

Physical and Emotional Changes at Puberty

Lesson Plan

Resource: H&PE Elementary Resources

Unit: Human Development and Sexual Health

Grade(s): 4

Lesson: 2 of 4

H&PE Curriculum Expectations

2019 H&PE Curriculum Expectations: A1.1, A1.2, A1.5, D1.5

Materials

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)
- Sticky notes (paper or online interactive tool)
- [Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart \(PDF\)](#)

Learning Goals

- We are learning about the physical changes that occur at puberty and the emotional and social impact that may result from these changes.
- We are learning how to express our feelings and understand and respond to the feelings of others.

Overall Assessment

Using the Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart, observe and provide written and verbal feedback on students' ability to describe the physical changes that occur during puberty and the emotional and social impacts that may result from these changes.

Minds-On

Share the learning goals with the class and co-construct success criteria with students. Consider posting the success criteria in the learning space for reference throughout the lesson.

Review the ground rules/agreements established during Lesson 1. Ask students if there are any more ground rules/agreements they would like to add to the list. Have students identify why each ground rule/agreement is important and how, when followed, it creates an emotionally safe and inclusive learning environment for everyone.

Remind students that during puberty, bodies undergo many changes. Everyone experiences these changes at different rates and at different times. Sometimes it is difficult getting used to the changes that are happening so quickly. Experiencing physical changes associated with puberty can also have an emotional and social impact as well.

Provide students with a [KWL Chart](#). Have students individually complete the first column, identifying what they recall from Lesson 1 about the changes during puberty.

Action

Distribute 2-3 sticky notes to each student. Have students work in pairs to identify some physical changes that occur during puberty and the emotional and social impact of these changes. Have pairs record their responses on their sticky notes, writing one change on each note (e.g., “You start to grow faster” [physical], “You may start to feel moody” [emotional] “You may have new feelings for other people that you didn’t have before” [social]). Have pairs join two other pairs to combine their sticky notes, categorizing them under headers of “Physical Changes”, “Emotional Impact”, and “Social Impact”.

Invite groups to share their responses from each category with the class. Collect group sticky notes for use in Lesson 3.

Using Direct Instruction, make connections between the physical changes at puberty and the emotional, and social impact these changes can have on them by explaining to students that physical changes at puberty sometimes impact their feelings and their social groups as well.

Use the following prompts to lead a large group discussion about emotional impacts of puberty.

Teacher prompt: “What are some feelings you might have as you start to experience changes with puberty, and how can you manage them?”

Student responses:

- “Excitement, happiness, embarrassment, confusion, and fear are some feelings I might have. It’s sometimes hard to recognize what I am feeling and why things feel different.”
- “I know that all these feelings are part of growing up. I try to notice what I’m feeling and what is happening, and that helps.”
- “I might be having difficulty with how my body is changing and how I feel about it.”
- “I can ask questions, talk with a friend, parent, or trusted adult, and get help if I need it.”
- “I can learn more about the physical and emotional changes during puberty by reading more about this topic so that I am better able to cope with these changes when they occur.”
- “When I get butterflies in my stomach, I can take a few deep breaths and remember that it’s okay to feel a bit nervous in new situations and that I’ll get through it. I can also use some of the strategies that I’ve been learning for taking care of my physical and mental health, such as being physically active.”

Teacher prompt: “What can change socially as you start to develop physically?”

Student responses:

- “Relationships with friends can change, because sometimes people start being interested in different things at different times.”
- “Some people start ‘liking’ others. They want to be more than ‘just friends’ and become interested in going out.”
- “Sometimes people treat you as if you are older than you actually are because of how you look, but you should be treated in an age-appropriate and respectful way.”
- “Sometimes classmates, friends, or family make comments or tease you about the changes. That’s not okay.”

Remind students that not everyone experiences puberty the same way (e.g., they may not experience all the same physical changes or the emotional and social impacts as others or may not experience changes to the same degree as others).

Consolidation

Have students complete an [Exit Card](#) responding to the following questions:

- How can relationships with friends and family change as people start to experience the physical changes of puberty?
- What are some things you can do to identify and manage your emotions and respond to the changes that you are experiencing during puberty?

Have students update their KWL Chart recording what they have learned and any questions they may still have.

Notes to Teachers

The language of “boys” and “girls” is gender interpreted, and it is more accurate to talk about anatomy rather than gender and use “bodies with” or “people with” language when referring to developments and changes in puberty. In addition, using the language of body parts (rather than boy/girl, male/female) allows for discussion of the diversity of people’s body parts and how they experience puberty (e.g., people who are intersexed). It can be helpful to use language such as “many girls have __, but not all girls” when students ask more specific questions.

Biologically speaking, not everyone is born exclusively male or female. Some people are born intersex, which means that they may have chromosomes and/or hormones and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics of both male and female in various degrees. (*Adapted from: Rainbow Health Ontario (2020). [Glossary](#).*)

Some people do not feel that their physical body matches their gender identity, which may lead to increased stress and body image concerns as their body undergoes puberty. Those who experience these feelings may identify as transgender, transsexual, or another identity altogether.

For additional information, consult your local public health unit website or refer to these websites:

- [Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights: Taking care of our bodies](#)
- [Egale Canada](#)
- [Every Body Curious](#)
- [Intersex Society of North America: What is intersex?](#)
- [Rainbow Health Ontario: Intersex health fact sheet](#)
- [Shore Centre: Inclusive Sex Ed Language Checklist](#)
- [The Canadian Center for Gender+Sexual Diversity](#)