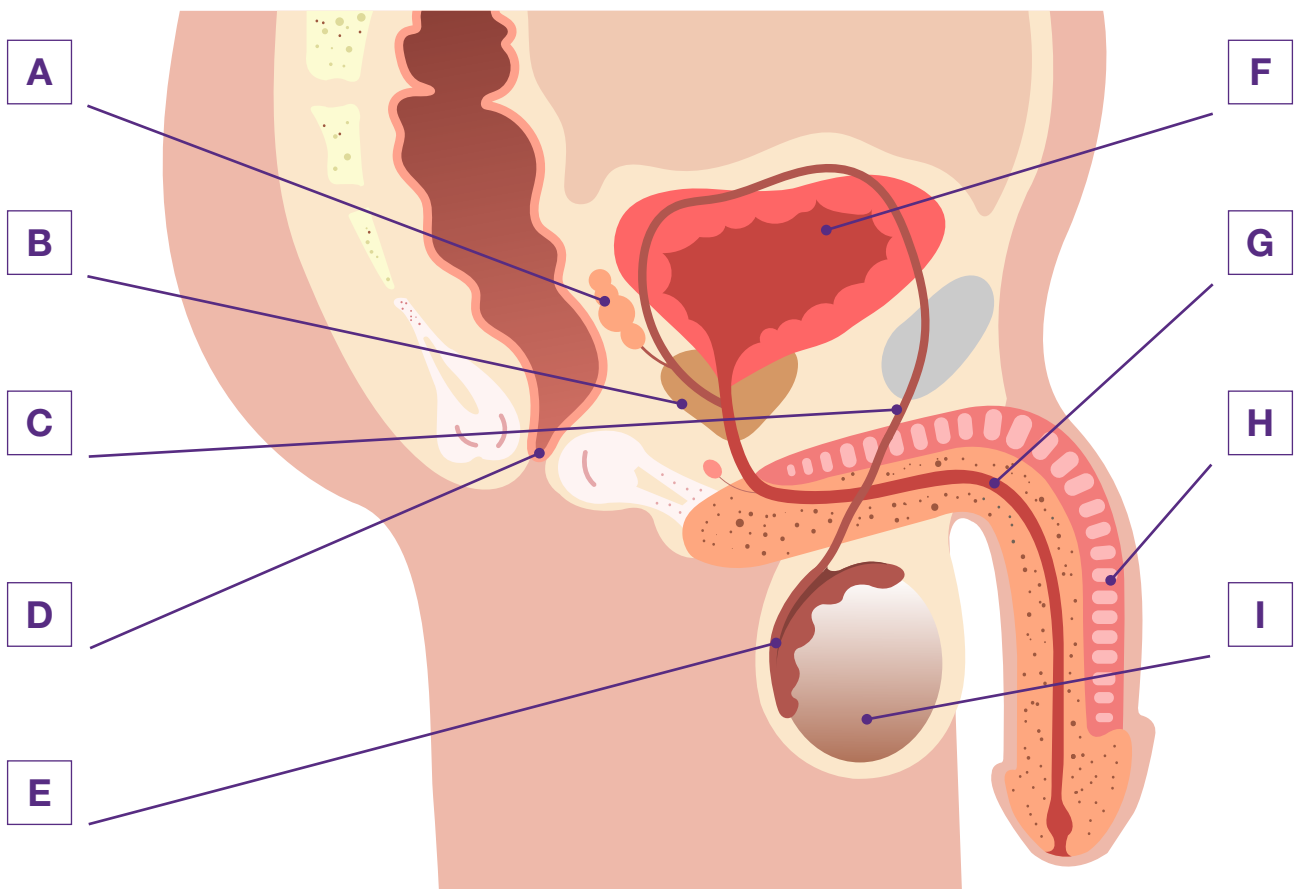
H.



## Worksheet 2 – Male reproductive system

Label the diagram below using the words provided.

**Urethra, Penis, Testicles, Bladder, Prostate gland, Seminal vesicle, Epididymis, Vas deferens, Anus.**



A.

F.

B.

G.

C.

H.

