

Making the Change Together

A curriculum resource to address gender-based violence prevention
and bystander intervention education



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Making the Change Together: A Curriculum Resource to Address Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Bystander Intervention Education Health Education Grade 9

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Grade 9

Why This Work Matters

Education plays a vital role in preventing gender-based violence (GBV) by supporting young people to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their health, relationships, and well-being. Grade 9 represents a pivotal stage of adolescence, as students navigate increased independence, more complex peer and romantic relationships, and greater exposure to social, sexualized, and digital pressures. At this stage, students are more likely to encounter situations that involve power imbalance, coercion, online victimization, or expectations related to gender norms, making intentional, skills-based learning essential for safety and well-being.

Building on the foundational learning developed in grades primary to 8—including emotional literacy, boundary awareness, consent, healthy relationship skills, and early bystander strategies—this learning deepens students' capacity to recognize risk, analyse social conditions that contribute to harm, and respond effectively in real-world contexts. In Healthy Living 9, students engage more directly with topics such as balanced power dynamics in relationships, gender equality, societal norms and behaviours that contribute to GBV, digital harm, and strategies for supporting themselves or others in unsafe situations. This progression reflects students' growing cognitive and social capacity to think critically about responsibility, accountability, and their role within relationships and communities.

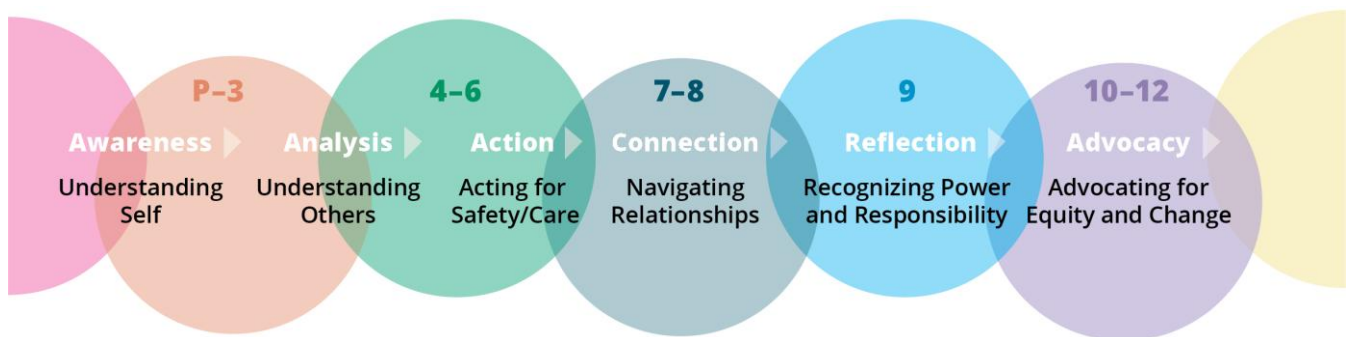
This learning supports gender-based violence prevention by helping students

- recognize patterns of coercion, control, and inequality
- understand how consent, boundaries, and power operate within relationships
- identify ways to interrupt harm as active bystanders

Through this learning, students strengthen their ability to communicate needs, set and respect boundaries, intervene safely when harm occurs, and seek help when situations escalate or feel unsafe. These skills are critical for supporting respectful, equitable relationships and shared responsibility for safety—both online and offline.

This learning directly supports the Mass Casualty Commission’s Recommendation C.17, which calls for mandatory, province-wide, evidence-based learning that helps students recognize, prevent, and respond to harm. In Healthy Living 9, this includes explicit development of bystander intervention skills; analysis of how societal norms, stereotypes, and behaviours contribute to GBV; and strategies for navigating, responding to, and seeking help in situations involving violence, exploitation, or digital harm. Each outcome builds the skills learners will need to form safe, caring, and equitable relationships throughout their lives. Every teacher of Healthy Living 9 plays a vital role in ensuring all children in Nova Scotia feel seen, safe, supported, and empowered.

Building healthier relationships involves a progression of teaching and learning concepts and skills through grades primary to 12:



Key Teaching and Learning Resources

The following suggested resources support teachers in planning and delivering learning experiences related to gender-based violence prevention, healthy relationships, personal safety, and well-being. These resources are designed to support professional judgment by offering adaptable activities, background knowledge, and discussion tools that can be integrated into existing curriculum-based learning experiences.

Teachers are encouraged to select, adapt, and integrate resources based on:

- student readiness and developmental level
- classroom context and community considerations
- alignment with specific curriculum outcomes and indicators
- time, comfort, and instructional goals

Where relevant, activities most closely aligned with specific grade-level outcomes have been identified within the suggested learning experiences section. Resources may also be used flexibly—for example, to support discussion, introduce or reinforce concepts, build skills over time, or deepen understanding of issues already being explored.

Unless otherwise indicated below, these resources can be accessed through the Gender-Based Violence Moodle.

Connect with Respect (UNESCO)

Connect with Respect is a curriculum resource developed by UNESCO that supports teachers in building knowledge and awareness related to gender equality, social cohesion, and respectful relationships among young people. The resource includes a professional learning component for educators, along with 30+ classroom-ready learning activities designed to strengthen students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

The activities are developmentally appropriate for grades 5 to 9 and address topics such as communication, consent, power dynamics, stereotypes, social norms, and bystander responsibility. Lessons are designed to be interactive and skills-based, supporting discussion, reflection, and real-world application.

From the Ground Up: A Health Promotion and Harm Reduction Curriculum Resource to Address Youth Substance Use, Gaming, and Gambling

From the Ground Up is a health promotion and harm reduction curriculum resource to address youth substance use, gaming, and gambling developed by the Province of Nova Scotia. This resource is grounded in harm reduction, inclusion, and strengths-based pedagogy, and emphasizes relational learning, communication skills, help-seeking, and reflection on risk, power, and decision-making.

