



# Love, Sex & Relationships

## The Basic Essentials for Catholic Teenagers



Written by **Andrea Musulin** and **Tom Gourlay**  
FOR THE **CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**



This Handbook is dedicated to all *teenagers* as they journey through the challenging and ever changing world in which they live.

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## Love, Sex and Relationships

### The Basic Essentials for Catholic Teenagers

Based on the Protective Behaviours Program

Peg Flandreau West

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# Welcome

When I became the Archbishop of Perth in 2012 I made a commitment to myself and to the Archdiocese, that I would make the safety and well-being of our children and young people my first priority, and that I would respond in a compassionate, sensitive and just way to all those who had suffered sexual abuse by clergy and Church workers under the jurisdiction of my Office.

**Central to the fulfilment of this commitment has been the establishment here in the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth of our Safeguarding Program.** At the very heart of this initiative is our commitment to the principle that children and young people have an absolute right to physical, spiritual and psychological safety at all times, and that the Church, as a Christian institution, should now and into the future be in the forefront of efforts to make this a reality.

This Handbook is just one aspect of the work and commitment of the Safeguarding Office. It complements the previous resource titled ***Protecting God's Children – A Catholic Parent's Guide for Keeping Their Kids Safe***. Furthermore it value adds to the efforts of the more than 260 Safeguarding Officers who work in Catholic rural and metropolitan parishes, ensuring by their presence and active engagement in the parishes, that the dignity of children and young people is honoured and protected in our Catholic institutions, and that their right to absolute safety from any form of abuse or ill-treatment is an essential and fundamental priority for us all.

In this regard, it is important to note that while this Handbook focuses on the prevention of child sexual abuse and abuse by peers, the strategies and concepts presented in this resource can be applied to almost any unsafe or threatening situation in which a young person might find him or herself.

This Handbook is designed to speak directly to the young person and is offered, not only to Catholic teenagers, but to all young people, parents, carers, educators and all who might find it useful as a practical and informative resource to help respond to their deeply felt desire and responsibility to protect, educate and safeguard young people.

In officially launching this valuable and important resource, I wish to express how enormously grateful I am to Mrs Andrea Musulin, our Safeguarding Director and Mr Tom Gourlay the Manager of Campus Ministry at The University of Notre Dame. My appreciation is also extended to the Safeguarding staff and the army of Parish Safeguarding Officers spread right across the Archdiocese for the professionalism, courage and commitment they bring to this task, which today must be regarded as an absolutely essential dimension of the Church's mission.

My sincerest hope is that this Handbook will prove to be a valuable tool for young people, their parents, carers and other concerned adults, as we all seek to make our children safe.

May we continue our commitment to this vital work, walking together in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.



+ Timothy Costelloe SDB

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB**  
Catholic Archbishop of Perth



# Introduction

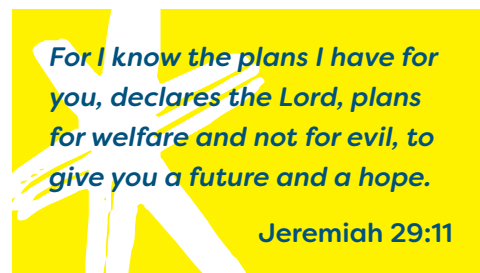
## TO USING THIS HANDBOOK

The Safeguarding Program is person-centred and informed by the fundamental belief that all people have the right to physical and psychological safety at all times. The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, in partnership with your parents, the community and your school can play a part in protecting you.

This Handbook contains the basic essentials required to keep you as safe as possible in the challenging and ever changing world you live in. It has been developed for you as Catholic teenagers in the hope that as you work through the Basket Fillers you will improve your personal safety and your ability to be assertive and resilient when life requires you to be.

The *Basket Fillers* have been designed to teach you to:

- develop an appropriate language of safety
- develop emotional intelligence
- develop optimism
- identify unsafe situations
- develop a sound understanding of God's design for love and sex
- respond appropriately to unsafe situations
- seek appropriate help in unsafe and risky situations and
- develop age-appropriate problem solving skills.



The keys to keeping safe are not in complex theories, elaborate over-the-top family rules, formulas for behaviour or your parents wrapping you up in cotton wool. Rather, as set out in the Bible, they are based on the deepest feelings of love and affection and an understanding that your feelings and emotions are a gift from God.

The Bible entrusts you to your parents, as your primary educators, and as such they have a responsibility to inform you about sex and to assist you in developing personal safety skills. This begins in your home and in your parents' heart and continues by supporting you when you feel sad, angry, confused, frustrated, hurt, conflicted, worried or scared. In other words, protection involves emotions, yours and your parents'. In the presence of God and with reverence, your parents' role in assisting you and empowering you within the protective behaviours educational program is part of God's plan for love and protection.





This Handbook is designed to guide you on the journey of life for years to come. Whilst this Handbook has a focus on the prevention of sexual abuse and unsafe relationships, it sets out a life skills approach to safety which will assist you in a variety of unsafe, risky, hostile or threatening situations you may find yourself in.

Until the early 1970s sexual abuse was thought to be rare, and centred among the poor. Experts now agree that sexual abuse has always occurred and still exists in all socio-economic and religious groups. According to research and prevalence studies 1 in 3 females and 1 in 6 males will be sexually abused in some way before the age of 18 in Australia.

It is vital that young people are educated sufficiently and appropriately on personal safety including sexual safety.

The vast majority of young people who are abused are not abused by strangers but rather by the people they know, love and trust. Teaching you about the people you do not know in isolation would not help you if you were to be harmed by a family member, friend or acquaintance. This said we must also acknowledge that a small number of young people will continue to be harmed by people they do not know.

Whilst there is no 100% fool proof system of protecting yourself, research and several government inquiries have shown that it is imperative that young people such as yourself participate in personal safety programs.

Until the age of 18 adults are responsible for your personal safety, however in providing the information contained in this Handbook it is our hope that we can help you grow to understand and appreciate safe, healthy and respectful relationships according to God's plan. Using the protective behaviours program you will develop a variety of skills and the appropriate knowledge to allow you to play a part in keeping yourself safe.

Relationships of any kind can sometimes be hard to navigate so as you work through this Handbook it is important to establish and maintain open and honest communication with your parents and/or the other adults in your life that care for you.

**Remember there is nothing that can be done to you and nothing that you can do to others that can't be talked about with an adult you trust!**

**IT IS NOW TIME TO GET TO *work.***

# ABOUT *me*

Your name:

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Your age:

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Your best friend is:

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You like:

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---

You're good at:

---

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Your best qualities include:

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Describe your personality:

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What is important to you?:

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# THE 10 BASKET FILLERS



In order to increase your personal safety and develop a clear understanding of safe, healthy and respectful relationships, it is imperative that you fill your baskets of knowledge with age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate information. All young people remain vulnerable to abuse, particularly sexual abuse because:

- you may have limited knowledge on sex
- you may have less power than the other person
- you trust and depend on adults
- you are taught to obey adults
- you may find it difficult to assess the motives of others, including adults
- you may wish to tolerate unsafe or unhealthy relationships or abuse to maintain an emotional connection with the other person and
- at your age anything to do with love, sex and relationships can be confusing.

Personal safety education requires a layering effect to develop empowerment and resistance. The following Basket Fillers will assist in increasing your skills and knowledge and in turn hopefully decrease the opportunity for harm to occur.

The following are to be read sequentially in order to increase your safety:

1. Theme 1: 'God gave all people the right to feel safe at all times.'
2. Feelings and Emotional Intelligence
3. Early Warning Signs and the Safety Continuum
4. Theme 2: 'Nothing is so awful that you can't talk with someone about it.'
5. Networks and Problem Solving
6. The Body God Gave Me
7. Social Distance Zones
8. It's OK to say NO
9. Consent and Coercion
10. God's Design for Sex

*"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 4:6-7







# Theme 1:

‘God gave all people the right to feel safe at all times.’

This is where the learning starts. Theme 1 creates the foundation for keeping you safe. As you work through all the Basket Fillers in this Handbook use this theme to guide you and to provide a focus.

It is important to realise and to always remember that God created each and every person out of love, and because of His love for you. In the words of Bishop Joe Grech, ‘God does not make rubbish.’

As a result, we must always remember that all people, at all times, have the right to feel safe.

Pope St John Paul II taught masterfully on the dignity of the human person and of the unique role that our sexuality plays in our lives.

He taught that ‘the person is the kind of good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love’ (Abuse and Violence, p. 41).

This means that nobody should ever be treated as an object or a thing. Treating someone as a thing reduces him or her to something less than a person. This can happen in many ways in our society, from how we might view or treat a person involved in a service profession, like a waiter or a cleaner, to how we might view someone who is sexually attractive, treating them or their bodies as merely an object of our desire. What John Paul II tells us is that each human person is created by God out of love, for the purpose of love. The only proper way to treat any person is with love.

Of course, love will look different in different contexts. Your love for your mum or dad will be very different from the love that you have for your sisters and brothers, or your friends, or your girlfriend or boyfriend. This love is different still from the love that a husband has for his wife, or a wife for her husband, and the love that your parents have for you.

This inevitably leads to one question: what is love?

Obviously when we say we love something this can mean a variety of things. You can, for example, say that you love pizza, and you can say that you love your mum, but in both cases you are saying two very distinct things.

A good way to understand true love is by looking at four particular attributes of love.

***Love is always freely given and received. It is always a total and unreserved gift of self to another. It is always faithful, devoted to one person, forever. And, it is always fruitful, meaning it is life-enhancing, life-giving, and open to life at all times.***

If it has these four characteristics, we can say that it is likely to be love. If it is lacking in any four of these features, we could perhaps say that it is something less than love.



## LOVE IS *free*

Love is always a gift, freely given and freely received. It cannot be forced upon another, nor should it be forcefully taken from another without their consent.

## LOVE IS *total*

Love is always a complete gift of oneself to another. It does not hold back anything of yourself from another, nor does it single out one particular characteristic or element of another that you love while despising or trying to get rid of other elements.

## LOVE IS *faithful*

Love is a bit of a strange thing, as it always seeks to go beyond itself and beyond the time and circumstances in which it finds itself. True love is faithful in all circumstances, beyond just now, or the next five minutes, beyond even the feelings it might give you just now. Love surpasses these feelings and is a decision to commit forever.

It would be hard to imagine a woman saying to her husband 'I will love you for the next few years' – love always seeks to promise itself forever.

## LOVE IS *life giving*

Finally, love is life giving. It always enhances the lives of both the lover and the one loved. In marriage this becomes real in a particularly powerful way, in the generation of new life.

When we say that God has given all people (including you) the right to feel safe at all times, we are saying that all people (yes, that's you!) have the right to be treated with love at all times. This means that we respect each other's freedom, a freedom to both say yes or no. It means that we should not be treated as something less than we are (i.e. we are not simply our bodies or our brains).





# 'God gave all people the *right* to feel *safe* at all times.'

## God

God made all of you and therefore you must remember that only God gives you this right. Your parents, teachers, adult relatives, friends or other adults in your life do not provide you with this and as such they cannot remove it from you. When God creates us he gives us this right and only God can take it away. That does not mean that through your life others won't try to take it from you! If and when this happens you should remind yourself it is simply not theirs to take! God gives and only God can take.



## All

So this means YOU! You are included in this.

There is no exception to this. Every young person in the whole of God's kingdom is entitled to feel safe at all times. This rule is not just for young people who are behaving as they should, it is for all young people in all situations and at all times. Most young people feel like they are not worthy or forgo their right to safety if they feel they have done something wrong, illegal or displeasing to others. This just isn't true.

The fact is that young people will and do make many bad choices in their lives. God can make use of these bad choices to help you to grow. You are designed to learn through the bad choices you make and it is important to understand that while the adults in your life, including your parents, may not agree with some of your choices, you can always talk to them about those choices because this is how families look after each other.

**Q. Think of a time when someone tried to take your right to safety from you?**

**A.** .....

**Q. How did it make you feel?**

**A.** .....

**Q. How did you respond?**

**A.** .....

## Right

This is a right that God gives you at birth and as such no one can take this away from you. Only God will take it back when you die. Your rights are grouped into categories and include: food, water, education, medical safety, care and love.

A list of these 54 rights you have can be found at:

[www.unicef.org.au](http://www.unicef.org.au)

A nine-minute video on 'The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Children Convention' can be found at:

[youtu.be/TFMqTDIYI2U](https://youtu.be/TFMqTDIYI2U)

## Feel safe

In the next section you will learn all about feelings and feeling safe. In the meantime consider what feeling safe looks like, feels like, smells like and sounds like. Explore feeling unsafe and how this is different to feeling safe.

How does God let you know you are safe? How does he warn you when you are not safe?

## At all times

No matter what, you have the right to feel safe, always. This never leaves you. It doesn't matter where you are, what you are doing, who you are with, what you are wearing, or whether you are doing something that is right or wrong. It is forever in all situations. Young people often think that because they have done something wrong or illegal that they forgo this right. That simply is not the case at all.

