

Keeping Children SAFE:

Protective Behaviours for Years 3 - 4



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Introduction

In Australia, child protection is a priority and Protective Behaviours Programs in school settings are an essential part of helping to protect children from harm. Research indicates that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 to 12 boys are abused before they turn 18, with 96% of the incidents occurring from someone they know and trust. Each state has Child Protection Policies in the Department of Education and Non-Government Schools that require schools to teach Protective Behaviour Programs in every year group to help prevent child abuse. Teachers are also required by law to report any belief, formed on reasonable grounds, that a child is or has been abused.

Protective Behaviours Programs promote wellbeing and safety, aim to reduce violence, and prevent abuse by giving every child access to information, skills, and support systems. They focus on empowering students and helping them to build life skills such as:

- Problem solving
- Assertiveness
- Persistence
- Ability to seek help
- Communication
- Self-awareness
- Emotional Intelligence

When teaching Protective Behaviours it is important to have a safe and supporting environment and to use strategies to help children deal with any trauma that might arise from the topics covered.

Things to consider include creating a safe learning environment that the children feel comfortable in; to develop their trust, build communication skills and reinforce their strengths. Coming up with some useful rules around the discussions helps the environment to stay a safe space for children. These include taking turns to speak, using third person in stories, encouraging a culture of respect, remembering that everyone might have different experiences and opinions, and that it is ok to pass.

It is important that the language that is used when discussing Protective Behaviours equips children with the knowledge and skills to be assertive and clearly communicate their boundaries. For example, when discussing the body use anatomically correct terms for body parts, their function, and how to respect and care for your own body. When speaking about reproductive body parts, the use of “private parts” helps children understand that these areas are private and belong to them; but be specific about what areas are private using the correct language.

In each lesson there are key messages/concepts that are safety messages and help the children to build their knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe and to access support and help.

Protective Interrupting and giving an option for topics that may cause distress helps support children’s different reactions to concepts that are being discussed. Giving a safe space such as the reading tent, if they feel overwhelmed or upset by the topic being discussed, helps create an environment of trust and safety. Protective Interrupting is used if a child starts to disclose a story or evidence of abuse during a class discussion; this helps protect themselves and the other students. A teacher can interrupt and advise they finish the story later in private. This should then be followed up promptly to keep the child’s trust and support them while they are feeling the confidence to disclose an incident of abuse.

 Some things to consider:

- Although not required, sometimes it is a good idea to get parent consent to discuss protective behaviours or send home parent information such as this brochure:
<https://tsto.gdhr.wa.gov.au/web/guest/-/talk-soon-talk-often-a-guide-for-parents-talking-to-their-kids-about-sex>
- When starting to teach body parts to younger students it is important to differentiate between male and female parts.
- If student giggle, it is ok. Explain it is a natural response to feel embarrassed. Just be firm that you don’t want to encourage silliness about the serious issues you are discussing.
- Praise students that are brave enough to join in conversations that might be uncomfortable and embarrassing for them.

- Reframe any inappropriate terms used for body parts, e.g. “penis” instead of “dick”.
- When discussing games that are seemingly harmless like when children play peekaboo under the toilet, discuss that it is inappropriate behaviour.



This book covers the following messages, section by section:

1. We all have the right to feel safe at all times.
2. Early warning signs.
3. Risk-taking and the Safety Continuum.
4. We can talk to people we trust.
5. Networks.
6. Persistence - keep asking until someone helps.
7. Body Awareness - there are public and private parts of the body.
8. Personal space - it is important to respect other's personal space and to ask their consent to enter their personal space.
9. Assertiveness - learning to stand up for yourself and say no.

This book is an excellent resource for teaching the skills and knowledge needed to help keep students safe and to develop strategies for protective behaviours in the Middle Primary Years, aimed at Years 3 and 4. It provides teaching information, lesson ideas, resources and activity pages linked to the Health and Physical Education ACARA curriculum outcomes.

