

# MY BODY

**EVERY DAY  
AND  
EVERY WHERE!**

**SAFETY AND RESPECT FOR  
GIRLS AND WOMEN**

## THE SPACE BETWEEN US ACTIVITY<sup>1</sup>

The “Space Between Us” is an interactive activity that can be used to shed light on the different experiences of girls/ women and boys/ men in society. It provides an opportunity for insightful discussions on power imbalances, the dangers of gender- based violence, and creating change. During the 16 Days Campaign, this activity will raise awareness about how sexual harassment presents itself in the lives of girls and women in communities, schools, and workplace.

### STEPS

1. Ask participants to line up side by side across the middle of the room, with sufficient and equal space both behind and in front of them. Ask them to all face one way (toward a wall or line on the floor that is at a distance in front of them) and to hold hands with the people on either side of them.
2. If you do not have at least two women and two men in your group, ask for volunteers to take on a pretend identity of the opposite sex. These volunteers should act according to their pretend identities throughout the exercise, making decisions and contributing to the debrief based on the identity assigned to them. Be sure to keep the tone serious.
3. Remind participants that it is a silent exercise and that they should not make any comments during the activity.
4. The facilitator will read a series of statements related to sexual harassment. After each of the statements, participants will move one space forward, backward, or stay where they are, based on their own experience or the general experience of the gender they represent. If participants begin moving in an opposite direction of the people they are holding hands with, they should let go. Participants can call “repeat,” if they didn’t heard a statement clearly.
5. When you have finished reading all the statements, pause. Ask participants to remain where they are. If some participants are still holding hands, they can now let go of each other.
6. Ask the participants to look around to see where they are standing and where others around them are standing. Ask them to take a moment to reflect on their own position and the position of others.
7. After a moment for reflection, say to the group: When I say “go,” race to the wall/line in front of you.
8. Count “one, two, three, GO!”

After the activity, gather everyone back in the large circle and debrief the exercise. Encourage participants to discuss how they felt doing the exercise and as it progressed (moving backward or forward), what they noticed occurred, how they felt about where they were standing at the end of the activity, how long it took them to race to the wall (it is likely that the boys/men in the group would be closest to the wall), and what they think the activity represents, among any other thoughts or feelings they may have. Open up further discussion about sexual harassment, what makes it continue, and what can be done to prevent it. The following are some topics you could discuss (you can also use the information on the “Campaign Overview” sheet to guide your discussion):

- The power imbalance between genders is the fundamental cause of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. How would society look different, if power was equally shared?
- Sexual harassment impacts girls and women in various settings (e.g. community, schools, workplace), and it can be verbal, nonverbal, and physical. Encourage participants to discuss different examples of sexual harassment and the impact it has on girls and women.

- Gender-based violence and sexual harassment continues because it is normalized in society, and girls and women who speak out are often stigmatized, called liars and dramatic. Ask participants of ways that this issue can be addressed, along with individual actions they can take.
- Blame is usually misplaced on girls and women for their experience of sexual harassment, but this ignores the responsibility perpetrators have to make positive decisions. How can boys and men be informed about sexual harassment, so they can make healthy decisions that creates safety and respect for all? How can perpetrators be held accountable for their actions, so future incidents are avoided?

## POTENTIAL STATEMENTS

- If it is generally accepted for your sex to make sexual jokes in public about the other sex, move one step forward.
- If a teacher has ever promised you better school results in exchange for sexual favors, move one step back.
- If there would be little or no reaction from others if your partner were to beat you, move one step back.
- If people of your sex often fear violence in their own relationships or homes, move one step back.
- If people of your sex can beat a partner because of unfaithfulness, with general acceptance of this behavior by others, move one step forward.
- If people of your opposite sex are often paid for sexual favors, move one step forward.
- If you fear being sexually assaulted if you walk home alone after dark, move one step back.
- If you have never worried about being called a prostitute, move one step forward.
- If you have never been offered presents for sexual favors, move one step forward.
- If you have ever worried about how to dress to keep yourself safe, move one step back.
- If you have ever feared rape, move one step back.
- If you have been touched inappropriately by a stranger in public, against your will, move one step back.
- If you have never been whistled or hooted at in public by the opposite sex, move one step forward.