Explain the difference between each of the following rights and other rights people may have using these suggestions or add your own.

RIGHTS	DOES SOMEONE <b>GIVE</b> THIS RIGHT TO YOU?	DO YOU HAVE TO <b>EARN</b> THIS RIGHT?	CAN THIS RIGHT BE <b>TAKEN AWAY</b> FROM YOU?
Allowance	✓	✓	✓
Curfew	✓	✓	✓
Going to a party	✓	✓	✓
A driver's licence	✓	✓	✓
Right to feel safe	✗	✗	✗

**Q.** If God gives you the right to feel safe at all times what is the responsibility He places on this right?

**A.** .....

**Q.** If you are in a situation where you feel unsafe what does God want you to do?

**A.** .....

The responsibilities attached to your right to feel safe include:

1. All other young people have this right to feel safe and, therefore, you are responsible for making sure that you do not make other young people, children or adults feel unsafe.
2. The choices you make may have consequences, such as the removal of privileges or your mobile phone. What your choices cannot do is stop God from loving you or the people who love and care about you from loving you.

*God does not exclude. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and him who comes to me, I will not cast out."* John 6:37

# Feelings and Emotional Intelligence

## 2.

Feelings or emotions are a gift from God. They provide colour to our everyday experiences and can have both positive and negative effects on how we perceive what is happening to us or around us.

Understanding how to express our feelings and emotions can be tricky. During the teenage years your brain and hormones are changing and it can be difficult at times to manage. It is useful to be aware of and be able to label feelings and emotions and find out why you might be feeling a particular way.

We often categorise emotions as being positive, like happiness, or negative, like fear. This does not mean that positive emotions are always good, or that negative emotions are always bad. Fear, for example, is a good thing when it gives us pause before a situation that might be unsafe. So, while emotions themselves are neither morally 'good' or 'bad' they can provide us with useful stimuli that may help us make good judgements about the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

It is useful to ask questions internally like, 'does this make me angry/sad/annoyed/scared?' It is also helpful to ask, 'why does it make me feel this way?'

Feelings and emotions come and go and it is important to realise that while we are not responsible for our feelings or what happens to us internally, we are responsible for how we act (Pornography, p. 49).

For example, feelings of anger can be recognised and then directed towards some kind of positive action, or they can dominate us and we can act out of anger, without thinking. The same thing goes for the sexual urge, which 'does not fully determine human behaviour but leaves room for the free exercise of the will' (Pornography, p. 49).

With one's developing sexuality often comes a variety of emotional experiences that are new or foreign to our previous experience. We must remember that our sexuality and the feelings and emotions which are associated with it are a gift from God, and an integral part of human existence. Like all other emotions and feelings though, the gift of sexuality and the feelings associated must be appropriately directed.

The way others behave or deal with their emotions is beyond your control but being able to understand things from their perspective is helpful in showing that you care and have compassion. It is through our connections with friends, family and God that we have a sense of belonging. These relationships are there for us in the good times and the challenging times. There are always adults you can turn to if you need to talk about or express your feelings; we call these your network people. This will be explained further in basket filler 5 on page 21.



## Activity for *Feeling*

### Self-awareness

Emotional self-awareness is being able to recognise your feelings and respond to them. In the space below write about your feelings and action.

A situation that makes me *feel safe* is...

This situation makes me *feel*...

What I do *next*...

What I *say*...

*Suggested Reading:* Luke 2:41 about Jesus in the Temple.  
Discuss the feelings experienced by Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

## Activity for *Feeling*

Name the feelings on each face and list some things that make you feel like this and what you can do when you feel like this:



Highlight the unsafe feelings **red** or **pink** and highlight the safe feeling **green** and if you think any of the feelings can be either safe or unsafe highlight these in **orange**.

Happy	Depressed	Nervous	Shame	Curious
Afraid	Frustrated	Relaxed	Unsafe	Concerned
Angry	Energetic	Proud	Hurt	Funny
Confident	Sad	Bored	Mad	Joyful
Ashamed	Scared	Glad	Silly	Disappointed
Jealous	Confident	Confused	Bullied	Pleased
Embarrassed	Shy	Stressed	Thankful	Anxious
Excited	Lonely	Surprised	Worried	Sick
Loved	Annoyed	Optimistic	Shocked	Conflicted
Insulted	Safe	Cheerful	Ignored	Grumpy
Guilty	Lucky	Tired	Merry	Frightened



# MY *feelings* PAGE

In your journey through adolescence you will experience a myriad of feelings and emotions. Some of these you will be familiar with and others will be new to you.

Some feelings will be confusing and may cause you to feel embarrassed, ashamed or maybe even guilty or compromised.

**As your feelings manifest write them down on this page,** in doing so create a word art page. Keep in mind this activity will be a work in progress!

# Early Warning Signs and the Safety Continuum

# 3.

There are feelings we have in our bodies when we are not feeling safe.

To be more specific they are our **PRIMARY, INVOLUNTARY RESPONSES TO DANGER** which our sympathetic nervous system is responsible for. Sometimes this is called the 'fight, flight or freeze response.

You might experience early warning signs in a variety of situations including when you are excited, scared or when you have a problem. If you are not in touch with your body or choose not to listen to your early warning signs, you might find it difficult to get help when you need it. Many people ignore their early warning signs because they are not in tune with them, but this is exactly what you do not want to happen to you.

When God made you He designed your body with this process already embedded within it. You could think of it like an 'Early Warning Signs App', which was put into your body from the moment of your conception. In primary school we teach children to download their App. Now is the time to update your App, and make sure you've turned on the notifications – make sure you pay attention to the early warning signs that you experience. These can include:



Brain racing away

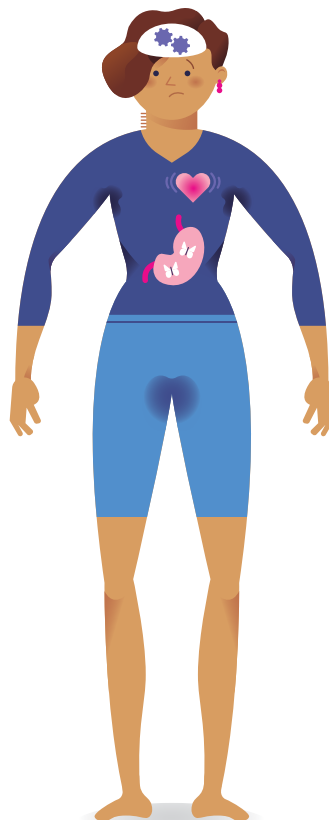
Hair on neck standing up

Heart beating fast

Sweaty underarms

Butterflies in the tummy

Need to go to the toilet



Dizzy

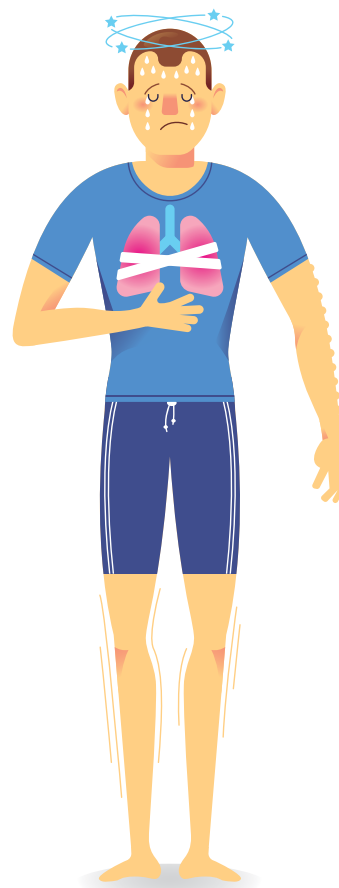
Sweaty forehead

Crying

Cannot breathe

Goose bumps

Shaking





These feelings are not always bad feelings because they alert us to situations where our mind and body are not working together.

We may get them when having fun, doing something scary but fun, having to take a risk or partaking in unsafe situations. This is best explained as a continuum and as such it is called the safety continuum. As teenagers, you should have experiences that have choice, control and time limits.

*Safety* = Choice + Control + Time Limit

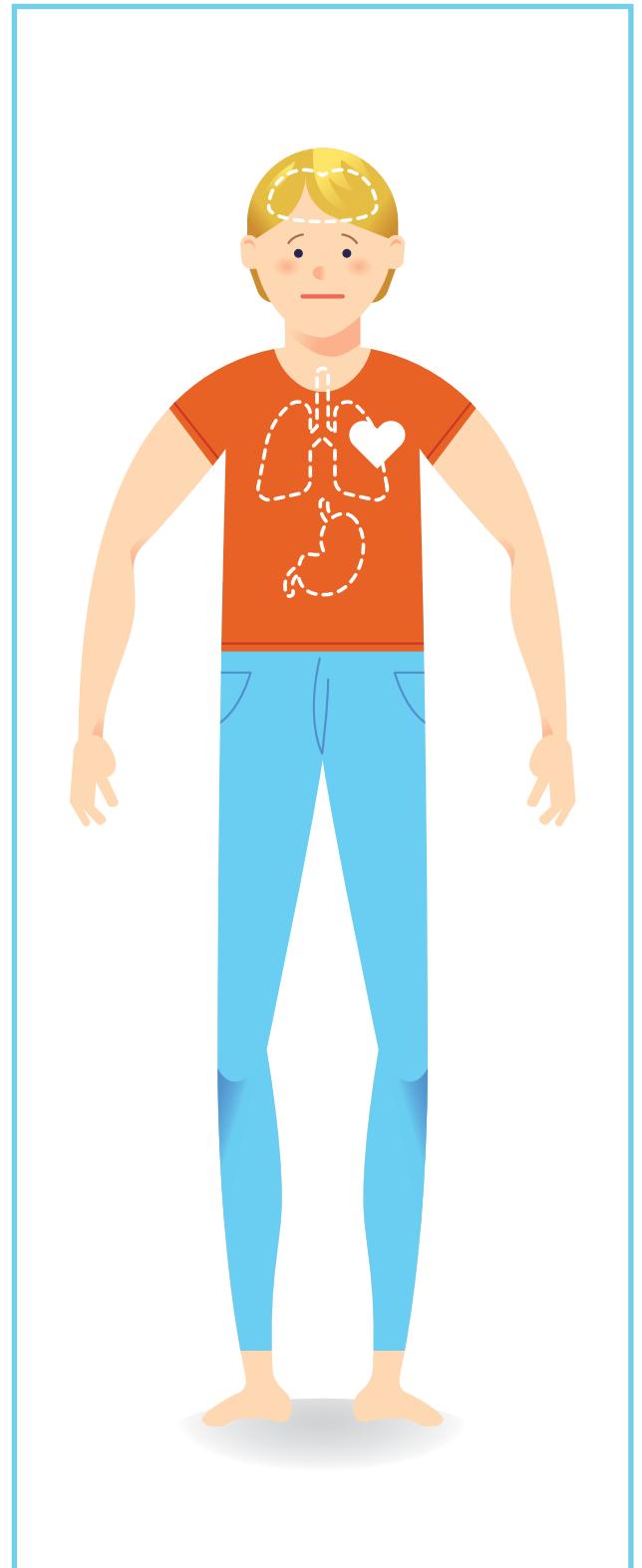
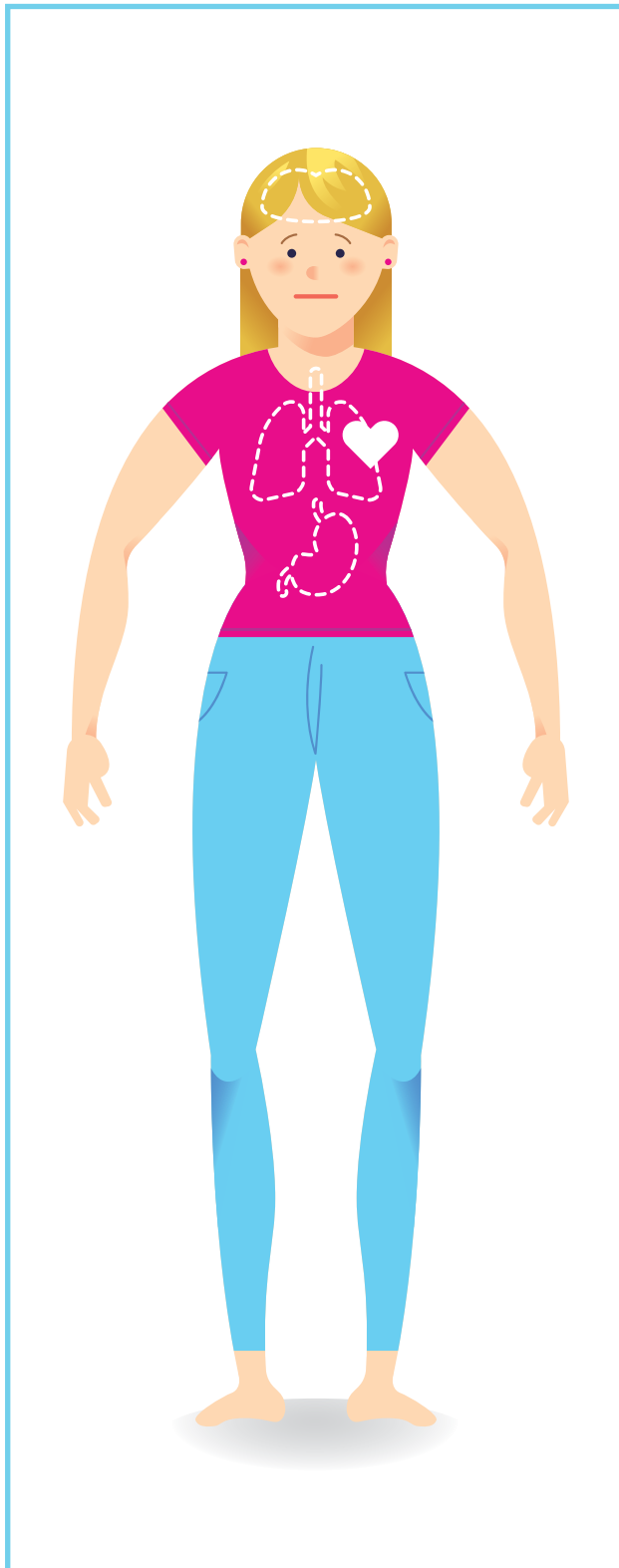
## SAFETY CONTINUUM



Think about everyday opportunities that arise and set off your early warning signs. Think about where on the safety continuum they sit. Remember it is always a good idea to talk to your parents or another trusted adult on your Network (see Network and Problem Solving, p. 23) about the choices you have made or are considering making, especially if those choices set off your early warning signs app or make you feel unsafe.

