

# Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Personal Safety



## Activity-Based Awareness & Learning for Pre-Schoolers & Children with Developmental Disabilities

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Finally, we dedicate this work to young children and children with developmental disabilities in schools, hospitals and child care agencies...in the hope that the activities in this book will help them to keep safe and to give voice to their experiences, so that their concerns on safety and narratives of abuse, in whatever form they emerge, will be seriously heard and addressed.

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## About the Activity Book

### **The Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Project's Work with Pre-Schoolers & Children with Disability**

For the past three years, the Dept. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NIMHANS has been implementing a community-based child and adolescent mental health service project with support from Dept. of Women & Child Development, Government of Karnataka. Aiming to provide direct services and capacity building in primary healthcare centres, government schools, anganwadis and child care institutions, it is based on the premise that in the Indian context, there is a vast gap between child and adolescent mental health needs and resource availability, with the few available resources being concentrated in tertiary care health facilities; and that children in difficult circumstances, who are at the greatest risk of mental health morbidity, often have the poorest access to quality psychosocial and mental health assistance.

Since its initiation, the Project has worked with preschoolers and children with disability and their caregivers/ service providers to in the following ways: (i) providing individual developmental assessments to young children as well as those with multiple disabilities and creating individual care plans that cater to the developmental needs and gaps of each child; (ii) designing and implementing early stimulation group sessions for preschoolers and children with disability; (iii) working specifically on methods for training children with various levels of intellectual disability (mild, moderate and severe) and those with multiple disabilities to enable them to achieve self-care and other basic functions; (iv) building the capacities of caregivers and child care staff to provide the above-described services, in keeping with conceptual understandings of child development and disability. The Project has worked to provide these services in a variety of child care agencies, including anganwadis, special education settings/ schools, government-run care and protection agencies for (orphan and abandoned) preschoolers and children with disability.

### **Why this Activity Book was Developed**

While child sexual abuse has existed since time immemorial, a relatively new-found public awareness has contributed to increasing reports of incidents in many parts of the country. The frequency of reports of child sexual abuse (CSA), especially abuse of very young children, in homes, neighborhoods and schools, appearing these days in the newspapers, is on the rise. Our observations show that younger children are increasingly being targeted for sexual abuse, due to their lower physical and mental capacities to resist or report abuse. Pre-schoolers are still at the early stages of physical, speech and language, social and cognitive development, as a result of which they have lesser ability to comprehend and verbalize their experiences, as compared to older children or adolescents. Their developmental vulnerability is compounded by the fact that they are far more susceptible to simple material lures and rewards that perpetrators use to entice them into secluded spaces or into performing sexual favours.

The problem of CSA is compounded in case of children with disability, who even under normal circumstances are nearly always invisible in most social spaces; within this group of children with multiple disabilities, those with intellectual disability, and perhaps those with speech and

hearing disabilities are the most vulnerable to abuse, due to their inability to either understand, recognize or communicate abuse experiences. Thus, children with developmental disabilities are vulnerable to CSA for the same reasons as preschoolers—only more so, because their disabilities unfortunately also cause parents and caregivers to be less believing of their experiences, even when expressed. In fact, any behavior change in a child with developmental disability, is simply attributed to the disability, with few attempts by caregivers to investigate the real reasons for behavioural change; this is also because of our failure, frequently, to perceive the personhood of disabled children, as sentient, beings with their own experiences and emotions albeit different from others or not age-appropriate. Thus, children with certain types of disability are vulnerable not only because of their difficulty in reporting what happened but also because manifestations of abuse experiences and behavior may often go unnoticed or unaddressed by others.

Children with certain types of developmental disabilities, such as those with intellectual disability (and/or locomotor disabilities) are heavily dependent on their caregivers for their daily personal and self-help related care. This renders them more vulnerable to abuse within the home and family context. Further, for older children or adolescents with intellectual disability, the risk of sexualization through sexual abuse, is greater due to lack of avenues for emotional and sexual expressions; in the backdrop of a society and culture that largely does not acknowledge or recognize the sexual needs and rights of disabled people, or even of neuro-typical adolescents, the rights and needs of adolescents with disability do not stand a chance. Thus, when they are presented with opportunities, through grooming and sexualization, they are at greater risk of sexual engagement and abuse. In younger children with disability, low socialization and the often unmet needs for sensory stimulation, particularly in children with intellectual and developmental disability, lead to greater vulnerability to sexual abuse.

In recent times, due to the increasing reports of incidents of child sexual abuse (CSA) there has been a flurry of efforts in the area of child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs. Most of these programs, however, have been developed for older children, mostly neuro-typical children who are school-going and above the age of 7 to 8 years of age. This is because many child care service providers, including pre-school teachers, special educators and indeed mental health professionals are uncertain about how to work with young children and children with intellectual disability. They are, perhaps, daunted by the complexities of talking to young or disabled children about what is essentially an adult issue i.e. sexuality, and by what methodologies to use to communicate with children.

It is in the background of these needs and challenges that this activity book has been developed—to enable caregivers and professionals to teach children personal safety concepts by engaging children in activity-based learning.

### **Our Approach and Objectives**

In the light of the needs and challenges we face in doing personal safety work with preschoolers and children with intellectual disability, the objectives of this activity book are:

- To help children to understand and apply personal safety concepts in their day-to day lives.
- To enable children to recognize sexual abuse if and when it takes place and report the same.

- In case of sexually abused children, to enable children to detail out or provide a narrative on sexual abuse experience, in a gentle non-threatening manner; and then to provide them with personal safety education that will empower them to keep safe in the future.

Many agencies now run child sexual abuse prevention and safety education programs for children in schools and other spaces and the crux of some of these programs appears to be helping children distinguish between ‘good touch and bad touch’ as part of safety and abuse awareness. We do not advocate the use of ‘good touch and bad touch’ or ‘safe and unsafe touch’ approaches to sexual abuse prevention because the so-called ‘bad touch’ can feel good and right to children (and adolescents) and so the onus of deciding whether a touch is good or bad cannot be on the child (especially not on a child with developmental disabilities); in certain situations, especially where abuse entails lure and manipulation or complex grooming processes, children and adolescents can find it exceedingly difficult to distinguish between ‘good and bad touch’; promoting sexual touch as ‘bad touch’ negatively impacts the development of affirmative sexuality i.e. children and adolescents should not associate sexuality as being a ‘bad or negative’ as this will have other harmful consequences on their relationships, health and happiness in the future.