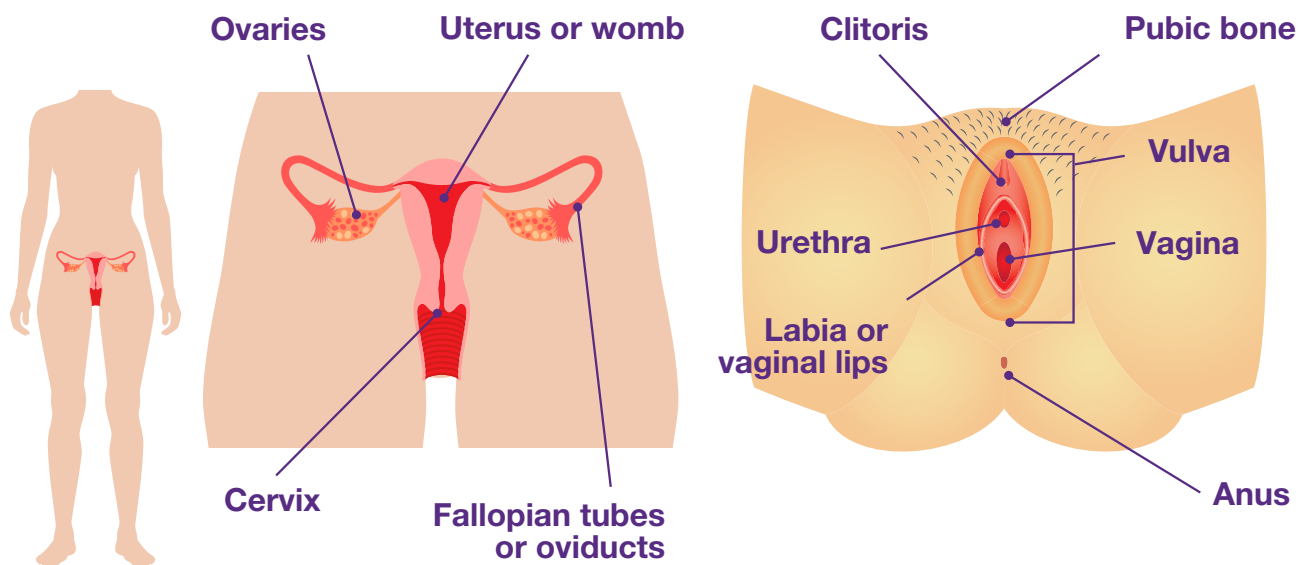
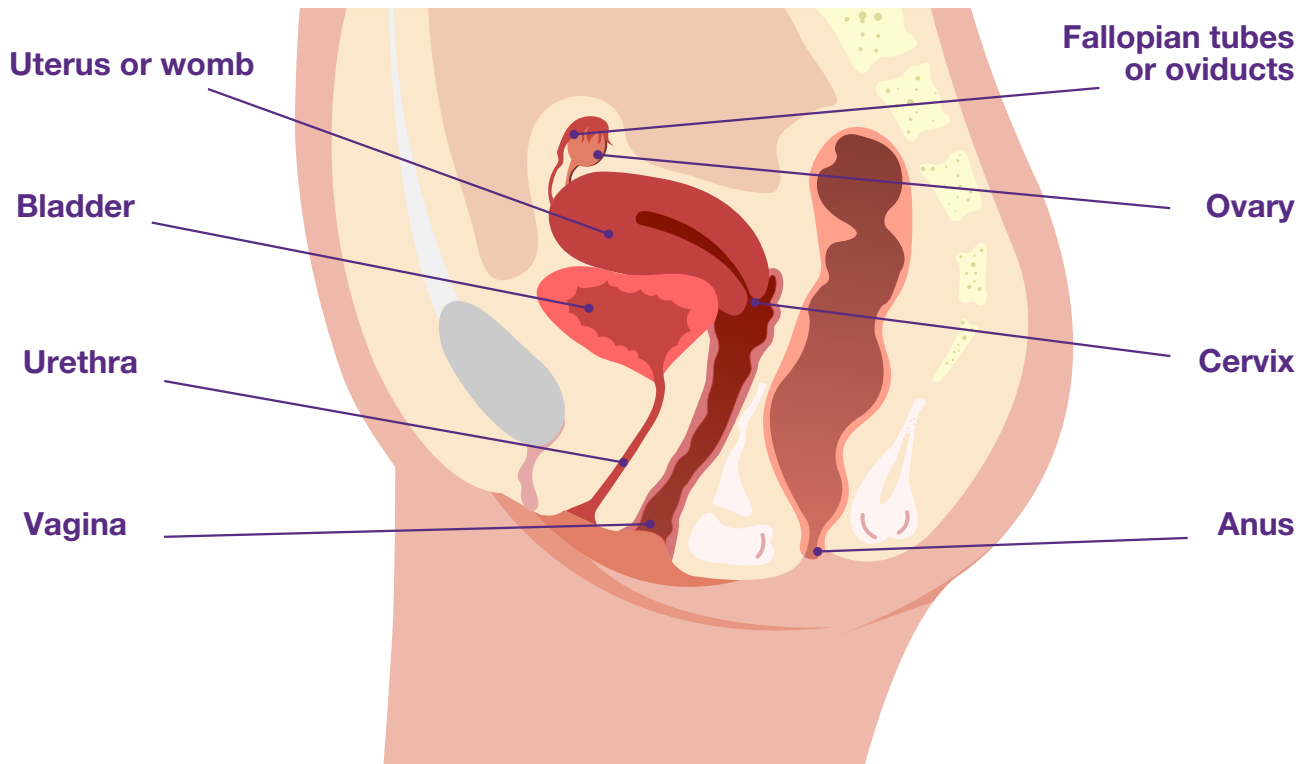
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## Handout 1 – Female reproductive system

Below are images of the female reproductive system.

