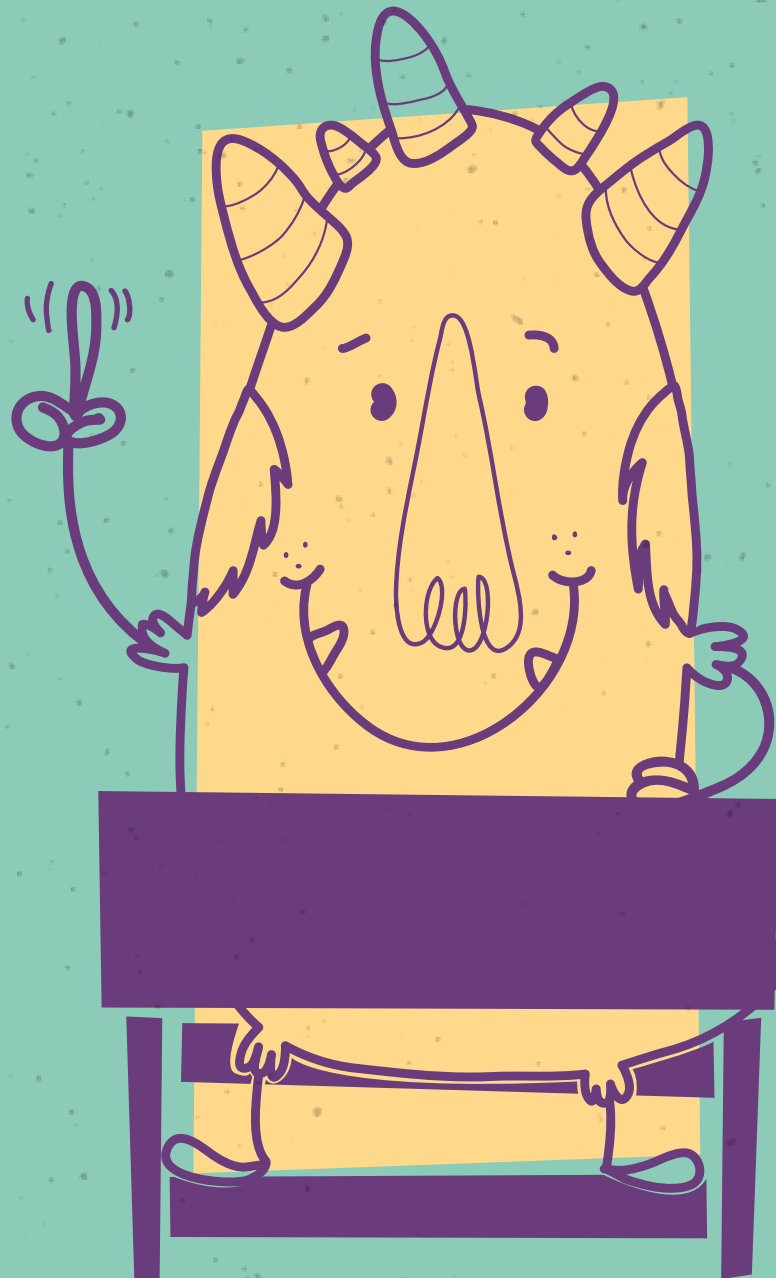




Synai/no for Educators

A GUIDE TO FOSTERING CONSENT
SKILLS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT





**Synai/no for Educators:
A guide to fostering consent skills
in the school environment**

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT US

Genderhood was founded in 2017 in Thessaloniki, and since 2020 its headquarters have been located in Athens. It is the first organization in Greece specialising in issues of gender equality for children.

Our vision is a world of free gender expression. Our mission is to empower communities of all ages to acquire the skills to co-create a gender-equal society.

Focusing on the child, we take a holistic approach to all the people surrounding them. Primarily, parents and teachers, but also adults who look forward to the free expression of all genders.

We design educational programmes as part of our actions on *Children & Prevention*. At the same time, we are active in the following areas: *Empowerment & Adults, School & Training, Society & Awareness Raising, Culture & Gender*. The expertise of our multidisciplinary team creates innovative educational projects with real social impact.

More about us and our work:

 <https://genderhood.org/>

 [Genderhood](#)

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SYNAI/NO

For us in Genderhood, training on consent is essential and should start from the very early years of a person's life.

So, in 2020 we created **Synai/no**, a comprehensive educational skill-building program on consent with the aim of preventing child abuse.

Synai/no includes:

- The digital guide for parents *Synai/no: Consent as a means of preventing child abuse* (available only in Greek)
- Online and face-to-face non-formal educational programmes:
 - > [Synai/no for primary school](#)
 - > [Synai/no for high school](#)
 - > [Synai/no for senior high school](#)
 - > [Synai/no for parents](#)
 - > The Synai/no board game for children 6-9 years old (under development)

To date, we have trained **1208 children and 407 teachers, parents and adults in the skills of consent** through the "Synai/no" project.



Funding: The writing and publication of the guide in digital format was designed and implemented within the framework of the project "Synai/no for Educators: A guide to fostering consent skills in the school environment" supported by the Civil Society Organizations Empowerment Program, which focuses on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This program was designed and implemented by Social Dynamo, the NGO Hub of the Bodossaki Foundation.

SYNAI/NO IN THEIR OWN WORDS



"I left the program empowered and more aware of the changes I need to make in my daily life in order to build a healthier relationship with my child".

Katerina, parent of a 6-year-old child

"R. told her mom that she feels weird being tickled by our school bus driver when she gets on. We know it's innocent and she also hugs him a lot, etc. but the nudge to think it through and to put it into words was your program".

Markos, elementary school principal




"I can do what I want with my body. Only I have the right".

Marina 8 years old

"I left with a head full of thoughts and realized that I and only I define my personal space".

Antonis, 12 years old



"I realized who I trust and can trust and how violating I've been in the past because I didn't understand how important our personal boundaries are".

Marilena, 16 years old



PREFACE

Hello,

Welcome to *Synai/no for Educators: A guide to cultivating skills of consent in the school environment*. If you want to get an idea of what consent is and how you can incorporate it into your classroom, then you're definitely in the right place. This guide is made for you and dedicated to you.

It will be your companion in the integration of consent into the educational process by providing the theoretical basis and activities adapted for each age group of Primary School.

It is a continuation of the **Synai/no** project and a step further in our efforts to a comprehensive education of children on consent. If you want to learn more about the theoretical basis of consent, you can refer to our [*Guide for parents: Consent as a means of preventing child abuse*](#), available in Greek, that we published in 2021. That guide provides a detailed analysis and the basic principles of consent, while the guide you have in your hands focuses on applying these principles in the school setting. It has been designed taking into account the needs of educators through two focus group discussions conducted online in May 2024, while also being informed by the scientific team of Genderhood based on their field experience and literature research.

This guide is our attempt to contribute both to the limited material that currently exists on the subject and to provide a tool to empower educators on the prevention of gender-based violence and child abuse.

Our objectives through Synai/no for educators are:

- understanding the concept of consent and recognising the importance of its integration in the educational process
- guiding educators towards the integration of consent into everyday pedagogical practices and the school environment
- providing concrete guidelines and activities for the integration of consent in the school environment,

So that, in the long term, we can contribute to:

- the reduction of incidents of abuse and bullying
- the promotion of an inclusive society where every child can flourish in a safe and supportive environment
- the creation of a foundation for people to live together in harmony.

UNDERSTANDING
CONSENT

PRINCIPLES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Physical autonomy and self-determination of the body are not knowledge consolidated at a certain age. **It is a life skill cultivated throughout the developmental stages of a person's life starting from infancy.** It is necessary for a child to know and defend their rights over their body.