If we want to talk about sexual abuse, one cannot go directly into this topic, especially to young or developmentally disabled children who have no understanding of sexuality-related issues. Thus, to teach children, what may be, complex concepts of personal safety and abuse, we use what we call a ‘window approach’—this is an approach that does not speak directly about abuse prevention (which may be the final objective and therefore the last discussion in the activity book) but ‘opening each window’, one by one, to introduce different but related concepts of personal safety and abuse: starting with understanding the body and its functions, it moves to the importance of preserving body safety, through understanding health and disease concepts; next, general safety concepts are introduced, followed by an issues of privacy and boundaries; then there are discussions on people safety, which finally lead up to recognizing and responding sexual abuse.

### **Components of this Activity Book: How it is Organized for Use**

The activity book has 5 themes, each of which comprise of four to five activities. Thus, a single theme may have many aspects to its learning and understanding—as outlined in its **Objectives**. Each activity first describes the **Methods** and **Materials** it will use; and then lays out the **Process** or the steps to be followed on how to implement the activity, including discussions to be had with the children to process the activity and summarize thoughts and learning derived from the activity. The themes and corresponding activities are organized in sequence and need to be implemented following the same. This is because acquisition of concept and skills from a given activity is dependent on the ‘successful’ completion and understanding of the previous activity i.e. the understanding of an activity is predicated on that of the previous one. This activity book is accompanied by a set of materials, which are organized into folders (in soft copy) labelled with the activity name/number that they correspond to.

The first theme is 'Body Shapes and Actions' wherein the activities focus on getting children to be comfortable with and appreciate their bodies because of all the fun and interesting things they can do with their bodies.

This is followed by the theme on 'Body Parts and Functions' wherein there are a series of activities that give children a language to be able to name body parts, especially private parts (which children often have no names for), and to be comfortable with naming body parts, including private parts. This section is particularly important as children are often unable to report abuse experiences because they have inadequate vocabulary on body parts. Activities on the functions of various body parts further help them to perceive the importance of keeping the body safe. Building on this basic understanding of the body, the third theme focuses on 'Physical Safety' or things we do to keep the body safe and protected.

The next theme is 'Privacy and Boundaries' wherein activities help children understand concepts of privacy, and which actions we perform in privacy and why; further, the concept of personal boundaries (an issue related to privacy) is also introduced.

The fifth theme is a more complex one, for it moves on to people safety. Through story-telling activities, children will be able to obtain an understanding of stranger safety and safety from known people; the latter is particularly important as most child sexual abuse occurs within homes and families and/or by known people—thereby creating the need for children to understand and maintain privacy and boundary rules even with people they know. This theme also touches on the issue of disclosure through discussions on secrets, for children are often lured or threatened into secrecy, by abusers.

The activities use a range of innovative and creative methods that allow for children & adolescents to understand and reflect on situations and experiences (vs mere information and instruction giving), and derive their conceptual understanding on personal safety from daily life situations. Thus, the activities use methods such as movement games, body mapping, Art, board games, adaptation of common children's group games (hopscotch), story-telling and narratives, and film clips to make learning a participatory and entertaining experience for children.

*\*Note: It is recommended that this activity book be used in conjunction with other existing materials on child sexual abuse treatment, such as 'Activity Book for Treatment Strategies for Abused Children, From Victim to Survivor' by Cheryl L. Karp & Traci L. Butler. While the Karp and Butler book is an exceedingly useful one for child sexual abuse work, it is in work book form, largely using art-based methods; it is also dependent on literacy and the ability and willingness of a child to write sentences/ narratives. Consequently, this book, developed in a western context, also does not cater to pre-schoolers or children with developmental disability. Our activity book sought to overcome some of the limitations of the Karp and Butler workbook by using multiple methods and also contextualizing stories and situations to the Indian context.*

## **For Whom**

It is recommended that this activity book be used with all pre-schoolers and children with developmental disabilities of various types, for creation of awareness on personal safety and sexual abuse. These activities are for use not only for preventive and promotive purposes but also as part of treatment processes for children who have been sexually abused i.e. as part of safety education to keep themselves safe in the future.

However, the activities cannot be used for children with mild to moderate disability nor for neuro-typical children below the age of 4 years; they would not be applicable to children with severe (or profound) intellectual disability and very young children as their cognitive levels would not permit them to engage or understand such concepts. Thus, in case of all children with disability, particularly for those with more severe developmental disabilities, and children below the age of 4 years, it is important to work with parents, teachers and other caregivers to provide adequate vigilance and supervision to these children at all times, in recognition of their extreme vulnerability to abuse. Caregivers also need to be alert to any emotional and behaviour changes and/or marks and injuries they see on children's bodies and enquire or report such issues to the concerned authorities (such as special educators and other child mental health professionals).

## **By Whom**

This activity book is for use by all persons who work with young children and children with developmental disabilities, including preschool teachers, counsellors, child protection staff, special educators i.e. persons working with children in education, health and welfare agencies. Such professionals may also involve and guide parents in the use of these activities, so that concepts and skills can be re-iterated at home.

While the activity book lays out methods for child sexual abuse prevention and personal safety work, ultimately, how the activities are used are at the facilitator's discretion—they should be based on children's contexts, needs and abilities. Facilitators are encouraged to use their discretion and select methods that they knew would be developmentally appropriate for a given child or group of children and to modify methods and techniques to suit their locomotor and cognitive abilities. The activities themselves, where possible, contain notes suggesting variations in method in the context of certain types of disability, for instance. So, the idea is for facilitators to be as creative as possible...the methods in this book are not finite as they are not exhaustive; they are not intended to limit facilitators, but rather to stimulate them to be exploratory and experiment with various alternative methodologies, based on their knowledge and understanding of the children they work with.

We wish you every joy and satisfaction of working with pre-schoolers and children with disability...more power to you as you journey along this interesting and challenging area of child care work!



# 1. Body Shapes and Actions

## Objectives:

- Establishing rapport with children.
- Getting them to be comfortable with their own body and around each other.
- Exploring fun ways for children to play, explore and learn about the body and its range of movement, encouraging body control, co-ordination and balance.