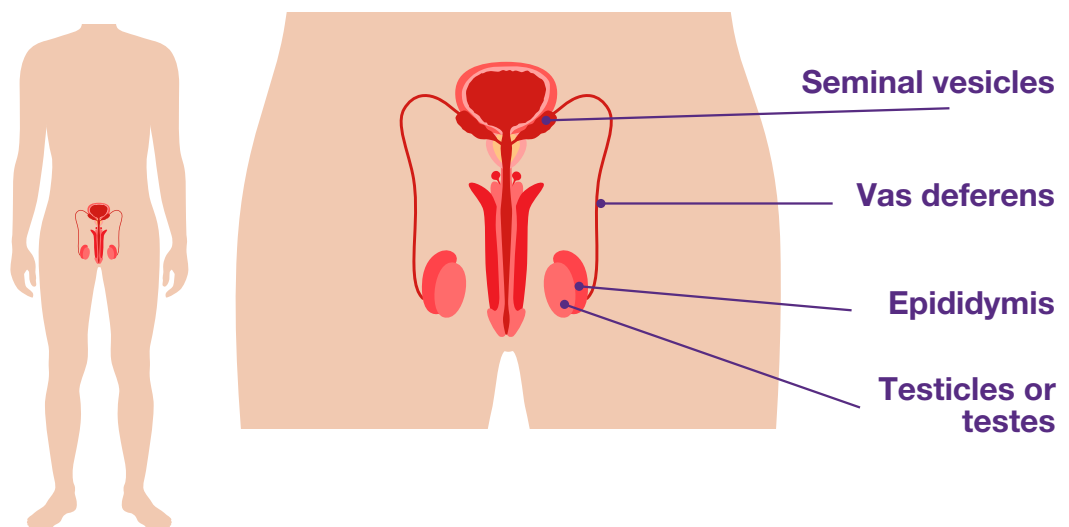
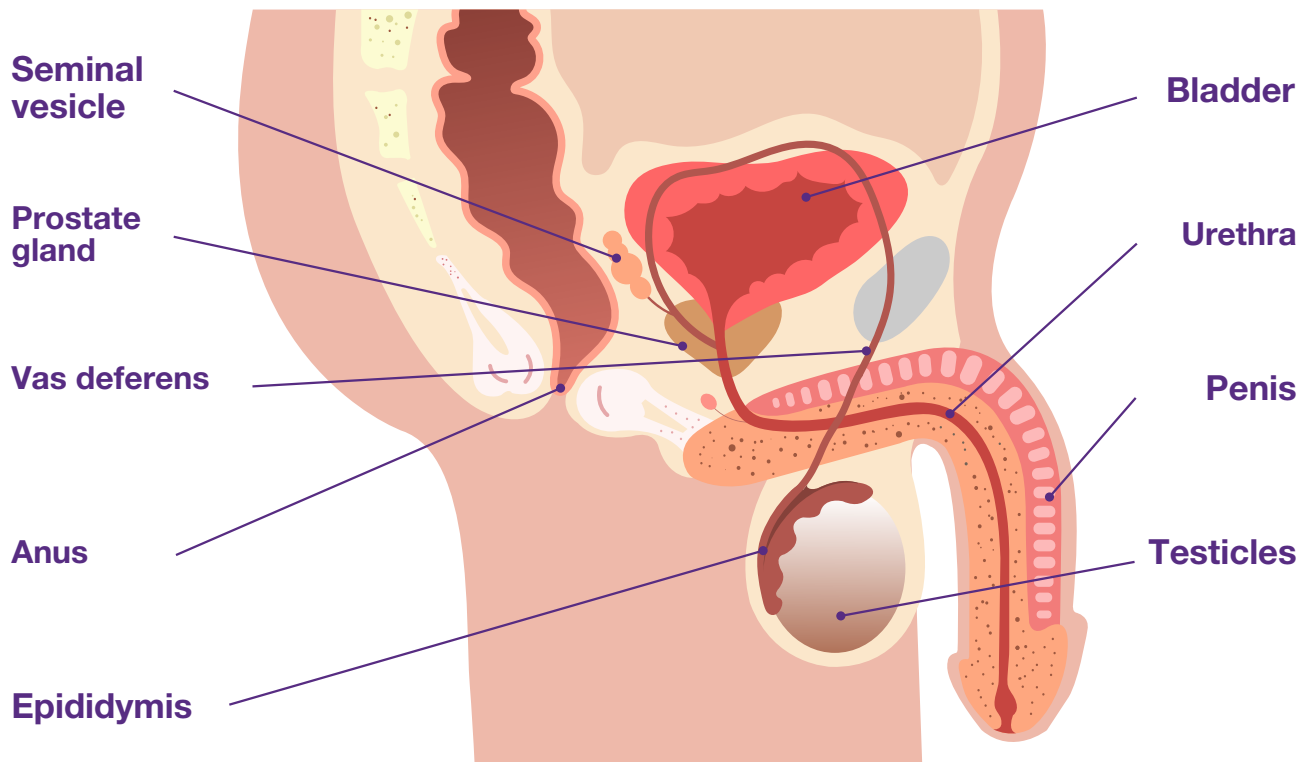


Female bodies have these parts but each may look different.  
No matter how you look, it is normal.



## Handout 2 – Male reproductive system

Below are images of the male reproductive system.



Male bodies have these parts but each may look different.  
No matter how you look, it is normal.

## Teacher's note – Male and female reproductive and sexual organs explained

### Female

Vulva	The overall word for the external female genitalia. The inner and outer <b>Labia</b> are the folds of skin within the labia that protect the opening to the vagina.
Clitoris	An organ in the female genitalia that can be a source of sexual pleasure. The tip is visible within the vulva and the rest of the organ is internal.
Vagina	A muscular tube that connects the outside of the body to the uterus (womb). Menstrual blood flows out through the vagina, and most babies are born through the vagina.
Uterus	A muscular organ that is normally the size of a pear, but it can expand to hold a developing foetus. The lining of the uterus is called the endometrium.
Fallopian tubes (x 2)	Tubes that connect the uterus to the ovaries. This is where a sperm might meet and fertilise an egg as the egg travels from the ovaries to the uterus.
Ovaries (x 2)	There are two ovaries, one on each side of the uterus. They contain eggs (ova). After puberty, one egg is released during each menstrual cycle. This is called ovulation. If the egg meets with a sperm, a pregnancy could occur. The ovaries also produce the sex hormones oestrogen and progesterone.
Cervix	This is the narrow passage or 'neck' of the uterus where the uterus meets the vagina.
Urethra	This is the tube through which urine leaves the body.
Anus	This is the tube through which faeces (poo) leaves the body.
Bladder	This is the organ in which urine is made and stored.