Through an array of ideas and hands-on activities/worksheets, the students gain a thorough understanding of strategies to develop protective behaviours covering the Year 3 and 4 Curriculum Outcomes. The tasks have cross-curricular links to subject areas of Health and Physical Education, English, Science, Drama, Digital Technology and Design and Technology as well as Cross Curricular Priorities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Series of Teacher Resource Videos to watch before teaching program: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLExTVApf9NBI8eIWz1pwQJb45r4OyTBXq>

References

1. New South Wales Child Protection Council. Child Sexual Assault: How to talk to children. Parramatta, NSW, 2000.
2. James, Marianne. Trends and Issues Series (no. 146). Child abuse and neglect: Redefining the issues. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. 2006.
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Child Protection Australia 2011-12. Canberra, 2013.
4. Brennan, H. 'Ignorance is not Innocence' in Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter, 14(1), (pp. 17-19), 2006.
5. Carmody, T. F. & J.P. O'Sullivan. Project AXIS Child Sexual Abuse in Queensland: The Nature and Extent. Brisbane: Queensland Crime Commission Queensland Police Service, 2000.

Curriculum Links

Health and Physical Education Personal, Social and Community Health

Sub-Strand: Identities and Change

Students explore how achievements, obstacles, setbacks and failures contribute to building resilience and shaping identities in a range of contexts (AC9HP4P01)

- describing how characters in stories overcome challenges and adversity, achieving success through various means
- exploring how First Nations Australians' pride in their cultural heritage strengthens their identity
- Explaining how overcoming challenges or adversity as a collective can bring together a diverse group of individuals
- investigating how cultural beliefs and values influence responses to success, challenges, setbacks, and failures
- understanding how success, challenges, failure, and enjoyment in physical activities impact identities

Students plan, practise and reflect on coping mechanisms to navigate various changes and transitions, including those related to puberty (AC9HP4P02)

- engaging in discussions about the physical, social, and emotional changes that accompany puberty and examining their influence on individuals' perceptions of themselves and their responses to different situations
- identifying individuals or resources available for accessing information and addressing questions about changes experienced during puberty
- examining the structure and dynamics of family support networks within First Nations Australian communities and discussing the diverse ways in which various family and community members can assist young people during periods of change and transition
- engaging in practice and refining of coping skills to effectively manage challenges or changes, including positive self-talk, problem-solving, mindfulness, and seeking support from family members, peers, and teachers
- analysing scenarios in texts where characters encounter and react to change and transition, assessing the benefits of their reactions, and identifying alternative options that could be helpful

Sub-Strand: Interacting With Others

Students elect, employ, and clarify personal and social skills to build, navigate, and reinforce relationships. (AC9HP4P04)

- anticipating and reflecting on the possible feelings of other students in challenging scenarios, and discussing what supportive actions they can take to assist them
- examining characters in texts who have exhibited respect for diversity and differences in individuals and communities, and investigating the strategies they used to do this
- using cooperative skills and providing encouragement to capably accomplish a movement task, such as partner balance, partner passing strategy, or team strategy

- discussing how showing respect and empathy towards First Nations Australians can promote the development of positive relationships
- understanding that bullying behaviour can manifest in many forms, including online, and suggesting tactics to confront and address bullying in and out of school

Students define the reasons for the variability of emotional responses and practice techniques to effectively manage their emotions (AC9HP4P06)

- realising how the depth and force of their own emotional reactions may differ in various situations, such as when experiencing loss, and practising strategies to manage emotions
- analysing scenarios to pinpoint potential triggers and warning signs that may predict emotional reactions
- analysing scenarios and identifying helpful ways in which someone might respond during an emergency situation
- describing the strategies used by characters in texts to recognise and regulate their emotions before making decisions or taking action
- employing self-regulation techniques to control the expression of emotional responses

Students practice and refine methods for respectfully seeking, giving, and denying permission, and describe situations where permission is necessary (AC9HP4P07)

- practicing and honing strategies for both seeking and giving consent, such as granting permission for their photo to be shared
- investigating the options available for people who have experienced hurtful or disrespectful actions without their consent, including in online settings
- exploring strategies they can use when they or others feel unsafe, including asserting boundaries by saying no, removing themselves from the situation, reporting the incident, and discussing how to apply these methods in scenarios where someone shares embarrassing photos online without consent, engages in unwanted physical contact, or resorts to violence