## Activity 1.1. Body Actions and Sounds

**Method:** Movement

**Materials:** None

### Process:

- Tell the children: "Today we will play games using our bodies - to see all the different actions we can do with our bodies, and how we can make all sorts of shapes with them". Let us begin our first body game by doing some fun body actions...
- Ask the children to stand in a circle and stand among them yourself.
- Name an action (as suggested below) and ask them to imitate perform it:  
Drive a car, row a boat, rotate like a fan, fly like a bird, jump like a rabbit/kangaroo/frog, walk like a tiger, melt like an ice-cream, move like a tree in the wind, make a dose/chapatti. Throw/catch a ball, crawl like a snake/elephant, play the flute/ drums, do 'rolly-pollies'...
- Encourage children to also make sounds and faces according to the action that they perform.

## Activity 1.2. Individual Body Shapes

**Method:** Imitation and movement

**Materials:** Cards of different body postures; or facilitator can demonstrate body shapes and postures for the children to imitate; or objects in the room with distinct shapes can be pointed to.

### Process:

- Tell the children: "We have done all sorts of movements and actions using our bodies...was it fun? Now let us have some more fun... our second body game is to make different kind of shapes with our bodies."
- Ask the children to stand in a circle around you.
- Show the children each of the body posture cards one at a time; or demonstrate the posture each time, asking children to observe the shape/ posture. (Or point to different objects in the room asking children to name the shape).
- Ask children to use their bodies (individually) to make the shape or imitate the posture.
- After the first few examples, you can ask children to make their own body shapes and name them if possible.

- Next, ask each child to take turns to create their own special/ unique body shape—and ask the others to imitate these shapes.

**Note:** *The more complex body shapes/ cards may be used for those children with higher cognitive abilities and those who do not have loco-motor disabilities.*

### Activity 1.3. Collective Body Shapes

**Method:** Imitation and movement

**Materials:** Flash Cards of different shapes such as circle, square, triangle, rectangle, diamond.

**Process:**

- Tell the children “So far we have been doing body shapes alone or individually. Now let us try and form different shapes together/ collectively by holding each other’s hand or standing in certain ways to make a shape”
- Ask the children to sit in a group.
- Then display the card to the children, and then invite them to use their bodies to make the different shapes indicated by the cards.
- Begin by demonstrating yourself by holding hands with children to form a shape.

**Note:** *If some of the children are unable to comprehend instructions or have loco-motor disabilities and are unable to participate, include them in the group by helping them position themselves as best as possible.*

### Activity 1.4. Free Movement

**Method:** Movement and dance

**Materials:** Music (recorded music of any type, preferably music that is familiar to the children/ in a language they understand)

**Process:**

- Play the music and ask the children that they can dance.

**Note:** *Children with loco-motor disabilities, can do whatever movements possible, such as clapping hands, moving their shoulders, shaking their heads etc.*

**Summary:**

Ask the children which body game(s) they enjoyed most and how they felt after the games. Tell the children: ‘So we learnt today that we can use our bodies to do a lot of fun things with our bodies...such as...? (Allow the children to enumerate)Yes, we can move in different ways, make sounds and faces, create different shapes, alone and together, dance...so our bodies are very important to us because they help us do all sorts of fun things.

## 2. Body Parts and Functions

### Objectives:

- To name and point out different body parts.
- Learn how different body parts are used.

### Activity 2.1. Learning Names of Body Parts

**Method:** Naming using pictures and children's own bodies or dolls.

**Materials:** Picture of girl/boy showing body parts or a doll.

### Process:

- Ask the children to sit in a circle.
- **Introduction:** Tell the children “Last time, we did fun shapes and actions with our bodies. Now, we will talk a little more about our bodies. We will learn different body parts, what we do with them and how to protect them.
- Show pictures of the human body (of boy or girl) or use a doll and point to body parts on the picture and name them. Ask children to repeat after you.
- Each time you show/point to a part and name it, ask children to point to that part on their bodies: ‘where is your nose? Show me where your nose is...’

**Note 1:** *This activity is for children who have not yet (completely) learnt the names of all their body parts i.e. it is a first level activity for children who do not know their body parts.*

**Note 2:** *Ensure that private parts are named too.*

### Activity 2.2. Naming and Pointing Body Parts

**Method:** Naming and pointing

**Material:** None

### Process:

- Ask the children to sit in a circle. You (the facilitator) can join in with the children.
- Tell the children that we are going to play a name game: ask them to name different body parts as you point to them, on your own body (‘what is this?’).
- Next, tell the children that we are going to play a pointing game: as you name different body parts (‘where is your...nose?’)
- If the children do not name/point to private parts such as the bottom or vagina/ penis and nipple you need to point to them and ask what it is. Acknowledge that boys and girls have a different parts there (Boys have a penis and girls have a vagina).
- After doing one round of the naming and pointing more slowly (and establishing the names that children use for private parts), say you are going to play the game more quickly now—and repeat the naming and pointing game (in combination) at a higher speed. But this time name/ point to the private parts more frequently, encouraging children to say them more frequently and loudly.

**Note 1:** Do NOT use technical terms for private parts—use the term(s) that children use. They need to be comfortable with the term and understand what is being referred to. Allow for some giggling/ laughter as children name their private parts.

**Note 2:** The frequent repeating of the names of private parts helps children discard their inhibitions and discomfort related to these parts and gradually become more confident about viewing them with the same objectivity and comfort as other body parts. To be able to name private parts comfortably is critical in child sexual abuse reporting—children are often unable to report sexual abuse because they either do not have the words for private parts or because they do not have the comfort to name these parts.

### Activity 2.3. Colouring Different Body Parts

**Method:** Art work

**Materials:** A work sheet illustrating an outline of boy/girl for children to colour; Different coloured crayons.

**Process:**

- Provide each child with the worksheet (containing an outline of a boy/girl) and some crayons to colour it.
- Explain the activity to the children—“we are now going to draw in and colour the various body parts.”
- Ask the children to colour the part of the body that you name. Demonstrate the first few of them and then guide them with each of the parts.
- Name the following body parts and ask the children to colour them one after another.
  - Head, Eyes, Ears, Lips, Nose, Tongue, Neck.
  - Chest , Shoulder, Arms ,Hands, Fingers
  - Stomach/Abdomen, Hips, Thighs, Knees, Legs, Foot, Toes.
  - Buttocks, Private Parts – Vagina, Penis.

