

Lesson 2

Public and Private

(The “wheres” and “whens” of what we do)



Contents

1. What is public and what is private?
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- Many things we do are better kept private: certain parts of our bodies, certain behaviors, and even some things we want to say!
- There are also things that are great to show to the world: other parts of our bodies, certain behaviors, and - yes - even some things we want to say!
- Learning the difference is important for our health, happiness, and safety.

Practicing private and public behaviors is not just the students' job; teachers and caregivers need to understand and demonstrate a respect for these concepts, too. It helps students with IDD recognize how they should conduct themselves in private and in public, which will aid them in avoiding uncomfortable, inappropriate, and even (accidentally) unlawful actions when they live or briefly venture out independently.

This unit will explore the difference between public and private (and those things that are a little of both) and how we should behave in each environment.



“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest”
– Benjamin Franklin

When our students and children are beside us, we can keep them relatively safe.
We look out for who comes in and out of our space.
We can monitor behavior.
We can teach as we go along.

But the more they learn and grow, the more unfettered our students invariably become (and - hooray! - that is the goal). Therefore, we need to ensure that before they venture out, whether for just a few hours or to live independently, they have the knowledge and ability to keep themselves safe from personal victimization. We must also ensure that they understand how not to mistakenly commit personal safety violations against others.

Our Personal Safety Curriculum teaches students basic concepts to keep themselves and others protected from harm without delving into topics of sexuality.

Because instilling and bolstering general safety concepts will pervade all areas of their lives. Boundaries are boundaries, whatever the situation.
Consent is consent, whatever the activity.
We will continue to repeat and reinforce these principles throughout the curriculum so that students will always know that they can - and should - communicate what they do and do not want, whatever the scenario.

Please continue to role model these concepts as you work with your students!
They are watching us...

This unit is about PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

Some things are ok to show the world, while other things should be kept just to ourselves!

Topics will include:

Encouraging and promoting privacy

Public and private places

Public and private body parts

Public and private behavior



Learning objectives for this lesson:

- Recognizing the difference between public and private places
- Demonstrating ability to let others know when you need privacy
- Ensuring that private places remain private
- Understanding public and private body parts and clothing
- Understanding public and private behavior
- Identifying what is appropriate to say in public

You will need:

- Pen or pencil
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- String
- Worksheets 15, 21-27

**You may read this lesson as it is written or use your own words.
And because everyone's abilities are different, you may choose to skip some worksheets.**

Section 1: What is public and what is private? ★

Have you ever held a rock concert in your bedroom?

Have you ever brushed your teeth in a restaurant?

We hope not! That's because there are rules that tell us what behaviors and activities belong and don't belong in certain places according to what is *appropriate* (remember that word from the last lesson? "Appropriate" means "suitable or proper; what is acceptable."). The people around us do not want to see certain behaviors or body parts - those are *inappropriate* - so we need to make sure we do not show these body parts or behaviors in places when other people are around or may happen to see us.

These places are known as *public*.

PUBLIC places are those where anyone can go and see or hear what everyone else is doing.

People in public places are with us and around us, so we have to conduct only behaviors that are appropriate for others to see. Is it appropriate to show others how you brush your teeth in a restaurant? No. But is it appropriate to *eat* in a restaurant? Absolutely! That's what it's there for!

The other activities - the ones we do not want other people to see - need to be done in places where we are sure we will be alone and unseen. These places are known as *private*.

PRIVATE places are those where we can be by ourselves, with no one around to see or hear us.



Why do we have to learn the difference between public and private?

For our safety and the safety of others! Other people want to know that they can go to public places and not have to see something that offends them or makes them feel uncomfortable.

If an action is inappropriate enough, there could be trouble.

(Later, we will learn what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate in public places.)

We also need to understand public and private for our own safety; if someone does something very inappropriate in a public place, they may be offensive or dangerous to us. To protect ourselves, we need to recognize when that is happening so we can avoid those people and their behavior.

As we learned in Lesson One, boundaries are important (remember, they are limits, like a fence that no one else can see but that you can feel). And just like people need to set boundaries for certain behaviors or body parts, people also need to set boundaries for their personal space, places where we can be alone in the quiet or listening to music, where we can sing or practice dance moves, where we can read or cry - where we can do whatever we want to without being seen.

Section 2: Public and private places ★

So how can we be sure if a place is public or private? Ask yourself:

1. Is anyone else in the room with me?

If you are in the school cafeteria, a shopping mall, or an office building, chances are someone else is in the room with you. That's because school, malls, and office buildings are public places!