Although the primary focus of *From the Ground Up* is substance use and related behaviours, individual lessons within each grade-level resource align with and can be used to support GBV prevention learning. Selected lessons that align with GBV-related outcomes have been identified in the suggested learning experiences section.

Government of Canada Workbooks (Women and Gender Equality Canada)

A set of interactive learning modules developed by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to support young people in understanding GBV and how to take action. The workbooks are designed for youth aged 14 to 24 and address forms of GBV such as controlling behaviours, emotional abuse, harassment, and unhealthy relationship dynamics, as well as help-seeking and allyship.

While not designed specifically for classroom use, select activities and prompts align with grade 9 GBV-related learning and can be adapted to support discussion, reflection, and skill development.

It's All One Curriculum

It's All One Curriculum is a comprehensive resource kit for a unified approach to teaching sexuality, gender, HIV, and human rights education. Developed by organizations like the Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), it provides guidelines and activities to help educators create curricula that are gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate, and grounded in evidence and human rights principles. The goal is to equip young people with the knowledge to make informed decisions, develop healthy relationships, and become advocates for their own and others' sexual and reproductive health.

Although broad in scope, select activities support learning related to healthy relationships, consent, power dynamics, and gender norms, making the resource relevant to GBV prevention learning.

Kids in the Know Personal Safety Program

Kids in the Know is a national, interactive personal safety education program developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. Designed for primary to high school, the program provides ready-to-use, age-appropriate lessons that build students' personal safety skills and reduce the risk of victimization online and offline.

Lessons focus on topics such as healthy relationships and boundaries, bodily autonomy, refusal and assertiveness skills, bystander strategies, online safety, and help-seeking. The program is widely used across Canada and is aligned with Health Education outcomes, supporting the development of confidence, critical thinking, and safety-related decision-making.



Educators with a GNSPES account can access the Kids in the Know Personal Safety Program and grade-level online training through the GNSPES landing page. Just go to “Learning Resources & Supports” and click the C3P icon.

MediaSmarts

MediaSmarts is a Canadian digital media literacy organization that develops research-informed, bilingual educational resources to support critical, safe, and responsible engagement with media and technology across grades primary to 12. Established in 1996, MediaSmarts provides adaptable lessons and frameworks grounded in evidence, ethics, and inclusion.

MediaSmarts resources support learning related to online safety, digital citizenship, media influence, misinformation, consent and boundaries in digital spaces, and critical thinking, making select lessons relevant to GBV prevention, particularly in relation to technology-facilitated harm.

OPHEA: Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education Resources

OPHEA (Ontario Physical and Health Education Association) is a registered charitable organization that supports health and well-being education through research-informed programs, partnerships, and professional learning. OPHEA's [Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education Resources](#) are designed to build educator understanding and confidence in addressing GBV through early, honest, and developmentally appropriate classroom conversations.

The resources support learning related to gender-based violence and harassment, consent, healthy relationships, and systems of power, and emphasize the role of educators in creating safe, inclusive, and positive school communities.

Teaching About Gender-Based Violence Toolkit (University of Windsor)

The Teaching About Gender-Based Violence Toolkit, developed by the University of Windsor, is a curriculum support resource designed for grades 8 to 12. The toolkit provides educator-facing guidance and classroom-ready materials to support learning about GBV, consent, power, healthy relationships, and prevention across subject areas.

Under Learning Resources & Supports in [GNSPES](#)

Found on the GBV Moodle, accessed through the GNSPES Landing Page under eLearning Commons:

- “Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Sexual Health Education: Research & Resources,” by SIECCAN
In this video, Dr. Jessica Wood shares key resources and research about comprehensive sexual health education and GBV prevention.
- *Not Just the Tip Toolkit* by The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
Not Just the Tip is a professional resource that provides guidance and knowledge for educators teaching grades 4 to 9 to develop the skills and confidence they need to teach about sexuality and sexual health in a way that is intersectional, inclusive, and inspiring. *Not Just the Tip* provides educators with information, tools, and strategies to support their delivery of comprehensive sexual health education.

- Reclaim Your Digital Space: Help End Gender-Based Digital Harm by the Canadian Women's Federation

This training, which can be done in multiple sittings, involves skills and knowledge in digital media literacy; it includes facts, practical resources, interactive scenarios, and actions individuals can take in life, in an organization, or community. This comprehensive and inclusive online course holds practical knowledge and skills for both educators and students in grades 9 to 12. Downloadable information sheets can be used for in-class learning.

- Teen Dating Violence Disclosures: Online Training for Educators by PrevNet

The teen dating violence online training modules are helpful for school staff working with children and youth. These modules share insights on how youth experience teen dating violence and the outcomes. It provides information on how you can respond to student disclosures of dating violence in an effective and trauma-informed way.

- Trafficking and Exploitation Services (TESS) Website

[TESS](#) is a partnership of over 70 agencies across Nova Scotia working together to respond to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. The website provides general information about human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, the services and supports available in Nova Scotia, upcoming events and training, resources for families and educators and the general public, and other news related to this topic.

From the [Nova Scotia School Book Bureau](#)

- *A Stronger Home* (NSSBB# 1007852)
- *Beyond the Basics: A Resource for Educators on Sexuality and Sexual Health 3rd edition* (NSSBB# 2002142)
- *Boys Do Cry: Improving Boys' Well-Being and Mental Health in Schools* (NSSBB# 1007665)
- *The Big Bad Wolf in my House* (NSSBB# 2003022)

Growing Understandings

Growing understandings in GBV prevention and bystander intervention education represent the core ideas and concepts students should meaningfully engage with in their learning. Students will continue to return to these understandings throughout their lives as they make choices about their safety, health, and well-being. Together, these growing understandings help build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and healthy decision-making.