**Alternative Method:**

Children who are unable to colour (due to poorly developed fine motor skills), can be given coloured stickers (or sticker *bindhis*) and asked to place them on the body parts that you name for them.

### Activity 2.4. Making Our Body Parts Dance

**Method:** Naming/pointing and movement/ dance

**Materials:** (Dance) music that the children might enjoy, player

**Process:**

- Ask the children to stand in a circle.
- Tell them: “Now let’s dance to this music by moving the body parts which I name”.
- Play music and ask them to dance by moving specific parts of their body (you can also demonstrate as you instruct)--For instance: “Now everybody shake your legs...now move your hands...make your tummy dance...rotate your hips, move your fingers...”

## Activity 2.5. How We Use Our Body Parts

**Method:** Naming/pointing and Description

**Materials:** Body pictures used or coloured (in previous activities)

**Process:**

- Explain to the children: “Now that we know different parts of our body let’s learn how we use each of our body parts”.
- Point to each body part on pictures used or coloured (in previous activities) and on their own bodies, and ask them:
  - Name the body part.
  - What we do with this part [hand], [mouth], [ear], [eyes], [stomach], [buttocks]...?
  - Why we need it?
- Provide information to them on the use of body parts in case they are unsure or do not know. (See box).

**Alternative Method:** For children who find it difficult to directly explain how each body part is used, you can reverse the above method—state a function and ask which body part does it—for example: which part do we see with? Which part receives our food once we eat it? Which part helps us walk?

### How We Use Our Body Parts

- We use our **Mouth, Lips, Tongue** to talk, eat, sing, blow balloons/ bubbles etc.
- We use our **Nose** to breath, smell different things (what is cooking in the kitchen, recognize different flowers such as rose/ jasmine...)
- We use our **Ears** to hear (noises, music, and people calling or talking...), wear earrings.
- We use our **Eyes** to see... (Beautiful things such as...?)
- We use our **Hands/Arms** to dance, to hold things, to eat...
- We use our **Fingers** to write, paint, colour...
- We use our **Thighs/ Knees/Legs/ toes** to walk, run, and climb up and down, dance and play...
- The Food we eat goes into our **stomach**.
- We use our **penis/Vagina** (or whatever words/ terms children use for these parts) to pee.
- We use our **bottom/buttocks** to sit and to do potty.

## Activity 2.6. Things We Can Do with Our Body Parts

**Method:** Matching cards

**Materials:** One set of cards with pictures of body parts; another/corresponding set of cards showing the functions or use of each body part

**Process:**

- Lay out (on the floor) pictures of the body parts—so they are clearly visible to the children.
- Show children pictures of functions performed by each body part (one at a time) and ask them to place the card against the appropriate body part i.e. Match the body part to its function.

### 3. Physical Safety

#### Objectives:

- To understand how and why we should protect our bodies/ body parts.
- To introduce the concept of general physical safety and everyday rules we follow to prevent hurt and injury.

#### Activity 3.1. Protecting and Caring for Our Bodies

**Method:** Description and discussion using picture cards.

**Materials:** Pictures or illustrations of children: eating nutritious food/ who are sick and taking medicines/holding an umbrella in the rain/ wearing warm clothes in winter/ having a bath/ washing hands before eating/ brushing teeth/ combing hair.

#### Process:

- Introduction: *“What happens when we fall down?” [Children likely to say they get hurt/ injured]. So, when we fall down or get hurt, it means that we don’t feel safe...and that is why we feel afraid or cry. Being safe means not getting our bodies hurt. We will now talk about the safety rules all of us need to follow, every day, to keep our bodies safe from hurt and harm—so that if we are safe and do not get hurt, we will also not cry or feel afraid...and we can be happy as we play and do other things.”*
- Tell children: “We are now going to talk about how to look after and protect our bodies.”
- Hold up and show each picture/card one by one and ask:
  - What do you see in the picture?
  - Why is the child in the picture doing this?
- As children attribute reasons for the actions in the pictures, you may add to their response (see box).
- Summarize what we have learnt about looking after our bodies and why we need to protect our bodies/ body parts, including what will happen if we do not—how we will get sick and how, when this happens, we will not be able to use our body parts as we would like to, do the things we want to or need to do.

#### How and Why We Protect Our Bodies

- We eat nutritious food so that our bodies grow (taller and bigger) and to keep our bodies strong, so we can run and play well.
- We take medicines when we are sick so that our bodies can get well quickly and we can run and play and go to school again.
- We use an umbrella in the rain so that our bodies do not get wet and cold, so that we don’t fall sick.
- We wear warm clothes in winter to keep our bodies warm.
- We have a bath everyday so that we keep our bodies clean—if bodies are dirty, we would fall sick.
- We brush our teeth to keep our teeth strong and away from cavities.
- We comb our hair so that our hair is healthy and clean.

## Activity 3.2. General Safety

**Methods:** Discussion using picture cards

**Materials:** Pictures detailing: road safety, fire safety, kitchen safety, Doors/window locks...

**Process:**

- Make the children sit in a circle. Tell them “I will show you few pictures of children doing different things; for each picture I show you, tell me whether the person will get hurt doing what he/she is doing...and so, is it safe or unsafe?”
- Show them the safety pictures, one by one and ask:
  - What is the person doing here?
  - Will he/she get hurt? (yes/ no)
  - So, is what she is doing safe or unsafe? (if the person gets hurt, it means he is unsafe; if he does not get hurt, it means he is safe).
  - What happens if we...
    - ...touch the fire/stove?
    - ...stick our fingers or any object into an electrical outlet or play with wires?
    - ... go very near to the well?
    - ...cross the road without looking to see if vehicles are coming?
    - ...play on the road?
    - ...do not put our toys and things away?
    - ...play with sharp objects such as knives, blade etc.
    - ...do not lock the door at night?
    - ...open the door without looking to see who is outside first?
    - ...do not put the strap on while sitting in the wheel chair?
    - ...do not place pillows while lying on the bed?
    - ...do not walk down stairs using railing/ we slide down the banisters?
    - ...put our hand into a dog’s mouth?
- Provide information on why we should not do certain actions/ why it would not be safe. (See Box).
- Summarize how we follow many safety rules to keep our bodies from getting hurt.