### Male

Penis	This is made up of the root (nearest the body), the shaft (main part) and the glans (head) which is covered by the foreskin. The foreskin can be gently pulled back to allow the glans to be cleaned. Some people have their foreskin removed for medical or religious reasons. There is an opening at the tip of the penis through which urine and semen can leave the body (but not at the same time). The penis contains a number of sensitive nerve endings and is made up of spongy tissue which fills up with blood during sexual arousal/excitement. This is called an erection.
Testicles/ testes (x2)	Two oval-shaped glands that make the hormone testosterone, as well as sperm. The scrotum is a sac (bag of loose skin) that hangs at the base of the penis and holds the testicles. One of its jobs is to control the temperature of the testicles, so it can contract or relax to move the testicles nearer to or farther away from the body.

Epididymis	The narrow tube at the back of each testicle which links to the vas deferens (a tube that transports semen to the urethra).
Vas deferens	The tube that links with the epididymis and transports semen to the urethra.
Seminal vesicles	Two small sacs near the base of the bladder that produce seminal fluid, which nourishes and transports sperm.
Prostate gland	A gland that surrounds a part of the urethra and produces some of the fluid that makes up the semen that is ejaculated from the erect penis. Semen contains sperm.
Urethra	This is the tube in the penis through which urine and semen leave the body (but not at the same time).
Anus	This is the tube through which faeces (poo) leaves the body.
Bladder	This is the organ in which urine is made and stored.

## Step 2: The journey of the egg and sperm

Tell the class that you are now going to explore how an egg and sperm develop and move through the body.



Give each small group the double-sided handout, **Worksheet 3 – Journey of the egg** and **Worksheet 4 – Journey of the sperm**, and tell them to number the order in which the journeys of the egg and sperm happen, based on their knowledge from the previous exercise and the information given to them within the worksheet.

Allow one group to provide feedback on the journey of the sperm and another group to provide feedback on the journey of the egg. Correct any misinformation the students might have.

### Teacher's note

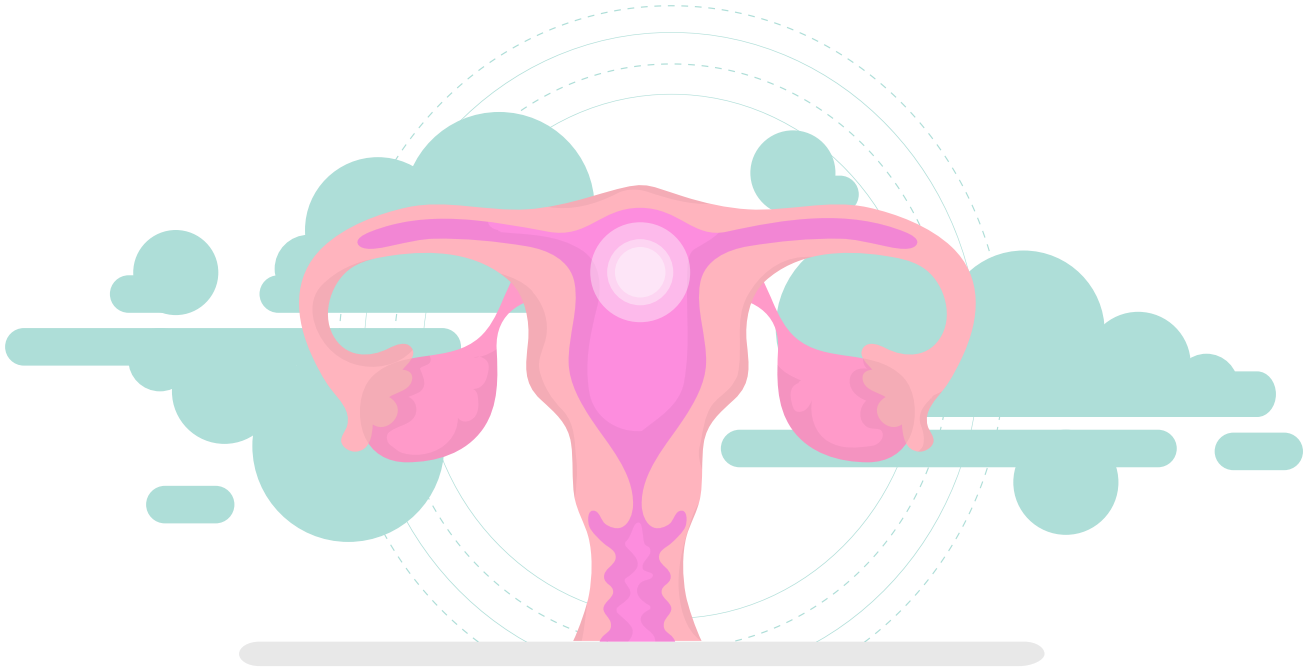
#### The journey of the egg begins...

Ovary	Fallopian tube	Uterus	Cervix	Vagina
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#### The journey of the sperm begins...

Testes	Epididymis	Vas deferens (sperm tube)	Seminal vesicle	Prostate gland	Penis
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## Worksheet 3 – Journey of the egg



### Uterus (womb)

The egg travels to the uterus. If it has been fertilised by a sperm, it will try to embed itself into the lining of the uterus wall (endometrium) which has become extra nourishing in preparation for a fertilised egg. If it is successful, a pregnancy will occur.

### Ovary

An egg matures and is released from an ovary during each menstrual cycle in the female body.

### Fallopian tube

After ovulation, the egg travels along the fallopian tube towards the uterus. If it meets a sperm here it may be fertilised.