According to the statistics we have available, in 2023 The Smile of the Child received **1,138 signed and anonymous reports of child abuse.** A rapid increase has also been recorded in the last 5 years in the number of **complaints about sexual abuse of minors**, according to official data available to the Greek Police. Moreover, the World Health Organization notes that **1 in 5 children** (0-18 years old) **falls victim to some form of sexual violence or abuse**, with 93% of cases involving a perpetrator known and trusted by the child from their family or social circle.

As *Bachman, Cunningham, and Boone* (2024) note in their article *Collaborating with Families for Innovative School Mental Health*, children's good health and well-being are promoted to a greater extent when both family and school take action to achieve shared goals. It is important that children are equipped early on with this knowledge so that they can develop into empowered adults who listen to their bodies and needs, set boundaries and respect those of others. In this way, they create healthy interpersonal relationships that are based on empathy, respect and acceptance.



School is the primary place of socialisation for children, where they coexist and form a large part of their identity. In addition to formal learning, informal learning takes place, where social skills and moral values are formed through interaction with peers and staff. The inclusion of activities promoting consent in the educational process is important because it:

1. Creates a safe learning environment

When children are trained to respect the boundaries and consider the wishes of others, they feel safer and more protected at school. This encourages their active participation and free expression, reducing the risk of bullying.

2. Empowers children

Practicing self-determination and physical autonomy gives children a sense of control. They understand the ability to make their own choices and take responsibility for their actions.

3. Develops life skills

The ability to communicate effectively, set boundaries and consider the needs of others are essential skills for success in all areas of life. By incorporating these skills into the curriculum, we prepare children to become adults with healthy interpersonal relationships.

4. Promotes healthy sexuality

Consent and respect for boundaries are fundamental concepts for a healthy sexuality. By introducing these concepts from an early age, we help children develop healthy relationships and make responsible choices about their bodies. This can help prevent sexual abuse and exploitation.

BUT WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent is the process by which an individual or group of people **freely** agree to do something or allow something to happen after having fully understood all relevant information and having provided their agreement without pressure, blackmail, coercion or fear.

Education on consent in the school context is about understanding our own and others' limits, kindness, empathy, reciprocity, generosity and respect for ourselves and those around us. It is applied to everyday interactions such as play, teamwork and communication, where children learn to express their thoughts and feelings and listen to those of others. In this way, consent becomes part of everyday life at school.

CULTIVATING CONSENT

APPLYING IT TO EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE

In the school environment, cultivating consent skills focuses on empowering children to openly communicate their desires, respect the physical and emotional boundaries of others, and make informed decisions.

Consent in the school environment encompasses all interpersonal relationships and interactions between students, as well as between the children and teachers. It is about free and voluntary participation in activities, the acceptance of personal boundaries and the promotion of children's autonomy and self-esteem.

However, teachers often exert control over children's movements and expressions, such as asking them to cross their legs, put their hands on the desk or simply sit still in their chairs. **This practice conflicts with the concept of freedom and consent, as children comply with rules without understanding their essence or having other choices.** Consequently, this can cause confusion over the concept of free will and may manifest itself through offending behaviours that express the need for control. Consent does not mean that there are no boundaries or obligations but that each context is explained precisely and options are given.

A simple way of integrating consent into the classroom is through the creation of a class contract. The class contract includes positive agreements that are mutually decided at the beginning of the year between the educator and the children and adhered to throughout the school year. In this way, children participate in shaping the rules and understand their importance, thus promoting a more consensual and collaborative educational experience. **When a child agrees to something without understanding that they have another choice, they comply but do not consent.** Discussing with children about what we expect from them and what they want can reveal that they think differently from us. This dialogue helps them feel that they belong in the group and that their opinion is valued. At the same time, it encourages them to take responsibility for their choices.

QUICK TIPS FOR CONSENT



Activity preparation: Before we begin a group project, we ask our children how they would like to work together. They may prefer to work in small groups or take on individual responsibilities.

In discussions: We ask children to express their views on a topic and make sure they feel comfortable sharing or keeping their views to themselves if they don't want to talk.

Private space: When we notice a child sitting alone, we ask: *"Would you like company or would you prefer to be alone right now?"* We help children understand and respect another person's right to have personal space.

During playtime: We encourage children to ask their friends first if they want to join the game and wait for a response before they start playing.

Boundary setting: We ask children to make their own "consent agreements" or "understanding agreements" for the class, such as when they feel comfortable talking or when they need time for themselves.

Use of Daily Questions: We start the day with a question like: *"How do you feel today? Would you like to share something or would you prefer to keep your thoughts to yourself?"* This helps children express their feelings without pressure.

Personal contribution to group projects: We encourage children to choose how they want to contribute to group projects, rather than giving them ready-made roles. We ask: *"What task would you like to take on in this project?"*

Consent before changes in routine: When we plan to change something in the school day or introduce a new activity, we ask children how they feel about it. *"Today, I'm thinking about changing the way we do this lesson. Would you like to share your views on this change?"*

Create a "comfort zone": We create a corner in the classroom where children can go when they feel the need to have some time alone. *"If you ever feel like you need some time to yourself, you can use the comfort zone to relax"*

Encourage questions: we tell children that they can always ask for clarification or questions if they feel unsure. *"If you feel like you don't understand something or are uncomfortable with something, you can always ask or say you need more help"*





CONSENT IN ACTION

STEP-BY-STEP ACTIVITIES

The yellow activities can be incorporated into the daily school routine, to enhance interaction between children and create a positive and inclusive classroom environment. Each activity begins with an introduction explaining the educational objective and the connection of the activity to the skill of consent, a description with instructions, definitions (where necessary), materials, target age group, and a “Plan B” (an alternative suggestion that allows for adjustment of the activity based on the needs of the group or the age level of the children). In the description of each activity, the suggested facilitation phrases for the teacher are *italicized* to facilitate group coordination.



The green activities are designed to cover one or two teaching hours and can be integrated into the daily school routine as complete lessons. Each activity begins with an introduction explaining the educational objective and the connection of the activity to the skill of consent, detailed facilitation guidelines, definitions of terms, a list of materials for implementation, and the target age group. It also includes alternative suggestions (Plan B) for adapting the activity to the needs of the group or the age level of the children. In the description of each activity, the suggested facilitation phrases for the teacher are *italicized* to facilitate group coordination.

SWAP PLACES IF...

This activity encourages children to think of situations where they have had to ask or give permission and respect others' boundaries. By swapping places, they learn to acknowledge and express their needs respectfully, while understanding that there are different opinions that need to be respected.



5' - 10'



—



6 - 12

Description:

- We are in a circle.
- We explain to the children that we are going to read some sentences, and if they apply to them, they will have to swap places with another person in the circle. For example, *"You swap places if you like chocolate."*
- We stress that while they are swapping places, they should be careful not to touch any of their friends. Thus, we create awareness of personal space.
- *"You swap places if: you are wearing something red, you have siblings, you ask permission to borrow toys, you feel comfortable expressing your feelings, your favorite subject is recess, you love walking barefoot, you had said "stop" when you didn't like something, you like playing with mud, you have at least one scratch on you, you like hugs, you wish it were always Christmas, you've had a fight with a friend at least once, you've asked permission for something important this week, you've changed your mind about something and you've expressed it"*.

Reflection questions:

- How did you feel when you swapped places?
- How did you feel when you were careful not to touch another child while swapping places? Was it easy or difficult?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- What did you notice (in yourself/other people)?
- How do you feel when people ask you before they borrow something from you or if they can hug you?

Plan B:

- Prompts can be adjusted, removed or added depending on the time available and the needs of the team.
Some suggestions for older age groups (e.g. 9-12) would be: *"You have asked permission to borrow a toy, you have said 'no' to something you didn't want to do, you have said 'please' when you wanted something from someone else, you have asked for someone's help when you felt uncomfortable, you have listened to and respected your friend's request, you have felt good when a person respected your 'no', you've apologized when you annoyed your friend, you've asked someone else's opinion before doing something with them, you've only given a hug when the other person wanted one, you've felt comfortable saying "no" to a friend/family member, you've felt proud of yourself for standing up for your personal boundaries"*.
- If there is no room to form a circle they can swap seats between desks and return to their original seats after the conclusion of the activity.