**Safety Rules: We Should Not...**

...Touch fire / burning stove because we will get hurt and burn our skin  
...Stick our fingers or any object into an electrical outlet or light bulb socket – electricity can cause shock, burns  
...Go very near a well or peep into them – as we may fall into them and drown  
...Cross the road without looking out for vehicles as they may dash into us and we will get hurt.  
...Play on the road we may get hit by a vehicle and get injured.  
...Leave our toys and things away so that no one slips and falls.  
...Play with sharp objects like knives, blades as we may cut ourselves.  
...Leave the home without locking the door because we may get robbed.  
...Open the door without checking who is outside as they may be thieves and may rob or hurt us.

### Activity 3.3. Safety Actions

**Method:** Picture description and colouring.

**Materials:** Black and white pictures of safety actions (for colouring)

**Process:**

- Tell the children that we are going to do some colouring in this session and also learn about doing things the safe way...in ways we do not get hurt.
- Give the children one picture at a time and ask them what they see in it—discuss the action that is being performed and why it is safe.
- Next, ask them to colour it.
- When they finish colouring a picture, re-iterate the safety action/message relating to it.
- Repeat the process with each picture (all pictures need not be done in a single session...continue the activity over a couple of sessions, or as long as it takes).



## 4. Privacy and Boundaries

### Objectives:

- To understand the concept of privacy in relation to the activities that are appropriate for children to do with various people known to them.
- To learn about personal boundaries in relation to safety.

### Activity 4.1. The Concept of Privacy

**Method:** Pictures and narrative

**Materials:** 2 sets of picture cards: i) Picture cards detailing daily activities that children usually engage in: eating, sleeping, brushing teeth, bathing, combing hair, dressing, undressing, going to toilet, singing, dancing, studying, playing;

ii) Picture cards showing people children know and encounter in their daily lives, namely mother/ father/ aunt/ uncle/ sister/ brother/ teacher/school cleaner/doctor/ male & female caretakers in an institution...

### Process:

- Explain to children: *“We do several activities everyday such as eating, sleeping, bathing, playing etc. Some of these activities are done along with others or in front of others...for example? [children may suggest playing/ studying] Some activities are done either alone or with particular people but not everyone. We are now going to look at various activities and understand whether it is appropriate to do them with everyone or it is appropriate only to do them with particular people. Knowing what to do and how to be with whom is another way of keeping ourselves safe.”*
- Lay out the people picture cards, on the floor, in such a way that children can clearly see them.
- Ask children to identify each person (i.e. in terms of their family/ social relationship) on the card; if anyone is missing you may ask the children to draw in and add a card.
- Present the daily activities cards one by one, and discuss the following questions:
  - What do you see here? (What action is being performed?)
  - With which people or in front of whom (indicating the people cards) can we do this action? i.e. with everyone or particular people?
  - Why is it appropriate (or inappropriate) as the case may be? (For example, if children say they cannot bathe in front of their uncle...why would it be inappropriate to do so?)
- Summarize the discussion thus:
  - There are some daily activities, like brushing your teeth, which one may not feel entirely comfortable carrying out in the presence of a stranger.
  - You may know some people very well, very closely but there are some daily activities such as bathing/ undressing that you may not do in their presence.
  - This is because we do certain things privately—either by ourselves/ alone or with the help of our mothers/ grandmothers/ special care-takers only. If we are asked to do them in front of others, we feel shy or uncomfortable.
  - So, if anyone other than mothers/ grandmothers/ special care-takers suggest that they want to do certain activities with us such as bathing/ dressing/undressing, we must do two things: i) say ‘no, I don’t want to’; ii) tell mother or grandmother or someone else you trust about it.

## Activity 4.2. The Triangle Boundary

**Method:** Game

**Materials:** Chalk, large space (so children can spread out and stand)

**Process:**

- Tell the children “Now, we will be learning about our safety triangle by playing games and some fun activities”
- Next, tell the children: “Now I will drawing a triangle on the floor for each one of you to stand inside”.
- Using chalk, draw a triangle for each child to stand in.
- When the children stand within their triangles, tell them that: “This is your personal space, the space that your body occupies in a way that when you are within it, you are safe; also, no one else should come within that space.”
- Then tell them: “When I shout “**Safe**”, you need to hop inside the triangle and when I shout “**Unsafe**” you need to jump out of the triangle.
- Demonstrate the process a few times and then repeat the process with the children for 10-15 times.
- At the end, tell the children “When you were born, like everyone else, you had a special need to be protected and kept safe. People have their own personal space around their bodies to make them feel safe—like you had as you stood inside the triangle. The lines or borders of the triangle are called boundaries. A boundary means: like when you colour a picture, you stay within the lines or when you stay inside your triangle.”
- Ask children to repeat what a boundary is/ what personal boundaries and safety mean until you are satisfied they have understood the concept.

**Alternative Method:**

For children with loco-motor disability, hand them paper cut-outs of a red triangle and a green triangle. Tell them that when you say ‘unsafe’, they need to hold up and wave the red triangle; when you say ‘safe’, they need to hold up and wave the green triangle.

## Activity 4.3. Personal Safety Triangle

**Method:** Art/paper-pencil tasks

**Materials:** A copy of the 2 pictures (below)—for every child.

**Process:**

- Explain to the child the following:
  - In the previous game, we learnt about boundaries—how the lines of the triangle form our safety boundaries.
  - So now we are going to learn more about personal space boundaries, so that you can protect yourself and know when your triangle boundaries are broken.
- Ask children to look at picture 1 and tell you what they see in it—point to the 3 corners of the triangle and ask which parts of the body are located at these 3 corners. [Breasts/ nipples and vagina/penis].
- Ask children to join the dots in picture 1, telling them that the area within the triangle form the personal boundaries of these children (one of which is them).

- Ask children to look at picture 2 and colour in the personal triangle/ space of children.
- Ask them to cut it out and stick it on the children shown in picture 2—to show where their personal triangles/ spaces are.
- Discuss the following:
  - What does this safety triangle mean?
  - Who can touch you in those parts and when?
  - Who cannot touch those parts?
- Summarize the following:
  - That no one can touch their private parts/ personal space and make them feel hurt or uncomfortable.
  - Only their mothers/ grandmothers/ caretakers can touch those areas if they need help with bathing or dressing—even so, never in a manner that causes them any physical pain or discomfort.
  - If someone other than mothers/ grandmothers/ caretakers touches us in our private parts or within our safety triangles, it means they have broken the triangle boundaries—and you need to tell someone like your mother/ caretaker/ someone you trust.
  - If a doctor (whether male or female) needs to examine children/ see and touch their personal triangle areas when they are sick, the doctor can do so only in the presence of parents/ care-givers.