The following growing understandings contribute to GBV prevention within Healthy Living 9 curriculum:

- Understanding how our emotions, stress responses, experiences, values, and social pressures influence behaviour helps us make responsible decisions and care for our own and others' well-being.
- Healthy relationships are built on clear communication, respect for boundaries and consent, and awareness of power, coercion, and inequality in friendships, dating, family, and online relationships.
- Messages from media, pornography, peer culture, and society can shape beliefs about gender, identity, body image, sexuality, and relationships, so questioning stereotypes and misinformation helps prevent harm and promote equity.
- Everyone deserves safety, dignity, and respect, and recognizing warning signs, intervening safely, and knowing how to seek help are important ways we protect ourselves and others.
- Our choices and actions can influence the safety of our communities, and challenging harmful norms, supporting others, and acting as responsible bystanders helps prevent gender-based violence.

Some suggested learning experiences appear with an asterisk (*) which indicates the lesson has been offered at another grade level. In Health Education, revisiting concepts is developmentally appropriate and beneficial. As learners age, their lived experiences evolve, and repeating a lesson allows them to apply deeper insights and greater social awareness.

Words and ideas to explore:

This vocabulary is for educator use and can be integrated within learning experiences. Some words and ideas may be new for students at this grade level.

- abuse/abusive
- advocate
- artificial intelligence (A.I.)
- assault
- assertiveness
- attention economy
- balance/imbalance
- barrier
- belonging
- bias
- body Image
- bystander
- care
- coercive control
- communication
- community
- compassion
- compromise
- conflict
- conflict resolution
- connection
- consent/non-consent
- content
- control
- coping
- culture
- cultural identity
- culturally responsive healthcare
- decision-making
- digital communication tools
- discrimination
- disinformation
- diversity
- domestic violence
- emergency
- empathy
- equality
- ethical
- factors
- gender
- gender-Based violence
- gender equality
- gender expression
- gender norms
- harm(ful)
- healthy/unhealthy
- healthy masculinities
- help-seeking
- identity (cultural, sexual, gender)
- illness
- inclusion/exclusion
- intervention
- intimate partner violence
- legal
- limits
- marketing
- media
- mental health
- misinformation
- needs
- negotiation
- normalize
- nude image
- online/offline
- perpetrator
- perpetuation
- pornography
- power
- power dynamics
- prejudice
- prevention
- privacy
- problem
- protective factors
- refusal skills
- rejection
- protective factors
- refusal skills
- rejection
- relationships (peers, friends, family, partners, colleagues)
- repair
- resilience
- respect
- responsibility
- rights
- risks
- safe/unsafe
- secrecy
- services
- sextortion
- sexual abuse
- sexual assault
- sexual harassment
- sexual violence
- silence
- social settings
- stereotype
- strategies
- support
- survivor
- tactics
- technique
- technology
- technology-facilitated violence
- treatment
- values
- verbal/non-verbal
- victim
- violence
- well-being
- witness

Understanding and Taking Care of Ourselves

Outcome

Learners will evaluate health behaviours that promote short-term and long-term health.

Indicators

- **Analyse** the impact of technology use on health and well-being.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Understanding how health behaviours influence physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being helps students make informed choices that support overall health and safety. While this outcome addresses a range of health behaviours, the strongest GBV connection in Healthy Living 9 comes from analysing the impact of technology use on health and relationships. Digital spaces can shape communication, identity, and power, and may be used to exert pressure, control, or harm. Developing digital literacy helps students recognize technology-facilitated harm, understand how online behaviours can affect safety, and make choices that protect personal boundaries. These skills support GBV prevention by helping students identify risk, respond to online harm, and seek support when digital interactions feel unsafe or harmful.

Suggested learning experiences:

- **Kids in the Know Lessons**

- Online Safety Lesson
 - > In this lesson, students will understand how attitudes and beliefs can contribute to sexual violence, including how the use of Artificial Intelligence and sharing intimate images can impact others. They will understand sextortion, ways to prevent sextortion, and how to respond if they are being sextorted. They will understand what constitutes sexual consent and sexual abuse and will be able to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They will know how to help a friend who discloses sexual abuse or assault and where to go for help.

- **MediaSmarts**

- [Body Image and Social Media: Escaping the Comparison Trap](#)
 - > In this lesson, students consider the ways in which social media may prompt them to compare themselves with others, and the impacts that can have on body image and self-esteem. They analyse how the features, algorithms, and culture of the social networks they use may affect them and will produce “paper prototypes” of redesigned social media apps that promote more healthful use. Finally, students reflect on how they can change how they use the existing apps to be more like their redesigned versions.
- [Body Positive Ads](#)
 - > This lesson helps students understand the relationship between body image and marketing by exploring Aerie and Dove’s body positive advertising campaigns. Students begin by reading about the impact that body positive advertising campaigns have on companies, as well as on their consumers. Students will then look at body positive ads aimed towards men and read research about how there is a lack of representation in this field. They will then deconstruct a series of traditional ads compared to body positive ones and discuss how marketers target “ideal beauty” messages to both men and women and whether they are effective. Finally, students will evaluate whether body positive ads are effective in general or not through discussion.

- [Break the Fake Lesson Plan: Verifying Information Online*](#)
 - > In this lesson, students participate in a workshop that teaches them four quick, easy steps to verify online information. After practicing these four steps they create a public service announcement aimed at teaching one of these steps and spreading the message that it is necessary for everyone to fact-check information we see online every time we are going to share it or act on it.
- [Dealing with Digital Stress](#)
 - > In this lesson, students reflect on the ways in which digital media can cause stress. Through a series of role-playing exercises, they consider how social media can cause stress by making us compare the highlights of others' lives to the lowlights of our own, and practice strategies for coping with digital stress.
- [First, Do No Harm: Being an Active Witness to Cyberbullying](#)
 - > In this lesson, students consider how difficult and complicated it can sometimes be to do the right thing. Students are asked to consider whether they agree with a number of widely-held moral principles and then are asked to consider a moral dilemma in which a number of moral principles are in conflict, reflecting on how their view of it may change based on the details of the scenario. They then explore the idea of weighing different moral principles against one another and develop their own moral dilemmas. Finally, students learn practical tools for deciding how best to intervene when they witness cyberbullying and apply those tools to moral dilemmas relating to cyberbullying.
- [Hate 2.0*](#)
 - > In groups, students research an online environment (*such as social networking sites*) and a particular example of that environment (*students should select a social media platform relevant to them*) to learn the issues, strategies and tools relating to online hate in that environment.