## Activity for *Early Warning Signs*

Think about a situation or a person who might give you your early warning signs. Then on the diagram below draw your early warning signs or use words to describe the feelings that manifest or show up in your body when you feel unsafe. For example: you might get butterflies in your stomach or your brain might feel like it is racing away?







# Theme 2:

‘Nothing is so awful that we can’t talk with someone about it.’

Sometimes we do not always do what we know is right. We can hurt others or make them feel unsafe. We can purposely act in ways that we know are contrary to what we know is right, or what we know God has asked of us.

In these instances it is important to realise that God always loves us, no matter what, and that we are always welcome to return to Him through the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession.

There is nothing you can do that is so awful that it will make God love you any less. Reconciliation is a gift, a gift that opens us up again to receive the love that God wishes to give to us. It is a wonderful way of experiencing God’s mercy and love through the priest who acts in the person of Christ.

It is good to remember that a priest is bound by an oath. This means anything you tell him in confession is kept between you and God. The priest will not bring it up with you or anyone else unless he has your express permission to do so. If you give your permission the priest will seek the necessary assistance you may need. This said if someone is making you feel unsafe or making you do things you either don’t want to do or you know are wrong, we strongly suggest you tell someone else on your Network as soon as possible because even though the Priest can’t share this information you can also tell someone else that you trust so that they can help you to feel safe again. See more on this in Networks and Problem Solving on Page 21.

Theme 2 builds on Theme 1 **‘God gave all children the right to feel safe at all times’**. Even though God gives us the right to feel safe, we know that there will be times when we don’t actually feel safe. When you feel unsafe you need to know that:

## John 8:2-11

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

## Reflection *Questions*

**1.** What does this story teach us about Jesus?

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**2.** What do we learn about forgiveness in this story?

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**3.** What does it teach us to do if we sin or make a bad choice?

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# Networks

## and Problem Solving

# 5.

As we grow up, it is important to remember that God did not create us to be alone. We even read this in the Scriptures, when God makes Adam and Eve for each other (Genesis 2:18).

While this reference is specifically referring to God's creation of marriage, it also speaks to the fact that humans are called to community, and that we image God not only as individuals but also and in a special way when we are in union with others. In fact, when God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ his Son, He established a community of believers, the Church, which is His ongoing presence in the world.

We are not meant to always 'go it alone', and in fact helping others, and allowing ourselves to be helped by others, is an important and essential element, not only of the Catholic Christian faith, but of life generally.

It is important for you to have a network of people around you whom you trust, and to whom you can go to if you have questions, or find yourself in a situation where you feel unsafe. Sometimes you might need help but you're not sure how to ask for it or you might feel that you are not able to ask for it because of something you did or said and as such, telling would bring shame, guilt or disappointment to others, especially your parents. This may be the case but this does not take away your right to feel safe at all times or your right to speak about it and ask for help.

It can be very difficult to tell an adult when things get tough. You may need to talk and share about something that has happened to you or something that you agreed to do initially but you are now sorry that you did!

Asking for help, no matter how big or small the issue might be, is often hard to do. Some teenagers see it as a negative thing because of the perceived consequences or they are concerned about what their peers may think. If it is a sexual abuse issue that you need help with this can be especially difficult because of the Grooming Process (as detailed on p. 45).

As a teenager knowing or feeling that you need help can be hard to admit. As a teenager it is important to be self-reliant and independent.

This Handbook has been created to show you that asking for help doesn't have to be difficult and to empower you to ask for help whenever you think you need it.

Asking for help can feel very uncomfortable and some teenagers think that in order to do so they must have to 'swallow their pride' in order to reach out for support - but that is simply not the case!

It takes real courage to reach out and say that you're struggling with something or you're not sure about something that someone is making you do. Maybe you simply just need to talk to someone or you just need a shoulder to cry on. All of this is perfectly OK for both males and females. God knows that life is not always going to be easy or go to plan.

# Network *Brainstorm*

Using the brainstorming space below, trace your hand, then on each finger and thumb brainstorm all the suitable adults that could be included on your Network.

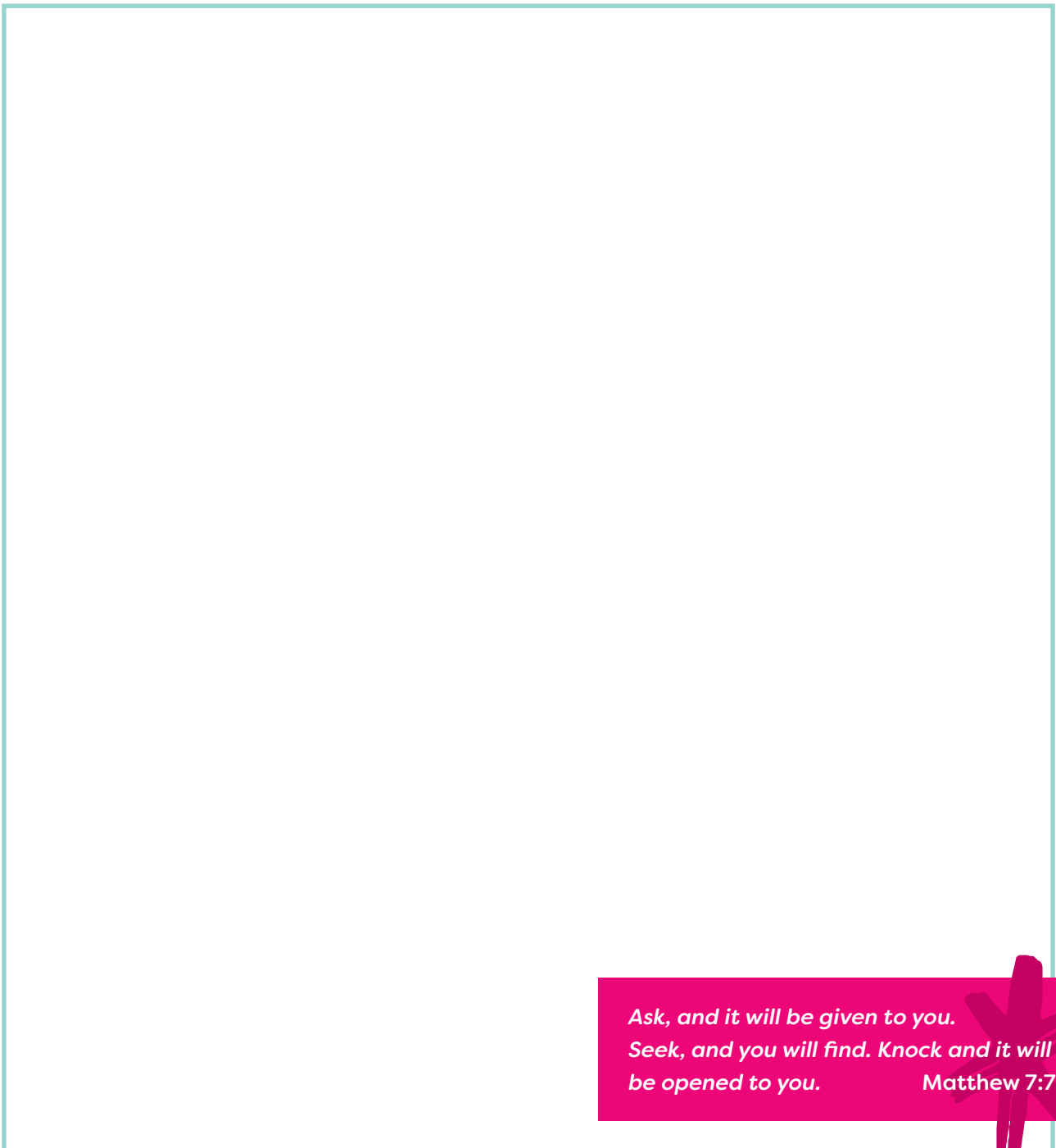
You may like to ask your parents, siblings, other relatives or peers to brainstorm with you.

**The adults you choose to put on your Network must be over 18 and be:**

- 1. Available to you when you need them**
- 2. Someone you trust**
- 3. Someone who you feel listens and believes you**
- 4. Someone who can take action to help you**

If possible we recommend that you include at least one professional person in your Network. For example: a teacher, doctor, school counsellor, police officer or Safeguarding Officer at your parish.

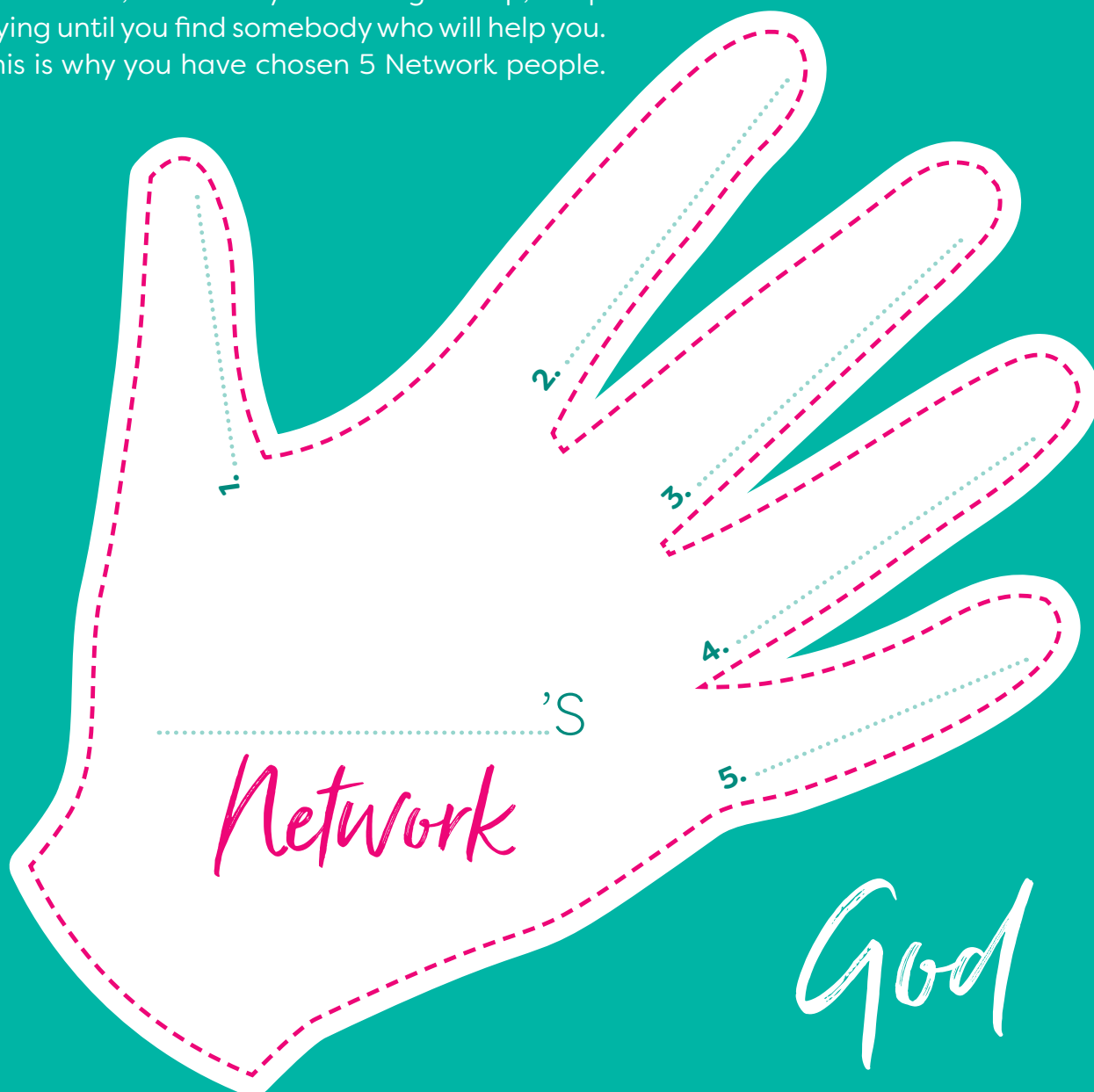
Also when completing your Network remember that only one adult from your home is allowed to be placed into your Network and generally the thumb is reserved for someone in your home or living under the same roof as you.