**Alternative Activity:**

**Method:** Learning boundaries using paper cut-outs

**Materials:** Large paper-cut outs of red triangles—so children can hold them against themselves

**Process:**

- Explain to the child the following:
  - In the previous game, we learnt about safe triangles.
  - So now we are going to learn more about the safe triangle—this time using our bodies.
- Tell the children that there are certain parts of our bodies that no one can touch (except our mothers/ grandmothers when they are bathing or dressing us).
- Ask children which ones these may be--ask them to place the red triangles against these body parts on our own bodies.
- Ensure that they place the red triangle cut-outs, one by one, on: lips, chest area, penis/vagina and buttocks.
- Reiterate to children:
  - Who can touch them in those parts and when?
  - Who cannot touch those parts?
  - What to do in case someone touches those body parts?
- Summarize the following:
  - That no one can touch their private parts and make them feel hurt or uncomfortable.
  - We should not touch others in these body parts either—just like we would not want others to touch us, they would not want us to touch them in these ways either.

- Only their mothers/ grandmothers/ caretakers can touch those areas if they need help with bathing or dressing—even so, never in a manner that causes them any physical pain or discomfort.
- If a doctor (whether male or female) needs to examine children/ see and touch their personal triangle areas when they are sick, the doctor can do so only in the presence of parents/ care-givers.
- If someone other than mothers/ grandmothers/ caretakers touches us in our private parts or within our safety triangles, it means they have broken the triangle boundaries—and they need to tell someone like your mother/ caretaker/ someone you trust.

## 5. People Safety

### Objectives:

- To learn about safety issues pertaining to strangers.
- To understand that how known people can also be a threat to our safety.
- To learn about safe and unsafe secrets (and how we should not keep unsafe secrets).

### Activity 5.1. Protecting Ourselves from Strangers

**Method:** Story-telling and discussion

**Materials:** Story about 'When Somu Forgot the Stranger Safety Rules'

**Introduce the Session/ Topic:** *"We have learnt how to keep our bodies safe from getting hurt because of fire and switches and knives. Now let us talk about safety in a different way—about keeping ourselves safe from some people who may not be very good. There are many good people in this world—and we trust or believe them because they will not do things that will make children/others feel scared or hurt. But is everyone good? Can we trust everyone? [Children likely to say 'no'] So, there are some people who may not be good and whom we cannot trust or believe because they do things that make children/ others feel hurt or worried. Today, we will talk about how we can keep ourselves safe from bad people whom we cannot trust or believe."*

### Process:

- Tell children: "There are some people we meet everyday—people who look after us, play with us and we know very well. Like who all...?Let us now talk about how to be safe from people we do not know
- Tell the story 'When Somu Forgot the Stranger Safety Rules'—showing the children pictures as you narrate.
- Discuss the following questions:
  - What was a name of the boy (in the story)?
  - Who did Somu live with?
  - Where was his house?
  - Who was Somu's best friend? And what all did they do together?
  - Who came along one day when Somu and Tommy were playing in the park? Did Somu and Tommy know him?
  - What did the man tell Somu?
  - And what did Somu say/ do?
  - What was Tommy thinking at that time?
  - Where did the man take Somu? What happened there?
  - How did Somu feel when the man took him to some unknown place?
  - What happened next?
  - What safety rules about strangers had Somu forgotten?
  - So, what do we now know about keeping safe from strange people?
- Summarize what we have learnt from the story:

- We must not talk to strangers or accept sweets/ toys from them—no matter how attractive the sweets/ toys may be because we do not know them—so we do not know whether they are good or not, whether we can trust them or not.
- Similarly, accepting rides from strangers is also not safe—since we do not know them, we are not sure where they will take us.

### When Somu Forgot the Stranger Safety Rules

Once upon a time, there was a boy called Somu. He lived with his parents and dog, Tommy, in a house that was on a busy street but also near a park. Tommy was a little brown dog with long silky ears and golden brown eyes; he was a happy, friendly dog and really loved his master, Somu.

Somu and Tommy were best friends. They played ball together and went swimming in the nearby pond; Somu always shared his biscuits and ice-cream with Tommy and Tommy even followed Somu to school and back.

One day, Somu and Tommy were playing in the park. Suddenly, a man came to them and started to talk to Somu.

“Hi, what a nice ball,” he said to Somu. “Can I play too?”

Somu smiled and agreed for the man to play with them.

Tommy wondered why Somu was talking to a stranger. Didn't he remember what Somu's mother had told him about talking to strangers? That it was not safe to talk to people you did not know.

A few minutes later, the man had persuaded Somu to go to the toy shop with him and eat some ice-cream after. As Somu walked away with the strange man, Tommy became very worried. He decided to follow them. The man did not notice Tommy walking behind them and Somu was too excited as he was thinking about the toystore and the ice-cream treat.

After a while, Somu realized that they were not walking towards the market at all. Instead they were in some strange street that he did not recognize. “I don't think that there is any toy shop or ice-cream parlour here,” said Somu doubtfully. The stranger said nothing and Somu was starting to feel very nervous and afraid. Where were they going? Where was this man taking him?

At last, they reached a broken-down old building. The man told Somu to sit on the bench outside and wait for him. Suddenly, he did not sound as nice and friendly as he had seemed in the park. Somu sat down upon the bench and started to cry.

“I want to go home, to mummy and daddy,” he cried. ‘I am scared...and I don't really know this man...I am lost now.’”

Just then Tommy bounded up. Somu cried out in relief and hugged his dog. “O Tommy, I am so glad you are here...”, he said.

Tommy started to pull at Somu's shirt. “O I see...you know the way home and can take us back!” said Somu. “Come on Tommy, let us run...let us go quickly before that strange man comes back.”

And so, Somu and Tommy ran all the way back home, where Somu's parents were starting to get very worried about them. “Where were you?” asked his mother. Somu told his parents what had happened at the park that morning and where all he had been after, how afraid he had been all alone with a stranger.

