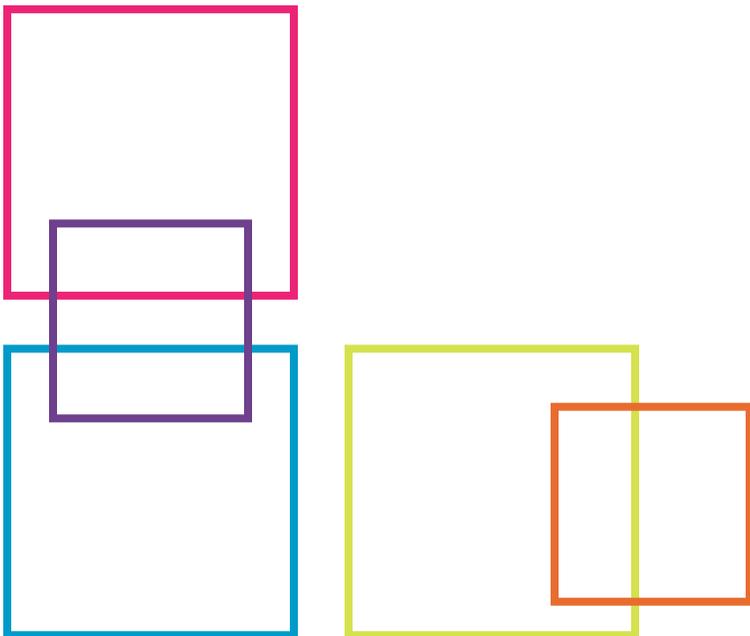


# MODULE 1



**TELL IT LIKE IT IS**

Sexual Health + Wellness Education



“Tell it like it is” – Aaron Neville

## **TOPICS AND CONCEPTS TO BE COVERED:**

- Introduction to Tell It Like It Is and Icebreakers
- Self-confidence
- Communication Skills
- Identifying and Talking about Feelings

## **GENERATING GROUP GUIDELINES**

Begin the module by providing a brief introduction about yourself as the facilitator. Next, explain that the participants will create a set of guidelines to be used and referred to throughout the modules. Ask the participants to identify actions and factors that help create a respectful and safe learning atmosphere (e.g., no interrupting or talking over others, listening to what others are saying, respecting confidentiality, etc.). Using a flip chart and markers, create a list that will hang in the room for the duration of the modules as a simple reminder for everyone. You may find it helpful to review these guidelines with participants at the beginning of each module.

## **INTRODUCTION TO TELL IT LIKE IT IS**

As a facilitator, you might introduce the group by saying something like this: *“Hello and welcome to Tell It Like It Is! This is an educational group to help you learn more about relationships, sexual health, hygiene, self-confidence, boundaries, and staying safe online. We will also cover sexuality education topics such as our bodies, safe sex practices, sexually transmitted infections, gender identity, and sexual orientation, as it plays a large role in how we identify with ourselves and the society we live in.”*

## **SUGGESTED “GET TO KNOW YOU” ACTIVITIES**

These activities are to assist participants to get to know one another and you, the facilitator. They will help build safety and trust through a positive sharing environment, and will help participants learn about themselves and others in the room. Facilitators are encouraged to select only those activities that are most appropriate for the desired needs and learning styles of the participants.

## ACTIVITY: WHO ARE YOU AND WHO AM I?

Encourage each participant to say their name before answering one (or more!) of the questions below. You do not need to go through each question. You could read questions aloud to the group, or print them on pieces of paper and have group members pull them out of a basket to answer. You may also provide participants with a coloured item (e.g., pipe cleaner, candy) that corresponds to the colours linked to each question—participants then answer the corresponding question(s).

1. If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get? (green)
2. If you were an animal, what would you be? (green)
3. What is one thing in life you'd like to do? (blue)
4. Who is your hero and why? (blue)
5. What's your favourite thing to do in the summer? (red)
6. If you were an ice cream flavour, which one would you be? (red)
7. What's your favourite cartoon character, and why? (orange)
8. If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go and why? (orange)
9. Are you a morning or a night person? (yellow)
10. What are your favourite hobbies? (yellow)

## ACTIVITY: STRING GAME

**Materials needed:** Roll of yarn or string, scissors

The string game is an icebreaker game and conversation starter that allows people to tell others about themselves. This activity requires some preparation. Take a pair of scissors and cut strings of various lengths - as short as 12 inches, and as long as 30 or more inches. When you are finished cutting the string, gather all the pieces up into one pile.

To play, ask the first volunteer to choose any piece of string. Have the person pull on it and separate it from the other pieces of string. Ask them to introduce themselves as they slowly wind the piece of string around their index finger. The funny part of the icebreaker game is that some of the strings are extremely long, so sometimes a person must talk for a longer period of time! This is a good way to get everyone to start talking. People may learn something interesting or new about each other! Feel free to adapt this game to your needs.