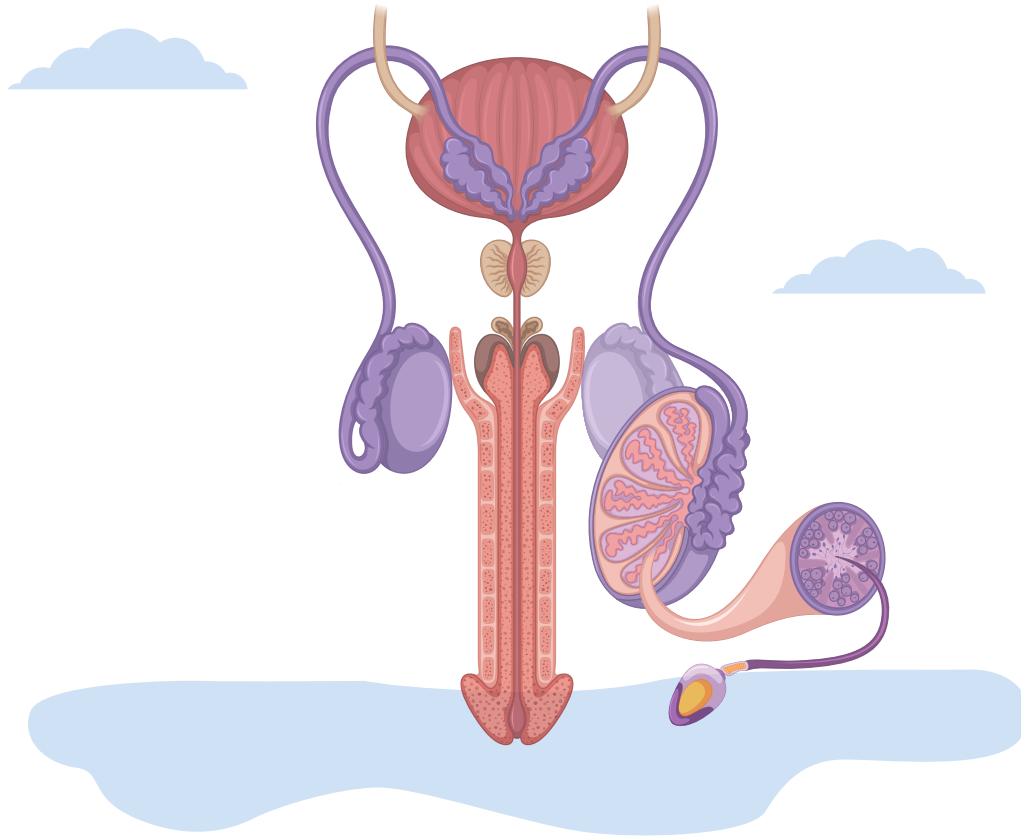
### Vagina

Parts of the disintegrated egg will leave the body through the vagina in menstrual blood (period).

### Cervix

If the egg has not been fertilised or embedded in the uterus wall, it will begin to break up. Some of it may be reabsorbed by the body, and some may be carried away through the cervix along with the additional uterus lining that is no longer needed.

## Worksheet 4 – Journey of the sperm



### Seminal vesicle

Sperm pick up some energy from the nourishing fluid released by the seminal vesicles as they travel through the vas deferens.

### Vas deferens (sperm tube)

Sperm move into the vas deferens and travel towards the prostate gland and the urethra.

### Epididymis

Sperm are nourished and mature in the epididymis.

### Testicles/ testes

Sperm are made in the testicles.

### Penis

Sperm travel along the urethra and are ejaculated through the penis. If the sperm are ejaculated into a woman's vagina, they may cause a pregnancy. Although it only takes one sperm to fertilise an egg, millions of sperm are released in each ejaculation because most die off on their journey through the female body.

### Prostate gland

Sperm get even more nourishment and protection from the semen produced by the prostate gland just before ejaculation through the penis.

### Step 3: Sexual intercourse and conception



Show the Busy Bodies 'How Babies are made' video (3 mins 24 seconds). Encourage the class to use **Handout 1 – Female reproductive system** and **Handout 2 – Male reproductive system** to identify the labels being used within the video.



How babies are made.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QekcR7Jl4Po>

Go at an appropriate pace for the class, stopping and starting the video as necessary. Ask if there are any questions, using the Teacher's note to guide the discussion.

#### Teacher's note

- 'Sexual intercourse' is the phrase used to describe vaginal sex between a male and female.
- Conception doesn't happen every time a male and female have intercourse. However, there is always a risk, especially if the couple is not using contraception.
- Sexual intercourse should always be consensual – this means that both adults know and agree to what is involved and the possible consequences.
- Sexual intercourse should be pleasurable for both people.
- The legal age of sexual consent in Ireland is 17 years. It is against the law to have sex with someone under that age even if they agree to it.
- Despite being legally allowed to have sex at age 17, many young people wait until they are older. Research shows that young people who wait until they are older and fully understand and agree to what they are doing are more likely to not regret their first sexual experience and to use contraception.
- Despite the fact that an adolescent's body is capable of having children after puberty, this doesn't mean that adolescents are emotionally or financially ready to have children.

### Step 4: Home activity



Ask the students to complete the **Worksheet 5 - Reproduction crossword**.