- [Impact! How to Make a Difference When You Witness Bullying Online](#)
 - > In this lesson, students discuss reasons why they might be reluctant to intervene when they witness cyberbullying and identify ways that they can help without making things worse. They then use the interactive tool to help them decide how to navigate scenarios relating to being a witness to bullying, and share their experiences to help them understand how important it is to think carefully before you act. Finally, students learn about "decision trees" and other infographics and create an original infographic to communicate what they've learned about how to intervene when they witness cyberbullying.
- [My Voice is Louder than Hate](#)
 - > A multimedia lesson resource designed to empower students in Grades 9 to 12 to push back against hate and prejudice in their online communities. Over the course of this program, students will: learn how to push back when they encounter hate or prejudice online; develop digital and media literacy skills to recognize and confront hate material online; and, prepare to take action as digital citizens by taking an active role in forming the norms and values of their offline communities and using digital and media tools for civic action online and offline.

Understanding and Taking Care of Ourselves

Outcome

Learners will analyse ways to care for one's own sexual and reproductive health.

Indicators

- **Determine** when and where to find options, supports, and treatments for issues that can impact health.
- **Investigate** the factors that influence decision-making relating to sexual health.

Why this matters for GBV prevention:

Understanding sexual and reproductive health supports students in making informed decisions about their bodies, relationships, and well-being. While this outcome addresses a range of topics, the strongest GBV connection in Healthy Living 9 comes from examining how GBV can impact sexual and reproductive health, recognizing power imbalances that influence decision-making, including the role of alcohol and other substance as a contributor to sexual and other forms of relational violence. Power imbalances can affect whether individuals feel able to express boundaries, access support, or make choices that reflect their values and safety. Learning to recognize these dynamics and communicate needs supports GBV prevention by strengthening bodily autonomy, supporting informed decision-making, and helping students seek support when sexual and reproductive health is affected by pressure, control, or harm.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***From the Ground Up***

- Lesson 9.6 Drug Land (Part 2) and 9.7 Collateral Damage
 - > In this lesson, students are reminded that alcohol and cannabis are widely used drugs, and their use is linked to many consequences—especially when they're consumed in riskier ways (binge drinking, large amounts of cannabis). One aspect of this lesson invites conversation that surfaces a range of consequences associated with the use of alcohol and cannabis. The task is for students to create a reality check for their community by sorting the consequences slides into two categories: Happening and Not Happening inviting reflection and conversation about the role of substance use in gender-based violence. *From the Ground Up* lessons are uniquely created for the teacher to adapt the slide-based learning experiences to include related health topics the class may be exploring. Lesson 9.7 Collateral Damage invites a similar learning experience surfacing not only consequences but life impacts.

- **It's All One Curriculum**

- [Activity 40: Self-Esteem](#)
 - > In this lesson, students discuss pressures related to physical appearance and write about an aspect of their own appearance that they feel good about. In small groups, each student hears characteristics unrelated to appearance that the others admire in them.

- **MediaSmarts**

- [Relationships and Sexuality in the Media](#)
 - > In this lesson, students learn to question media representations of gender, relationships and sexuality. After a brief “myth busting” quiz about relationships in the media and a reminder of the constructed nature of media products, the teacher leads the class in an analysis of the messages about gender, sex and relationships communicated by beer and alcohol ads. Students analyse the messages communicated by their favourite media types and then contrast it with their own experience.

Understanding and Taking Care of Ourselves

Outcome

Learners will investigate ways to access health resources that support health and well-being.

Indicators

- **Investigate** ways to navigate the healthcare system.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Developing health literacy helps students understand how to access information and services that support their health and well-being. While this outcome addresses health literacy more broadly, the strongest GBV connection in Healthy Living 9 comes from learning how to navigate the healthcare system when someone is experiencing domestic violence or intimate partner violence. Knowing what supports are available in the community and understanding how to access them helps students recognize that help exists beyond informal supports. Examining barriers to help-seeking—such as fear, stigma, lack of information, or concerns about confidentiality—supports GBV prevention by helping students anticipate challenges, identify safer pathways to support, and understand what to do when barriers arise for themselves or others.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***From the Ground Up***

- Lesson 9.8: How to Care
 - > In this lesson, students are invited to examine barriers of seeking help. Focusing on substance use, teachers can easily extend the learning to include intimate partner violence and/or domestic violence stories as these intersect with harmful substance use. Students come into our classrooms with ideas of what someone with a substance use problem looks like and this would also be true of perpetrators of violence. The goal of this lesson is to explore these preconceived notions about people who struggle with substance use and introduce the complex stories that can lead people to these challenging places in life. As a teacher, is it helpful to know that the earlier you can identify the need for help, and the earlier support or treatment can be accessed, the more successful the outcomes—including less collateral damage. This lesson could be paired with an inquiry-based learning experience to identify the types of health resources available in the community and online that address substance use and the intersection of related consequences including intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and other forms of violence including commercial sexual exploitation.

Healthy Relationships

Outcome

Learners will develop communication skills that support the growth and maintenance of healthy relationships.