2. If no one is in the room with me, could someone walk in without knocking first?

If you are in a public place like school, the mall, or an office building, other people can walk in and out whenever they want. Public places are meant for everyone.

3. Am I home?

Home seems private because most people can't just walk into your house. However, other people usually live there with you - family, caregivers, maybe someone who walks your dog or a roommate. Your home is not for everybody in the world, but it is not for just you alone (unless you live alone!). So, it is not really public... but it is still not private. We will call this "semi-private."

Semi-private places require *public* behaviors, because others might see or hear you!

4. Am I outside?

Outside is usually public. Anyone can walk in the park, down the street, or turn the corner at any time and find you there. Outside is usually for everybody.

You may think, what about my backyard? Other people cannot just walk into my backyard! That's true, but someone could easily drive or walk by, or peer through the bushes and see you. That means even your backyard is not truly private. A private place is one where no one can see you.

5. Am I in a *room* in my home?

This is where you will probably find a private place! Some rooms are not private - the living room, the kitchen, the TV room. Those are where everyone in your house is welcome; there are usually no doors and there are plenty of chairs. It is meant for everyone to enjoy.

Your bedroom (if it is only yours and you don't share the space) and the bathroom are two private rooms inside a home. This is where you can behave any way you want - as long as you are not hurting yourself - and no one can see you or walk in when the door is closed.



Take out **WORKSHEET 21, "What is Public and Private?"** Review what makes places public or private. Discuss how a public place might feel private (even though it's not); then discuss how a private place may not be so private!

Let's say you enter your classroom early, before anyone else is there (even your teacher).

The blinds are closed, and so is the door. You are all alone. Is this a private place?

Nope! That's because the classroom is meant for many people, and anyone could simply walk in at any time!

Now let's say that you go to the bathroom at school. No one is in the whole room. Is this a private place? Still no! Again, it's meant for everyone to use, so anyone could enter.

If you enter a stall and lock the door so no one can walk in on you: is this a private place?

Well, this space is *semi-private*. The stall is meant for you to go to the bathroom without interruption or anyone seeing, but if someone walked in the room and heard you doing something other than going to the bathroom, they might get offended. So, it is not actually a private place. It should be used only for going to the bathroom or changing clothes.

What about your bedroom? Maybe is only yours (you do not share it with anyone), and you have closed the curtains and the door. Is this a private place? Yes! You have made sure that no one could see or walk in! This space is just for you and no one else.

What about if you are in that very private room, and decide to take a photo or video of yourself? The curtains are closed, and so is the door. Is it still a private place?

No! Any time you do anything on your phone or computer, others may see it. Nothing on your phone or computer is *ever* really private. So, make sure you use public behavior in pictures and videos! (More on that in Lesson 4!)



Take out **WORKSHEETS 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d, "Public, Private, or Semi-Private?"** Print out all pages and cut out the words "public," "private," and "semi-private." Place the correct word on each of the pictures. Discuss your answers!

BONUS: Cut out magazine pictures of different kinds of places and play the game over and over again!

Section 3: Encouraging and promoting privacy ★

There are times we all need privacy. For instance, we don't want anyone watching us when we are going to the bathroom (unless we need help). When we change our clothes, others don't want to see us undressed (unless they are helping us). Privacy not only protects others from seeing what they might not want to see, but it protects us, too!

So how do we make sure that we receive the privacy we want and that others do, too?

- Let others know when we do not want to be disturbed and where we will be.
- Tell those around us that we would like them to knock on our door and wait for a "come in!"
- Show the same courtesy to others - everyone should respect others' privacy!
- Practice, practice, practice!



Take out **WORKSHEETS 23a, 23b, and 23c, "Wall Hangers!"** Cut out each pair and glue or tape the ends of a 6-10 inch piece of string to the back of one of the rectangles. Then glue or tape the two signs' blank sides together, back-to-back, so the words appear on the front and back of each. Choose which sign each member of the household wants to hang on their door. You can print multiples if more than one person want a particular sign or rotate the signs every weeks or so. Then... obey the signs!



Take turns entering a room and closing the door. The person outside should practice knocking and asking for permission to enter. Think of funny ways for one to knock and the other to answer. ("Knockety-knock!" "Hark, who goes there?!") The more you practice, the easier it gets; *repetition helps us remember things!*

We need personal space, and so do the people around us! When a caregiver or friend is in the bathroom, give them a few minutes alone before knocking. If someone is in their bedroom with the door closed, think about coming back later instead of asking to enter. Give respect, get respect!

