

Space Invaders Activity

Contributed by Jessica Danforth & the Native Youth Sexual Health Network
and adapted by Teen Talk

Recommended Age: 14+

Goals

- To discuss consent: explain consent, lack of consent and coercion, how alcohol/drugs impact consent, and provide sexual assault resources.
- To explore the idea of personal space.

Have Ready

- A big space that can fit all youth standing shoulder to shoulder in two rows facing each other. There should be at least 15 feet between the two lines of participants.

Instructions

- Ask the youth to partner up and to stand across from one another.
- Explain to the youth that we will be using an activity to explore personal boundaries and consent.
- Ask youth to, **“Stand across from your partner. Decide who will be ‘the walker’ and who will be ‘the stander’.”**

Part 1 of 3

(No talking or body language, just facial expression)

- **For this exercise, the walker will move towards the stander. They need to successfully communicate with one another to ensure that the walker does not enter into the stander’s personal space. When the walker stops, they must move their entire body up to their furthest step. There is a catch, though! In this first part, the stander can only communicate their**

personal space with their facial expressions. No talking, hand gestures, or other body language.

Debrief

- **“How was that for everybody? Hands up standers, whose walker is currently inside their personal space?”** Ideally, several. **“Why do you think this is?”** Walker couldn’t tell/didn’t notice that they were in their partner’s space, there was no talking, and there was no other body language.

Part 2 of 3

(Switch roles, no talking, but can use body language/facial expression)

- Okay, part 2. Same instructions, same partners, except we’re going to switch roles. Walkers become standers, standers become walkers. Now in this part, you can use your body language and hand gestures, but still no talking!

Debrief

- **“How was that for everybody? Hands up standers, whose walker is currently inside their personal space?”** Probably a bit better than part 1. **“What do you think could make this better?”** Talking, if the walker went slower. **“Why do you think solely relying upon body language sets us up for miscommunication?”** No one is a mind reader; you can easily misinterpret body language.

Part 3 of 3

(Switch roles, talking/body language/facial expressions allowed and encouraged)

- Okay, last part. Switch back to your first roles. Now, this time we want to see verbal communication between the walker

and the stander! Talk to one another and negotiate those boundaries! Use your body language and facial expressions too!

Debrief

- **“How was that? Hands up standers, whose walker is currently inside their personal space?”** Should be the best result. **“What made this one the most successful? Even if someone is inside someone else’s personal space, why is it different this time around?”** They got permission/consent.

Consent Debrief

- This is how Teen Talk explains consent: **When it comes to sexual situations, “Does anyone know what the word consent means?” Consent is clear permission, which means that only yes means yes. It’s a voluntary agreement, which means it’s not something that one person does to another, but rather it’s something that people decide to do together.**
- **Consent is about asking, listening, and respecting.** For example, let’s say that you want to kiss someone, what would consent sound like? What would you say? Can I kiss you? I’d really like to kiss you. (Anything they say that is respectful.) You might be thinking this is kind of weird or hard, or it seems really awkward, but the more we do it, the more natural it becomes.
- **Let’s practice asking for consent about something non-sexual.** Look to the person next to you and ask them to join you in an activity you want to do this weekend. For example, “Do you want to have lunch together, go swimming, play video games, etc. with me?” Truth is, we are using consent all the time. “Did any of you hear a yes?” Great. “Did anyone hear a no?” That is going to happen sometimes.
- **Part of asking for consent is listening to the response and respecting what they say/want. It’s also important to pay attention to what they’re doing non-verbally.**
- “If you ask if you can touch someone’s bum and they say yes, it’s bum touching time! If they say maybe later, I’m not sure, or

nothing at all, what does that all mean?" No. **Sometimes hearing a no can feel hard or we might feel kind of rejected. Even though those feelings are normal, it's our responsibility to deal with our feelings and respect the person who is saying no. Consent is also ongoing. This means that you have a right to say no at any time.** So, if in the middle of bum touching, someone wanted it to stop, what would have to happen? Stop. If someone says 'stop', or 'wait', looks uncomfortable, or is pulling away, stop and check in with them. This could sound like, "You don't seem really into this." **If you are unsure, always stop and ask.**

- Asking for consent can be fun and sexy, and figuring out ways to talk about consent that feels comfortable for you can help. We know that it can be more complicated than just asking or saying 'yes' or 'no.' People don't always talk about touching/sex before it happens; sometimes people communicate non-verbally, through eye contact and body language. **Ultimately, consent gives both people a chance to say whether or not they are into something and is part of creating trust and respect in our relationships.**
- So, we just talked a lot about what consent is, now we're going to share some things that consent is not. **Consent is not coercive, which means trying to change someone's no into a yes by pressuring, nagging, or using guilt.** It's also not okay to try to change someone's no into a yes with alcohol or drugs, or to wait until someone is drunk or high to ask them for consent. What's the most respectful thing to do if people are drunk or high? Wait until they are sober, bring them water, help them get home, or watch over them, etc. **Ultimately, consent doesn't count when people are drunk or high.** That doesn't mean that every time there is drinking and sex it's a sexual assault, but we do know that it happens. **What's important to know is that any unwanted sexual attention or contact is not okay.**
- **If you have ever experienced sexual assault, it is never your fault.** It doesn't matter where you were, who you were with, what you were wearing, or if you were drunk or high. If someone chooses to assault another person, it's always the fault of the person who is choosing to use violence.

- **People have a right to be believed and get support. No one has to go through recovering from that experience alone.** It can help to talk to someone you trust. You can access support for you or a friend. If you know someone or have a friend that has experienced a sexual assault, a couple of good things you can say are: “It’s not your fault,” and “I’m sorry this happened.” You can ask them how you can support them and you can also give them information about the Sexual Assault Crisis Program. **The Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line is a great resource that people can call if they need to talk. You can also call the line if you’re feeling upset or unsure about a sexual experience. It is open 24/7 and free to call from anywhere in Manitoba. Their phone number is 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631. If someone needs to go to the hospital or clinic after an assault, a counsellor from the Sexual Assault Crisis Program can be there to support them.**