Sub-Strand Making Healthy and Safe Choices

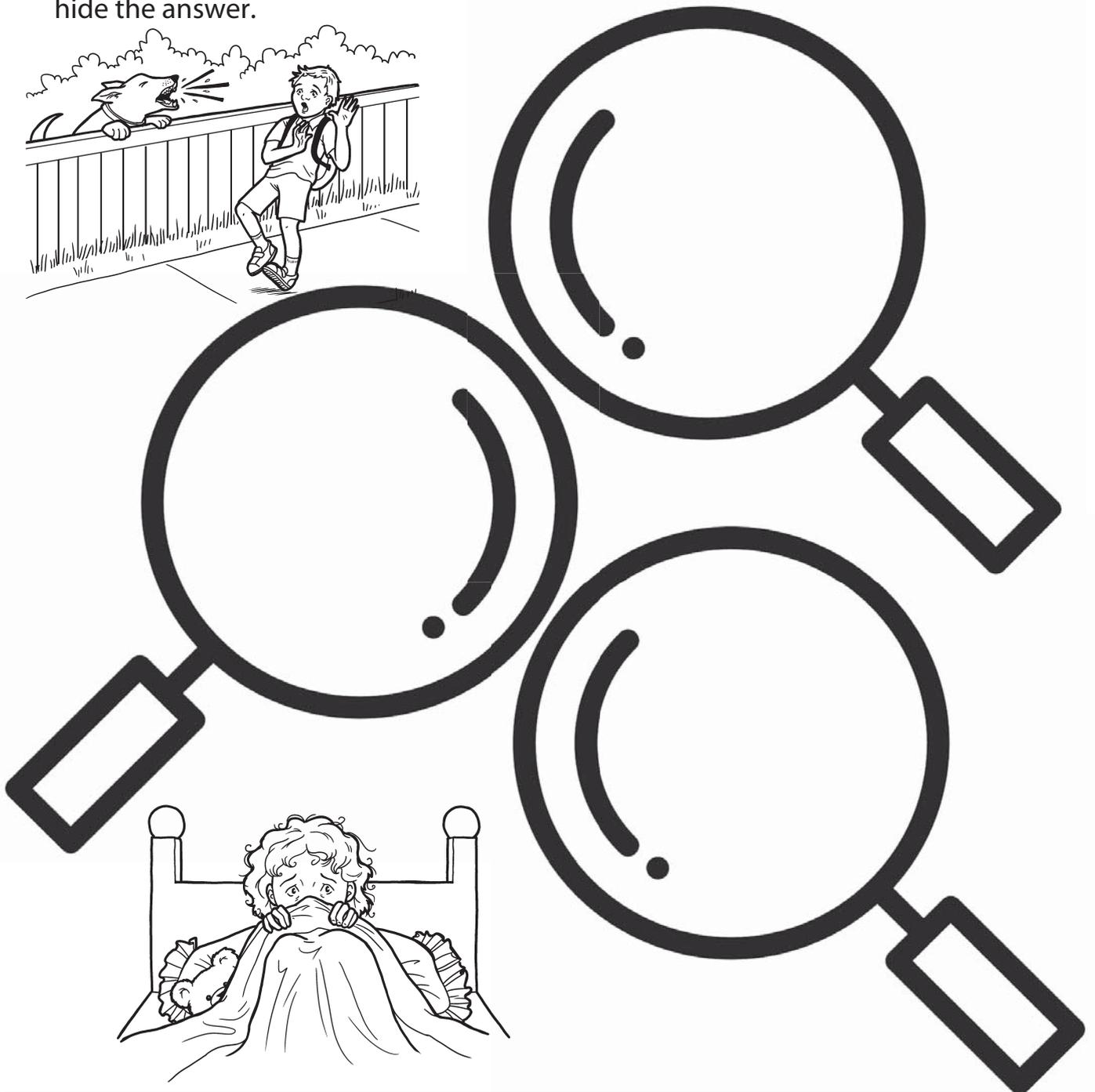
Students learn to express and employ protective behaviours and seek help in a variety of online and offline scenarios (AC9HP4P08)

- identifying warning signs, including physical, emotional, and external cues, to recognise if they are safe or unsafe
- analysing protective behaviours to stay safe across diverse situations, such as near water or roads, in parks, while online, and when confronted with situations that make them feel nervous or unsafe
- recognising a variety of help-seeking strategies to negotiate positive results in difficult circumstances, such as addressing negative or harmful online behaviour by seeking support from trusted adults
- marking safe locations and people on a local map where they can seek assistance if they feel unsafe or frightened
- suggesting strategies for maintaining online safety by helping them recognise feelings of discomfort or insecurity and outlining steps for reporting harmful or negative behaviour

Activity 5

Body Clues

- Give some clues about different ways your body reacts when you feel unsafe. Stick a piece of paper over the top of each clue and just tape the top as a flap to hide the answer.