*Ask, and it will be given to you.  
Seek, and you will find. Knock and it will  
be opened to you. Matthew 7:7*

## MY Network

Remember, if at first you don't get help, keep trying until you find somebody who will help you. This is why you have chosen 5 Network people.



It's really important to find someone you trust and feel safe to talk to. If you can't find anyone in your life who will listen, call **Kids Helpline** and talk to a counsellor.

 **1800 55 1800**  
Anytime. Any Reason.



**Kids**  
aged 5 to 12



**Teens**  
aged 13 to 17



**Young Adults**  
aged 18 to 25



**Parents and Carers**



**Schools and Teachers**

**Kids Helpline** is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Call **1800 55 1800** or WebChat/email via [kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au)



# WHY DON'T TEENAGERS *Tell OR ask for help?*

We know that it might be difficult to talk to someone on your Network. Below are some of the reasons why teenagers don't tell adults about the unsafe or problem situations they are faced with:

- They don't think that they will be believed.
- They feel scared or worried about what might happen.
- They think others will judge them and the decisions they made or did not make.
- They think that it is their fault and they will be blamed.
- They don't think that anyone can help them and their parents will be very angry or disappointed.
- They or other people see it as a sign of weakness.
- They prefer to do things themselves.
- There is no one available that they feel comfortable talking to.
- There is no one available that they feel they can trust.
- They're not sure the person they tell will keep what they say confidential.
- They have asked for help before and the situation only got worse.
- They can make excuses to themselves in order to avoid asking for help.
- They don't have the right help available.
- They feel guilty, embarrassed or ashamed.



## Activity for *Problem Solving*

What is the *problem*?



What *options* do I have in responding to the problem?

WHAT CAN I DO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I CHOOSE TO DO THIS

1.

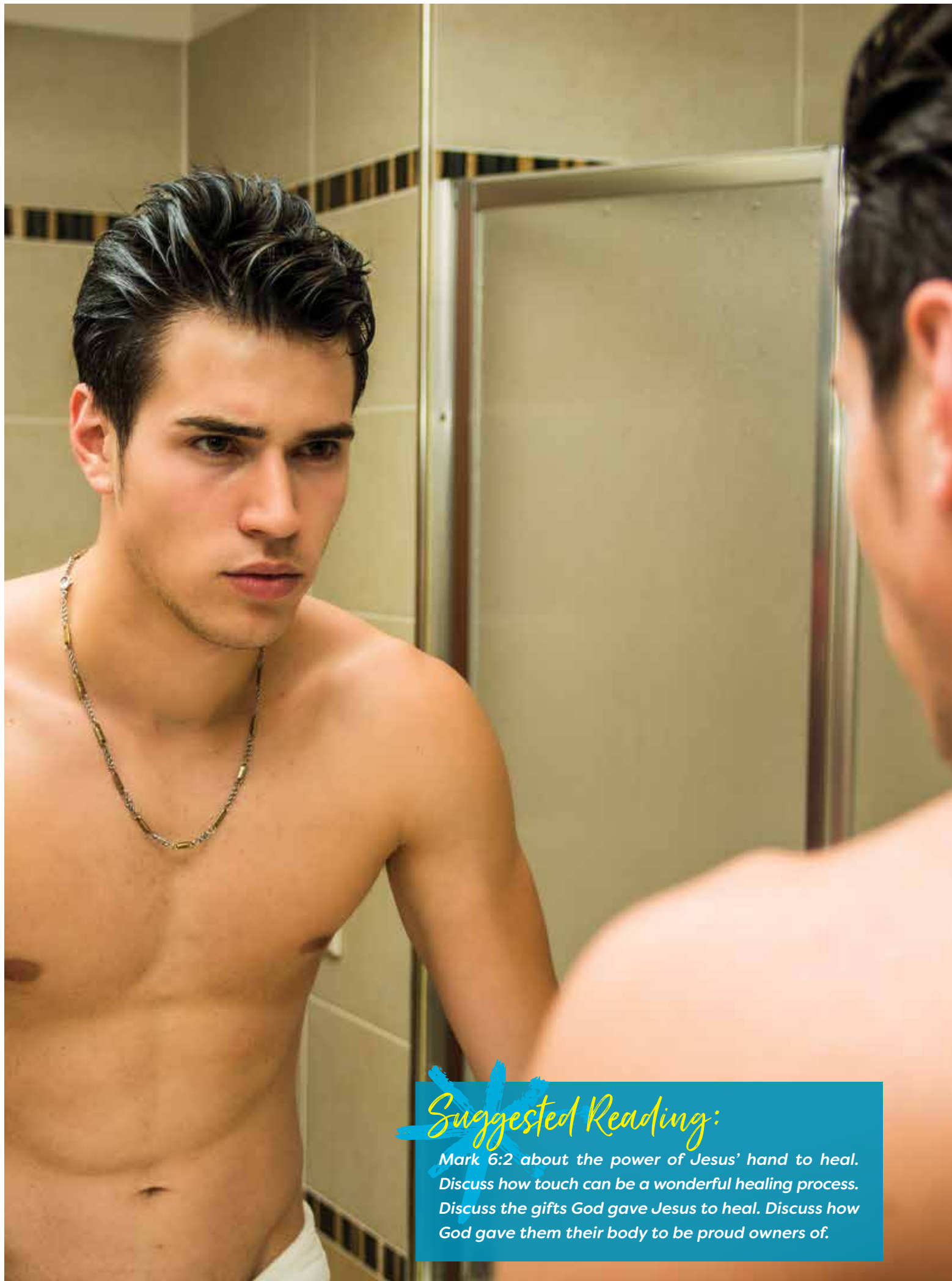
2.

3.

4.



What is the *best option* I should choose in this situation?



### *Suggested Reading:*

*Mark 6:2 about the power of Jesus' hand to heal. Discuss how touch can be a wonderful healing process. Discuss the gifts God gave Jesus to heal. Discuss how God gave them their body to be proud owners of.*

# The *Body* God Gave Me

# 6.

***God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*** Genesis 1:31

It is important to always remember that God gave us a body and that no part of your body is 'dirty' or 'bad'. In fact, when God became human, He took on a fully human body as Jesus; a man in everything that it means to be a man.

Through our bodies we communicate who we are to those around us. It is through our bodies that we give and receive love, whether that is in shaking hands, a friendly or familial hug, or the romantic hug you might share with your boyfriend or girlfriend and the romantic embraces of husband and wife.

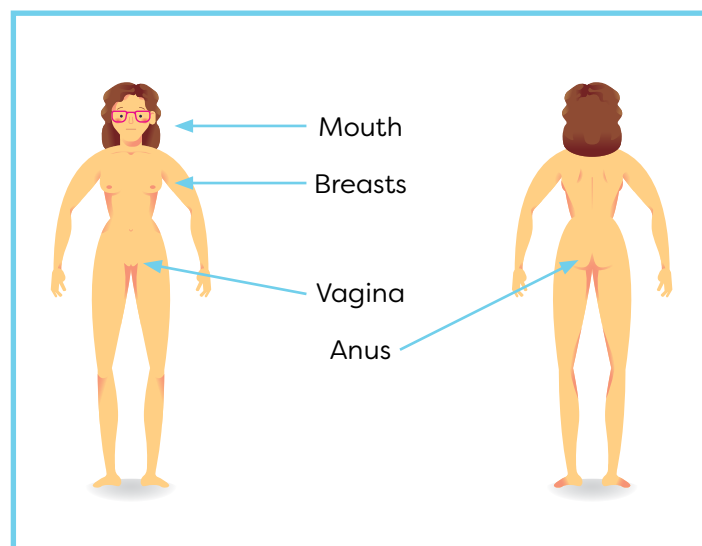
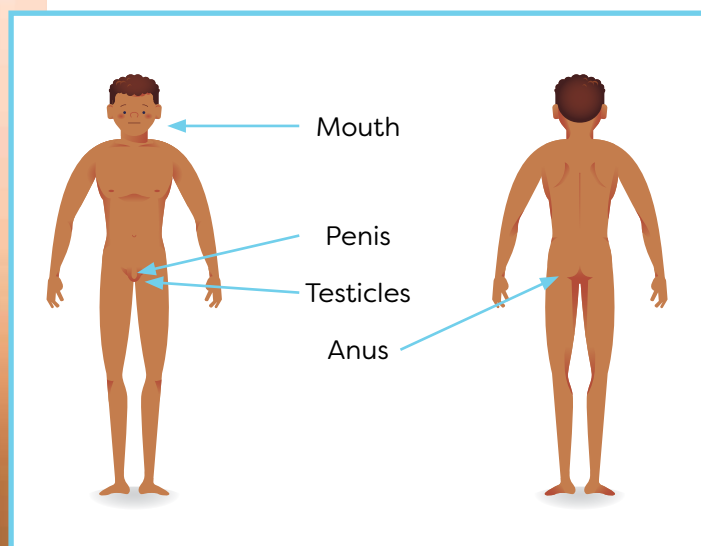
It is important to note that while everyone shares the common experience of being embodied (everyone has a body), our bodies are sacred to ourselves. Our body is a gift to us from God, it cannot be bought or sold and it is not for anyone to use as they see fit.

Also, when we speak of our body as 'given' to us, we also know that it is not something that we can necessarily change, at least on a fundamental level. Sure, we are certainly able to add more muscle mass, go on a diet, dye our hair, get a tattoo and change our body in that way, but most fundamentally our bodies are given to us and as such we cannot change their essence.

Throughout adolescence and the teenager years, your body matures as you become an adult. There is a lot that happens in this stage of your life, physically as well as emotionally, socially and even spiritually. You should develop a healthy awareness of your body, the body that God has given to you.

It is important to know the correct anatomical names for your body parts. Whilst you may be familiar with a range of names for the private parts of your body the correct anatomical names can be found in the diagram below. If anyone was to touch these parts of your body without your permission or get you to touch their private parts without permission this is not OK and you should tell someone on your Network as soon as possible. This means even if you thought it was OK because you were coerced, tricked or talked into it, this is still not OK and should be spoken about.

Remember God gave ***all people*** the right to ***feel safe*** at all times.

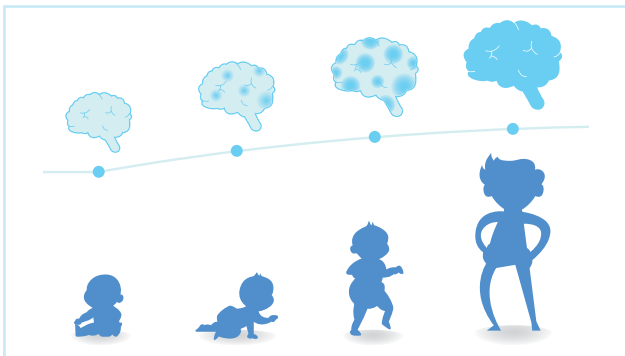




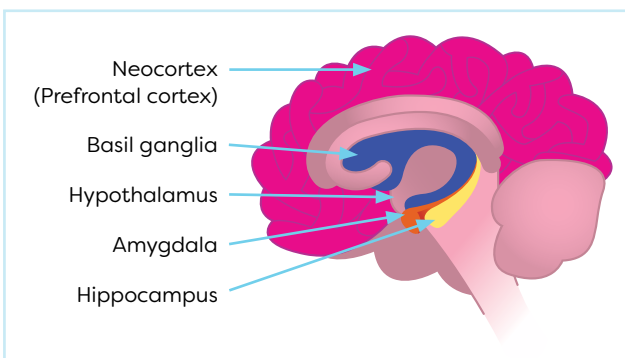
# THE TEENAGE *Brain*

When God made you He created all of you, including your brain. Your brain is responsible for how your body functions on a daily basis and is the control centre of your body. It controls your feelings and emotions and your ability to make informed choices. When you were 6 years old your brain was 95% fully developed. This means the remaining 5% of your brain development is not complete until you reach the middle of your twenties.

The teenage brain can be very confusing but you have to remember it is still doing a great deal of growing during the teenage years. For girls the brain reaches its largest physical size around 11 years of age and for boys, the brain reaches its largest physical size around age 14.



Different sections of your brain are responsible for different functions. Take a look at the brain.