HOLD ME TIGHT!

This activity encourages children to love and accept themselves, which is fundamental to acknowledging their needs, setting clear personal boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others.



5'-10'



sheets of paper,
markers



6 - 12

Description:

- We sit in a circle and ask the children to think of a trait they love about themselves.
- Each child shares in the circle (or writes on a piece of paper) what they love most about themselves.
- *"We close our eyes, wrap our arms around our body and give ourselves a tight hug. We stay still for a few seconds".*
- If children have written their traits on a piece of paper, they can opt to share it with the group, but it is not required.
- We discuss the importance of loving ourselves for who we are, not just for what we accomplish, the importance of forgiving ourselves, hugging ourselves tight and speaking to ourselves with love and respect.

Reflection Questions:

- How did you feel when you hugged yourselves?
- Did you learn something new about yourselves?
- What does it mean to love yourself for who you are and not just for the things you accomplish?
How do you understand it?



GREETINGS

This activity educates children on consent as they become familiar with different greetings, broadening their range of choices. Thus, they realize that they are in control of their body and no one can cross their boundaries.



5'



sheets of paper,
markers



6 - 12

Description:

- We start the day with a (fun) way of greeting.
- We have a box in the classroom where we can suggest a way of greeting (real or made-up) by writing it on a piece of paper.
- Each morning or at the end of the previous day, a child chooses a way of greeting and announces it to the rest of the class (handshake, hug, high-five, smile, eye contact, verbal greeting, tyrannosaurus roar, heart-shape with hands, kiss in the air, etc.).
- The children greet each other using the chosen way.
- The way of greeting changes every day to keep things interesting.
- **Important:** We have pre-checked the suggestions to prevent any offensive greetings, which can be discussed in class at a later time.

Reflection questions:

- ◀ • What did you think of the way we chose to greet each other today?
- Was there a moment when you felt comfortable or uncomfortable with the way we greeted? Why?
- What is your favorite way of greeting and why?
- How do you feel when you and another person agree on how to greet each other?
- How can you show that you don't want to greet a person?
- If a way of greeting seems uncomfortable or offensive to you, how can you express it? ▶

Plan B:

- If a child is not comfortable with hugs or some other type of greeting, we can limit ourselves to handshakes or high-fives or agree as a group that some days we may not want to greet at all.
- In younger age groups, we can add animal greetings (e.g. bear greeting with a big hug, goldfish greeting with lips that suggest a fish making sounds, owl greeting where we stand still and call out "hoot, hoot").



A COLLAGE OF EMOTIONS

This activity helps children recognise and express their emotions. Through understanding their own emotions, they can more effectively express their needs and boundaries, while also learning to recognise the emotions of others.



5'



wheel of emotions or
a sheet of paper,
markers



6 - 12

Description:

- There is a map of emotions printed in the classroom (see appendix).
- In turn, we ask the children to choose what emotion they currently feel and share it with the group.
- If a child does not want to share their emotion they can say "not today" and we skip them.

Reflection Questions:

- Does anyone want to share with us why they chose this emotion?
- When was the last time you felt this way?
- If you painted this emotion, what color(s) would you use?
- Would you like to swap this emotion for another?
- Can our emotions affect our boundaries?
- How do you think you can ask for space or time to feel better?

Plan B:

- If children find it difficult to express themselves in words, they can use colours or pantomime to represent their emotions.
- For younger age groups, we can use the thermometer (see appendix). In the classroom, we have the basic emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, surprise) posted on the wall, and using the thermometer we identify the intensity (e.g. joy - excitement, sadness - grief).



I FEEL IT IN MY FINGERS, I FEEL IT IN MY TOES

This activity encourages children to recognise their physical needs, which is essential for understanding their boundaries and communicating them. It, also, helps identify warning signs (see appendix).



5'



—



6 - 12

Description:

- We sit at our desks or in a circle.
- We ask children to share how their body is feeling today (e.g., tired, energetic, relaxed, tight, hurting in the belly or the head) and match it to a movement that represents the feeling.

Reflection questions:

- How does your body feel today?
- Is there a special feeling you want to share?
- Can you show a movement that represents it?
- Is there something that makes you feel this way?
- If it were an animal/color, what would it be?
- What does your body need to feel better when it is tired?
- Is this the first time this feeling has ever appeared? What did you do last time? How did you deal with it?

I AM AMAZING!

This activity helps develop empathy and positive interactions between students. It cultivates mutual acknowledgement of boundaries and fosters trust.



5'



—



6 - 12

Description:

- We ideally sit in a circle or alternatively at our desks.
- Following a circular flow, each child says something positive about themselves and makes a positive comment about the person next to them. (e.g. *"I like that I am brave, and, John, I admire/like that you are a good friend, generous"*).
- The child receiving the positive comment thanks the person who made it.
- It is important to clearly explain that we only exchange positive comments, and any person who breaks this agreement will face consequences. We want to protect the children from potential malicious comments. Also, knowing the dynamics of the group, we are mindful of which child sits next to whom to avoid teasing.

Plan B:

If some children are uncomfortable speaking up, they can agree at the beginning of the activity that they will write their positive comments on pieces of paper and we will read them out loud to the class.

HOW I LEAVE TODAY

This activity encourages self-reflection and recognition of emotions. It fosters children's ability to express their needs and thoughts with respect for themselves and others.



5'



—



6 - 12

Description:

- We ask children to share how they feel now that the day is over.
- We encourage them to say something positive that happened to them today or something new they learned about themselves.

► *This activity can be combined with the [A collage of emotions activity](#).*

Reflection questions:

- How do you feel at the moment?
- Do you feel different than this morning?
- If so, what has changed? What happened that changed your mood?
- What do you take away from today?
- If you could repeat one moment of your day, what would it be and why?
- What did you like most about today?

Plan B:

If some children find it difficult to express themselves, they can write down their feelings on paper and share them only with us or with the rest of the class.



DING, DING, DING!

This activity trains children to recognise and become familiar with the warning signs the body gives when we feel uncomfortable or are in a situation that requires our consent. At the same time, it enhances our understanding of physical awareness and, more specifically, the ways in which the body can alert us to situations that make us uncomfortable. This way, children develop self-awareness and the ability to recognise and defend their own boundaries.



90'



the poster "Early Warning Signs" (see appendix), A4 sheets of paper, markers, crayons, pastels, red and green flags (see appendix), stories (see appendix)



8 - 10

Definition:

Warning signs are physical reactions indicating that what is happening makes us feel uncomfortable or that the situation we are in is not safe.

Description:

Part A (45')

- We are in a circle.
- We explain that in addition to our mouths, our bodies also talk.
- E.g. When we are hungry, our tummy rumbles, and when we receive a gift (surprise) our heart beats very fast.
- We ask the children in which way our body talks to us when we feel: joy, sadness, anxiety, fear, and uncomfortable focusing more on the last three. We encourage the children to speak freely and share their experiences.
- *"When we feel uncomfortable our body sends us signals. It's like a ding ding ding! We may start to get a stomach ache, start shivering, sweat or shake. It can also be that two different emotions give us the same reaction. We may cry with joy and sadness or our heart may pound with surprise and fear. Our body speaks to us in different ways, and sometimes we call these messages warning signs."*
- Before we start naming the signs, we allow space for the children to think and contribute their own experiences.
- Then, we divide the group into subgroups of 4-5 people.
- We hand out A4 sheets of paper and coloured markers, crayons or pastels. We give the children 15-20 minutes to draw a human body (or we have it drawn beforehand) and write or draw on it the warning signs that our body may feel when it is in an uncomfortable situation that causes fear, shame or makes them upset.
- Once all groups have finished, we all walk around to look at each other's drawings or we place them in front of us and sit in a circle.