## **ACTIVITY: TELEPHONE**

### **| Materials Needed:** None

**|** This is a fun way to develop listening skills. This game is great for any age. Have the group sit in a circle, and have one participant choose a word or phrase that they will then whisper to the person next to them. The message is then passed on around the circle. The last person then says aloud the word or phrase they heard, and is often much different than what it started out as! Sometimes it is fun to begin with a simple message and gradually increase the complexity of the message as the games continues.

## **BUILDING OUR SELF CONFIDENCE!**

Start by facilitating discussion and asking, “What is self-confidence?” Self-confidence is the value you give yourself as a person. It is sometimes also referred to as self-esteem. It is a belief in one’s own ability to think, learn, choose and make appropriate decisions. Self-confidence includes:

- How we see ourselves
- What we think we deserve
- The way we allow others to treat us
- What we tell ourselves
- The way we take care of ourselves

How can we improve or nurture our self-confidence? Encourage participants to identify activities, self-care practices, and positive relationships that can contribute to improved and sustained self-confidence. Some ideas include:

- Doing an activity we enjoy and believe we are good at
- Keeping a journal where we write one positive thing about ourselves each day
- Surrounding ourselves with kind and supportive people
- Taking care of our body with healthy food and exercise
- Maintaining personal hygiene and an appearance that makes us feel good

## **ACTIVITY: GIVING AND RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS**

**|** A compliment is when we say something nice or positive about another person. It is a “word gift.” A compliment may be about something someone did or anything positive about them.  
**|** While most of the time a compliment is given from one person to another, it is also something we can give to ourselves. Compliments we give ourselves are sometimes referred to as affirmations. Compliments can be important in helping people recognize their value.

Take turns with the group giving and receiving compliments to one another. If group members feel uncomfortable doing this, you can also use a stock photo of a person and the group can practice complimenting the person in the photo (e.g., I like that person's outfit, etc.)

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Developing effective communication skills is valuable in all aspects of our lives. Communication skills can help enhance and nurture our relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and partners. When using our communication skills we want to remember the different "languages" that we use—our verbal (words, talking), and non-verbal (body movements, posture, eye contact) language.

### ACTIVITY: VERBAL VS. NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE

**Materials needed:** flip chart & markers

Make two columns and have participants offer their ideas of what verbal and non-verbal communication looks like to them. Explain that non-verbal language is the use of our body, and verbal language is the use of our words. Responses may include:

**Non-verbal language includes:** eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, facial expressions, mimicking in moments of empathy, gentle pat on the shoulder, hug, etc.

\*\*\*Important note about eye contact: Making eye contact varies across cultures. In some cultures not making eye contact is seen as a sign of respect. In other cultures, making eye contact during conversation to show interest is a socially acceptable form of communication. Good eye contact involves looking at others, but also looking away once in a while. We don't want to stare at other people for too long or make them feel uncomfortable. It's especially important to avoid staring at others when they are in a shared space such as a public washroom or change room.

**Verbal language includes:** agreeing by saying 'yes' or simply saying 'mmm hmm', comforting words, words of encouragement, offering ideas for solutions, etc.

## WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING?

'Active listening' means fully concentrating on what is being said by the speaker. Active listening involves all of your senses and requires patience to build and develop the skill.

An active listener is:

- Accepting
- Open minded
- Non-judgemental
- Honest

Some more advanced aspects of active listening include:

*Reflection* involves closely paraphrasing what the speaker has said in order to show you understand. It helps to reassure the speaker's message and demonstrates understanding.

*Clarification* is the opportunity to ask questions of the speaker to be sure both the listener and speaker have received the same message. The speaker can then build on questions to further explain their point.

## TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS

The way you feel inside is important. It can be hard when we hide our feelings, bottle them up, or simply avoid talking about them with someone we trust. Talking to someone like a family member or friend can begin to help us feel better. Having someone to share those feelings with helps us feel safe and supported and begin to explore solutions.

Our feelings are important because they tell us something about what is happening in our lives. Our feelings can help us understand ourselves, but they can also cause confusion and even hurt and pain. Feelings we may experience towards an intimate partner, a crush, or a person of interest may be especially confusing. A better understanding of our feelings can help us express them to the people around us. When we feel comfortable to open up and share, it allows us to grow closer with the person or people that truly care about us.

**Question for the Group:** What is the hardest part about sharing your feelings with others?

When we decide who we want to talk to, we can arrange a time and place to talk—a place where we feel safe and comfortable. Writing our thoughts down before we meet can help get the conversation started.

Some people have a more difficult time sharing their feelings, and that is ok. We do not have to share every feeling that we may be having, but it is important to share feelings when we need help. A solution may not happen right away, but we know that there is someone there to support us.