When I feel unsafe my body... _____

Activity 11

Safety Continuum Sort

☀ Cut out and paste the examples below under the correct heading.

Safe	Fun/Scary	Risking on Purpose	Unsafe

Dancing at a disco.	Getting lost at the shops.	Falling over in a park.	A stranger offering you a lift.
Climbing a tree	Going down a waterslide	Doing a high ropes course	Getting a needle vaccine
Reading a book	Climbing the monkey bars	Abseiling	Crossing the road without looking
Swimming outside the flags	Brushing your teeth	Crossing a rope bridge	Spotting a snake
Jumping into the pool	Rock climbing	Watching a movie	Snorkelling in the ocean

Section 4: People We Trust

Curriculum Links for this Section:

Health and Physical Education - Students learn to express and employ protective behaviours and seek help in a variety of online and offline scenarios (AC9HP4P08)

Students plan, practise and reflect on coping mechanisms to navigate various changes and transitions, including those related to puberty (AC9HP4P02)

Students elect, employ, and clarify personal and social skills to build, navigate, and reinforce relationships. (AC9HP4P04)

Students define the reasons for the variability of emotional responses and practice techniques to effectively manage their emotions (AC9HP4P06)

Students practice and refine methods for respectfully seeking, giving, and denying permission, and describe situations where permission is necessary (AC9HP4P07)

Students explore and enforce behaviours that add to their own and others' health, safety, relationships, and overall well-being (AC9HP4P10)

Students demonstrate creative thinking skills by making movement sequences and solving movement-related challenges (AC9HP4M07)

English - Explain the impact of text structures and language features in literary texts when expressing and exchanging opinions (AC9E4LE02)

Devise, produce, revise and publish written and multimodal imaginative, informative, and persuasive texts, utilising visual features, interconnected ideas, complex sentences, appropriate tense, synonyms and antonyms, accurate spelling of multisyllabic words and basic punctuation (AC9E4LY06)

Drama -Improvise, conceive, and mould drama utilising the components of drama to convey ideas, viewpoints, and/or meaning (AC9ADR4C01)

Teacher Ideas and Information for Section 4: People We Trust

Review: *When things feel unsafe, we can use the safety continuum to assess how risky a situation is and if it is a good idea.*

Introduction and main message: We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust.

Learning intentions:

- Introduce the importance of being able to talk to people students trust.
- Students develop a network of trusted adults to talk to.
- Students understand they can talk to these people anytime, about anything

Warm up: Play a circle game and throw a ball around the circle; when a student catches the ball have them name an adult in their lives or in the community that would be a trusted adult they could talk to, e.g. mum, dad, grandparents, coach, teacher, police officer, doctor, fire fighter.

Explicit teaching: We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust. Explore people in the community and the qualities they have that make them trustworthy. Discuss the difference between a surprise and a secret.

Watch this clip about being trustworthy:

Link 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc-B6bm8Qyc>

Then brainstorm attributes of a trustworthy person.

Whole group activity: The students do a trustworthy sort and then write 5 adults in their lives that are trustworthy. (Activity 13)

Reinforce the main message and review what was discussed in the lesson: *We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust.*

We can talk with someone we trust about anything, no matter what it is.