Section 4: Public and private body parts: What to wear ★

Have you ever noticed that people wear only certain items of clothing in public places? We see each other in shirts and jeans and dresses, but we don't see people walking around town in their underwear! That's because some clothing is appropriate in public places and other clothing is only appropriate in private. (Wearing NO clothes is ALWAYS for private places only.)

How do we know what is ok to wear in our room, in other rooms in our house, and out of our house?



The Colorado Trust

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The general rules are:

In private: You can wear whatever you want, or nothing at all - remember, it is your personal space!

In semi-private: At home, you can wear anything that covers the body parts that a bathing suit covers (what we call "private parts"). However, there may be other rules in your house, such as needing to wear pants and a shirt at the dinner table or keeping your shoes on in the dusty attic. Check with your caregiver to learn what is appropriate clothing to wear in your home! As for your backyard, you can probably wear a bathing suit and remain appropriate, especially if you have a fence or bushes surrounding you. But checking with your caregiver is also a good idea here.

In public: Usually, you must wear a shirt with pants, shorts, or skirt and shoes (with or without socks)! We see the most people - and they see us - in public, so we want to remain appropriate!



Take out **WORKSHEET 24, "The Parts I Keep Private."** Cut out the bathing suits and place them on the figures. Notice the parts the bathing suit covers on each body. Point to the parts on your own body that a bathing suit would cover.

BONUS: Put on your bathing suit and see what it covers!



Take out **WORKSHEET 25, "Where Can I Wear This?"** Look at the list of clothing combinations and discuss what is appropriate in public, in private, and around your house (semi-private)! Come up with house rules together about what is appropriate to wear, and when.



Section 5: Public and private behavior ★

Now that we know how to dress in a way that is acceptable in public, private, and semi-private, we can think about how to behave while in these places, too. Issues such as noises we make and how loudly we make them, what we do with our body parts, and how we interact with other people are important lessons to learn. That's because behaving appropriately helps us make sure that we remain safe and others feel safe.

- As we mentioned before, we do not want to show any of our private body parts - the ones that our bathing suits cover - when other people are around. That means we should wear clothes that cover these parts when in public (like in school and on the sidewalk) and semi-private (alone in a place where others are free to enter and exit, like our living room).

So, our **NUMBER ONE** rule for public/semi-private behavior is: **Keep your clothes on.**

The exceptions to this rule are 1) taking off your coat, jacket, or sweater, and 2) taking off your shoes when you have gotten permission to do so (stores and restaurants will not allow you to stay if you do not have shoes on, but some people prefer you do not wear shoes inside their house). Clothing must always remain covering your private body parts when you are in public or semi-private places.

The next rule of appropriate public and semi-private behaviors has to do with boundaries. Remember, boundaries are limits, almost like a fence that no one else can see but that you can feel.

- You have boundaries (personal space and parts of your body that you do not want touched or anyone near) and so do other people! Even those people who are closest to us, like family or friends, may have boundaries regarding being touched. We should always ask before touching someone!

Many of the people we see in public places are strangers - those are people we do not know, who do not know us, and who have no connection to us. These are people we never want to touch! Just as you would not like someone you do not know to put their hands on you, you should respect others' boundaries and not put your hands - or other body parts - on them!

So, our **NUMBER TWO** rule for public/semi-private behavior is: **Do not touch other people unless they give you permission to do so.** (This rule applies to private behavior, too!)



Take out **WORKSHEET 15, "How to Talk About Boundaries With Verbal Communication"** again. We've said it before and we'll say it again - *repetition helps us remember things!* So, let's practice setting boundaries and respecting others' boundaries. Practice saying and repeating the phrases on the worksheet until you get comfortable with them.



Take turns setting boundaries and expressing them differently every time. You can use the phrases on Worksheet 7 or make up your own! As long as it is firm (they should know you mean it) but friendly (there's that smile again), you can't go wrong. When the other person sets their boundaries, practice accepting them.

So far, appropriate behavior in public and semi-private has had a lot to do with your body:

Number one: Keep your clothes on.

Number two: Do not touch other people unless they give you permission to do so. (★And they should never touch you unless you give them permission!)

However, our next rule has to do with our words!

Although all of our private body parts are natural and beautiful in their own ways, sometimes people do not want to hear us talk about them in public. Therefore, we should only talk about them in private when we know others cannot overhear what we are saying. And we should never write, text, or email them - reading these words are just like hearing them! The same goes for rude words and curse words, ones that might make someone else feel uncomfortable.

