

Incorporating gender-based violence (GBV) and bystander intervention (BI) education within Health Education

Learning Related to GBV and BI is embedded across health education curriculum P-9. Concepts and topics have been embedded in ways that include foundational information that supports long term skill development, as well as more specific and developmentally appropriate information. The goal of this curriculum is to develop skills around emotional literacy, personal safety and injury prevention, healthy relationships, and healthy habits. There are many lessons and approaches that teachers use currently which align well with delivery of comprehensive health education. Much foundational work is already being done which supports the growth and development of health literate youth across the province. In strengthening this curriculum with critical components of GBV and BI education we are able to support students with additional skills that will help to keep themselves and others safe and healthy.

Within this curriculum there are interconnected topics that span across four domains:

- Emotional Literacy skills and development
- Healthy Relationships
- Personal Safety and Injury Prevention
- Healthy Habits

Foundational skills and information are used to support the understanding of the role of emotions in human health and how to regulate them in healthy ways, an awareness of the types of relationships in our lives, why relationships matter and ways to nurture them, and understandings of human rights. Across the grades this information grows and builds in new ways to provide increasingly complex vocabulary that can be used in various situations and events. This new way of seeing the world around them serves as a protective factor by establishing an understanding of the many ways that people live and can thrive in safe and healthy ways.

Specific skills and information are used to expand on foundational skills in order to provide direct instruction and application of topics that are developmentally appropriate for each grade level. This information is used to provide skills which protect students from various forms of violence including through unhealthy relationships, human trafficking, intimate-partner or technology facilitated violence. This also includes direct actions to take to notice and respond to emergency or risk situations by connecting with a safe adult, contact emergency services, and engage in healthy ways to navigate or resolve conflict.

Both foundational skills and specific skills have aspects of GBV and BI embedded within. GBV topics are embedded using national benchmarks from the Sexual Information and Education Council of Canada's [Benchmarks for Comprehensive Sexual Health Education in Canada](#) and [Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Prevention within School-Based Comprehensive Sexual Health Education](#). These include concepts involving: Healthy Relationships and Communication Skills, Disrupting Gender Roles, Norms, and Stereotypes, Consent and Boundaries Digital Media Literacy, and Human Rights Education and Transformative Justice

Bystander Intervention education can take many forms and be used across various settings and scenarios. To ensure students are exploring and developing key BI skills, the curriculum aims to have students notice, interpret, know how to act, take responsibility, and act in relation to outcomes, concepts, and topics in developmentally appropriate ways. This includes actions that can be taken by students such as calling or alerting emergency services, identifying and overcoming barriers to action, and knowing ways to help themselves or others seek support when needed from the many services that are available across Nova Scotia. Students should be engaged in participatory methods that help to develop these skills. Opportunities to rehearse the skills and strategies they are learning to build problem-solving, and communications skills is a key part of effective Health Education.



The Mass Casualty Commission's Recommendation C.17 calls for Province-wide implementation of curriculum addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and bystander intervention (BI). This will ensure that every student in grades primary to 12 will learn how to recognize, prevent, and respond to GBV and other harms.

Health Education Grade 1

Gender-based Violence and Bystander Intervention

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Items specific to GBV and BI:

	What students are learning and doing	This information builds learning about:
Foundational skills and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify healthy ways of coping with feelings Name common emotions associated with change Recognize instinct as a useful emotional tool Explore the characteristics of a healthy friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Relationships and Communication Skills
Specific skills and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize all people are unique and have a right to be treated with respect and dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights Education and Transformative Justice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop safety skills to use at home and in the community Name safe adults to go to for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bystander skills in actions to take in an emergency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the difference between safe and unsafe behaviour Describe the difference between keep and speak secrets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bystander skills in noticing and interpreting events or situations

To support engagement with new content, teachers can access a variety of resources and supports identified on the [Gender-based violence collection Moodle](#), which provides training modules, and access to background knowledge and lessons that can be immediately used in the classroom.