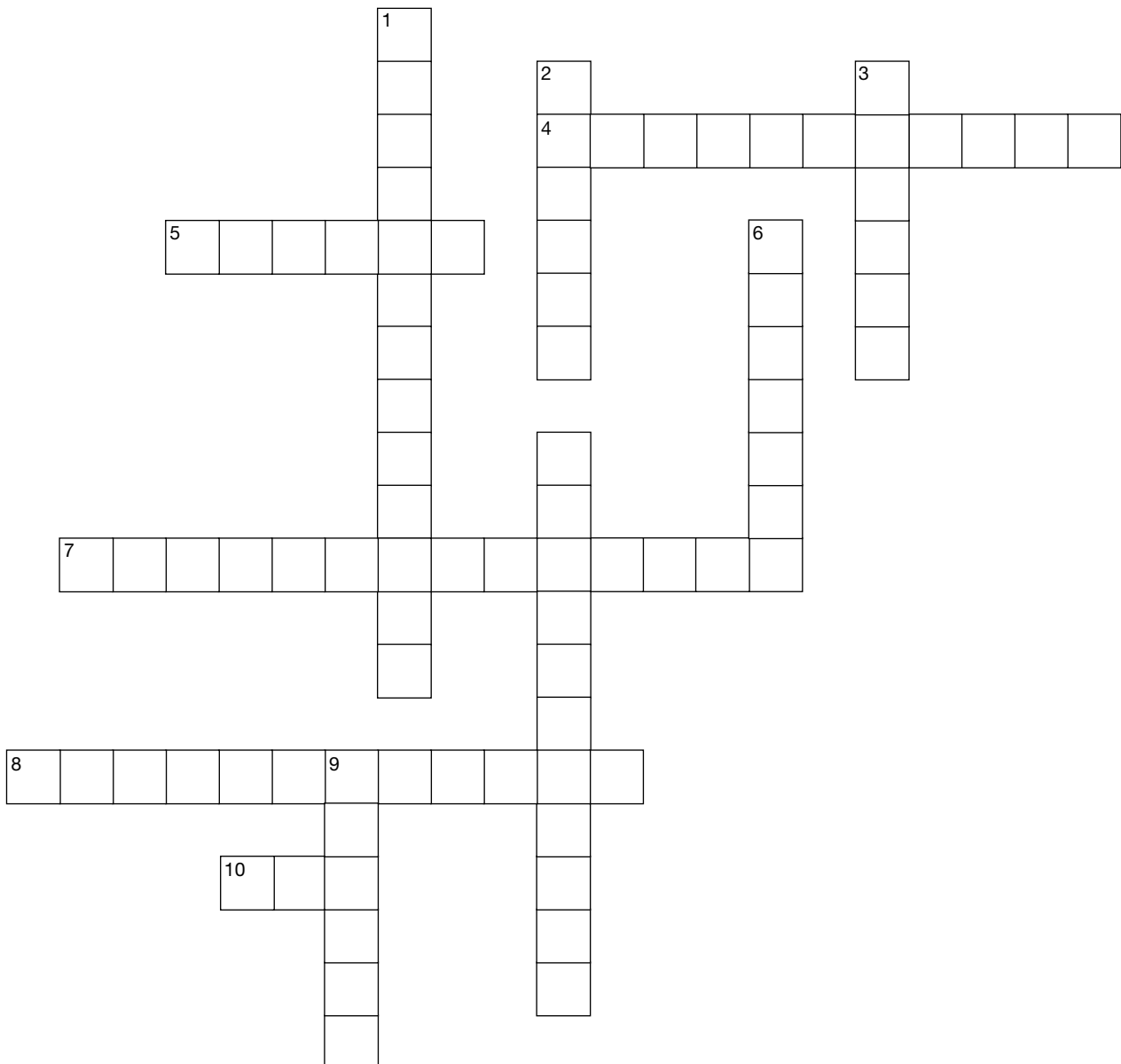


## Worksheet 5 - Reproduction crossword

### Reproduction RSE

Complete the crossword below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