Indicators

- **Select** language to use when expressing needs, disagreement, and perspectives within relationships.
- **Use** assertiveness, negotiation, and refusal skills across various relational scenarios.
- **Analyse** the impact of various conflict resolution strategies.
- **Reflect** on the impacts of language used online and offline.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Understanding how relationships influence physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health helps students recognize how communication, power, and respect affect safety and well-being. In Grade 9, students are more likely to navigate complex peer and romantic relationships that involve expectations around consent, boundaries, and responsibility. Learning to communicate needs, recognize healthy and unhealthy relationship patterns, and respond to conflict or harm supports safer interactions. These skills support GBV prevention by helping students identify power imbalances, challenge harmful behaviours, intervene safely as bystanders, and seek help when relationships involve coercion, control, or harm.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***Connect with Respect***

- Topic 4: Activity 4: Making an Apology*
 - > In this activity, students will practice using empathy to devise and give an apology.
- Topic 5: Activity 1: Communication Skills for Respectful Relationships*
 - > In this activity, students will identify positive and negative attributes, actions, and attitudes in peer friendships.
- Topic 5: Activity 2: Respectful Relationships Between Boys and Girls*
 - > In this activity, students will identify the ways that positive attributes, actions, and attitudes can strengthen male-female relationships between siblings, friends, spouses, fellow students, and co-workers.
- Topic 5: Activity 3: Introducing Assertiveness*
 - > In this activity, students will learn the difference between assertive, aggressive, and submissive behaviour and practice assertive communication strategies to address or prevent GBV.
- Topic 5: Activity 4: Using 'I' Statements to Share Emotions and Assert Needs*
 - > In this activity, students will learn about and practice 'I' statements as an assertive communication strategy, practice use of 'I' statements in the context of preventing or reporting GBV, and practice expressing personal needs in a positive way, without blaming others.

- **Government of Canada Workbooks**

- [Module 2: Gender-Based Violence and You](#)
 - > In this module, students learn how to talk about GBV with their loved ones and think about GBV through an intersectional lens.

- **It's All One Curriculum**

- Activity 27: My Relationships*
 - > In this activity, students create a visual representation of their relationships.
- Activity 29: Is It Love?
 - > In this activity, students distinguish love from related emotions.
- Activity 32: What I'm Looking For
 - > In this activity, students list the qualities they would seek in a long-term partner and analyse their responses from a gender perspective. Students consolidate what they have learned in a letter or song for an imaginary future partner.
- Activity 36: Practicing Assertive Communication*
 - > In this activity, students review assertive behaviours, discuss cultural implications, and practice using assertive communication in situations where rights are being abused.

- **MediaSmarts**

- [Online Relationships: Respect and Consent](#)
 - > In this lesson, students use mind maps to explore concepts of "respect" and "consent" in an online context. They consider a wide range of scenarios that shed light on different aspects of consent relating to digital media and draw on those to create a detailed definition. They then learn about the moral disengagement techniques or "sneaky excuses" that we sometimes use to let us do things we know are wrong, and identify them in short videos. Finally, students create a digital story in which they illustrate one of the aspects of consent or one of the "sneaky excuses."
- [Relationships and Sexuality in the Media](#)
 - > In this lesson, students learn to question media representations of gender, relationships, and sexuality. After a brief "myth busting" quiz about relationships in the media and a reminder of the constructed nature of media products, the teacher leads the class in an analysis of the messages about gender, sex, and relationships communicated by beer and alcohol ads. Students analyse the messages communicated by their favourite media types and then contrast it with their own experience.

- **Teaching About Gender-Based Violence Toolkit (University of Windsor)**
 - Healthy Relationships Lesson Plan
 - > In this lesson, students demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships. They apply their knowledge of sexual health and safety, including a strong understanding of the concept of consent and sexual limits, and their decision-making skills to think in advance about their sexual health and sexuality.

Healthy Relationships

Outcome

Learners will reflect on conditions that positively counter harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and biases within relationships.

Indicators

- **Identify** the conditions that influence gender norms, practices, and behaviours.
- **Investigate** the requirements for balanced power dynamics in relationships.
- **Investigate** actions that promote gender equality.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Understanding how individual and collective actions influence safety and well-being helps students recognize their role in preventing harm within relationships and communities. In Healthy Living 9, students are expected to reflect on how social norms, power dynamics, and silence can contribute to gender-based violence. Learning to identify situations where intervention is needed, evaluate safe and appropriate responses, and take action as a bystander supports prevention before harm escalates. These skills support GBV prevention by helping students recognize responsibility beyond themselves, interrupt harmful behaviour, support those who may be at risk, and contribute to safer, more respectful environments both online and offline.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***Connect With Respect***

- Topic 1, Activity 1: Gender and Equality*
 - > In this activity, students will learn about the difference between the terms sex and gender.
- Topic 1, Activity 2: Unpacking Gender Norms
 - > In this activity, students will consider how gender norms differently influence people's experiences, identify the way in which gender norms can differ from one community to another and can change over time, and identify the ways in which gender norms can lead to harmful practices and behaviours, including inequality, discrimination, exclusion, violence, and risk-taking.
- Topic 1, Activity 3: Messages About Men and Women in the Media and Literature
 - > In this activity, students will explore how gender norms are reinforced in the media and other social spaces.
- Topic 1, Activity 5: Challenging Myths
 - > In this activity, students will identify and challenge common myths based on gender norms and expectations.
- Topic 2, Activity 1: Gender Equality and Positive Role Models
 - > In this activity, students will describe the qualities and character strengths that they value in others and consider the non-gendered nature of valued personal qualities and character strengths.
- Topic 2, Activity 4: Positive and Negative Uses of Power*
 - > In this activity, students will consider the kinds of power that exist in various relationships, develop an understanding of the positive and negative uses of power, and identify positive and negative uses of power within peer and gender relationships.
- Topic 2, Activity 5: Differences and Discrimination*
 - > In this activity, students will develop an understanding of the term discrimination, develop an awareness that discrimination is an abuse of power, and identify groups and sub-groups who are more likely to experience discrimination.