When you become older and more mature, the connections between neurons in your brain will be stronger. When most adults are presented with a problem or are faced with a dangerous, risky, threatening or unsafe situation, they react with their prefrontal cortex, which is the front part of the brain in charge of evaluating choices, planning, prioritising and weighing up consequences. This part of the brain also controls impulses and is used to form sound judgement.

The problem during the teenage years is that your brain develops piece by piece. Your brain starts developing in the back and moves its way to the front. The prefrontal cortex is one of the last areas of your brain to develop. This explains why teenagers seem to engage in risky behaviours. Often they do so without thinking it through. Usually when they come to the conclusion that their decision was not such a good one it is sometimes too late or at least the teenager thinks it is too late. However it is never too late to ask for help. In essence what this means is that you will probably find it difficult to evaluate your choices (before you make them) and the weighing up of consequences takes second place behind pleasure and reward. It is for these reasons that your parents, carers and teachers still have to nurture and protect you through these years even though you may think it is not necessary and that you are old enough to make your own decisions.

This means that when you are presented with a problem or an unsafe situation, you are not able to think with your prefrontal cortex. You are more likely to rely on your amygdala, which is the part of your brain that is responsible for your emotions. This might explain why you get sad or depressed at the smallest things. You are always thinking with the part of your brain that's responsible for making you gloomy or depressed.

During adolescence brain development is in top gear. Your brain is like a sports car travelling at high speed with a faulty braking system. This explains some of the decisions teenagers may make that might threaten their health and wellbeing.

As a teenager the most common feelings you are likely to experience include:

**Joy, Fear, Happiness, Sadness, Disgust, Excitement and Sexual Excitement.**

These feelings have all been given to you from God and during your teenage years God is preparing you for the adult world. You don't have to have all the answers and no one expects that you would know what to do all the time or in unsafe situations, that is why you need a Network (p. 21) of adults of your choosing to turn to for help, advice, guidance or simply just to listen.

# Social Distance Zones



Affection is important and is a necessary part of life.

When God created the human body He did so knowing that in order to grow and flourish human touch was necessary. Appropriate touches, such as hugs and kisses can be and should be enjoyed. However no one should be allowed to touch, hug or kiss you without your permission. This includes relatives and people that you know. It is perfectly OK for you to say no to your peers and the adults in your life - even if it is someone you love.

Social Distance involves the personal space that surrounds your body. We are all born different and you have the right to own your body: this is God's design for us - It's **YOUR BODY, YOUR CHOICE!**

Note: Sometimes the situation and not the person might dictate to you where you place someone in your Zones. Your surroundings may also make a difference.

## Small Kiss Zone

Think about and identify the people that you would like to receive a Small Kiss from. This could mean a kiss on the cheek or on the lips. It is important that you would feel comfortable if they did kiss you.

## Big Kiss Zone

Think about and identify the people you would like to receive a Big Kiss from. This could mean a kiss on the cheek or on the lips. It is important that you would feel comfortable if they did kiss you.

## Hug and Release Zone

This zone is for the person you want to hug you but you don't want the hug to be lingering. Maybe you like to give your parents a Hug and Hold but in front of your friends a Hug and Release might be more appropriate.

## Hug and Hold Zone

Think about and identify the people you would like to receive a Big Hug from - one that lasts a little while. Remember you must feel comfortable with your choices.

## Fist Bump Zone

Think about those people who are only allowed to give you a Fist Bump.

## Hand Shake Zone

Think about those people who you would extend a hand shake to.

## The Nod Zone

Think about the people you know or don't know who you do not want touching you in any way.

## The Emergency Zone

Sometimes strangers will have to enter your Social Distance Emergency Zone to assist in a medical emergency and as such it is difficult to decide about this zone. It is important for you to understand that in medical emergencies you may need to allow people that you know and people you don't know to enter the Emergency Zone to assist you.

# *Social Distance* RINGS

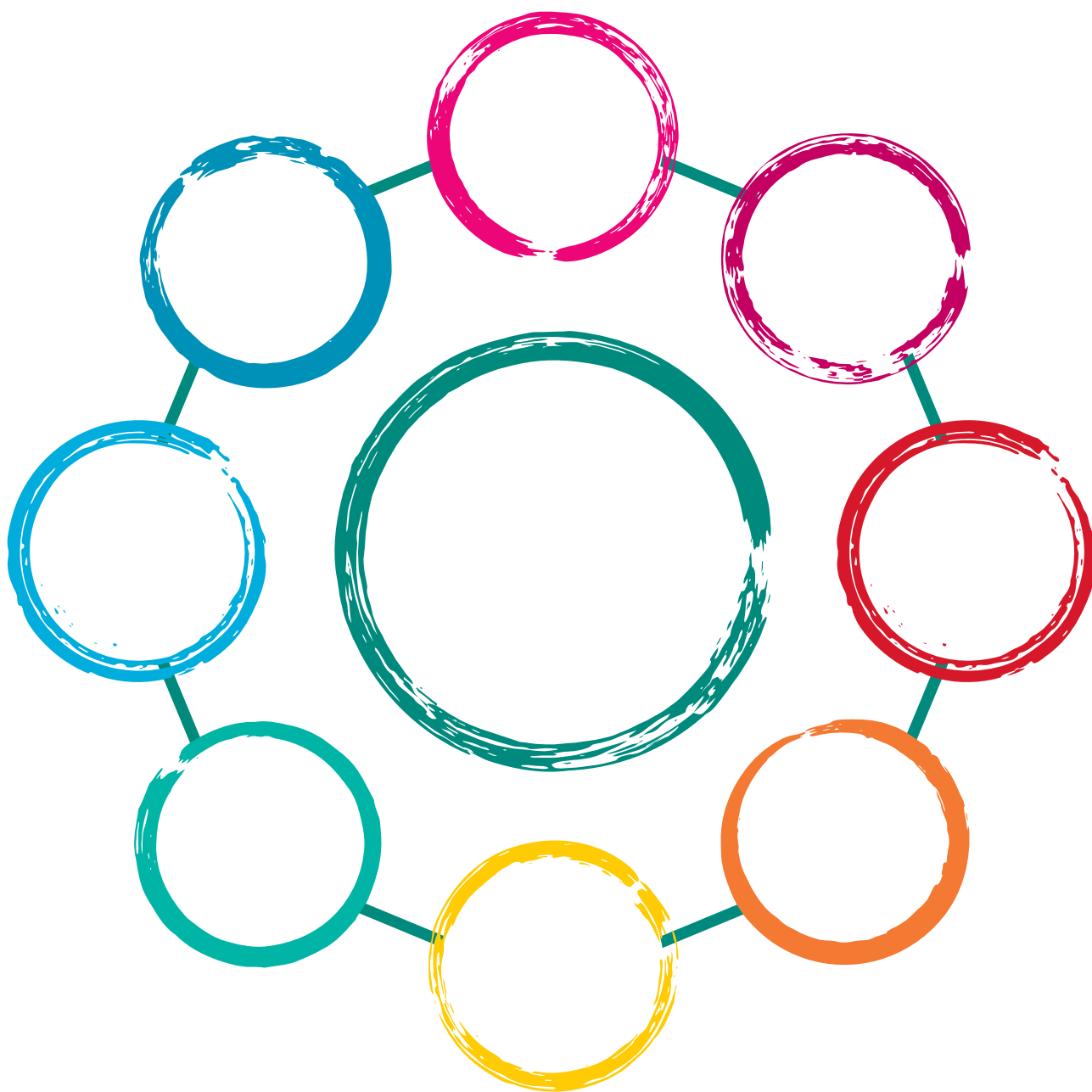


Remember you are in charge of your Social Distance and personal space and it is very important that you respect other people's Social Distance Zones and personal space.

## Activity for *Social Distance Rings*

Think about your social distance zones that surround your body and think about who you will allow to enter your Social Distance Zones. Once you have decided who you will allow into your Social Distance Zone this can be changed at any time as necessary.

Complete your Social Distance Zones in the blank zones below.











## It's *OK* to Say *No*

# 8.

The Bible says that obeying one's parents is a direct command from God. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). "Honour your father and mother" – which is the first command with a promise – "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth."

We should also acknowledge that learning to trust that inner voice of our conscience can be difficult.

There are two main ways that our freedom can be impinged upon: **externally** and **internally**.

Externally, our freedom can be suppressed by someone else. This could be an adult or another teenager who pressures you into doing something that you do not want to do, or that you feel uncomfortable with. This kind of external pressure is never OK in any situation but especially when it is related to sexual activity. It doesn't matter who you might be experiencing this kind of pressure from. If you feel that it is encroaching on your freedom, you should say a firm 'no' and go and seek help.

Internal constraints on freedom are a little different. Sometimes bad habits stop us from doing what we know to be right, and we end up doing something that we know to be wrong. St Paul wrote about this nearly 2000 years ago (see Romans 7:15-20). These kinds of internal constraints on our freedom can be felt in a variety of areas in our lives, including but not limited to areas of our sexuality. In these instances we often try to fool ourselves, saying 'this is really what I want to do right now', but in the end it is important to know that if we cannot say 'no', then our 'yes' becomes meaningless. If you are having trouble saying 'no' to things that present themselves to you, speak to someone, and if it is something that you know is wrong, make use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

If you are ever unsure about something you should feel free to say 'no', and to get help from a trusted adult on your Network or a friend if you need it.

# You're allowed to *break the rules* in an *emergency*.

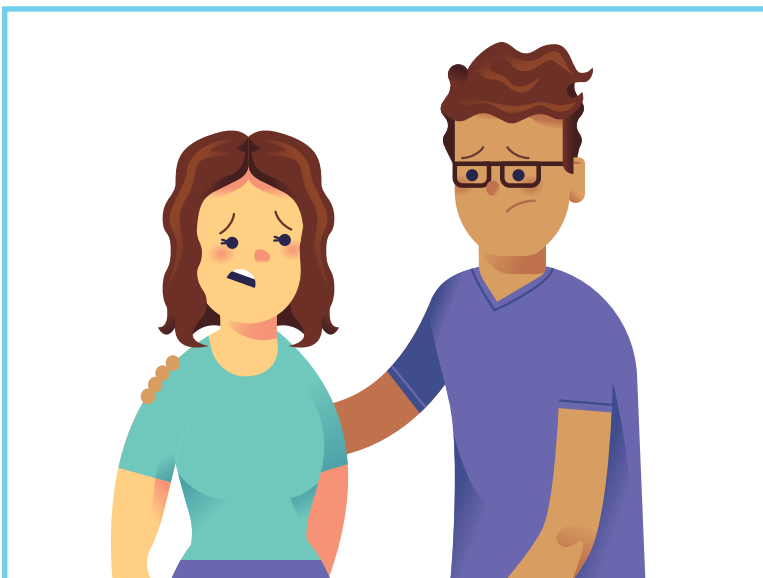
If someone makes you **feel unsafe**,  
**that is an emergency** and you should:



**Say No!**



**Get away**  
from the  
person and...



**Tell someone**  
on your network.

# Coercion and Consent

## WHAT IS CONSENT?

**Consent** is providing permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something. It must be given freely and cannot be assumed or implied.

## WHAT IS COERCION?

**Coercion** is the action or practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.

SO YOU SEE THEY ARE SIMPLY *Not* THE SAME THING!

A good process of deciding if you have given consent is to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do I have a choice in this?
2. Am I in control of the situation?
3. Do I have the option to end this at any time?

Because the formula for Safety is:

*Safety* = Choice + Control + Time Limit

Many people these days talk about consent as something like the lowest common denominator in a sexual encounter. The problem with this is that seeking explicit consent makes sex look like a contract and there is something about romantic relationships and sex in particular that seems to refuse any such arrangement. Millions of songs and movies show our ideal of a first sexual encounter: we want to be swept away by a desire that is too wonderful, too human, to be contained by legal forms. In these songs and movies, words are often few or missing. We will not make sexuality a contract, with ourselves as the lawyers working out the terms and conditions. Something in our very freedom revolts against this whole idea.

**Q. Think of a time you may have felt coerced to do something you did not freely choose to do?**

**A.** .....

**Q. How did you respond at the time?**

**A.** .....

**Q. Could you have done anything differently? If so what?**

**A.** .....

*For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light.* Luke 8:17





*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

**Romans 7:15-20**

# God's *Design* for Sex

Sex is good. God made it and all things that God made share in His goodness.

Like all things that God has made though, sex is designed for a particular purpose. The purpose of the act of sex is to express love between married persons. Love is always freely given and received. It is always a total and unreserved gift of oneself to another. It is always faithful, devoted to one person, forever. It is always fruitful, meaning it is life-enhancing, life-giving and open to life at all times.

How am I to know?

In your teenage years it can be really difficult to understand what is going on inside your body. Strong feelings of emotional and sexual attraction can cloud your judgement, as can feelings of guilt or shame. One way to help you to discover whether a particular act is in accordance with God's design for sex is whether it fulfils the criteria mentioned in Theme One, on p. 9

**Free:** Is this particular act respecting my freedom and the freedom of the other person involved? God has given you freedom and you should feel empowered to make use of that. If someone is acting in a way that you feel is taking away your freedom you should always be able to say 'no'.