Reflection questions:

- ◀ How did you feel during this activity?
- What was easy, and what was difficult?
- Did you notice anything different or anything extra in your friends' drawings?
- Did anything stick out to you?
- Was there anything you hadn't thought of?
- **We introduce the sketch with the warning signs (see appendix).**
- Is there anything in here that you hadn't thought of?
- Do you think we can feel more than one warning sign at the same time?
- What can we do if we feel any of the warning signs? (we walk away from the situation that makes us feel uncomfortable, we talk about what happened to an adult in our safety network).
- ▶

▶ **Suggestion:** Along with the children, we collectively create a large poster of the body's warning signs and then hang it in the classroom.

Part B (45')

- We divide the children into four groups and hand out to each group the flags and a story in which the protagonists show some of the warning signs. The aim is to discuss whether the situation that the person is experiencing is comfortable or uncomfortable for them. If the situation is uncomfortable they raise the red flag and if it is comfortable, the green one. We give them 10' to discuss the story and identify the warning signs.
- We direct the children's attention to body language and facial expressions.
- We make it clear that under no circumstances is the protagonist to blame for what happens in the story (preventing victim blaming).
- "Once they finish, we gather in a plenary session with the children from each group sitting together.
- We ask each group to read their story and the rest of the class decides by raising flags whether it is a comfortable or uncomfortable situation. Then the group shares what they discussed.

Reflection questions:

- ◀ How do you think the person in this story feels?
- What do you notice that might show us how they feel? How can we tell?
- Does the person feel comfortable or uncomfortable?
- Do you think this person wants to be in this situation?
- What can the person do to feel safe? (get away from the situation, go to an adult they trust, and if there is no adult, to any other adult person)
- How would you feel if you were in a similar situation? What would you do?
- How do we recognize the warning signs?
- How can we tell if a person or a friend of ours is not feeling comfortable?
- How can we respect other people's feelings and boundaries?
- What can we do if we find ourselves in a similar uncomfortable situation in order to feel safe again?
- ▶

If something happens to us that triggers our Warning Signs we need to follow these steps:

1. We notice our warning signs.
2. We move away and we shout STOP!
3. We quickly run to an adult we trust, and if there is no adult, to any other adult person.
4. We share the incident with a person in our safety network.
5. We share the incident with a person in our safety network.
5. If necessary, we report it to the police.

Stories

Natalia at the Park

Warning signs

- steps back
- no response - freeze
- heart beating fast
- legs shaking

Marios at a party

Warning signs

- need to use the toilet
- upset stomach

Elena's secret

Warning signs

- shivers
- sweaty palms

Nick's gift

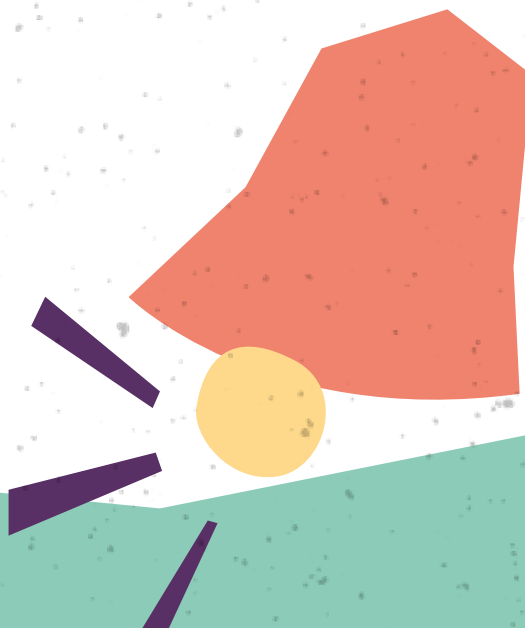
Warning signs

- there are none

Plan B:

For the 10-12 age group we can develop the stories with more details or add new ones such as:

- exchanging suspicious/malicious emails
- older brother (16 years old) secretly takes the car keys and asks you not to tell
- your classmate shows you inappropriate pictures on their phone.



A CELEBRATION OF EMOTIONS

The recognition of emotions is directly linked to consent, as both are necessary for mutual understanding and respect in interpersonal relationships. When we recognise and understand our emotions, we can clearly express our needs and boundaries, while understanding the emotions of others allows us to understand their desires and boundaries. This fosters the creation of a safe environment where consent can be given or withdrawn freely and with full awareness.

Definition:

Emotions are psychological and physical states that include reactions, physical changes and behaviours. They occur in response to internal or external stimuli and affect our thinking and behaviour.



45'



emotion cards
(appendix), A4,
crayons or markers



6 - 12

Description:

Part A (10')

- We are in a circle and ask the children to share what the word "emotions" means to them.
- "What are emotions? How would you explain to a friend what an emotion is? Can you give me some examples of emotions? How can I show what I am feeling?"
- We give the group time to think and then offer a definition ourselves: "Emotions are like the different colors that dress our hearts. When we feel joy, anger, sadness or fear, it is like having a different colour in our heart. These emotions show us how we feel about different things around us and help us better understand what is happening inside us and how to react. When we recognise our feelings, we can manage them better. If I can tell my friends that I'm sad, they can understand and support me."

Part B (30')

- We divide the children into groups of 3-4 or in pairs.
- Each group or pair is given 5 emotion cards (see appendix) and shows their pair or group the emotion they were given by doing a pantomime (i.e. using only facial expressions and body language).
- The group or pair tries to guess the emotion.

Reflection questions:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- How did you feel when you were trying to recreate the emotion? Was it easy or difficult?
- How did you feel when you were trying to guess the emotion of your partners?
- Were there any expressions or movements that helped you better understand the emotion of your partners?
- Was there any emotion that you found more difficult to mime? Why do you think it was so? How can we spot and recognise it in real life?

Part C (5')

- On A4 sheets of paper, the children fill in the phrases:
I feel joy when...
I feel sadness when...
- We can add as many emotions as we want.
- We share what we have written with the rest of the group.

Plan B:

- For the 9-12 age group we can add more "complicated" emotions and/or we can ask them to create a short sketch, instead of a pantomime, describing a situation and the emotion that corresponds to their card. (For example, calm - I am lying in bed, sadness. I dropped the ice cream I just bought). In addition, we can discuss different reactions we might have to the same emotion using open-ended questions such as: "*What other emotion could you feel if you were lying in bed?*" Or "*How would you react if you were with friends and they helped you get more ice cream?*"
- For the 6-8 age group, we limit ourselves to the 6 basic emotions (joy, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, disgust). We ask the children to draw what colour and/or symbol each emotion represents for them.

► To reinforce our understanding of emotions and see how they affect our thoughts and actions, we can watch the film "**Inside Out**" in class and later discuss it with the children.



COME CLOSE, BUT NOT TOO CLOSE

Understanding and managing personal space is one of the first ways in which children understand the concept of consent. By acknowledging the space around their bodies, children understand that they have the right to set boundaries and protect themselves. In addition, they are taught to respect the space and boundaries of others, recognising that consent is also about caring for the feelings and boundaries of others.



