SAFE AND UNSAFE TOUCH

JANICE MASOKAS, BA
PREVENTIONIST
Sexual Assault Services Center
24 Hour Hotline: 815-730-8984
Guardian Angel wants to help kids stay safe!
Let’s start our story!
When Jimmy’s mother tucks him in bed at night, they always talk for awhile. They talk about interesting things, silly things and serious things. One night she said, “One of my favorite things is tickling your tummy.” She tickled him gently and Jimmy laughed.

“I also like to give you hugs,” she said, cuddling him close. “And most of all,” she teased, “I like to pretend to bite your ear.” She nuzzled his earlobe and made turkey sounds, “Gibble, gobble, gibble.”
Jimmy laughed again. “Stop it, Mom! Stop!”

“Okay,” she said. “When you say stop, I always stop, right?”

Jimmy took a deep breath. “I was just kidding! Do it again!”

“Not now,” said his mother, “because I want to talk about touching problems.”

“What’s a touching problem?” he asked.

“If I kept tickling you and tickling you, and I wouldn’t stop no matter what you said, that would be a touching problem.”

“That would be a mean thing to do,” said Jimmy.
She nodded. “There are other kinds of touching problems, too.”

“Like when Spot licks my face. Yuck!” he said. 

“Yes,” or when a bully knocks you down and sits on you and won’t let you go.”

“That happened to me once,” Jimmy agreed.

“It did?” his mom asked. “How did you feel?”

“I was so mad!”

“You sound mad! I’m sure glad you’re safe now.”
Then Jimmy’s mother asked, “Have you ever been tricked?”

“Hmmm,” Jimmy wondered. “Do you mean like when someone says ‘Open your mouth and close your eyes, and you will get a big surprise’ and the surprise is a worm?”

“Yes,” his mom said, “that’s what I mean. But there are other tricks, too. Once there was a little girl...”
“Do I know her?” Jimmy asked.

“No, but she is a real person. One day when she was playing outside, a neighbor walked up and said, ‘Would you like to come over to my house to see some new baby kittens?’"

Since she knew this person, she went with him. When the girl was inside his house, she looked all around. “Where are the kittens?” she asked.
“The man said, “If you sit on my lap, I’ll show you the kittens.”

“Then the little girl got an uncomfortable feeling. She was about to go home when the man tried to touch her in her private area.”

“He did?” Jimmy asked.
“Yes, he did,” Jimmy’s mother nodded. “So the little girl ran out of there as fast as she could.”

“Did she get away?”

“She ran all the way home and told her mother and father what had happened.”

“What did they do to the man?”

“He got into big trouble. What he did is wrong. It’s against the law too.”
“He will have to learn to never try anything like that again.”

“Why would somebody want to do that to a little kid Mom?” asked Jimmy.

“I don’t know,” his mother answered shaking her head sadly. “I just know that it does happen sometimes. But if we talk about it, we can help you to be safe.”
“Do you remember in the story where the little girl felt uncomfortable?” Jimmy nodded. “Lots of kids say they get warning feelings when things are not safe. Some children say it’s a nervous feeling. Others say that their tummies feel upset. So be sure to pay attention when warning feelings tell you to watch out.”
“Does it feel like when you’re gonna throw up?” asked Jimmy.

“It might.” Jimmy’s mother smiled at him. “Or you could feel tickly and prickly like a nervous cat. Warning feelings are like a safety whistle. Your whole body, from head to toe, is private and belongs to you. Some parts of your body are extra personal and private. We wear bathing suits when we go swimming so we can cover up our private places. Private places are off limits for touching unless there is a good reason.”
“What if I have a sore on my bottom?” Jimmy asked.
“What do you think?” his mother asked.
“I’d want you to fix it.”
“In a case like that, it would be okay for Dad or me to take care of things. It’s also okay for a doctor or nurse to check you all over and give you a shot in your bottom if you need one. It’s okay to change a baby’s diaper. And, of course, babies are small children and need help with washing and drying.”
“Now let’s say someone was trying to touch you under your clothes. What would you do?”

“I’d want them to stop.”

“The first thing you do is tell that person to stop. This might be hard to say to someone who is bigger and older than you, so I think we should practice. Can you say ‘Stop it. I don’t like that!’”