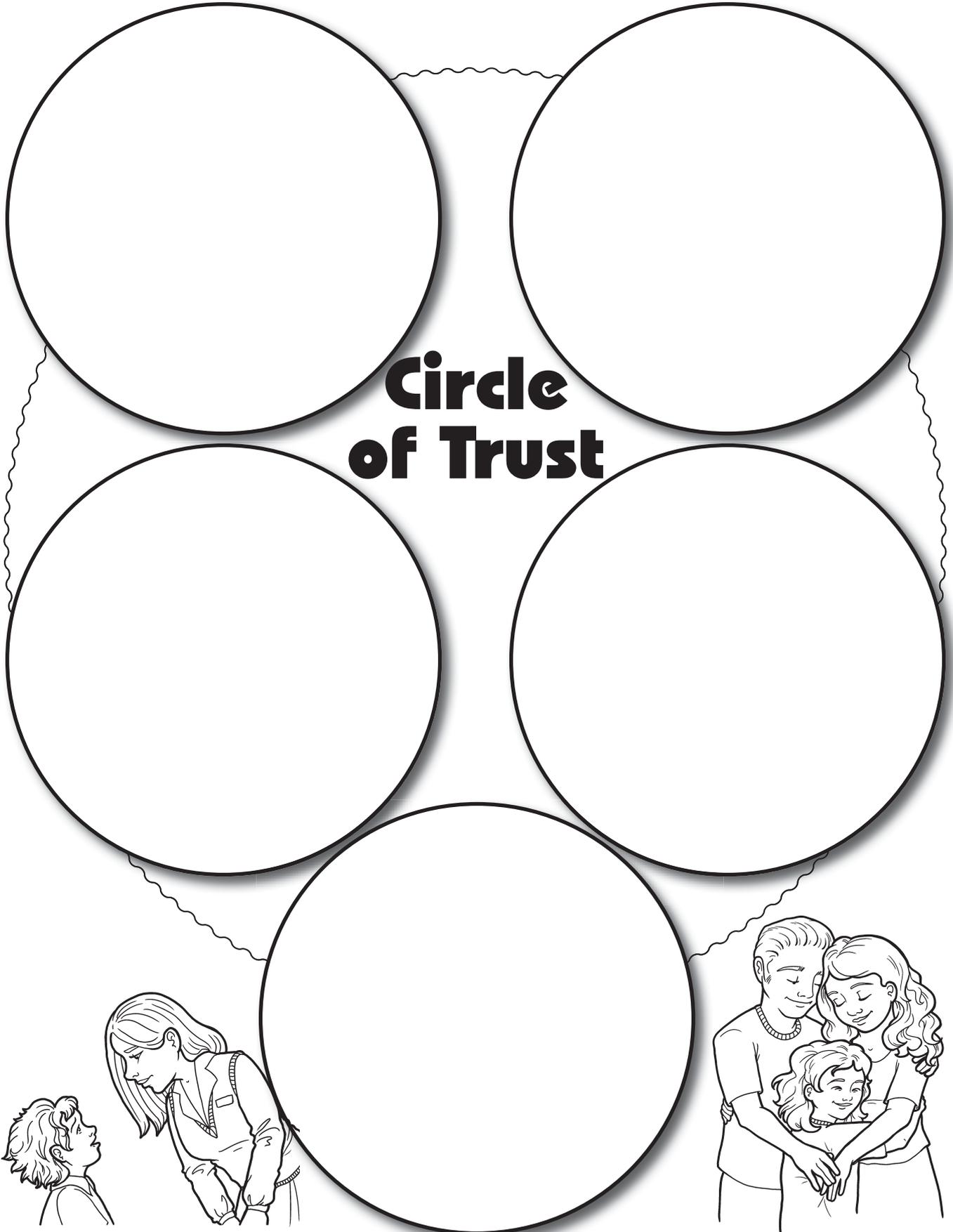
Surprises are something that lots of people know about and you only must keep for a short period of time to make someone happy. If someone asks you to keep a secret that is only between you and one or two other people, and they tell you that you cannot tell anyone ever about it and it makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable - TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST IMMEDIATELY.

Follow up tasks in class:

- Act out scenarios of surprises versus secrets, e.g. surprises: a birthday party for someone, a present for mum or dad, a special reward for a friend (emphasise that it is a good thing that lots of people know).
- Secrets: that someone said something unkind and told you not to tell anyone, someone hurting you or asking you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or wrong like stealing or lying, etc.
- Write about and give examples of the difference between secrets and surprises. (Activity 14)

- ☀ Draw and label 5 trusted adults in your life and write trustworthy attributes to describe them, or give an example of why you trust them.