45'



sheets of paper,
markers, safety network
(see appendix)



6 - 8

Description:

Part A (15')

- We are in a circle.
- We ask the children if they have heard the words “personal space” (or “my bubble” for the younger children) before and what they imagine this phrase might mean.
- We give them time to think and then give the children the definition.
We ask them to open the circle and stand in a spot where they can stretch their arms right and left without touching another child.
- *“I want you to take the invisible pencil in your hands and draw with me an outline around your body with your arm outstretched. This is the personal space. It is the space around our body that helps us feel safe and comfortable when it is not being violated. For some people, the circle may be larger, and for others, it may be smaller. Even if we don’t see it, it doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. You and you alone decide what you do with your body and which people you choose to put in your personal space. No person can enter your personal space without asking your permission, that is, without your consent. We all have our personal space that we don’t allow all people into. This space seems to say “NO TRESPASSING” and it is our vital space that we sometimes enlarge and sometimes shrink. For example, we don’t allow a stranger to hug us, but we may allow our mum or dad to hug us. Just as we all have the right to protect our space, we should do the same for the other people around us.”*
- We ask children to reach out and make a circle around themselves, showing where their personal space begins and ends.
- *“This is your personal space. Now, you will walk freely in the space and be careful not to get too close to your friends. If one gets too close, raise your hand in front of you and say “Stop!”. This means you are protecting your personal space”.*
- Allow children to move freely around the room and practice the “stop” technique when an other gets too close. We observe their reactions and give them space and time to practice.

Reflection questions:

- What did we do in this activity?
- How did you feel when you had to say “Stop!” to another child?
- What did you notice when you said “Stop!”? Did your friend respond?
- How can you use what you learned today when you are with other people?

Part B (20')

- We divide the children into pairs. One child (A) will be the one approaching, and the other (B) will have to express their limits.
- *"Now one (A) child will approach the other (B), and when the child (B) feels that their friend is getting too close, they will say "Stop!" and ask them to move away. The important thing is to learn to listen when a person asks us to stop and respect their space".*
- We give each pair time to role-play and switch roles so that all children have the opportunity to be on both sides, the one who expresses boundaries and the one who respects them.
- *"When your friend gets too close and you feel uncomfortable, you can say, 'Please, can you step back a little bit? I feel uncomfortable'".*
- After giving the pairs time to finish, we move on to the reflection questions.

Reflection questions:

- What did we do in this activity? What happened?
- How did you feel when a friend got too close to you?
- Was it easy or hard to ask a friend to stop? And why?
- How do you think a person feels when we don't respect their personal space?
- How do you feel when they don't respect your bubble?
- What other phrases can we use when we want to say "Stop!"?
- How would you like your friends or other people you know to react when you ask them to respect your personal space?
- How could what we learned today help you at school or in your group of friends?

Part C (10')

- We meet in a circle.
- *"So far we've talked about how we protect our personal space, our bubble, and how we say "Stop!" when a person gets too close. Sometimes, however, even if we say "Stop!", a person may not hear us or may enter our bubble without us wanting them to. In that case, I want you to know something very important: It's not your fault!"*
- *"When we feel that someone is stepping into our bubble and we don't want them to, we have the right to ask for help. Where can we ask for help? Our safety network. Our safety network is the adult people we trust, the people who can protect us and help us when a person steps into our bubble when we don't want them to. It can be our mom, dad, a teacher, an aunt, or even a family friend. However, not our little sister or our cousin who is in high school. These people are here to listen to us and help us."*
- We hand out the Safety Network (see appendix) to the children and each child fills it out on their own

Plan B:

- We can incorporate some movement games (energizers) or read a themed book in between and extend this activity to 90 minutes.
- For older ages (9-12 years old), the activity can be adapted with more complex scenarios and further elaboration:
 - Through role-play scenarios, we can use situations related to the daily life of children of this age (e.g., when a classmate sits too close to their desk or someone gets too close to their personal space while playing).
 - We can ask children to write how they would feel in different situations where their boundaries are not respected and how they might react.

YES! NO?

Consent is not limited to verbal communication. It is equally important to recognise the non-verbal signals we give off, such as body language and facial expressions. Words can say “yes” or “no” but if the body shows something different, it creates confusion about our true intentions. The aim of the activity is to help children become aware of the connection between verbal communication and body language so that they can consistently and clearly express their consent or denial.



45'



A3 or seminar
paper, markers



9 - 12

Description:

Part A (10')

- We have designated two corners of the classroom for ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ and in the middle of the distance, we have ‘I don’t know.’ The children start the activity in the middle. Alternatively, we have drawn a line with chalk or tape on the floor, with ‘yes’ at one end and ‘no’ at the other.
- We read a series of statements and each time the children move to “yes”, “no” and “I don’t know” depending on how they feel about each of these statements.

Statements:

- I like sharing my toys with my friends.
- It’s okay for a person to hug me without asking me first.
- I feel joy when they say something nice to me.
- I like to be kissed on the cheek by my relatives.
- It is okay for my things to be taken away without my permission.
- I like playing outside on a sunny day.
- It’s okay for my body to be touched without my permission.
- I really like splashing around in the rain.
- It’s okay for other people to talk badly to me.
- I feel excited when I learn something new.
- I want a hug when there’s thunder.

Reflection questions:

- How did you feel when you answered these questions? Was it easy or difficult to choose sides? Did anything make an impression on you?
- Sometimes it’s hard to choose between a “yes” or a “no.” How do we feel when we’re not sure or don’t know? What could be changed to move us towards yes or no?
- Have you noticed similarities to your friends? Have you noticed that some children may have answered differently than you? What does this mean for their own boundaries and feelings?
- Are there situations where our opinion changes depending on which person is hugging us or what game we are playing? How does this affect our consent?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself or the group?

Part B (25')

- We explain that there are many ways to say "yes" or "no", and it's not always just the words we use.
- *"Have you ever noticed how a buddy of yours might say "yes" but their face or body shows that they don't mean it? Maybe our posture, the way we look or even our tone of voice can show what we really want. Do you have other examples of this?"*
- Divide the children into 4 groups.
- Distribute markers and an A3 (or seminar) paper to each group and give them 15 minutes to prepare their presentation.
- Groups 3 and 4 present their findings with theatrical improvisations, using facial expressions and body postures to represent how we give or do not give consent.
- Once the groups are ready, they take turns sharing their findings with the rest of the groups.

Group 1: Record words that give consent.

Group 2: Record words that do not give consent.

Group 3: Prepares facial expressions that give and do not give consent.

Group 4: Prepares ways in which the body gives and does not give consent.

Supporting questions for the groups:

- "Which words do you use when you want to say yes? Which words do you use when you want to say no?"
- "How do you use your body to show that you agree or disagree?"
- "Which facial expressions show that you are happy or unhappy about something?"
- "How does the body look when it is excited about something and how when it is fearful/closed off?"

Reflection questions:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- What was easy for you? What was difficult for you?
- How does facial expression or posture help us tell if a person is saying "yes" or "no"? Can you give examples from the presentations we saw?
- Are there different ways to say "yes" and "no"? Which ones?
- Which words do we use to say "yes" or "no"? Does the meaning of words change depending on the tone and the way we pronounce them?
- How do you feel when a friend says "yes" but their body or face shows something different? What can you do to better understand what they mean?
- If they show that they don't want something with their body, but they say "yes," what do we need to do to make sure they mean what they say?
- How can we use what we have learned to better respect the feelings of others?

▶ We point out that in order to agree on an activity we need our words and our body language to agree.

Part C (10')

- "Let's play a game that combines words, posture and facial expressions".
- We ask the children to work in pairs for 5-7 minutes.
- One child will choose a word from the lists they have already created (e.g. yes, maybe, no way) and accompany it with a posture and/or facial expression.
- The other child will observe if the posture and/or facial expression matches the word.
- We give the children an example where we say "yes" while making a sad expression with crossed arms.
- "What do you think? Does what I say match what I do? I say 'yes'. But what does my body say? What could be changed to better match the posture to the word I said?"
- We ask the children to take turns experimenting in pairs (once or twice each). While they are experimenting, we move between them and observe carefully.

Reflection questions:

- When did you feel that the body and the words matched? Did it confuse you?
- How do you feel when the body and the voice don't match?
- How do you feel when someone says "yes" to you but their body shows the opposite? What feelings does it cause you?
- How do you feel when your words and body say the same thing? Is it easier to show this to others?
- If I ask my friend to hang out with me and I get an answer that says "yes" but a body that says "no," what do I need to do?
- What did we learn today about consent? Is it just one word that says "yes" or "no"?

