

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 five domains :

- Health Behaviours
- Mental Health Literacy
- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Safe and Healthy Relationships
- Substance Misuse Prevention



Foundational skills and information are used to support expression of emotions and navigating conflict, development and identification of healthy relationships, and understandings about human rights in an inclusive society. Across the grades this information grows and builds as a protective factor for students, provides vocabulary that can be used in various situations and events, and establishes 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 that students use which includes identifying healthy vs unhealthy relationships, identification and respect for boundaries and autonomy, build awareness of gender norms, stereotypes, and biases and how this contributes to gender-based violence and finding reliable and accurate information and supports across various scenarios. This also includes direct actions to take in noticing and responding in emergency or risk situations through identifying ways to intervene and engaging in help seeking strategies for self and others.

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.

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 6

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"> ▪ Analyse potential impacts of time spent online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital Media Literacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate ways to cope with challenging life circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Healthy Relationships and Communication Skills
Specific skills and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select words that describe various mental health states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Healthy Relationships and Communication Skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate the concept of sexuality and sexual health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Rights Education and Transformative Justice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate how respect for diverse sexual identities is expressed within society 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse communication skills that keep relationships healthy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Healthy Relationships and Communication Skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate how boundaries keep relationships safe and healthy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent and Boundaries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify ways to safely intervene when help is needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bystander skills in knowing how to act in situations and events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate when, where, and how to ask for help for harmful substance use in family environments 		

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.