Jimmy repeated in a loud voice, “Stop it! I don’t like that!!”
“Good job!” said his mother.
“You sounded like you really meant it. I want you to remember that no one has the right to touch private parts of your body without a good reason, not even Dad or me. If there isn’t a good reason, say no, just like we practiced. I know that could be hard, because kids think they should do whatever they are told.”
“But some people are pretty mixed up. Sometimes grown-ups, babysitters, and bigger kids try to trick children into secret touching games that might seem like fun at first. If something like this ever happens to you, don’t be afraid to tell me, even if it is supposed to be a secret. And remember, touching problems are NEVER a child’s fault.”
“I would always tell,” Jimmy yawned. “But you know what? Can I please have a drink of water?”

Jimmy’s mom smiled. “I’ll get you a drink of water,” she said, “but you will remember what we talked about won’t you?”

WHAT ARE SOME SAFE TOUCHES?

SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED A HIGH FIVE
SAFE TOUCHES MAKE US FEEL... HAPPY SECURE LOVED COMFORTABLE PROUD
WHAT ARE SOME UNSAFE TOUCHES?

...A SLAP OR PUNCH
...A KICK OR PUSH
...TOUCHES TO OUR PRIVATE AREAS
...TOUCHES THAT MAKE US UNCOMFORTABLE
Unsafe touches make us feel...

Sad
Afraid
Angry
Confused, like something is wrong
Embarassed
THE PARTS OF OUR BODIES COVERED BY OUR SWIMSUITS ARE CALLED OUR PRIVATE PARTS.
SAFE SECRETS:

✓ ARE FUN TO KEEP
✓ DO NOT HURT US OR OTHERS
✓ DO NOT MAKE US UNCOMFORTABLE
UNSAFE SECRETS:

✓ SHOULD NOT BE KEPT
✓ HURT US OR OTHERS
✓ MAKE US FEEL
  UNCOMFORTABLE/CONFUSED
✓ CAN MAKE US FEEL AFRAID
THERE IS SOMETHING CALLED A “PRIVATE TOUCH.”

THESE TOUCHES ARE NOT MEANT TO HURT OR EMBARRASS US, BUT TO HELP US!

FOR EXAMPLE:
UNSAFE VS.
PRIVATE TOUCHES
WHAT IF AN UNSAFE TOUCH OR LOOK HAPPENS TO YOU?

- Get away as fast as you can!
- Say “NO! I DO NOT LIKE THAT!”
- Tell a trusted adult!
- Remember, this is not your fault!
- Know that you have done nothing wrong!
WHO CAN I TELL?
WHY IS IT HARD TO TELL?

The unsafe person may try to trick you by saying:

- **IF YOU TELL, YOU WILL GET IN TROUBLE.**
- **YOUR PARENTS WILL BE ANGRY WITH YOU.**
- **I WILL HURT YOUR FAMILY OR PET.**
- **YOU WANTED ME TO DO IT.**
- **NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOU.**
- **ALL KIDS DO THIS.**
WHY IS IT HARD TO TELL?

You may not want to tell anyone because you feel:

- SCARED OR EMBARRASSED.
- THAT SOMEHOW IT IS YOUR FAULT THIS HAPPENED.
- THAT YOUR FRIENDS WILL NOT LIKE YOU ANYMORE.
- ALONE, LIKE NO ONE WILL UNDERSTAND.
WHAT DO YOU THINK? THUMBS UP OR DOWN?

A GROWN UP WANTS YOU TO TOUCH HIM/HER IN THEIR PRIVATE AREA. YOU SAY “NO” AND RUN AWAY. THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?
YOUR FRIEND TELLS YOU SOMEONE HAS TOUCHED HER IN HER PRIVATE AREA. SHE ASKS YOU TO KEEP IT A SECRET. THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?
A GROWN UP FRIEND OF YOUR FAMILY TELLS YOU HE/SHE WILL GIVE YOU A SPECIAL GIFT IF YOU ALLOW HIM/HER TO TOUCH IN THIS UNSAFE WAY. YOU REALLY WANT THIS GIFT.
A RELATIVE ALWAYS WANTS TO GIVE YOU A KISS WHEN THEY SEE YOU. SOMETIMES YOU DO NOT WANT TO GIVE A KISS. YOU SAY, “NO THANK YOU, NOT TODAY.” THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN?
WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Sexual Assault Service Center
(815)730-8984

Groundwork Domestic Violence Program
(815)729-1228

815-729-0930, ext. 1524
jmasokas@gacsprograms.org