Plan B:

If we want to create smaller groups, we can split groups 3 and 4 into two smaller ones, just like groups 1 and 2.



SUPPORT LINES

Support lines for child abuse in Greece*:

European Helpline for Children and Adolescents: 116 111

National Helpline for Child Protection: 1107

The Smile of the Child: 1095

ELIZA - Society For the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: 10454

National Hotline for Domestic Violence: 15900

* Identify the support lines available in your countries or specific contexts.



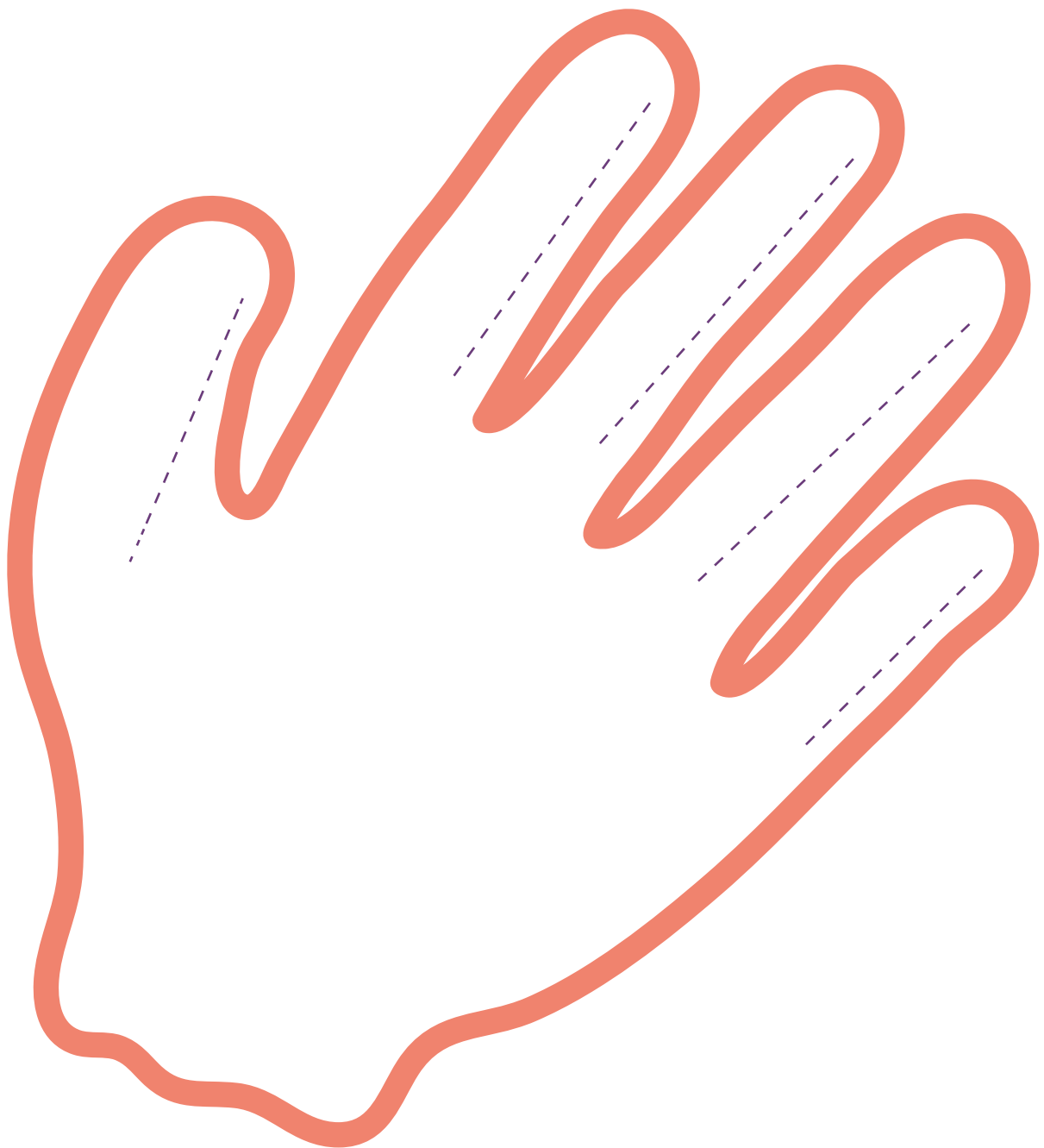
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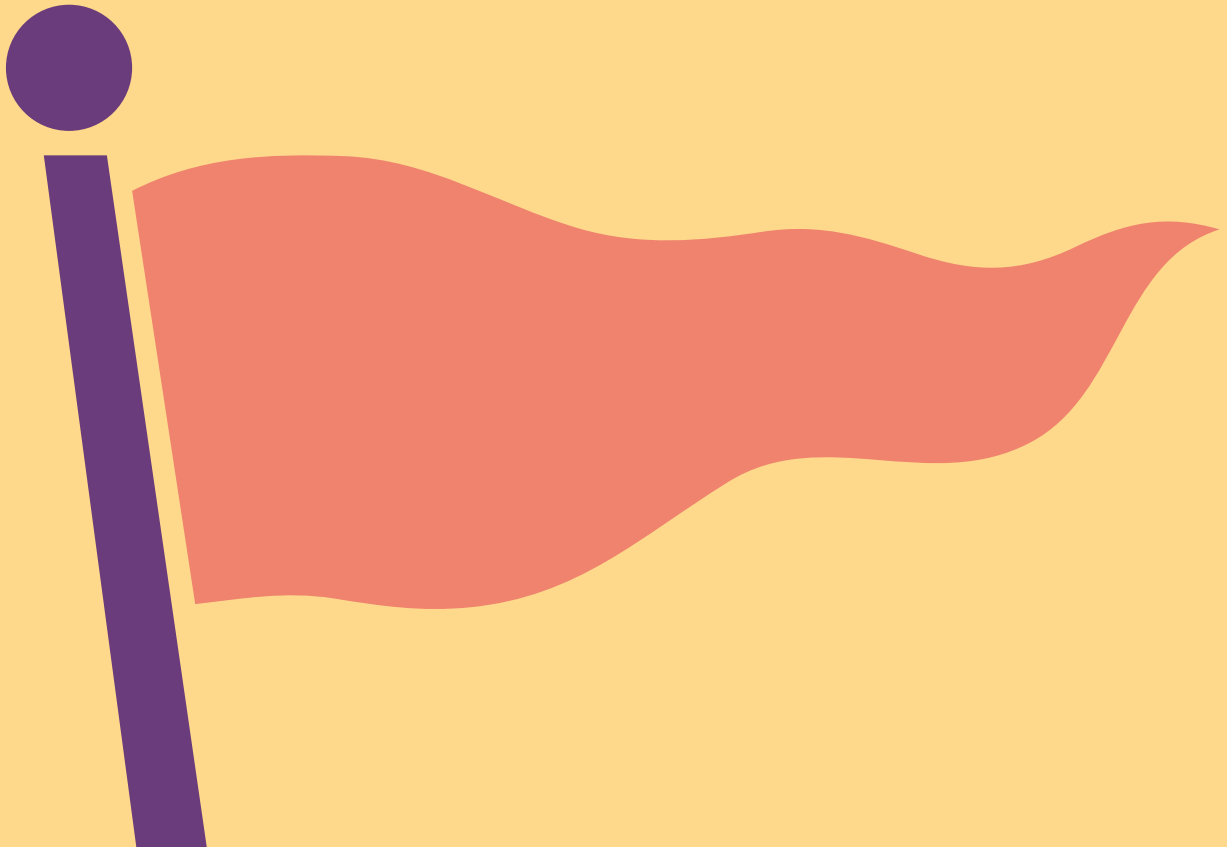
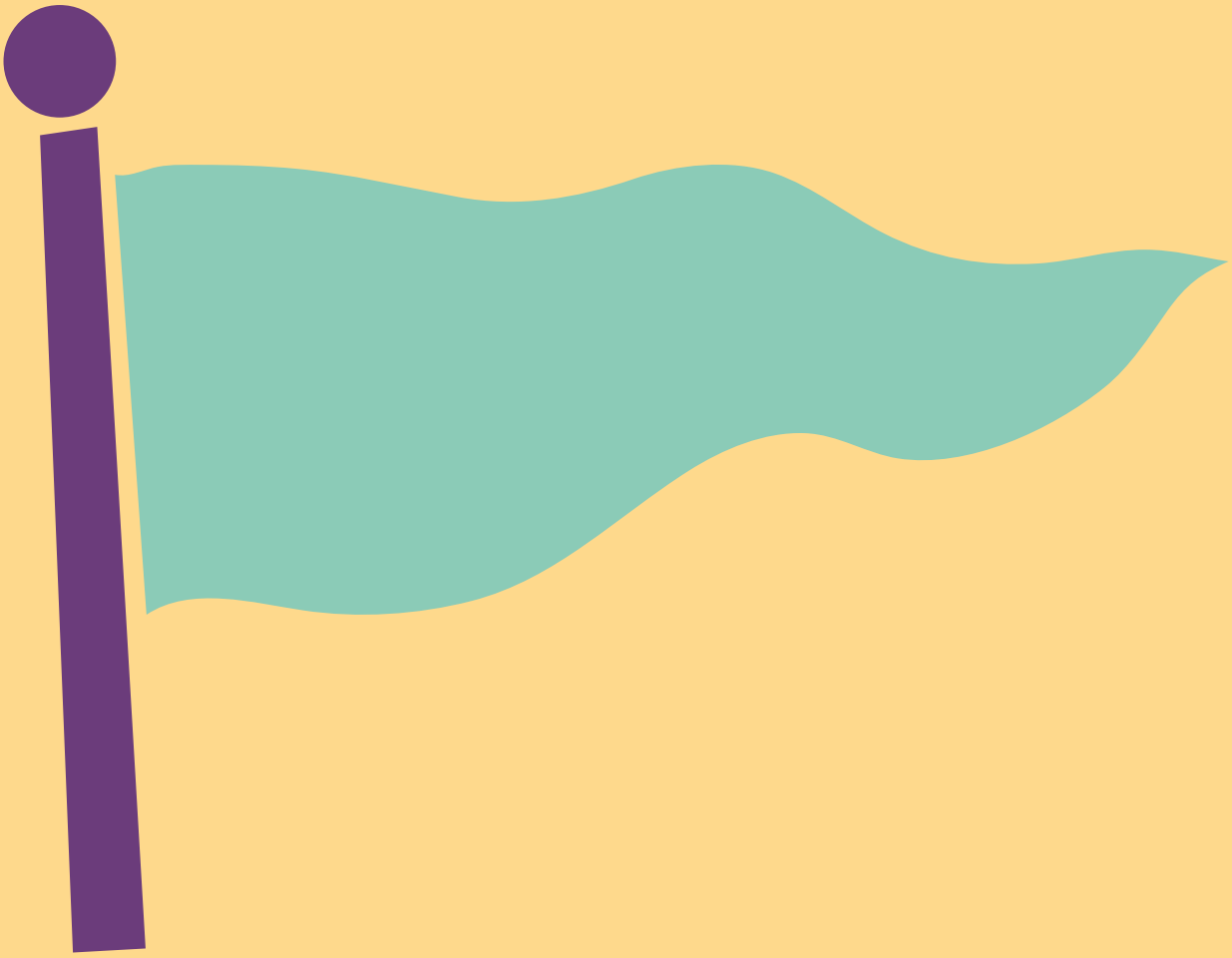
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APPENDIX

