

Adolescent boys face many serious problems that negatively impact their lives and the lives of those around them, negatively impacting the inclusivity of schools. Additionally, asking for help is not a traditional gender role for males. Young men are provided with messages from the media, peers, and their families that it is considered weak to ask for help and seek out support services when they need assistance. To address this need, the Department of Health and Wellness (with support the Department of Education) developed *Guys Work*: a grades 6 to 9 school-based program for boys, with a primary focus on the health of boys and those around them.

The *Guys Work* sessions take place during instructional time while other genders are participating in similar programming with other school staff. The 10 lessons take place in a simple circle of chairs and have been designed to move youth through an experience that leads to a place of conversation and reflection on the misperceptions and/or masculinity performances at play for boys and young men.

This guide is designed to provide a brief overview of the GuysWork curriculum at Grade 6 and to identify the curricular links. For more detailed information, visit <https://www.bridgesinstitute.org/guyswork>

Note to Teachers:

The overarching purpose of Guys Work is that adolescent boys will begin to engage in healthier behaviours, disrupting traditional masculinity norms that affect the health of them and their peers. Understandably, teachers may want to address curricular goals through the Guys Work program as well.

To maintain the authentic, safe, and confidential model used by Guys Work, students should not be assessed on their level of participation nor on the content of what they share. However, teachers might use formative assessment techniques such as exit slips or the check-out question to assess curricular goals.

The table below identifies the topics explored and the Health 6 outcomes that can be addressed by each lesson in the Guys Work program.

GuysWork Topics	Health Education 6 Outcomes <i>**Outcomes in italics are not explicitly covered in the lesson but may come up depending on where the Guys take the conversation.</i>
Lesson 1 - Identity	
Defining yourself Identifying helpful and unhelpful personality traits	Learners will investigate the components of mental health literacy. - Investigate ways to cope with challenging life circumstances Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health - Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy
Lesson 2 – Values	
Communicating values/beliefs/ideals Impact of values on behaviour and interactions Factors that cause misalignment with values	Learners will analyse how health behaviours enhance physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health - Investigate the relationship between food and values, beliefs, and culture Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health
Lesson 3 – Boundaries	
Trusting your “gut” Normalizing differences in behaviour Assertiveness and refusal techniques	Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health - Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy - Investigate how boundaries keep relationships safe and healthy Learners will analyse how health behaviours enhance physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health - Analyse potential impacts of time spent online

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Lesson 4 – Relationships	
Factors of a healthy/unhealthy relationship Empathy (how we treat others and want to be treated)	Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health - Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy - Investigate how boundaries keep relationships safe and healthy
Lesson 5 – Substance use	
Categorizing risky behaviours Making healthy choices (and factors that impact choice)	Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate the relationship between food and values, beliefs, and culture - Identify ways to safely intervene when help is needed <i>Learners will investigate sexual and reproductive health information.</i> <i>Investigate where to find reliable sexual health information and support in the community</i> Learners will analyse how relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health Learners will analyse the impacts of substances on the health and safety of children. - Analyse tactics used in marketing and advertising to promote and normalize substance use to children and youth
Lesson 6 – Help Seeking	
Accessing help Normalizing help seeking	Learners will investigate the components of mental health literacy. - Investigate ways that people can get help for a mental health problem or illness for self and others - Investigate ways to cope with challenging life circumstances

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Lesson 6 – Help Seeking (cont’d)	
Accessing help Normalizing help seeking	Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy - Identify ways to safely intervene when help is needed Learners will analyse the impacts of substances on the health and safety of children. - Investigate when, where, and how to ask for help for problematic substance misuse in family environment
Lesson 7 – Puberty	
Identifying changes (across all dimensions of health) and the differences in experiences <i>Sexual orientations and gender identities</i>	Learners will investigate the components of mental health literacy. - Investigate ways to cope with challenging life circumstances Learners will investigate sexual and reproductive health information. - Investigate the concept of sexuality and sexual health - Select ways you to cope with changes associated with puberty <i>Investigate how respect for diverse sexual identities is expressed within society</i> Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health
Lesson 8 - Anger	
Gender expectations around anger Recognizing your response to and expression of anger	Learners will analyse how health behaviours enhance physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health - Investigate the relationship between food and values, beliefs, and culture Learners will investigate the components of mental health literacy. - Investigate ways to cope with challenging life circumstances. - Select words that describe various mental health states.

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Lesson 8 – Anger (cont’d)	
Gender expectations around anger Recognizing your response to and expression of anger	Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. - Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy <i>Identify ways to safely intervene when help is needed</i>
Lesson 9 – Gendered media	
Confronting gender expectations and media representations/stereotypes Exploring gender identity beyond the binary	Learners will analyse how health behaviours enhance physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health - Investigate the relationship between food and values, beliefs, and culture - Analyse potential impacts of time spent online Learners will investigate sexual and reproductive health information. - Investigate how respect for diverse sexual identities is expressed within society <i>Learners will analyse how healthy and safe relationships impact physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health.</i> <i>Investigate how changing relationships with self and others can impact the dimensions of health</i>
Lesson 10 – The end	
Varies by group, however overarching goals: - Help seeking behaviour - Perceptions of masculinity - Increased healthy behaviours	Help seeking (see lesson 6) Perceptions of masculinity (see lessons 1, 5, 6, 8 and 9) Healthy behaviours (see lessons 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8)