**Total:** Does this particular act show love to me as a complete person, or to another?

**Faithful:** Is this particular act respecting my past and my future? Does it seek to enrich my life long-term or is it only a short sighted attempt at immediate gratification?

**Life-giving:** Does this act enrich my life or the life of the other person. Is it open to the generation of new life in all that means.

It is worth discussing this last characteristic of love as fruitful or life-giving in greater detail.

In our contemporary society and in the media, whether that is on TV, online or elsewhere, sex is often viewed as the only way two people express love for one another. The Catholic Church teaches that this is an important element of married life. Sex is an expression of married love and it also acts to enhance that love. This is called the 'unitive' end of sex and marriage.

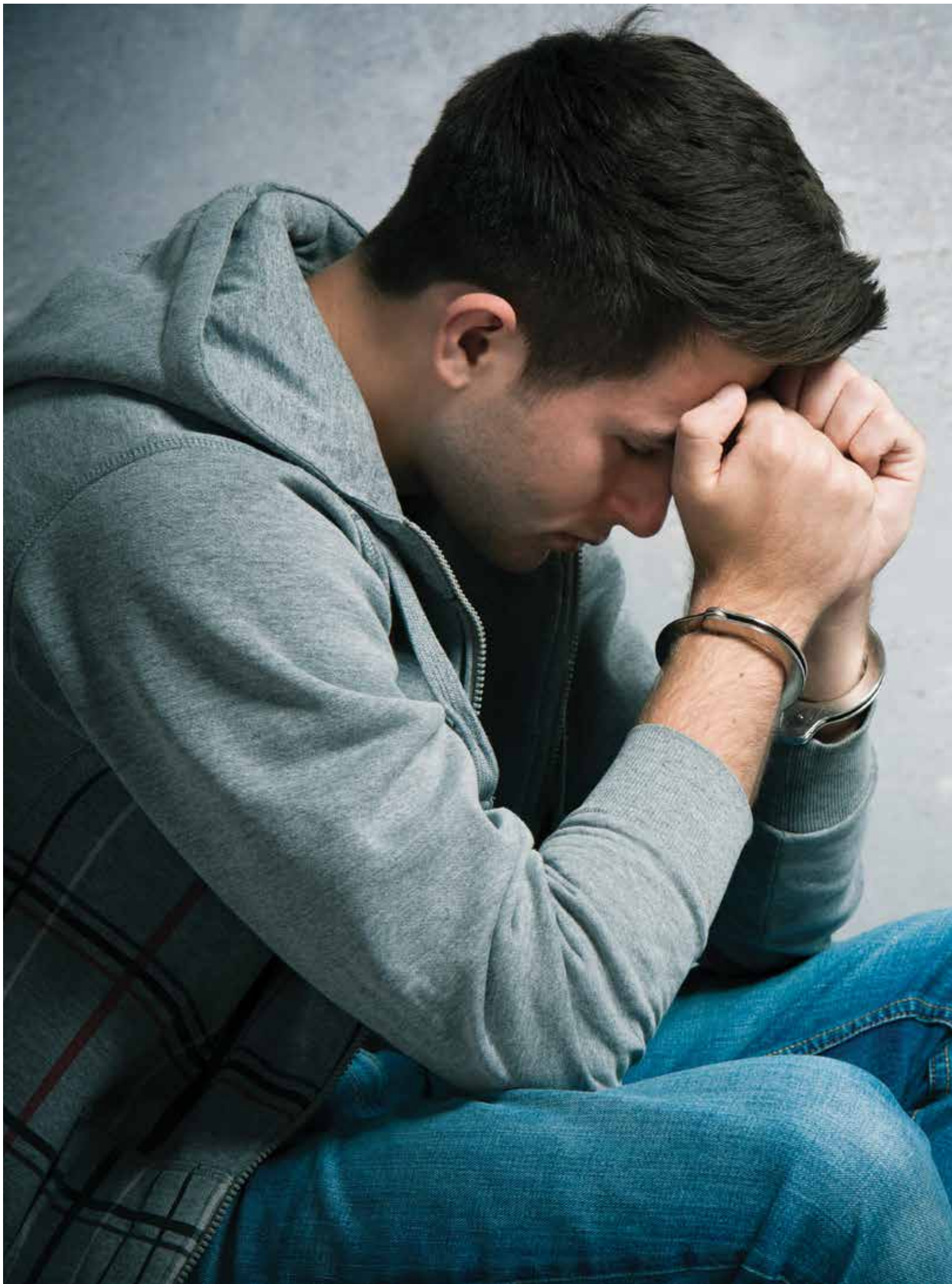
The Church also teaches that the other equally important aim or goal of sex is the generation and procreation of children. This is called the 'procreative' end. In our culture pregnancy may be viewed as an unfortunate side-effect of sex that should be avoided. For Catholics, the procreative and unitive 'ends' of marriage and of sex sit side by side in terms of their importance.

These four points can be used as a litmus test – does this act fit in with God's design for sex?

- Is this free? Freely given and freely received?
- Is it total? Am I holding anything of myself back, including my future self? Am I only directing this act towards one aspect of the other?
- Is it faithful? Is this act undertaken within the context of a committed married relationship?
- Is it open to life?

When people engage in sex or sex related activities outside of God's plan of life and love, sex can become a damaging force in people's lives. One example is explored in more detail in the Why Pornography is Unsafe section on p. 49.





# Sex and the *Criminal Law*



## In Australia it is against the law to:

Have sex if you are under 16

Have sex with someone who is under 16

Have sex with someone under 18 who is under your care supervision or authority e.g. teacher, doctor, coach, scoutmaster

Have sex or touch someone in a sexual way who hasn't given consent

Threaten someone verbally or physically into taking part in sexual activity

Have sex with your child, brother or sister including step-children and half-brothers and half-sisters

Force, trick or pressure someone into sexual activity

Continue to engage in sexual activities with someone who has changed their mind

Create, send, receive or forward sexual images via mobile phone of someone under 16 (nudes or sexting)

Take advantage of someone who is drunk or drugged

Intentionally transmit HIV





## SEXTING (NUDES)

Think carefully about what can happen if you take or send pictures of yourself, your friends, your girlfriend or boyfriend on your mobile phone, especially if they are not fully dressed, even if they agree. You could be charged by police for committing a criminal offence.

It may seem like harmless fun at the time and everyone might be doing it, but be careful – if you send sexual images electronically or agree to other people taking them of you, they can become part of your 'digital footprint', which may last forever. It could damage your future career prospects or relationships or lead to criminal charges.

### What is Sexting?

'Sexting' is distributing an intimate image of a person to others without their consent and the distribution of the image is contrary to community standards of acceptable conduct. This might include nude, sexual or indecent photos using a computer, mobile phone or other electronic device.

Sexting is a crime if you intentionally create or distribute an intimate image of a person under 18 to others, even if they agree to the sext message being sent. You could also be charged by police with child pornography offences.

### What the Criminal Law says:

Under Australian Commonwealth law you could be charged with child pornography offences if you take, send, receive, make available, possess or store sexual or intimate photos of someone who is under 18 or who looks or represents someone under 18. Under these laws, there are serious consequences.

### If you are found guilty

Adults and Young People found guilty of sexting or child pornography offences may receive a criminal record as well as criminal penalties. They can also be stopped from working or volunteering with children, for example, as a teacher or sports coach.

In some instances when the offence is committed you could be added to the sex offender register and follow reporting obligations for between eight years and the rest of your life, depending on the offence.

### Child pornography pictures are illegal if they are:

- asked for;
- taken or created;
- received and kept; or
- sent, passed around or uploaded to the internet

# Abuse and *Violence*

# 12.

The Bible teaches us that violence has been around since the beginning of creation. In The Book of Genesis Cain and Abel experienced a violent relationship.

The scriptures also teach us that Lamech was a violent man who treated his wives poorly and took pride in his violence towards them. These are just two examples of violence that can be found in the Bible. This tells us that violence in relationships is not a new problem of the modern world but rather, has been around since the beginning of creation. What we must remind ourselves however, is that violence is not part of God's plan for love or a loving relationship!

In Australia National Data statistics indicates that 1 in 3 young people will experience violence before they turn 18 years of age.



# ABUSE – *What is it?*

A child is someone under the age of 18. There are generally five types of abuse and neglect categories that are deemed as child abuse. These five categories may co-exist.

## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child or young person is severely and or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver. This involves hitting, punching, burning, scolding, excessive physical punishment or discipline, tying up and shaking too hard.

Physical abuse can also occur in teenage relationships.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or young person is exposed to or involved in sexual activity that is inappropriate to their age. This involves allowing children or young people to watch pornography, allowing a child to watch sexual acts, fondling a child's genitals, having oral sex with a child or young person, having sexual intercourse with a child or young person and using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse can also occur in teenage relationships and is committed when consent is not provided by both parties.

Keep in mind that according to God's law and Catholic teaching the only approved form of sex is within a marriage. Even within a marriage both partners need to provide consent to each other. The absence of consent is sexual abuse.

It is important to note that the criminal law system in Australia states very clearly that a child under the age of 16 cannot consent to sex and therefore any form of sexual activity before the age of 16 is not only against God's law but also the criminal law of Australia.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child or young person in ways that can damage the individual's ability to feel and express their feelings. This can include put downs, name calling, bullying, threats to harm loved ones, property or pets, not showing love, support or guidance, threatening abuse, ignoring or rejecting children and young people and exposing children or a young person to domestic violence.

Emotional abuse can also occur in teenage relationships as can domestic violence.

## Psychological Abuse

Psychological abuse is repeatedly treating and speaking to a child or young person in ways that can damage the individual's perceptions, memory, self-esteem, moral development and intelligence. This can involve name calling, belittling, shaming, humiliating, threats, isolating from friends and family, constantly ignoring a child or young person or encouraging a child to act inappropriately.

Psychological abuse can also occur in teenage relationships.

## Neglect

Neglect occurs when children and young people do not receive the necessities of life to survive and flourish, to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. It includes leaving children and young people home without appropriate supervision, not ensuring the child or young person attends school, not giving a child or young person physical affection or emotional support, not permitting or arranging medical care when needed, infection due to poor hygiene or lack of medication and not providing suitable and adequate food and water.

### Relationships exist on a spectrum

Relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive to somewhere inbetween.



## Activity for Abuse

Take a look at the action examples below and tick which category of abuse it falls under. Keep in mind some examples could fall under more than one category.

ACTION:	Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Financial	Cultural/ Spiritual
Threats to harm family members					
Damaging property					
Denying blame for abusive actions					
Telling a partner who they can and can't be friends with					
Abusing pets					
Threatening to leave the relationship					
Constant put downs and name calling					
Being jealous and possessive					
Not helping with household chores					
Not allowing someone to go to church					
Controlling the other persons movements and decisions					
Blaming the other person for the abuse or violence					
Playing mind games					
Threats of physical harm					
Forcing the partner to engage in sexual activities					
Controlling the spending					
The silent treatment					
Threats to harm themselves if they don't get what they want					
Physical aggression and assaults					
Sending explicit images to of you to friends					
Wanting to know where you are at all times					



# Healthy RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships can be very tricky, especially for young people who are still trying to work it out. How one behaves in a relationship is either healthy, unhealthy or abusive.

HEALTHY	UNHEALTHY	ABUSIVE
Good communication	Poor communication	Communication is threatening, insulting or demeaning
Mutual Respect	Disrespectful	Disrespects the others views, feelings, decisions or physical needs
Trust	Not Trusting	One partner checking up on the other all the time and demanding to be told where they are at all times
Honest	Dishonesty – one or both partners tells lies	One partner constantly lies about who they are with or where they have been
Loving	Loving sometimes	Physical aggression or forces the other to do things they don't want to do
Equal control	Trying to take control	One partner tries to dominate, control and isolate the other
Compromise	One partner has to always give in	One partner demands to have their way at all times and tells the other what to do rather than ask what they would like to do
Spending time apart	Not spending time apart	One partner not allowing the other to spend time with their family or friends without them

Consider the questions below if you are in a relationship or if a friendship is moving in that direction:

- Is the behavior healthy or unhealthy in the relationship?
- Is there a possibility the behaviour could be in the **NOT SURE** or **STILL DECIDING** zone because you are just not sure?
- Do you feel safe and respected?
- Do you have the right to privacy in the relationship, both online and off?
- Are you allowed to make your own decisions?
- Do you have the right to choose when/if you have sex and who you have sex with?
- Are you allowed to hang out with your friends and family, without your partner getting jealous or controlling?
- Does your partner force you to do things you don't want to do either sexually or otherwise?

If you have answered **NO** or are **UNSURE** on any of the questions you should talk to an adult on your Network about the relationship and seek advice on how you might achieve a healthier relationship. An adult might be able to help you to decide on your options. Remember God gave you the right to feel safe at all times and His plan for you is love, in its fullest form, and to live a healthy and safe life. You have the right to end a relationship that isn't healthy for you and you have the right to live free from violence.