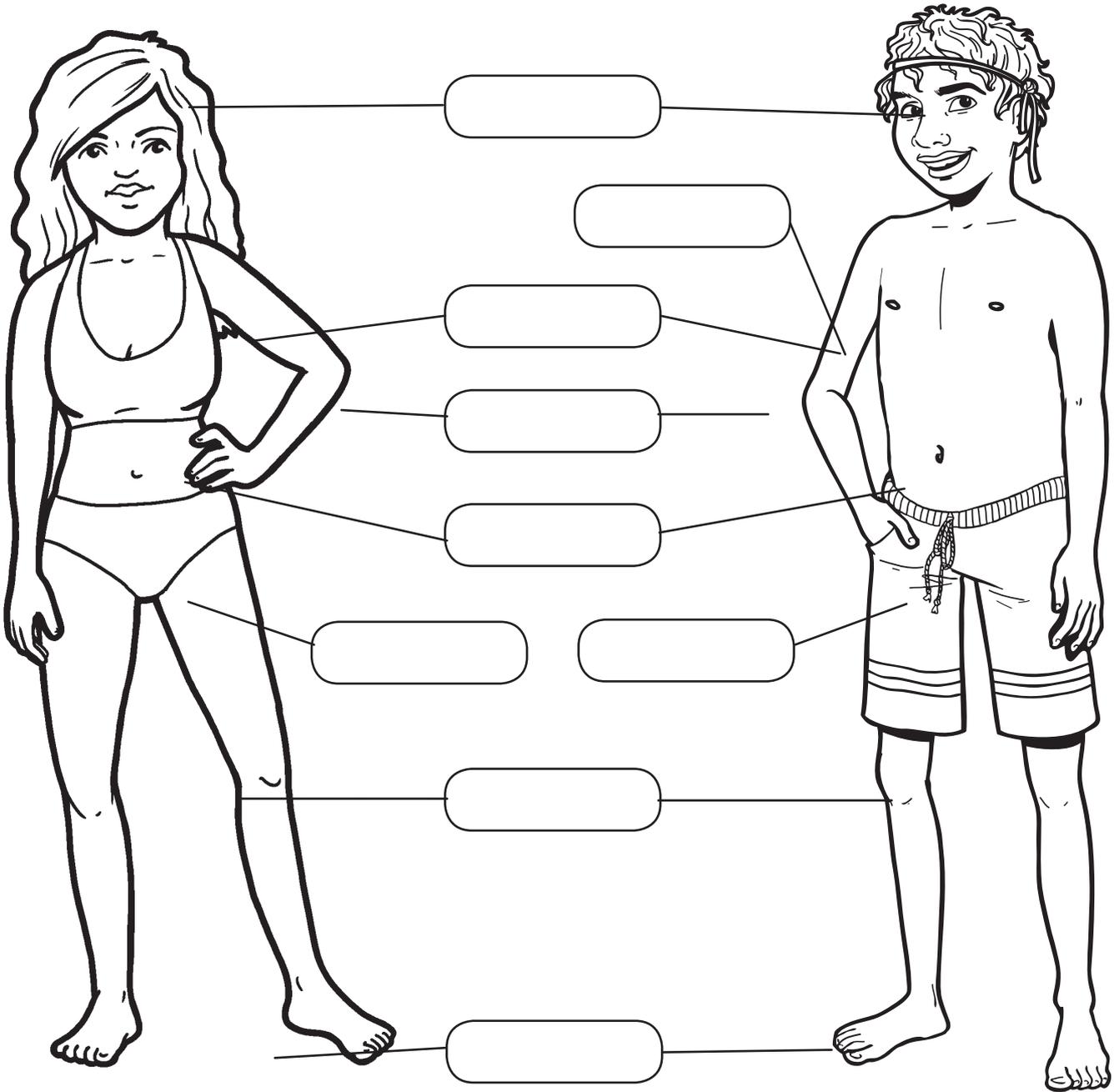
Circle of Trust



Activity 27

Body Part Labelling

☀ Label the body parts using the correct names:



Why is it important to know the correct names for private body parts? _____

What do you do if someone wants to see or touch your private parts and you feel unsafe? _____

Activity 29

Consent Scenarios

- ☀ Asking for consent is important to respect other people's personal space and boundaries. Write some examples of asking for consent in the following scenarios.

A classmate won the cross-country race, and you want to congratulate them. How could you ask for consent?



You meet a new friend. They are upset and you would like to comfort them. How could you ask for consent?



You want to greet your teacher in the morning. How can you ask for consent?



Activity 35

Show the Response

☀ In each of the scenarios write the sort of response you would get from each communication style.

1. Your Aunt asks to give you a hug, but you don't like people coming into your personal space. Show the different responses:

<i>Passive</i>	<i>Aggressive</i>	<i>Assertive</i>

2. Your friend wants to be the leader in the game you are playing and isn't giving anyone else a turn. Show the different responses:

<i>Passive</i>	<i>Aggressive</i>	<i>Assertive</i>

3. Your brother/sister is using your pencil case without asking. Show the different responses:

<i>Passive</i>	<i>Aggressive</i>	<i>Assertive</i>