- Topic 2, Activity 6: Sexuality and Stigma*
 - > In this activity, students will develop awareness that some forms of gender-based discrimination are particularly severe for those who are transgender or same-sex attracted.
- Topic 2, Activity 7: Local Leaders
 - > In this activity, students will identify simple acts of friendship that can be used to provide positive peer support and develop positive norms for intervening to provide peer support for those experiencing stigma or discrimination.
- Topic 4, Activity 1: A Focus on School-Related Gender-Based Violence
 - > In this activity, students will identify where and when students are most likely to experience GBV at school, and where and when they are most likely to be free from gender-based violence.
- Topic 7, Activity 4: Messages of Support*
 - > In this activity, students will practice simple peer-support strategies.
- **It's All One Curriculum**
 - Activity 1: Why Fairness Matters*
 - > In this activity, students think about the issue of fairness by responding to quotations from prominent people.
 - Activity 5: Male and Female Word Webs
 - > In this activity, students work in groups to create word webs about what society says it means to be a "man" or a "woman," and to discuss where these ideas come from. They are introduced to the concept of gender.
 - Activity 6: Memory Journey: Learning About Gender as a Child
 - > In this activity, students share a memory of a time when they were treated a certain way because of their sex; they recall their feelings about those experiences.
 - Activity 8: Research Project: Gender in the School Environment
 - > In this activity, students conduct research on the role of gender in schooling and report on their findings. This project requires out-of-class research plus class time.

- Activity 9: Selling Stereotypes: Analyzing Advertising*
 - > In this activity, students make a collage of female and male images from advertisements, analyse the ads' messages about gender, and create ads that break stereotypes.
- Activity 10: The Gendered Space
 - > In this activity, students draw maps of their communities, showing which spaces are safe and accessible to people of which sex. They analyse how participation in civic life is affected by gender roles.
- Activity 11: Women of Action: A Make-a-Book Project
 - > In this activity, students create children's books about a female leader.
Note: This activity requires access to a library or to the internet, so you must plan accordingly.
- Activity 15: Images of Changing Gender Roles and Norms
 - > In this activity, students interview a grandparent (or someone from that generation) about gender roles and norms when they were young, compare them with their own experiences, and discuss how gender roles change.
- Activity 18: First Impressions
 - > In this activity, students examine their response to a character in a story based on their assumptions about whether the character is male or female.
- Activity 20: Feeling Different
 - > In this activity, students identify how it feels to be similar to or different from other people and reaffirm the human rights of minority groups, including sexual minorities.
- Activity 53: Get Inspired! Creating Change
 - > In this activity, students select a quote that inspires them and explore what it would mean to apply the message of the quote in their own lives.

- MediaSmarts

- [Exposing Gender Stereotypes](#)*

- > This is the first of three MediaSmarts lessons that address gender stereotypes. The objective of this lesson is to encourage students to develop their own critical intelligence with regard to culturally inherited stereotypes, and to the images presented in the media. In this lesson, students take a look at their own assumptions about what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman. The brainstorming and discussion sessions are meant to encourage them to ask gender-specific questions as a step in the self-reflective process. Students will begin to see how believing in stereotypes can lead to violence towards oneself and others.

- [Learning Gender Stereotypes](#)*

- > This is the second of three lessons that address gender stereotypes. The objective of these lessons is to encourage students to develop their own critical intelligence with regard to culturally inherited stereotypes, and to the images presented in the media. The lesson begins with a review of stereotypes that are associated with men and women and their possible sources - including the role of the media. Students deconstruct a series of advertisements based on gender representation and answer questions about gender stereotyping about articles they have read.

- [The Impact of Gender Stereotypes](#)*

- > This is the third of three lessons that address gender stereotypes. The objective of these lessons is to encourage students to develop their own critical intelligence with regard to culturally inherited stereotypes, and to the images presented in the media. The lesson begins with a discussion about how self-violence may be promoted by the fashion industry, as well as on social media when men and women put their health at risk to attain impossible standards of attractiveness and thinness. Students also explore how stereotypes about masculinity can fuel male violence.

- [Girl in the Mirror](#)*
 - > In this lesson, students look at how gender stereotyping may discourage young women from becoming involved in politics. Students begin by discussing what is meant by the terms “politics” and “political action.” With those definitions in mind, they create a “portrait of a politician” based on the traits and characteristics that are needed to be a political agent. Students then deconstruct media products aimed at girls and young women in order to identify the stereotypes contained within and understand how these may raise barriers to being politically active.
 - [Marketing to Teens: Gender Roles in Advertising](#)*
 - > In this lesson, students explore gender roles in advertising by taking an ad campaign they have seen which is specifically directed to one gender, and redesigning the campaign to target the opposite gender.
 - [Put Your Best Face Forward](#)*
 - > In this lesson, students start by discussing the phenomenon of “selfies” and serve as experts in advising the teacher on the standards by which the “best” selfies are judged. They then discuss a number of statements taken from interviews with youth that highlight issues of self-representation, body image, and gender standards, and learn about “photoshopping” images. Finally, students apply what they have learned by modifying an image that is at least 50 years old to meet “selfie” standards.
- **OPHEA**
 - Singer Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students enhance their media literacy using the Singer Scenario activity by reflecting on how their attitudes and behaviours can be affected by the actions of influential people and, in turn, how the attitudes and behaviours of influential people can be affected by the actions of consumers. Students decide what type of bystander they want to be, consider how their actions reflect (or don’t reflect) their core values, and explore how they can change their behaviour in order to advocate for preventing GBV.

- **Teaching About Gender-Based Violence Toolkit (University of Windsor)**
 - Cisnormativity/Heteronormativity Lesson Plan
 - > In this lesson, students will be introduced to how gender norms related to heteronormativity and cisnormativity are socially constructed, how this impacts individuals' identity and sense of self, how they relate to others and the world, and how the norms are often weaponized in the form of gender-based bullying and harassment. Through a series of interactive activities, students will learn and review vocabulary connected with communities marginalized by gender and sexual identities, as well as reflect on how their own experiences shape how they move through the world. Cisgender and/or straight students will have an opportunity to gain perspective on their relative privilege and all students will think critically on the ways in which gender is policed in their everyday lives.
 - Gender Policing Lesson Plan
 - > In this lesson, students will review how the social norms of gender are socially constructed and policed, and create responses. They will grow an understanding of what gender policing looks like and who is often targeted. Through a series of interactive activities, students will develop critical thinking skills around how dominant culture restricts gender expression through its systems and its effects on social, interpersonal, and personal levels. Cisgender and/or straight students will have an opportunity to reflect on their relative privilege and all students will reflect on the ways in which gender is policed in their everyday lives.