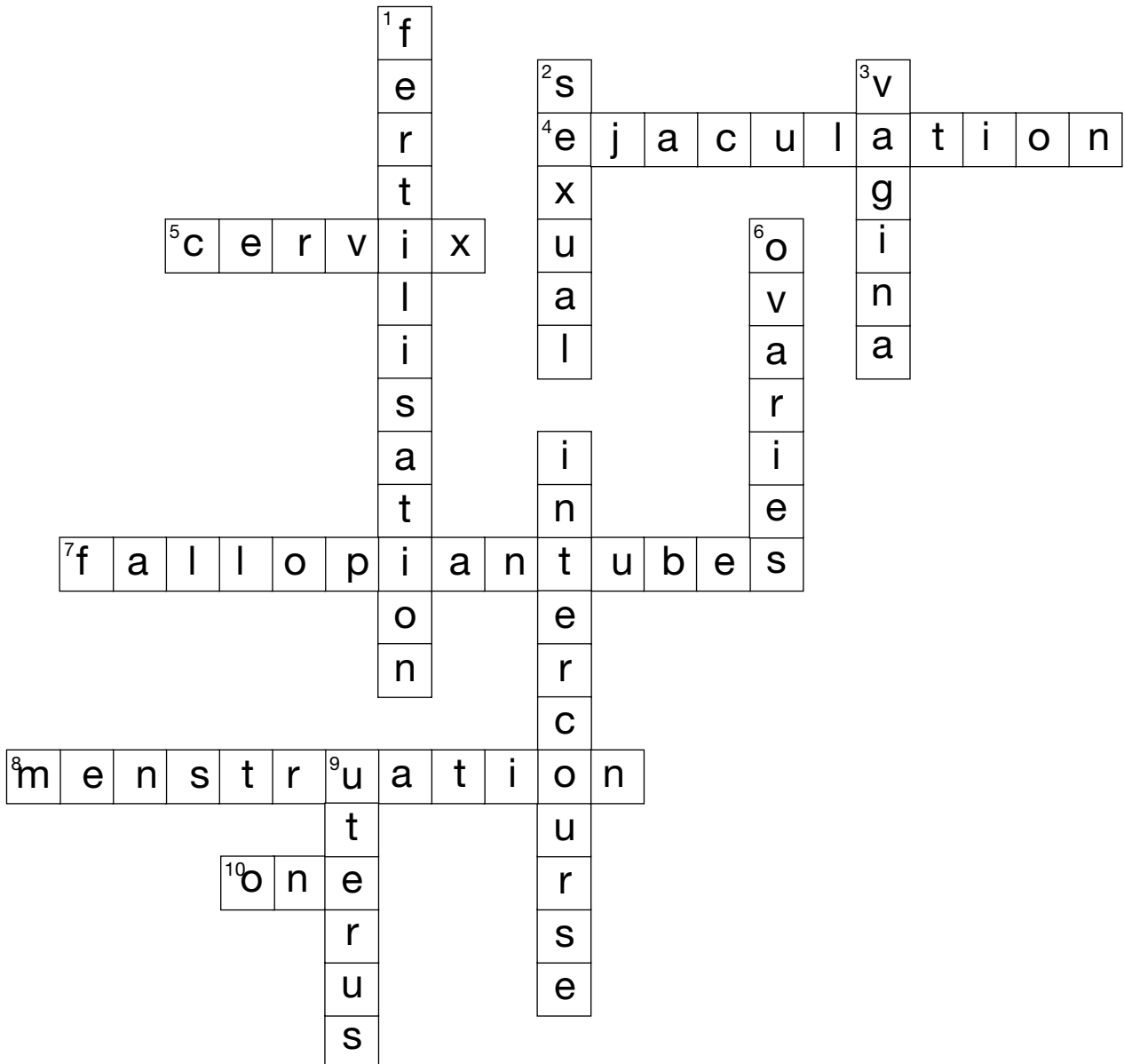
#### Across

4. When semen and sperm are released from the penis.
5. The narrow opening of the uterus, linking it to the vagina.
7. The passages that connect the ovaries to the uterus.
8. When the lining of the womb is expelled from the body through the vagina.
10. The number of sperm needed to fertilise an egg.

#### Down

1. This occurs when a sperm joins with an egg.
2. When a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina.
3. The passage connecting the uterus/womb to outside the body.
6. Where female eggs are stored in the body, one of which matures and is released each month.
9. The place where the babies grow, it expands during pregnancy.

## Worksheet 5 - Reproduction crossword - Answer sheet

**Across**

4. When semen and sperm are released from the penis (ejaculation).
5. The narrow opening of the uterus, linking it to the vagina (cervix).
7. The passages that connect the ovaries to the uterus (fallopian tubes).
8. When the lining of the womb is expelled from the body through the vagina (menstruation).
10. The number of sperm needed to fertilise an egg (one).

**Down**

1. This occurs when a sperm joins with an egg (fertilisation).
2. When a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina (sexual intercourse).
3. The passage connecting the uterus/womb to outside the body (vagina).
6. Where female eggs are stored in the body, one of which matures and is released each month (ovaries).
9. The place where the babies grow, it expands during pregnancy (uterus).



## Activity 10 – Personal hygiene (LOs 1.7, 2.1)

In this activity, students learn the importance of good hygiene habits. Students will also be taught that people's hygiene habits can suffer depending on what is going on in their lives, and that it is important to show empathy and be supportive of any peers who are struggling with their hygiene.

### Teacher's note

It is important to reiterate the RSE ground rules before this activity. When talking about how to deal with challenging hygiene issues, it can be useful to emphasise the value of care, respect and sensitivity towards others, as well as specifically towards each other in this RSE class.

### Step 1: Brainstorm

Ask the students to brainstorm what the word 'hygiene' means to them, and document feedback on the board. Ask them what is meant by 'personal hygiene' (e.g. "personal hygiene is the practice of caring for one's own bodily health and well-being through cleanliness").

#### Suggested discussion points

- Why is personal hygiene so important?
- Can personal hygiene (or lack thereof) have an impact on your health?
  - Repeat the question, replacing 'health' with 'self-esteem' or 'social acceptance'.

### Step 2: Hygiene scenarios



Invite the students to divide into groups of three and give each group one or two of the hygiene scenarios from the **Worksheet – Hygiene scenarios**. In discussing their scenarios in their groups, ask the students to consider:

- a. The problem
- b. The impact
- c. The possible solution.

Ask each group to read their scenario to the class and share the discussion they had in their group about the problem, the impact and the possible solution. Encourage the rest of the class to add to the group discussion. Pay particular attention to the discussion around possible solutions and dealing with certain hygiene issues. Draw the students' attention to the fact that there may be many reasons why someone might experience a hygiene problem at some stage in their life. This person may be experiencing other difficulties which take priority (e.g. health issues or family issues at home), or they may not know what to do and be too embarrassed to ask. It would be hurtful if others treated the person badly because of this, and it wouldn't resolve the problem. Further information is presented in the Hygiene scenarios – Teacher's notes.

### Suggested discussion points

- What do you think are some of the key messages for personal hygiene?
- What do you think is the best way to respond to someone who has a hygiene issue? (Challenge the class to consider if their method of response is respectful and if it would resolve the issue.)

### Step 3: Home activity

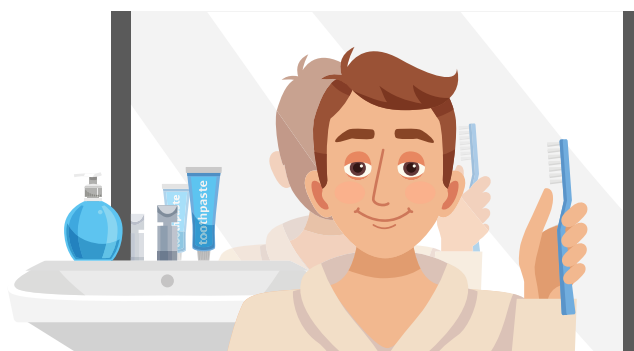


Complete a personal hygiene plan for yourself for the week, documenting what you can do throughout the day to maintain good hygiene levels.