“So you forgot the safety rule about not talking to strangers...about never going anywhere with them even if they offer you sweets and toys,” said his father.

“Yes,” said Somu sadly. “But Tommy knew and remembered the rule. That is why he followed me—to protect me from any hurt or harm that may have happened to me.”

So, clever Tommy was given many hugs and an extra special biscuit for helping Somu to be safe.

And from then on, Somu always remembered the 3 safety rules about strangers:

- NEVER talk to strangers!
- NEVER go anywhere with them (or take rides with them)!
- NEVER accept offers of toys or sweets from them!

“Yes,” said Somu sadly. “But Tommy knew and remembered the rule. That is why he followed me—to protect me from any hurt or harm that may have happened to me.”

So, clever Tommy was given many hugs and an extra special biscuit for helping Somu to be safe. And from then on, Somu always remembered the 3 safety rules about strangers:

- NEVER talk to strangers!
- NEVER go anywhere with them (or take rides with them)!
- NEVER accept offers of toys or sweets from them!

## Activity 5.2. How Known People Can Hurt Us

**Method:** Story-telling and discussion

**Materials:** Story about ‘Tommy’s New Neighbour’

**Process:**

- Tell the children that we are going to continue talking about people safety and learn what to do in case someone hurts us.
- Tell the story ‘Tommy’s New Neighbour’—showing the children pictures as you narrate.
  - What exciting news did Somu’s father give him one day?
  - Who moved into the house next door to Somu’s?
  - Did the two families become friends? How do we know that?
  - Who was not happy? And why?
  - Was Bozo nice to Tommy in the beginning? How do we know that?
  - What happened later to make Tommy unsure of Bozo’s friendship?
  - How did Tommy feel when Bozo did not treat him well?
  - What happened next about Tommy’s breakfast? Where was it disappearing? And how did that affect Tommy?
  - When Tommy caught Bozo eating up all his food, what did Bozo tell him?
  - How did Tommy manage to tell Somu about Bozo?
  - Was it a good thing that Tommy told Somu about Bozo? What would have happened if he had not?
  - What did Somu’s mother say about when we can trust people we know and when we cannot, even though we know them? (How do we know whether some known person is good or not?)
  - So, what have we learnt about trusting people we know?

**(Note:** Given the age of the children, they may require some prompting and repetition—the above questions are a broad guideline on what issues to touch on for learning and discussion).

- Summarize:
  - Most people we know or our families know/ are friends with are good people and we can trust them.
  - A few people, however, may not be good and cannot be trusted.
  - When people we know, try to hurt us or threaten us, then we know they are not good people and we must not trust them (like what Bozo did to Tommy).
  - In case someone we know does things that are hurtful to us, it is important to tell someone about it (like Tommy told Somu)—so that the hurt can stop and you can be safe.

- **Note:** *This part of the module may be appropriate only for children with mild intellectual disability i.e. those who have greater degrees of cognitive impairment may not be able to comprehend these stories.*

### Tommy's New Neighbour

The house next door to Somu's house had been empty for a long time. "I wish someone nice would move in there, so I could have someone to play with," Somu would keep saying.

One day, Somu's father came home and called out to him: "Hey Somu, I have news for you...a family has moved into the house next door! They have a girl who is your age—her name is Leela-- so you have someone to play with...and guess what! They even have a dog...so Tommy can have a new friend too!"

Somu's parents and Leela's parents became good friends. Their fathers would meet and talk about gardening sometimes, their mothers would go shopping together. Somu and Leela also became very good friends: they went to the same school and played hide-and-seek in the park or watched cartoons together at home. So, everyone was happy...except for Tommy.

The next door dog, Bozo was bigger and stronger than Tommy. At first, he seemed very friendly—he would wag his tail when Tommy went over with Somu. He and Tommy would both play ball and hide and seek with Somu and Leela. In fact, Tommy thought Bozo was a kind and friendly dog and liked him very much.

But after a while, Tommy began to wonder whether Bozo was really as friendly and nice as he seemed. Once he ate up Somu's biscuit when he was not looking and Somu scolded Tommy for it, thinking it was his dog who had done it. When they played ball, Bozo who had been gentle and playful before began to push Tommy in a rough and hurtful way, especially when Somu was not looking. Tommy felt sad and confused. "Doesn't Bozo like me? Why does he hurt me like this?" thought Tommy.

One day, Tommy went to eat his breakfast and found his food bowl empty. He was very surprised as he knew he had not yet eaten his porridge and could not imagine how it had disappeared. Somu and his parents would never have forgotten to fill his bowl. This continued to happen—each morning, his porridge would be missing and poor Tommy would be hungry. Since Tommy got little to eat these days, he grew thinner and more tired and Somu could not understand why.

Then, one morning, when Tommy went to eat his breakfast, he was just in time to see Bozo eating up the last of his porridge. "So it is you who has been eating my breakfast everyday! How could you do that? I thought you were my friend!" said Tommy.

"I am no friend of your's...you thought wrong," laughed Bozo, showing his big white teeth. "And if you let Somu know that I eat your breakfast, I will fight you...and you know I am bigger and stronger than you...so, be careful! And Somu will never believe you if you tell him—he likes me!"

Tommy retreated in a hurry and sat under Somu's bed all day, for fear that Bozo would hurt him. Somu could not understand why Tommy no longer came out to play with him or went to the park or followed him to school. He saw that Tommy looked sad and scared these days. "What's the matter, Tommy? Something seems to be wrong..." said Somu.

The next day, Tommy decided that Somu must know the truth. So, knowing when Bozo would come to eat his breakfast, Tommy pulled at Somu's shoelace until Somu got up from the breakfast table and followed him outside. And there was Bozo, eating Tommy's porridge. "Bad dog," said Somu to Bozo. "So, that is why Tommy seems thin and hungry and sad all the time!"



Somu told Leela about Bozo's being mean and nasty to Tommy. Leela was also angry with her dog and punished him—Bozo was not allowed outside to play for several days and all his favourite foods were taken away from him.

"And to think that we thought Bozo was a good, friendly dog!" said Somu. "Sometimes even people we think we know and believe to be nice can be hurtful and unsafe. Am so glad that Tommy told me about Bozo—else, we would never have known how mean he was being to Tommy. But how do we know then who to trust and whom not to trust?"