We should make sure that we only use rude words or talk about our body parts with people we know well - like family, close friends, and doctors - and in private places where others cannot overhear so we do not *offend* others.

To **OFFEND** is to cause someone to feel upset or annoyed.

So, our **NUMBER THREE** rule for public and semi-private behavior is: **Do not talk about body parts or use rude language when speaking in public or semi-private, or writing, texting, emailing.**

***One exception is this: Tourette syndrome is a disorder that causes repetitive movements or unwanted sounds. If someone has Tourette syndrome, they may also experience outbursts of offensive words. The majority of people with Tourette syndrome do not have this symptom, but it is important to acknowledge that it is uncontrollable and that one should not be reprimanded if they do experience it.

Sometimes, the person we are with is the one who wants to use rude language or tell stories that might offend others. If someone says they want to tell you something, you may want to first ask, "Is this public or private?" You can explain that public stories are ones that others can hear without becoming offended, while private stories should be told in places where others cannot hear. If they say it is a public story or word, then go ahead and listen! But if they say it is a private story or word, suggest that they not tell you until you are together in a private place.

- Have you ever gotten so angry that you punched your pillow? Or thrown an object to the ground? We all get angry, and sometimes hitting something with our fists feels good. However, there are ways to keep others safe and from getting upset while we release our *aggression*.

AGGRESSION is wanting to attack or harm.

When we feel aggressive, it is important that we express our feelings in a private place. Yelling into a pillow is a great way to let out some emotion without offending or scaring anyone. Making angry faces in the bathroom mirror is another good outlet. Your body should never come in contact with something hard or sharp, or with another person. The important thing is, make sure you do not yell at, hit, or frighten other people with your aggression - and don't hurt yourself, either! Find a safe way to release your emotion where no one can see or hear you.

So, our **NUMBER FIVE** rule for public and semi-private behavior is: **Do not release aggression unless you are in private, and make sure you keep yourself safe when you do.**

- Just like taking off our clothes or showing our private parts (the ones that our bathing suits cover), some behaviors are perfectly fine in private, but not appropriate in public or semi-private. This is the same with bathroom behaviors; the things we do in the bathroom to keep ourselves clean and comfortable are often not appropriate in places where others can see you.
Blowing our nose in the bathroom is a great way to breathe easier.
Blowing our nose in a restaurant is a great way to make people feel sick!
Burping in the bathroom is a great way to release gas from our stomachs.
Burping in someone's living room might make them ask us to leave!

So, our **NUMBER SIX** rule for public and semi-private behavior is: **Do not conduct bathroom behaviors anywhere but in the bathroom.**

Can you think of other behaviors that belong in private places only?



Take out **WORKSHEET 26, "Where Do I...?"** Draw a line from each behavior to the place it belongs, either public or private. Are some behaviors appropriate in both? Then think of other behaviors that belong in each!

BONUS: Write the word "semi-private" between "public" and "private," then see which behaviors are ok in that kind of setting, too!



Take turns showing each other behaviors (just pretend to show them with the very private ones - clothes should stay on!) and guessing if each belongs in private or if it is appropriate in public or semi-private places.

BONUS: When one of you guesses correctly, ask if it ok to get a high-five from the other person (checking their boundaries!). Practice giving permission and not giving permission - and if you get a "yes," enjoy the high-five!



Take out **WORKSHEET 27, "The Mighty Five."** Each of the five public and semi-private rules has been written in **bold** throughout this lesson. Go back and locate each, then write them on the worksheet. You can keep it close to refresh your memory, or hang it up on the wall or refrigerator for reference! The more you look at them, the better you will remember them!

One important thing to take away from this lesson is that sometimes you won't immediately know what should be kept private and what can be said or done in public or semi-private. This is a great time to discuss the question with your caregiver or teacher.

As we mentioned earlier, a bathing suit is usually acceptable in semi-private, but only sometimes appropriate in public. For instance, it is ok at a public beach or pool, but not ok at school or the dentist's office; brushing our hair is certainly appropriate in the bathroom, but it is also ok in our bedroom, even when the door is open or others are visiting us there. If you don't know if something is appropriate, it's always ok to ask, too!

Keep the discussion going with your caregiver or teacher, and keep reminding yourself of the mighty seven rules. Remember: *repetition helps us remember things!*

AGGRESSION is wanting to attack or harm.

OFFEND is to cause someone to feel upset or annoyed.

PRIVATE places are those where we can be by ourselves, with no one else to see us.

PUBLIC places are those where anyone can go and see what everyone else is doing.

SEMI-PRIVATE places are not public but not necessarily private - they require public behavior.