MY SAFETY NETWORK

Choose 5 adults you trust and want to include in your safety net. Then place this paper in a place that is easily accessible to you, such as your living room or bedroom.





NATALIA AT THE PARK

Natalia is playing in the park when an adult she doesn't know comes over and asks her to show them how to play a game. Natalia steps back and doesn't answer right away. The adult continues to talk to her and approach her. Natalia feels her heart beating fast and her legs shaking. She looks around trying to find someone she knows.

MARIOS AT A PARTY

Marios is at a birthday party and another guest, Kyriakos, asks him if he wants to go with him to a quiet room where he can show him something. Marios suddenly feels a strong urge to go to the toilet and his stomach is upset. Kyriakos insists, and grabs his hand, but Marios pulls his hand back and says "no".

ELENA'S SECRET

Elena is playing with her friend Niovi at home. Niovi tells her she has a secret to share, but she asks her not to say anything to anyone. When Elena hears the secret, she shivers and her palms start sweating. She lowers her eyes and purses her lips.

NICK'S GIFT

It's Nick's birthday and he loves surprises. Without him knowing it, his classmates have organized a surprise party for him. As soon as Nikos opens the door, the whole class shouts loudly "Happy Birthday"! Niko's heart beats fast, he feels a shiver all over his body and a huge smile appears on his face!