Healthy Relationships

Outcome

Learners will evaluate responses to gender-based violence.

Indicators

- **Analyse** the ways that societal conditions, norms, and behaviours can contribute to gender-based violence.
- **Investigate** ways to counter behaviours that contribute to gender-based violence.
- **Identify** ways to support someone who experiences, witnesses, or hears about gender-based violence.
- **Identify** strategies for getting help in abusive relationships.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Evaluating responses to GBV helps students understand how harm is shaped not only by individual actions, but also by societal conditions, norms, and behaviours. Learning to analyse how attitudes, stereotypes, silence, and power imbalances contribute to GBV supports critical awareness of why violence occurs and how it is sustained. Investigating ways to counter harmful behaviours and identify supportive responses helps students recognize their role in prevention and response. These skills support GBV prevention by helping students support those who experience or witness violence, challenge harmful norms, and identify safe strategies for seeking help in abusive relationships.

Suggested learning experiences:

● *Connect with Respect*

- Topic 2, Activity 2: Fairness, Equality, and Human Rights*
 - > In this activity, students will describe what they believe fair, equal, and respectful treatment would look like in families, schools, communities, and the workplace and advocate for the personal qualities needed to create a world where everyone is treated as if they are of equal value.
- Topic 2, Activity 3: Human Rights and Gender Equality in Everyday Moments*
 - > In this activity, students will identify what respect for gender equality and human rights could look like in everyday human interactions.
- Topic 3, Activity 1: Awareness of Gender-Based Violence*
 - > In this activity, students will learn that violence has many forms including physical, psychological, verbal, and sexual; identify that at different times, people can be in the position of a target, witness or observer, perpetrator and/or accomplice, and the negative consequences of violence on each of these parties; and develop an understanding that discrimination and violence can often go together and have similar effects.
- Topic 3, Activity 2: What is Gender-Based Violence?*
- Topic 3, Activity 2: What is Gender-Based Violence?*
 - > In this activity, students will define GBV, provide examples of different types of GBV, and recognize that anyone can be the target of GBV and that some groups are more likely to be targeted than others.
- Topic 3, Activity 3: Effects of Gender-Based Violence*
 - > In this activity, students will describe the kinds of GBV both males and females tend to observe, initiate, or be the target of in and around school. They will identify the physical and psychological effects of school-related GBV on target(s), witness(es), accomplices, and perpetrator(s).
- Topic 3, Activity 4: Negative Health Impacts of Gender Norms*
 - > In this activity, students will identify how some gender norms have a negative effect on health and human rights.

- Topic 4, Activity 2: Positive Rules for the Safe Learning Space*
 - > In this activity, students will make rules and agreements they need to support a safe, friendly, and equal learning environment for everyone in their class/school.
- Topic 4, Activity 3: Empathy, Imagination, and Hidden Emotions
 - > In this activity, students will learn about the concept of empathy and explore the positive impact of empathy on preventing or responding to GBV.
- **Government of Canada Workbooks**
 - [Module 1: Gender-Based Violence and Healthy Relationships](#)
 - > In this module, students explore what GBV is, who it affects the most, and how they can spot the signs in their relationships.
- **Teaching About Gender-Based Violence Toolkit (University of Windsor)**
 - Consent Lesson Plan
 - > In this lesson, students demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relations. Students apply their knowledge of sexuality and safety, including a strong understanding of the concept of consent and sexual limits, and their decision-making skills to think in advance about their sexual health and sexuality.

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

Outcome

Learners will investigate ways to care for one's personal safety and ways to prevent injury online and offline.

Indicators

- **Investigate** rights and responsibilities of engagement in online spaces.
- **Investigate** ways to prevent, navigate, and respond to online victimization.
- **Identify** ways for setting and respecting personal boundaries of self and others.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Understanding how to care for personal safety supports students in navigating risk and protecting themselves and others in both online and offline spaces. While this outcome includes injury prevention more broadly, the strongest GBV connection in grade 9 comes from examining rights and responsibilities in online spaces, preventing and responding to online victimization, and setting and respecting personal boundaries. Digital environments can be used to harass, control, monitor, or threaten others, often in ways that mirror or extend offline harm. Learning to recognize online victimization, understand boundaries, and respond safely supports GBV prevention by helping students protect their privacy, challenge harmful behaviour, and seek support when online interactions feel unsafe or abusive.

Suggested learning experiences:

- **Government of Canada Workbooks**

- [Introduction: Understanding Your Rights](#)
 - > Students discover what rights they have as a young person and learn how to set boundaries by creating a Personal Bill of Rights.
- [Module 3: Seeking Support for Gender-Based Violence](#)
 - > Students find resources to support themselves or a loved one, learn how to avoid unsafe situations, and see how self-care can help them handle trauma.

- **MediaSmarts**

- [Thinking About Hate*](#)
 - > In this lesson, students develop their critical thinking skills by learning to recognize various types of bad faith arguments, including those that are used by hate mongers to spread misinformation and fuel hatred and intolerance.

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

Outcome

Learners will develop bystander intervention skills across a variety of emergency and risk scenarios.

Indicators

- **Identify** emergency and risk scenarios.
- **Determine** actions to take in a variety of emergency and risk scenarios.
- **Investigate** ways to overcome barriers that may prevent people from intervening.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Developing bystander intervention skills helps students recognize when someone may be at risk and understand how their actions can prevent harm. Learning to identify emergency and risk scenarios builds awareness of situations where GBV may be occurring or escalating. Determining appropriate actions and investigating barriers that prevent people from intervening—such as fear, uncertainty, or social pressure—supports safer and more effective responses. These skills support GBV prevention by empowering students to act when harm is occurring, reduce silence and inaction, and contribute to safer environments through informed, responsible intervention.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***Connect with Respect***
 - Topic 6, Activity 1: Skills for People Who Witness Violence*
 - > In this activity, students will explore the effects of violence on someone who witnesses or hears about violence.