## FEELINGS AND BODY CLUES

Ask the group to identify the reasons we may experience the four main feelings: fear, anger, sadness, happiness. Explain that we may also experience sexual or romantic feelings. Support participants in identifying body clues or sensations that help us better identify how we are feeling. Feel free to utilize a visual (e.g., drawing, photo) of a simple body outline to illustrate body clues and guide the discussion. As a facilitator, assist the participants to recognize and learn that:

- **Scared or Fearful Feelings** may tell us when things are not okay or when something potentially bad might happen. Fear often helps to protect us when we think a situation is dangerous. Fear helps us be more cautious.
  - ▣ Body clues may include: tense muscles, quick shallow breathing, heart beating quickly, not thinking clearly, running away, hiding, etc.
- **Angry Feelings** may help to tell us when something is not working the way we want or expect it to, we are being treated unfairly, or we have lost something that is important to us. Sometimes, angry feelings can help motivate us to fix problems.
  - ▣ Body clues may include: tense muscles, shallow breathing, flushed cheeks, clenched teeth, furrowed eyebrows, foggy brain, yelling, swearing, hitting, etc.
- **Sad Feelings** may help us know what we care about. Sad feelings often are experienced when we have lost something (e.g., an important item, a game, a job, a loved one, something we've hoped for, etc.)
  - ▣ Body clues may include: relaxed muscles, slumped posture, head down, tears, etc.
- **Happy Feelings** may tell us when good things are happening. They help us decide what we really want to do or with whom we want to spend time.
  - ▣ Body clues may include: relaxed muscles, slow breathing, steady heartbeat, smiling, laughing, clear brain, using kind words, safe touching such as hugging, etc.
- **Sexual or Romantic Feelings** may tell us that we are attracted to, have a crush on, or like someone. These feelings are normal and might turn into loving feelings, or eventually a friendship or relationship. We will learn more about these feelings in later modules.
  - ▣ Body clues may include: relaxed muscles, slow or fast breathing, steady or fast heartbeat, smiling, feeling turned on, thinking sexy thoughts, safe touching such as hugging, kissing, etc.

## ACTIVITY: EXPRESSION MODELING

■ **Materials:** Cup or basket, images of facial expressions

■ Ask participants to model the facial expression that they would show if they were happy, sad, angry, and scared. Encourage participants to share when they might feel these emotions and to provide examples. As a facilitator, you may wish to model the expressions yourself and have the individuals repeat the facial expressions. You can also play “charades” by modeling a feeling and asking participants to guess what feeling you are expressing. To make “charades” more interactive, place pictures of facial expressions in a cup or basket and have each participant pick a picture and model the expression, while the rest of the group guesses the demonstrated feeling.

## **COPING WITH DIFFICULT FEELINGS**

There are a number of strategies that can help us deal with and work through our feelings. These strategies may cheer us up, or help us relax and feel calm. These activities may be most useful when we are experiencing strong feelings (for example, when we are really angry with someone). Coping strategies help us slow down, think through what we are experiencing, and provide positive options for dealing with difficult feelings.

Prior to reviewing the strategies listed below, encourage participants to offer their own ideas and suggestions for coping with difficult feelings. Participants may provide additional ideas that will be helpful to others. If time allows, it may be helpful to try some of the activities (e.g., deep breaths, counting, guided meditation, stretching, etc.) together with the group.

- Talk to a friend, family member, or someone you trust and feel safe with
- Take 5 or more slow deep breaths
- Count to 10 or 20 slowly
- Go for a walk or do yoga
- Write in a journal or draw, colour, doodle
- Listen to music
- Listen to a guided meditation
- Take a relaxing bath or shower
- Watch a funny movie

## **TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL FEELINGS, OUR BODIES, AND SEX**

Encourage participants to briefly reflect on appropriate people to discuss sexual feelings with, and appropriate places to do so. Remind participants that sexuality is often viewed as a private and intimate topic. It's important to respect the boundaries and comfort level of those around us. Appropriate places would be quiet, private, and somewhere we feel comfortable talking. Appropriate people would be friends, family members, supports, and other helpers (e.g., doctor, nurse, counsellor) who we trust and feel safe with. It is best to avoid talking about sexuality at work with our co-workers, or in public places such as the bus, mall, or gym.

## **CHECK-OUT**

(See Appendix 1.0 for the corresponding handout)

- Review the main “takeaways” from today’s module.
- Address any question or concerns that participants may have
- This may be a good opportunity to complete a “Head, Heart, and Hands” check-out. Head explores elements of ‘what’ and ‘why’, heart explores values, beliefs, and feelings, and hands explores practical skills and tools. Invite participants to pause and reflect on their learning experience, and ask:
  - Head: What’s one thing you learned?
  - Heart: What’s one thing you are feeling?
  - Hands: What’s one thing you can do?

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