JOY

SADNESS

FEAR

SURPRISE

RAGE

PATIENCE

ANGER

SHAME





EXCITEMENT

DISGUST

CALMNESS

CONCERN

GRATITUDE

INDIGNATION

RELIEF

DISAPPOINTMENT



EARLY WARNING SIGNS

IF I FEEL UNSAFE,
MY BODY LETS ME KNOW.
HERE IS HOW

eyebrows sweating

eyes crying

shaky all over

heart beats fast

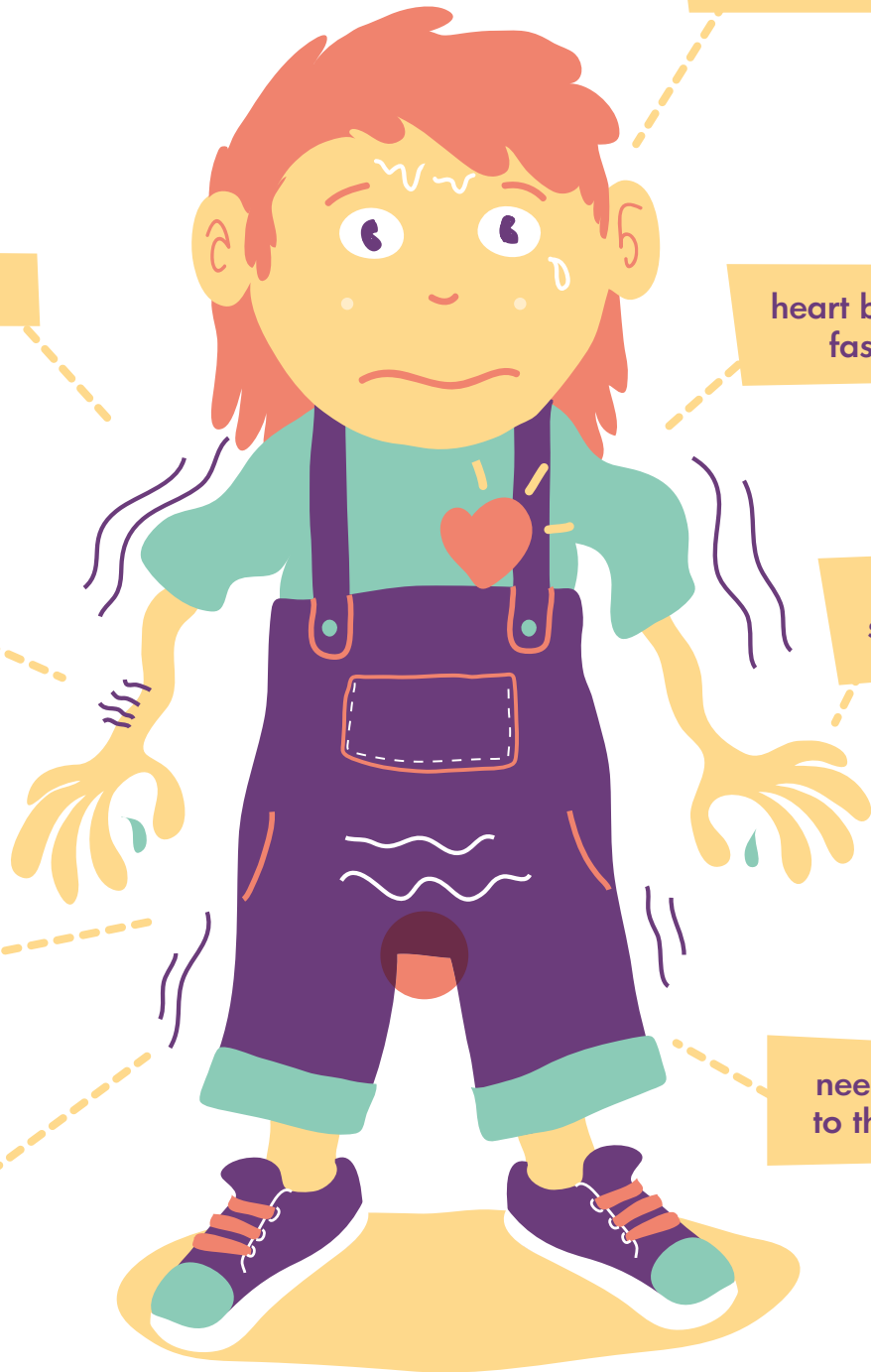
goosebumps

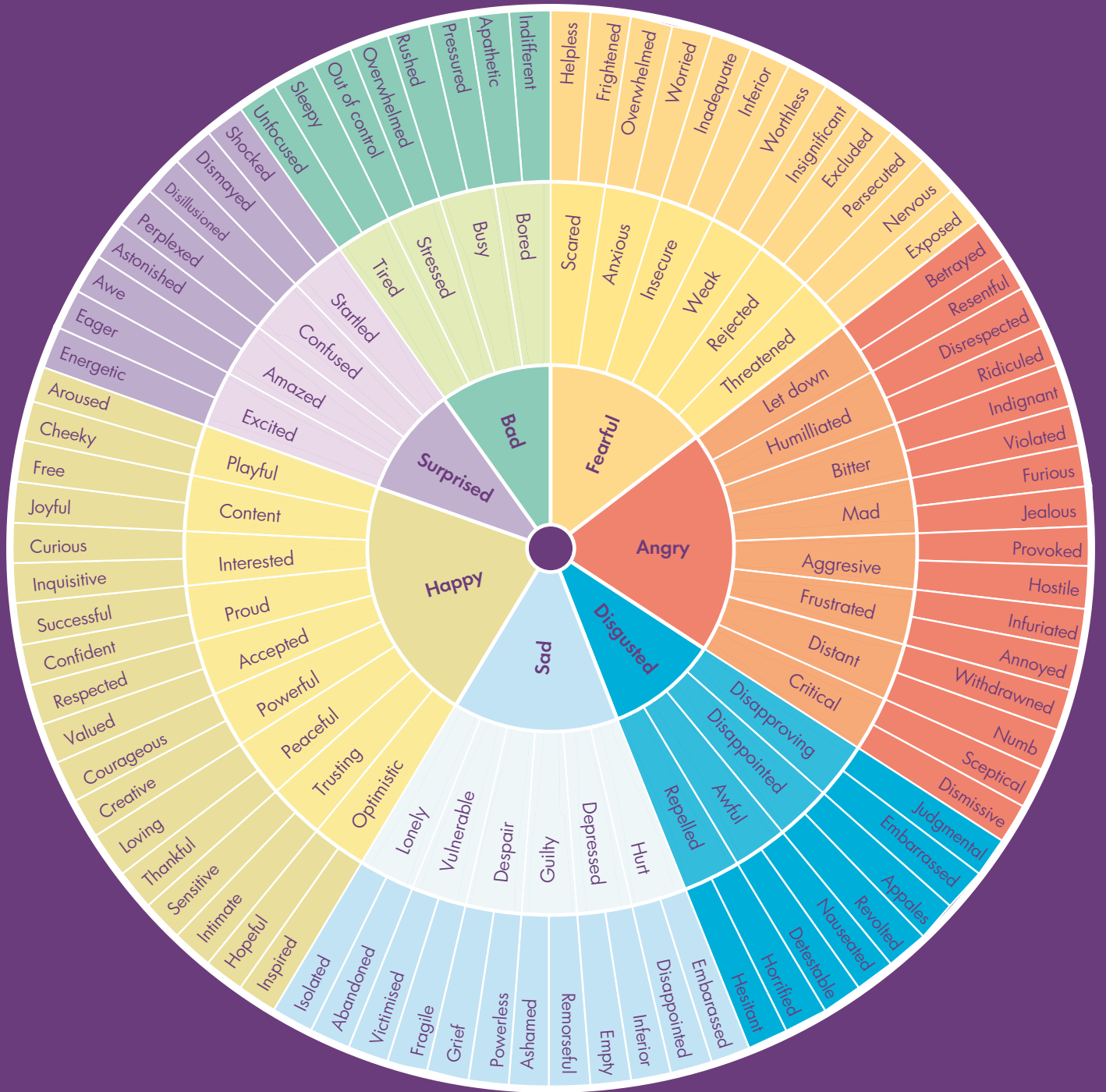
palms sweating

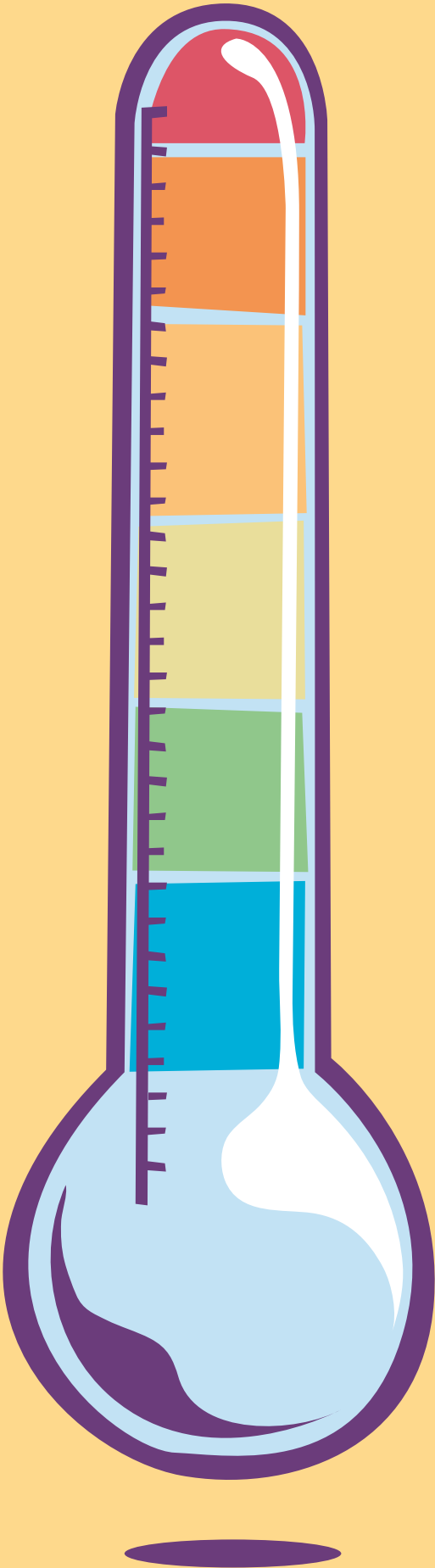
feel sick in
the tummy

need to go
to the toilet

wobbly
legs









Athens
2024