## Worksheet - Hygiene scenarios

1.	A student's dad is not well at the moment and, as a result, they have not had their uniform washed in a few weeks. It is beginning to smell.
2.	A student got their period at school. They do not have any sanitary wear with them and they are embarrassed to ask a teacher for some.
3.	A student recently caught a cold and are coughing and sneezing.
4.	A student has started getting a lot of spots on their face. They think the best thing to do is to leave them alone.
5.	A student has started to have the occasional wet dream but feels too tired in the morning to bother washing and sometimes does not even change underwear from one day to the next.
6.	A student has started getting periods and using tampons. They are sometimes left in all day, and when they are eventually taken out, they are often flushed down the toilet.
7.	A student has noticed an increased level of sweating, even when not playing sports.
8.	A student left their toothbrush behind when coming back from holidays. They are now using whichever one is in the bathroom.
9.	A student gets really nervous in class and constantly bites their nails.
10.	A student has started to shave. They cannot always afford to replace their razor so they sometimes use any razor they find in the bathroom.



## Home activity - Personal Hygiene plan

Daily schedule	
<b>Morning</b> 	
<b>During the day</b> 	
<b>Night</b> 	



## Teacher's note - Hygiene scenarios

1.	Clothes need to be changed and washed on a regular basis, as stale sweat will leave a bad smell on clothes. While many parents do this for their children, it is useful for young people to know how to use a washing machine. You could ask to be shown how to work the washing machine so that you can take responsibility for cleaning your own clothes.
2.	Never be embarrassed to go to the school nurse or office (or a trusted teacher) for sanitary wear if you do not have any. A good option is to download an app that tracks your menstrual cycle so that you will have a good idea of when your period is due. You can also learn a lot about your menstrual cycle by tracking it through an app.
3.	Not covering your mouth or nose when you sneeze or cough will cause germs to be spread to other people. It is important to cover your mouth with a tissue or, if this is not possible, use the corner of your inner elbow. If you cough or sneeze in your hand, you should either wash your hands or use hand sanitiser as soon as possible in order to limit the spread of germs.
4.	Regardless of skin type, it is important to wash your face at least once a day, but preferably every morning and night. Doing this removes all the dirt, dead skin and sweat that accumulates on your skin on a daily basis. Some people say that soap is bad for your face because it can dry the skin's natural oils out too much. However, during puberty, young people usually overproduce oil. You may find that special cleansing creams you buy make your spots worse. The best thing to do is to figure out what suits your skin. You should not squeeze spots because of the risk of spreading any infection. If you wear make-up, it is important to remove it before bed so that your pores do not get blocked.
5.	Wet dreams are a normal part of puberty, but be mindful when experiencing wet dreams that you do not forget your personal hygiene habits. Underwear should definitely be changed after a wet dream, as should bedclothes if necessary. Bacteria can breed on sweat produced in the genital area, so it is important to wash the genital area and change your underwear every day. Continually wearing the same underwear could lead to bacterial and fungal infections.

## Teacher's note - Hygiene scenarios Continued

6.	<p>Tampons can be a good personal choice during periods. However, because they are inserted into the body, they have to be changed regularly. Toxic shock syndrome, is a form of blood poisoning caused by bacterial infection from tampons that are not changed regularly. Sanitary towels and tampons should be changed at least every 4–8 hours. Sanitary towels and tampons have different levels of absorbency, so you should choose the appropriate absorbency depending on how heavy your period is. Using super absorbency tampons on lighter days increases the risk of toxic shock syndrome.</p> <p>Tampons, tampon applicators and sanitary towels should not be flushed down the toilet because they cause problems for wastewater systems and the environment. They should be disposed of in the bin.</p>
7.	<p>Even when you are not hot, sweat is constantly coming up to the surface of your skin from your sweat glands and coming out through your pores. The sweat helps to rid your body of waste and keep your temperature stable. During puberty, you start to sweat more. Sweating alone does no harm; however, when sweat dries and reacts with the bacteria present on the skin (or on clothes), it produces a nasty smell or body odour (often called BO). In order to avoid this, it is important to wash all areas of the body daily, especially those areas that sweat the most (the underarms and genitals). A deodorant or antiperspirant can help mitigate the smell of BO. An underarm deodorant works by slowing down the growth of bacteria on the skin, and antiperspirants make you sweat less by closing some of your pores.</p> <p>As there is generally more sweat on sports clothes than on regular clothes, sports clothes should be washed at a higher temperature in order to ensure that the bacteria on them are killed.</p>
8.	<p>Sharing toothbrushes is not a good idea, because when a person brushes their teeth, they are removing plaque and other soft debris from the teeth. Toothbrushes become contaminated with bacteria, blood, saliva, oral debris and toothpaste. Even after they have been washed, toothbrushes can remain contaminated. For example, hepatitis B and C can be spread through sharing toothbrushes. Even when not shared, toothbrushes should be changed regularly.</p>
9.	<p>Dirt can gather under nails, particularly if they are long. Biting nails can transfer bacteria and other potentially harmful substances from the hands to the mouth, with the possibility of causing infection. You should wash your nails using a nail brush.</p>
10.	<p>The growth of body hair is normal on the adolescent and adult body, and people can choose to retain or remove it. Shaving is one way of removing hair and should be done safely – i.e. without sharing razors. This is because razors can hold traces of blood and bacteria, which can be transferred if the razor is shared. Infections such as hepatitis B and C as well as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can be spread in this manner.</p>



