

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 8 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 *Guys Work* curriculum at Grade 9 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 Healthy Living 9 outcomes that can be addressed by each lesson in the Guys Work program.*

Guys Work Topics	Healthy Living 9 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>
<b>Lesson 1 – Identity 9</b>	
Aspects of masculinity that can harm health How pressure is exerted to conform to masculine expectations	9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives
<b>Lesson 2 – Body Image</b>	
Body image and mental health Social norms and expectations Misogynistic language and rape culture	9.6 identify ways of maintaining sexual health 9.11 examine the cause and effect of unhealthy relationships and practise communication and assertiveness skills to confront unhealthy relationships 9.16 examine issues around hypersexualization of children and youth and how these phenomena can contribute to violence, affect body image and self-esteem, and impact relationships
<b>Lesson 3 - Girls Land</b>	
Gender equity Toxic masculinity Social norms and expectations Peer support	9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives 9.10 apply communication and interpersonal skills to discuss reproductive and sexual health issues 9.11 examine the cause and effect of unhealthy relationships and practise communication and assertiveness skills to confront unhealthy relationships 9.20 identify school and community-based resources and health services available to assist themselves or a friend if help or information in the area of sexual health, mental health, alcohol, and other substance use or gambling is needed, and practise how to make initial contact with such a service/resource

<b>Lesson 4 – Masculinity Creep</b>	
<p>Masculinity and individuality</p> <p>Social norms and expectations</p> <p>Conflicting identities</p>	<p>9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives</p> <p>9.11 examine the cause and effect of unhealthy relationships and practise communication and assertiveness skills to confront unhealthy relationships</p> <p>9.14 practise speaking about concerns regarding substance use and gambling in self or others</p> <p>9.15 examine the negative impact of stereotyping and stigma upon help-seeking behaviour</p>
<b>Lesson 5 – Parent 2.0</b>	
<p>Male role models</p> <p>Masculinity norms</p> <p>Intergenerational trauma</p>	<p>9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives</p> <p>9.11 examine the cause and effect of unhealthy relationships and practise communication and assertiveness skills to confront unhealthy relationships</p> <p>9.20 identify school and community-based resources and health services available to assist themselves or a friend if help or information in the area of sexual health, mental health, alcohol, and other substance use or gambling is needed, and practise how to make initial contact with such a service/resource</p> <p><i>Also 9.2, 9.3, 9.13, 9.14, &amp; 9.15 depending on where conversation leads</i></p>
<b>Lesson 6 – The Dadbod Express</b>	
<p>Health promotion and prevention strategies</p> <p>Social determinants of health</p> <p>STBBIs</p>	<p>9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives</p> <p>9.2 recognize the warning signs of depressive disorders and the importance of seeking help for these disorders</p> <p>9.6 identify ways of maintaining sexual health</p> <p>9.19 recognize and respond to physical health dangers and emergency situations related to alcohol and other substance use among their peers</p>

<b>Lesson 7 – Boostermania</b>	
<p>Nude images and sextortion</p> <p>Gender equity</p> <p>Masculinity norms</p> <p>Coercion and consent</p> <p>Refusal skills</p>	<p>9.16 examine issues around hypersexualization of children and youth and how these phenomena can contribute to violence, affect body image and self-esteem, and impact relationships</p> <p>9.24 demonstrate understanding of how easy it is to lose control of information online</p> <p>9.11 examine the cause and effect of unhealthy relationships and practise communication and assertiveness skills to confront unhealthy relationships</p> <p>9.12 identify and practise negotiation, assertiveness, and refusal skills, related to sexual activity, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, other drug use, and gambling</p>
<b>Lesson 8 – Mud Puddle</b>	
<p>Peer support</p> <p>Help seeking</p>	<p>9.1 analyze their health needs in times of change and apply strategies that enhance their capacity to manage change in their lives</p> <p>9.20 identify school and community-based resources and health services available to assist themselves or a friend if help or information in the area of sexual health, mental health, alcohol, and other substance use or gambling is needed, and practise how to make initial contact with such a service/resource</p>