- Topic 6, Activity 2: Building Support Strategies
 - > In this activity, students will explore how the response of the witnesses can either encourage or prevent GBV, learn about positive strategies that witnesses can use to prevent or reduce the effects of GBV, and practice appropriate, safe, and responsible witness responses to GBV.
- Topic 6, Activity 3: I Want to do Something to Help!
 - > In this activity, students will develop scripts that witnesses can use to report GBV or to provide support to people experiencing violence.
- Topic 6, Activity 4: Active Listening for Peer Support
 - > In this activity, students will learn the technique of active listening as a strategy for improving their capacity to provide peer support.
- Topic 7, Activity 1: Help-Seeking and Support Skills
 - > In this activity, students will consider when reporting or help-seeking is warranted in response to school-related GBV.
- Topic 7, Activity 2: Where to Go for Help*
 - > In this activity, students will identify a range of people from whom students can seek support if experiencing or observing GBV and identify a range of people who students can support in their everyday lives so as to contribute to the reduction of GBV.
- Topic 7, Activity 3: Overcoming Resistance to Help-Seeking
 - > In this activity, students will explore barriers to reporting and help-seeking in situations involving GBV.
- Topic 7, Activity 4: Messages of Support*
 - > In this activity, students will practice simple peer-support strategies.
- **Government of Canada Workbooks**
 - [Module 4: Being a GBV Ally](#)
 - > In this module, students learn to become an ally to those who have been subjected to gender-based violence and learn how to speak up, with, and for people experiencing harm, violence, and oppression.

- OPHEA

- Aunt's Love Interest Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students identify their feelings and explore the feelings of others regarding healthy relationships and establishing healthy boundaries. The activity encourages students to think about their core values and beliefs about healthy boundaries in intimate relationships, the importance of privacy, and the challenges of intervening as a bystander in subtle yet impactful ways.
- Community Member Texting Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students investigate the use of technology to respectfully and appropriately communicate with others. Students practice empathizing with a friend whose consent is being violated by a community member and consider the safest and most effective ways of intervening as a bystander.
- Co-op Placement Boss Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students identify the feelings and emotions of the person in the scenario, taking note of the emotional impacts of workplace sexual harassment. This scenario teaches students about the difficulties of navigating power imbalances and why victims and bystanders often feel powerless. By connecting with the emotional impact of the harassment, the students will learn the importance of being empathetic and supportive bystanders.
- Deepfake Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students explore the issue of generating and sharing deepfakes as a form of GBV with the intent to humiliate, violate, or demean another individual. Students assess the impact of deepfakes on the individuals targeted and consider strategies to safely respond to situations as bystanders and responsible digital citizens, and to contribute to a safer and more inclusive school community.
- Draw the Line Coach Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students identify their feelings and emotions about the scenario, taking note of how these stem from their core values and beliefs around communicating and interacting with trusted adults. Students consider taking various challenging or uncomfortable actions as a bystander and assess short-term and long-term implications for their choices.

- Intimate Partner Stalking Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students explore the feelings of the person in this scenario, taking note of the subtleties of the type of intimate partner violence, such as stalking, that can occur online and in person. The activity encourages students to think about media messages that normalize stalking behaviours as they determine strategies for establishing, communicating, and respecting boundaries in intimate relationships and dealing with intimate partner violence. Students consider the importance of taking responsibility for managing their own emotions and actions in a relationship and explore ways of being a supportive bystander and an advocate for education and change.
- Online Sexual Harassment Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students explore the hypersexualization of romantic relationships between women in an online environment, taking note of the subtleties of this type of GBV. Hypersexualization is the act of attributing sexual overtones to something that is not inherently sexual. The activity encourages students to think about these sexually explicit, derogatory messages (overt and implied) and assess their potential impact on the individuals targeted and those who witness it. Students reflect on attitudes that normalize and diminish the seriousness of this behaviour and explore ways of being a supportive bystander and an advocate for education and change.
- Photo Sharing Scenario Activity
 - > In this activity, students will explore what consent means and how they are implicated in situations involving the sharing of intimate photos as bystanders, consider their core values and beliefs, reflect upon how their role as a bystander could affect perpetrators and victims of GBV while promoting restorative justice.

Mental Health and Addiction

Outcome

Learners will evaluate healthy ways to navigate change and/or challenging life circumstances.

Indicators

- **Identify** protective factors that support resilience in times of change.
- **Investigate** ways for coping with feelings associated with life challenges.
- **Identify** practices for rest, relaxation, fun.

Why this outcome matters for GBV prevention:

Learning healthy ways to navigate change and challenging life circumstances helps students build resilience and protect their well-being during times of stress or vulnerability. Identifying protective factors and practicing coping strategies supports emotional regulation and reduces isolation when students experience difficult emotions or life transitions. Understanding the importance of rest, relaxation, and positive outlets helps students maintain balance and recognize when additional support may be needed. These skills support gender-based violence prevention by strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerability during periods of stress or change, and helping students seek support rather than remain isolated when challenges increase risk.

Suggested learning experiences:

- ***From the Ground Up***

- Lesson 4—Firsts: Revisited
 - > In this lesson, students revisit a lesson introduced in grade 7 exploring “firsts” related to substance use but this time expands the notion of potentially harmful “firsts” to other health areas with a focus on behaviours we can initiate that help build resilience in ourselves, and the support we can show friends. It’s also a chance to reflect on some unhelpful or unhealthy firsts that have already taken place with substances or involvement in some activities, and thinking about the next steps ... will they be helpful or unhelpful? *From the Ground Up* lessons are uniquely created for the teacher to adapt the slide-based learning experiences to include related health topics, recognizing common risk and protective factors are interconnected.