If you are being subjected to any of the categories and/or examples of child abuse on p. 41 then it is extremely important to tell someone on your Network, even though this might be a difficult thing to do. Experience shows that it may only get worse if you don't tell someone. Quite often young people feel powerless to do anything about it and that is exactly why you need to gain the help of an adult.

# Grooming and *Entrapment*

13.

When thinking about the people who sexually abuse children and young people you might conjure up an image of a creepy stranger waiting on a corner in a dark trench coat or a suspicious man in a white van. Your parents and teachers may have already taught you about 'stranger danger.' But this is not where most of the danger lies.

The vast majority of sexual abusers are people that children and young people already know and trust. You may be surprised to know that even young people can groom and entrap other children or young people, so we are not just speaking about adults in this section. For this reason it is important for you to learn how to respond when an uncomfortable or dangerous situation arises with an adult, a friend, a family member or peer. It is also vital that you learn how to recognise when danger is approaching.

This section is designed to teach you how to recognise grooming; the subtle, gradual, and escalating process that sexual abusers use to build 'trust' with children and young people and often also with their parents and caretakers. What you have to be aware of is that whilst genuine trust exists so does fake trust and you need to be able to tell the difference. You need to know to be careful with everyone. It's a fine line and one that makes teaching about grooming a somewhat difficult task.

## WHAT IS GROOMING?

Grooming can be explained as 'getting ready'. You would spend considerable time and energy getting ready for an important party or social event by making sure that your hair, face and clothes were all perfect or your makeup was applied properly and your accessories or bling all went together. In the same way, sexual abusers groom children and young people they want to abuse by getting them ready to abuse and by making sure everything is in place and perfect.

In essence grooming is a subtle form of deception, manipulation and emotional seduction, where bonds of friendship, trust and intimacy are formed with the child or young person and their parents or carers.

Sexual abuse is a crime punishable by a prison sentence. Just like any other crime the person committing the crime usually prepares the crime scene. So think about grooming being the process of preparing the crime scene. In these cases the crime scene is prepared through trickery and coercion and most importantly by making sure the child or young person will keep the sexual acts a secret. This way not only is the sexual abuser assured they can commit the offence but they can also get away with it. If they get away with it quite often that means that they can commit other sexual abuse offences against other children and young people.

The grooming process is similar in both online and offline. In fact online provides greater anonymity for the offender. So remember to be especially careful when online.

# THE *Grooming* PROCESS

## Selection Process

We know that the people who sexually abuse children and young people actually choose their victims carefully. Those who groom don't want to get caught, so they usually target kids who are vulnerable and who they think won't tell or say no. They spend a considerable amount of time targeting, enticing and trapping a child or young person for sexual purposes. Grooming can take weeks, months or years.

## Grooming the Parents or Carers

Those who sexually abuse children and young people do not just walk up to them and ask to play a sexual game or ask them straight out to touch their private parts! If they did this you would more than likely say "No!" or tell them to "Get Lost". In order to spend time alone with the child or young person they may need to also groom the parents and or carers and in doing so develop trustworthiness (false trustworthiness) in order for the parents to allow the child to spend time alone with the perpetrator.

## Invisible Traps

Child sex offenders don't want to scare the child or young person and because they don't want to get caught, they set up invisible traps in the hope the child or young person will get stuck in it. This is like the spinning of the spider's web. Like a fly caught in a spider's web, once a child or young person is caught in the web of deceit and deception it is very difficult to get out. Let's think about this for a moment. If a fly gets caught in a spider's web – how does it get out safely without being harmed? Or maybe it has already been harmed but still wants to get out of the web so it doesn't get harmed again or the harm is not able to continue. We can also think about sharks and how they select and circle their prey prior to attacking. A shark will circle its victim until it feels comfortable that it can attack and get away with it.

## Trickery and Coercion

Perpetrators use trickery and coercion to involve children and young people in sexual behaviour. Grooming is hard to notice, it is gradual and can get more intense or worse over time by the process of building 'trust' with the child or young person and also their parents and/or carers.

**Fake Trustworthiness** – Perpetrators pretend to be a friend in order to gain trust. They often aim to develop the idea of a special and exclusive relationship in the hope that a dependency will develop. This would also make it more difficult for the child or young person to tell.

**Testing Boundaries** – This is achieved through telling jokes, rough housing, back rubs, tickling, or sexualized games (truth or dare, strip games, etc). This is a process designed to work out whether or not the child or young person would be willing to play along.

**Non Sexual Touch** – Is the process of touching and hugging that would be considered healthy so as not to alarm the child or young person in the beginning. This touch however moves or escalates from regular, mostly comfortable non-sexual touch to 'accidental' touching of private parts. This can also include inappropriate kissing.

**Showing Pornography** – Young people have a natural curiosity when it comes to sex. Child sex abusers know this and use it to their advantage by normalising sexual behaviour. This is often achieved by showing the young person pictures, videos, text messages, photos and websites of a sexual nature.

**Breaking Rules** – This involves encouraging a child or young person to break rules, which establishes secret-keeping as part of the relationship. The secret is then used as blackmail in the future to maintain secrecy. In the beginning this could include innocent but forbidden activities such as lollies or MA rated movies through to the use of drugs, alcohol and pornography.

**Lowering Inhibitions** – This involves breaking the rules or in some instances breaking the law and quite often involves drugs and alcohol. Child sex offenders rely on the fact that you won't tell because you will consider the fact that you also did something wrong. This is why it is so important to always tell an adult when you feel unsafe or threatened.

## Sexual Assault Occurs

**Intimidation and Demanding Secrecy** – Causing fear, embarrassment or guilt to keep a child or young person from telling, and demanding that they keep it a secret through texting, emailing or calling in an unexpected way.

**Blaming the Young Person** – The perpetrator makes the child or young person feel responsible or guilty for the abuse, or blames them for becoming involved in other activities that occurred prior to the sexual acts.

**Establishing Fear** - Creating fear (false fear) of what could happen to the child or young person, their family or their pet, if the child or young person tells someone about what they have been doing. In some instances they will also threaten to harm themselves if the child or young person tells.

As detailed in Basket Filler 4 on page 19 – **Nothing is so awful that you can't talk to someone about it.** If you break the rules, break the law or do something you know you shouldn't do, it is still very important, if not more important, that you tell someone on your Network.





# Activity for *Grooming*

Considering the stages of the Grooming Process below -  
 What could someone do if they thought they were being groomed?



GROOMING PROCESS	What could I do	Who could I tell
Selection Process		
Grooming The Parents or Carers		
Invisible Traps		
Trickery and Coercion		
Fake Trustworthiness		
Testing Boundaries		
Non Sexual Touch		
Showing Pornography		
Breaking The Rules		
Lowering Inhibitions		
Sexual Assault		
Intimidation and Demanding Secrecy		
Blaming The Young Person		
Establishing Fear		

# Pornography

## What is Pornography?

The representation of people, or sexual behaviour, that is erotic or lewd and is designed to arouse excitement.

As a teenager you will be confronted with images or footage that is inappropriate. It might be depicting people's bodies or sexual acts that essentially reduce the body to an object for use. There are many reasons why these kinds of images can be harmful, not only to the people depicted, but also to those consuming such content.

Often young people are drawn to this content out of curiosity, but quickly find themselves giving over their capacity for choice and control. Sometimes young people are shown this content by others who might think it funny, or may have other motivations. For example, many cases of sexual abuse begin with an adult showing this kind of material to younger people. At all times, you should feel empowered to say no when you are feeling unsafe or coerced. Remember, if you choose or feel coerced to watch pornography it is always advisable to discuss this with a trusted adult on your Network.

*Flee from sexual immorality.  
All other sins a person commits  
are outside the body, but  
whoever sins sexually, sins  
against their own body.*

1 Corinthians 6:18



# THE *Problem* WITH PORN

Many young people encounter porn and many teenagers and young adults watch it regularly. So... if it is so common why is it an issue? And who does it hurt anyway?

## Common Myths

### 1. The most common myth about pornography is that it doesn't hurt anyone.

The reality is that porn is harmful to both those involved in its production and those who watch it. (CCC2354). It is even harmful to those whom the porn user is in relationship with and especially harmful to a person's current or future romantic partner or spouse. Porn distorts and reduces not only the sexual act but the appreciation of the person as being made in the image and likeness of God. It changes the viewer's perspective on the real meaning of love and intimacy. It is not something that is based in reality; it is a misleading fantasy. It is normal to be attracted to the human body and to desire sexual intimacy; however, pornography trains us to see sexual acts as being all about using another person for our pleasure. People should be treated with love, respect and dignity, not seen as objects to be taken or used for selfish reasons.

### 2. Porn is not bad because it shows sexual acts.

Sex is a gift from God and was created to be very good but porn distorts what is meant to be beautiful, safe and fulfilling.

**The main problem of porn is not that it shows too much but that it shows too little.**

It leads the viewer to objectify the person, to see them as just a collection of body parts. Pope Saint John Paul II speaks of sexual objectification, 'It reduces the call of the communion of persons, the riches of the deep attractiveness of masculinity and femininity to the mere satisfaction of their sexual need.'

### 3. Some people believe porn does not change us or influence our conduct.

This is like claiming social media and advertising doesn't influence youth culture and trends. With close to 100% of young people encountering porn and many young adults watching it regularly the effects of porn are really hurting today's young people.

### 4. Porn doesn't affect young people's behaviours.

Research shows that porn use can affect peoples' beliefs and behaviours. Sadly, a lot of porn depicts and normalizes violent and aggressive sexual acts. It is pretty hard to see explicit violent sexual acts and to not have it influence your thoughts, perceptions and relationships. Porn gets in your head and can dominate your thoughts. It steals from the way God designed sex to be experienced as a healthy, loving and life-giving experience in marriage

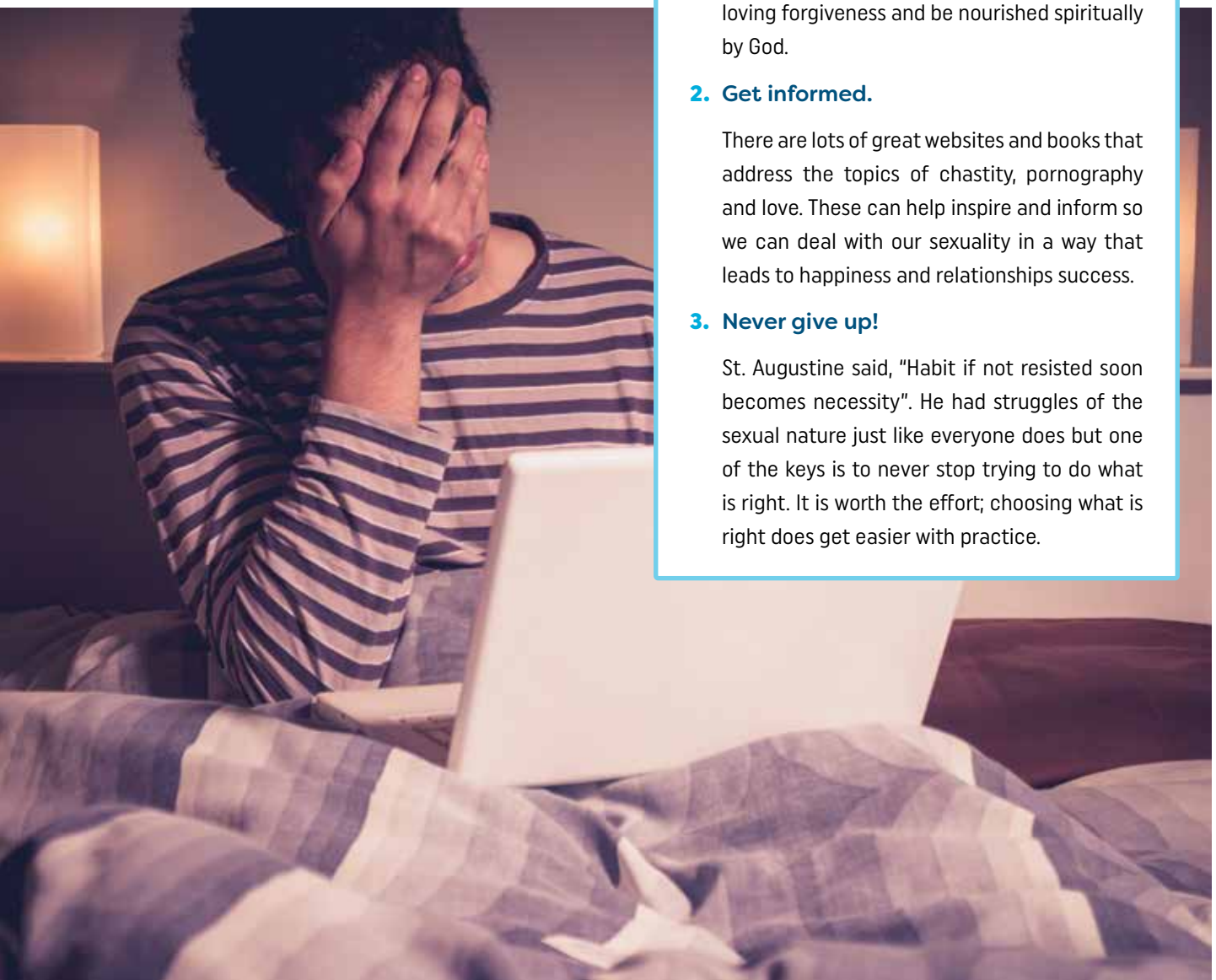
#### Research shows that people who use porn regularly are more likely to:

- Have reduced sexual satisfaction
- Have harmful thoughts about women
- Have unhealthy expectations of sex
- Have behaviours that increase their risk of STIs
- Experience sexual dysfunction in the present and in the future.

