

You're in
My Bubble

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- Core topic:** Bonding Skills/Avoiding causing others stress
- Identify Problem:** To teach youth appropriate boundaries to help them with bonding skills, and personal boundaries.
- Materials Needed:** Yard stick or measuring tool
- Intro:** Your personal space is like an invisible bubble that surrounds you. If people move inside this bubble when they are talking to you, it may make you feel uncomfortable.

On this page we'll look at how big the bubble can be, whether it always stays the same size, how to measure your own personal space bubble, and what effect it can have on how you perceive other people.


Everyone's personal space is different. How close you normally stand to someone else when you are talking to them will depend on who it is you are talking to, and under what circumstances. In our examples here, we will look at bubbles for people in everyday situations, such as at school or at work, where the people know each other fairly well.

Here are some facts about personal space bubbles:

- The bubble is larger if you are talking to a stranger.
- The better you know the person you're talking to, the smaller the bubble may be.
- The bubble is usually larger for two men than for two women.
- The bubble may be very small for a man and a woman if they are in a relationship.
- The bubble may be larger than normal for a man and a woman who are strangers to each other.
- The bubble size may differ for different cultures.

- Exercise:** Partner the group in different variations (male: male) (male: female) (female: female). The two participants should begin a conversation while fairly far away from each other, and attempt to concentrate only on what is being said. As they converse, they should move *slowly* towards one another.

Each person identifies the point at which they feel uncomfortable because the other person is *too close* by raising their hand, and the



distance nose-to-nose is measured.

For the last round have them stand about ten feet away from each other. Person **A** will stand still and person **B** will walk slowly towards Person **A**. As soon as Person **A** feels like Person **B** is in their bubble they will shout “STOP”. Person **B** must stop and remain facing person **A**. After each group has shouted “STOP” instruct person **B** to take one more step forward, invading person **A**’s “bubble”.

Have the youth raise their hand if they feel uncomfortable with someone in their “bubble”

Does anybody feel anxiety or their heart beating from being stressed or uncomfortable?

Discussion:

What are ways that a person tells you that they are uncomfortable?
How can staying out of someone’s bubble reduce stress?
Why is it important to be aware of the differences in the distance people feel is comfortable?
Is the personal space bubble different in different countries?
Different cities? Different families?
How can invading someone’s bubble prevent us from making friends?
Ask any other questions that apply.

Identify Skills:

Personal space
Avoiding a conflict
Making friends
Reducing stress

Source:

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