"When people we know start to do mean or hurtful things...things that make us feel sad or confused or upset, we know then that they are not good people...and cannot be trusted", said Somu's mother. "Sometimes they may seem friendly and nice but do things that are hurtful—just like Bozo did when Tommy thought he was friendly and nice. But most people we know are nice—it's just some people who might be like that. "

"Now I have learnt that even people I know can be unsafe," thought Tommy. "But as Somu's mother said, that's not everyone...and I know now how to be safe, so I need not worry. And am glad I told Somu...if I had not told him, he would not have known Bozo was hurting me." And so, safe and happy now, Tommy fell asleep at Somu's feet.

### Activity 5.3 Safe and Unsafe Secrets

**Method:** Story-telling and discussion

**Materials:** Story about 'Which Secrets to Keep'

**Process:**

- Tell children: "There are some people we meet everyday—people who look after us, play with us and we know very well. Like who all...? Let us now talk about how to be safe from people we do not know.
- Tell the story 'Which Secrets to Keep'—showing the children pictures as you narrate.
- Discuss the following questions:
  - What is a secret?
  - What plans had Somu made for his mother's birthday?
  - Why did he want it to be a secret?
  - Who were the only two other people who knew about Somu's secret plans for his mother's birthday?
  - Who came along when Tommy was sitting by the gate? What were they talking about?
  - Why did they want Tommy to keep their plans secret?
  - What did they tell Tommy he would get if he kept the secret?
  - What did they tell Tommy that they would do to him if he did not keep the secret?
  - Did Tommy decide to keep their secret or not? Why?
  - What did Tommy do that night? How did he make sure that Somu and his parents were safe?
  - Somu had a secret plan about his mother's birthday surprise. The thieves had a secret plan to rob Somu's house. So, both had a secret. What was the difference? Which one was a good secret and which one was not?
  - What have we learnt about good and bad secrets?
- Summarize:
  - Secrets can be good and fun (like Somu's plans for his mother's birthday).

- Secrets can also be bad and unsafe (like the thieves' plan to rob Somu's house and hurt his family).
- When people want us to be part of good secrets, there is no problem—because we know that at the end, we as well as others will be happy and no one will get hurt.
- When people want us to be part of bad secrets, there is a problem—because we know that at the end, we as well as others might get hurt and be unhappy.
- When people threaten to hurt us if we refuse to keep the secret, we know surely that they are bad people and we should not trust them (just like the thieves said they would hit Tommy with a stick if he told their secret plans).
- When people say they will give us something nice, something we like, like sweets or toys to keep 'bad' secrets, we know then also that they are bad people (just like Tommy knew when the thieves said they will give him a box of his favourite biscuits if he kept their 'bad' secret).
- So, if someone tells us a 'bad' secret, it is important to tell someone we trust (just like Tommy always tells Somu, whom he trusts). If we do not tell 'bad' secrets, then we ourselves or others may get hurt or not be safe.

### **Which Secrets to Keep**

Somu's mother's birthday was coming up. He was very excited because he had planned a party and present for her. The best part of this was that it was a secret! He had not told her about it because he wanted it to be a surprise for her. He kept imagining how surprised and happy she would be when she opened the box and saw her new pink saree and when all the guests arrived along with the birthday cake that had been ordered for the evening! Only two others were in on the secret—Dad, because he was helping with organizing the birthday surprise plans and Tommy because...well, Tommy and Somu were best friends and Somu always told Tommy everything!

The day before Somu's mother's birthday, while Somu was at school, Tommy was sitting outside the house, near the gate, when two strange men came by. They did not notice Tommy as they whispered to each other, pointing to the house.

"Yes, so we will come tonight...at around midnight so that the family is fast asleep..." said one.

"We can break in through the side door—it looks a little old so it should be easy to get in that way," said the other. "And if the family and the kid give us any trouble as we steal all the stuff in the house, we will just hit them on the head."

Tommy pricked up his ears when he heard their conversation, especially the last part about the stealing and the family being hurt...someone was going to hit his beloved Somu??

Suddenly they noticed Tommy but did not realize that he belonged to the house they were going to rob and the family they were planning to hurt. The first man laughed and said "aha, you silly dog...so you heard our secret! You better not tell...it is a secret...if you don't tell, I will give you a large box of your favourite biscuits."

"And if you tell, we will smack you on the head with a heavy stick", said the other one.

Tommy felt afraid...and confused. What did they mean that it was a secret? Weren't secrets supposed to be good things? Just like Somu's secret about his mother's birthday surprise? What kind of secret was this then— these strange people were planning to steal stuff and hurt people? Was he supposed to really keep it a secret when he knew that Somu's house was going to be robbed and Somu and his family were going to be hurt??

Of course not!! This was not the kind of secret he was going to keep—not for a bag of his favourite biscuits and not even if anyone threatened to hurt him! In fact, if these strange men were going to do bad things like stealing and hurting people, Tommy thought, he must certainly not keep their secret!

And so, that night, Tommy did not go to sleep as usual on Somu's bed. He sat by the window and kept watch—long after Somu was asleep, and his parents had gone to bed. At about midnight, Tommy heard a noise and saw two men come down the road—the thieves he had seen yesterday, the ones who had told him to keep a bad secret. He started to bark loudly until Somu and his parents woke up and came running to see what the matter was. Standing by Tommy, Somu's father saw the two thieves approach the house. He immediately called the police—and within minutes, the police car was at their house and the two thieves, who had been hiding in the bushes near the gate, were caught.

Tommy was petted by the family and given his favourite food the next day. "Clever dog," said Somu's mother.

"I wonder how he knew the thieves were going to come," said Somu. And Tommy thought to himself: "I heard them plan...and knew their secret. But their secret was not a safe or good secret and so I did not keep it."

That evening, Tommy watched Somu and his father give his mother the surprise birthday present, and the guests and cake arrive for the surprise party. Somu's mother was excited and happy... "I never knew you had planned all this!" she said. "It was a secret," said Somu.

"A very good secret", thought Tommy. "Because no one got hurt and everyone was happy!"

## 6. Re-Cap

Each week (or more frequently if required, particularly for children with developmental disability), re-cap:

- The names of body parts and their functions.
- Our personal safety triangle areas and where no one should touch us.
- Safety rules we follow with regard to various people.

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