**This page has been written by: Paul Ninnés** – Paul is the managing director of Real Talk Australia. Paul has spoken to tens-of-thousands of young Australians about pornography and shares candidly about his experience with this topic and the awesomeness of God's plan for love, sex and marriage. [realtalkaustralia.com](http://realtalkaustralia.com) | [paulnannes.com](http://paulnannes.com)

## Porn use can be **addictive**

Once someone has a habit of looking at porn it can be very hard to stop. It works powerfully in the brain and gives the user a 'high' much like that which is experienced with other addictive substances (e.g. alcohol, nicotine or drugs). This is one of the reasons why porn is dangerous. It can lead to a destructive habit in a person's life that is really hard to break free from. It can lead to a desensitization to sexual images and acts that leave the user always wanting more and not satisfied with real relationships and intimacy.



### **What to do:**

If you are struggling with porn use you might like to speak with a trusted adult. You are not alone and many good people, especially during adolescence, find this topic difficult. God understands how hard it is and the Church speaks of chastity being a 'long and exacting work' and that this is particularly hard during adolescence. (CCC 2342)

#### **1. Ask God for forgiveness.**

When we stuff up (and we all do) it is good to repent and ask God for the grace to start again and do better next time. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a way we can receive God's loving forgiveness and be nourished spiritually by God.

#### **2. Get informed.**

There are lots of great websites and books that address the topics of chastity, pornography and love. These can help inspire and inform so we can deal with our sexuality in a way that leads to happiness and relationships success.

#### **3. Never give up!**

St. Augustine said, "Habit if not resisted soon becomes necessity". He had struggles of the sexual nature just like everyone does but one of the keys is to never stop trying to do what is right. It is worth the effort; choosing what is right does get easier with practice.







# Online Safety

# 15.

Digital technology is a rapidly growing and ever changing environment that you undoubtedly are engaged in. Whilst most people agree that there are many benefits of the online world, it can come with risks.

It is important for your parents to be involved in your online wellbeing and equally important for your parents to set clear rules which provide guidance and support for respectful internet use.

Young people are online now more than any other time in history. You are heavily influenced by social media and your online experiences. The trusted adults in your life have a responsibility to assist you to maximise the benefits of being online, whilst also ensuring they are assisting you to manage the risks. This can be difficult for the trusted adults in your life as they didn't grow up with this technology and often don't use it in the same way you do. Whilst the developments in technology have immense benefits, we are now faced with social and legal issues we have never dealt with before. When it comes to technology it's fair to say that you most likely know more about it than your parents, but the adults in your life have more life experience and know about safety. We encourage you to work in partnership with the trusted adults in your life so you can enjoy the benefits of being online and manage the risks.

## Online Security and Privacy

Being safe online includes being aware of online security and the measures you can take to assist to keep your personal information secure. Ensure antivirus software is up-to-date on all the devices you use. Be mindful that as free public WiFi increases in popularity so too do the risk factors. Unsecured WiFi can be used by hackers to distribute malware as well as intercept and access what you're sending on the internet.

Passwords are 'private' information, be careful who you share these with. Use strong passwords that don't relate to you in anyway (eg don't use your name or date of birth), include lower and upper case letters, numbers and characters.

Change passwords regularly and ensure a password to access internet banking is different to all other passwords. Consider using multifactor authentication, including pass phrases (eg something you know such as your first pet's name). Be careful not to be tricked into disclosing this information when entering competitions or doing online quizzes. Use the privacy and security settings on devices and social media platforms to their full potential.

## Think before you post

It's important to remember that for the most part the internet is a 'public' place. Many young people think that if they're sending private messages the conversation and anything sent within it is private. Please remember, content (words, pictures and videos) will only stay private if all parties choose to keep it that way. Anything you post on the internet can be copied, downloaded, shared and manipulated. It can resurface at any time in the future, even years after it was originally posted. Before you post any words, photos or videos ask yourself, is what I'm posting true, kind and necessary.

Also ask yourself, would I want any of the following people to see it (now and in the future)?

If you answer no to anyone of these questions, don't post it.

- Parents (and grandparents)
- Principal
- Paper (on the front page of the newspaper or nightly news)
- Police
- Partner (future partner and children)
- Perspective Employer
- Paedophile

## Private Pictures (Nudes and Image Based Abuse)

If you take and share private pictures the consequence is they could be seen by more people than you intended. A recent study found that nearly 90% of private pictures once received by the person requesting them, were shared with other people and put on other websites. Some people believe if you use a disappearing app (eg Snapchat) the photos won't resurface but time and time again this is proved to be untrue. Messaging apps and their servers have been hacked and 'private pictures' shared online along with the name of the person in the image and where they live, work or go to school.

The online section was co written by  
**Kayelene Kerr, WA Child Safety Services.**

Taking, sending and being in possession of sexually explicit photos or videos of a person under 18 years of age is a criminal offence in Australia. If you think a private picture or video of you has been posted or shared online you should report the matter to a trusted adult as soon as possible to reduce the spread of the image. You can also report the matter to the Australian Government Office of the eSafety Commissioner, [www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse](http://www.esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse).

Image based abuse is the non-consensual sharing of private pictures, often referred to as 'revenge pornography'. The criminal law in Western Australia is currently being amended to include additional criminal offences if someone shares a private picture of you without your consent.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a repeated behaviour that can include hurtful messages, images or videos, abusive texts and emails, nasty online gossip and chat, trolling, imitating, excluding and humiliating other people online. You will be judged on the way you conduct yourself online. Ensure you behave online in the same way you would behave offline. How you behave online says a lot about who you are as a person so make it positive. If you see someone else being bullied online don't be a bystander, be an upstander and provide support to the person being bullied. In Australia bullying can be reported to the Australian Government Office of the eSafety Commissioner, [www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints](http://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints).

Cyberbullying is a criminal offence, if bullying persists the matter may need to be escalated and reported to your state Police. If you ever need someone to talk to the Kids Helpline is available 24 hours a day.







## Online Grooming

When using the internet you have the opportunity to connect with a third of the world population, that's about 2.5 billion people! Online relationships with people can feel as real as offline relationships so this can get a bit tricky for young people. When you're going through adolescence you want to feel special, attractive, understood and validated. This is a very normal part of your development and it's important to know this can increase your vulnerability online.

There's a chance that someone will connect with you online to get your personal information, request private pictures or want to meet you in person. Not everyone is who they say they are online. If you haven't met the person offline, you are trusting that they are being honest about who they are. Online predators will sometimes pretend to be another young person, a friend of a friend or in some cases a celebrity. Online predators will sometimes use their correct age because they know young people are often seeking connection and a feeling of belonging online that they may not be experiencing offline. If you're communicating with anyone online that you don't know offline be careful what personal information you share. No matter how cool or understanding someone may seem don't share your full name, where you live, where you go to school or private pictures.

**Open communication** is reinforced by Theme 2 '**Nothing is so awful that we can't talk with someone about it**' and is essential for online safety. Think about the internet and the websites, games and activities you enjoy. Explore these with your parents and teachers and discuss useful strategies to deal with online content that gives you your early warning signs, like talking with someone from your network, turning off the screen or learning how to block or report people.

**Technology tools** can be helpful in online safety by reducing the likelihood of offensive and illegal material such as pornography. Use filters, parental controls, privacy settings and security or anti-virus software. Keep online use in an open place where you can be seen and supervised if necessary. For device use in bedrooms consider an 'open-door' policy.

**Clear boundaries** are important and need to be established for responsible and respectful online use and communication. This is for your own safety and the safety of others. Think about 'pausing' before posting, texting and sharing information. Use your previous discussions on Basket Filler 2 to remind yourself about not upsetting others online and cyber bullying. You can also talk with someone on your Network if you are upset about online communication. Remember that content can remain online forever and can be shared with other people without your permission.



# Helpful WEBSITES & READING

## **Reach Out Australia** [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)

ReachOut.com helps under 25's with everyday questions through the tough times. Provides tools young people may need to make life easier.

## **Love Is Respect** [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

This website is a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and is designed to empower young people to prevent and end abuse in relationships.

## **Our Watch** [www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au)

Australian website designed to prevent and educate on violence against women and children.

## **The Line** [www.theline.org.au](http://www.theline.org.au)

An Australian website that looks at relationships, gender, sex, bystander action and technology; how to keep it healthy and respectful for teens, parents and teachers.

## **Paul Nannes** [www.paulnannes.com](http://www.paulnannes.com)

Resources and blogs for Catholic young adults including video and audio content.

## **Chastity** [www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)

Good source of resources and teachings on chastity including a Q&A section

## **The Dating War** [www.thedatingwar.com](http://www.thedatingwar.com)

Australian based ministry to Catholic young adults on a variety of chastity and relationships topics.

## **The Porn Effect** [www.theporneffect.com](http://www.theporneffect.com)

American based Catholic website that covers the basics on pornography very well.

## **The Chastity Project** [www.chastityproject.com](http://www.chastityproject.com)

Provides Catholic resources and includes a section on Pornography.

## **Covenanteyes** [www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com)

Offers a holistic approach to internet safety including accountability software.

## **Your Brain on Porn** [www.yourbrainonporn.com](http://www.yourbrainonporn.com)

Provides information on the effect porn has on the brain.

## **Feed the Right Wolf** [www.feedtherightwolf.com](http://www.feedtherightwolf.com)

Provides a range of strategies to help with a porn habit. This site is overseen by trained counsellors.

## **Go for Greatness** [www.goforgreatness](http://www.goforgreatness)

Australian based Christian organisation that provides information and short videos. Also provides Christian counselling information.

## **Lawstuff** [www.lawstuff.org.au](http://www.lawstuff.org.au)

Lawstuff provides legal information to children and young people in Australia.

## **Youth Beyond Blue** [www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)

Youth Beyondblue provides information and support to help young people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.

16.

# Contact Numbers

## Kids Helpline

A free, private & confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people.

**Free call:** 1800 551800

**Website:** [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

## 1800RESPECT

**Phone:** 1800 RESPECT

## The Department for Communities

**Freecall:** 1800 622 258 (country areas)

**Phone:** (09) 9325 1232

## Crisis Care Helpline

Provides information and a counselling service for people in crisis who need urgent help from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

**Freecall:** 1800 199 008 (country areas)

**Phone:** (08) 9223 1111

## WA Child Safety Services

Provides quality child protection and abuse prevention education direct to children, parents, schools, professional groups and community groups.

**Phone:** 1300 310 083

**Website:** [www.wachildsafetysservices.com.au](http://www.wachildsafetysservices.com.au)

## Family Helpline

Offers a telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties. Interpreter services are available.

**Freecall:** 1800 643 000 (country areas)

**Phone:** (08) 9223 1100

**TTY:** (08) 9325 1232

## Western Australia Police Force

**Emergency Phone:** 000

**Police Attendance Phone:** 131 444

**Website:** [www.police.wa.gov.au/Contact-Us](http://www.police.wa.gov.au/Contact-Us)

## Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC)

An emergency service that offers assistance and support to any person, female or male, aged 13 years and over who has experienced any form of unwanted sexual contact or behaviour in the last 2 weeks. A free counselling service is also available (during business hours) to people who have experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse in the past (more than 2 weeks ago).

**Freecall:** 1800 199 888

**Phone:** (08) 9340 1828

## Office of the E-Safety Commissioner

Provides online safety education, assistance and a complaints service for cyber bullying and illegal online content.

**Phone:** 1800 880 176

**Website:** [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

## Real Talk

Provides up-to-date presentations and programs that help young people understand the amazing gift of sex, love and relationships

**Website:** [www.realtalkaustralia.com](http://www.realtalkaustralia.com)

## Headspace

Provides early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds, along with assistance in promoting young peoples' wellbeing. This covers four core areas: mental health, physical health, work and study support and alcohol and other drug services.

**Phone:** 1800 650 890

**Website:** [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

## Safeguarding Office

Provides training in all aspects of child protection within the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth. This office also oversees the daily proactive and reactive operations of over 260 parish based Safeguarding Officers.

Provides support, advice and referral for concerns relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**Freecall:** 1800 072 390

**Phone:** (08) 9221 7762

**Email:** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)

**Website:** [www.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.perthcatholic.org.au)