

7th GRADE BOYS

UNIT 2: The Kedusha Talk

Sessions 1-10+: ~20-Minute One-On-One Talks with
the 7th Grade Students

How to speak about *Kedusha* issues
to boys around the age of Bar-Mitzvah



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The Kedusha Talk

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Guidance & Review:

Rav Aharon Feldman, Rosh Yeshivas Ner Yisrael
Rav Elya Brudny, Rosh Yeshivas Mir Brooklyn
Rabbi Yaakov Schwartz, Menahel of TA middle school

“This booklet is amazingly well-done and I have recommended it to many people. Yasher Koach for all the effort you put in to produce this crucial chinuch resource.”

- Benzion Sorotzkin, Psy.D.

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בס"ד אב תשע"ז

To whom it may concern:

We would be negligent in the education of our children if we would permit them to grow into adolescents without preparing them first with adequate tools to help them live as Jews in the un-Jewish environment they will be living in. The only way is to teach them, before their adolescent drives set in, how a Jew is obligated to deal with his reproductory drive. It is vital that we get our message across to the child before the messages of the culture around him begin to inundate him.

I therefore endorse "The Talk," prepared by the Guard your Eyes organization together with Rabbi Avi Landa, both of whom I can personally endorse, which gets across this message. I recommend that it be seen by Menahalim, Mechanchim and parents to lay down a framework to prepare pre-adolescents for the challenges that they will soon be facing.

With blessings,

Rabbi Aharon Feldman



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אליהו ברודנא

1752 E. 18 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229

ק"ג

י"ג תמוז תשע"ח

I am happy to endorse the entire booklet entitled "The Kedusha Talk" by Rabbi Avi Landa and the GYE organization. This booklet presents a program for educating every 7th grade בחור regarding the changes taking place in his body, how to properly understand the purpose, attitude, and self-control necessary regarding inyanei kedusha, as well as opening the door for the בחור to approach the right people for continued guidance and understanding.

It is a necessary program for today's youth, in all of our frum communities. Rabbi Landa and GYE present a clear and organized מהלך for schools, to educate our youth and encourage them to come to the right people for further guidance in this sensitive area of life - inyanei kedusha. I endorse every part of the talk that is suggested to be had with each 7th grade בחור. This booklet successfully strikes the balance of making sure the בחורים get the information they need, including some of the secular terminology, and the understanding that they can come to us with questions on any aspect of this area of life, while not presenting information that should only be presented just before בחור gets married. It is only when we mention some of the terms our youth are hearing in our society, and put them in an accurate and קדוש framework, that we can hope for our בחורים to come to us for further clarifications and guidance. This booklet presents these concepts and terms in a mature and קדוש framework for every בחור, thus diminishing any worry of ליצנות or inappropriateness.

Additionally, in The Kedusha Talk, initial steps are offered that can be taken to help a בחור struggling in these areas. They also reference a second booklet by the same author, entitled, "Maintaining Kedusha", designed for Yeshivas with older בחורים, which elaborates on these ideas and presents a clear and detailed מהלך for a Rabbi to both help a בחור struggling, as well as encourage a בחור to seek out that help. Both booklets are important resources for mechanchim across the religious spectrum to understand and implement towards the successful chinuch of our children.

As is mentioned in The Kedusha Talk, if any community or school feels uncomfortable with a particular phrase or word choice, I strongly encourage them to slightly edit the content and still implement the program. The authors would be happy to support and help towards such a goal in any way possible. To be clear though, I do feel that the way it is presented in the booklet is a way לכתחילה for it to be implemented.

Rabbi Landa and GYE should have הצלחה and ברכה in all of their holy endeavors.

בכבוד
אבי
אליהו ברודנא

Preface

As a Mashgiach in a well-known Yeshiva in Baltimore, MD, and as a psychotherapist who works with children and adults in the frum community, I was asked by the Guard Your Eyes organization to partner with them in creating a clear mehalech for schools to be able to educate children in the more sensitive area of inyanei kedusha, or puberty development. I have drawn from various presentations organized by Torah Umesorah, as well as my own personal experience with many children, teenagers and their families, and of-course, together with Guard Your Eyes' vast experience in this area.

“Having the talk” is perhaps the most dreaded phrase for parents to hear. Clichés like “the birds and the bees” as well as red-faced awkward pauses, come to mind. We all know that educating our children is our responsibility. To maximize results, parents will hopefully partner together with their child’s school or Yeshiva. But when it comes to *inyanei kedusha*, including puberty and the drives that develop during adolescence, we tend to take a step back. After all, these are very private developments and even discussing them can be uncomfortable. However, should we be taking a back seat and allowing our children to

develop their own understanding of this delicate, yet important, topic?

I have seen in both my experience as Mashgiach and as psychotherapist, that when left to their own devices, many children will attempt to satisfy their natural curiosities with whatever is available to them. When a child first hears about this topic, perhaps from a friend in school, or from the Chumash or a Mishna, or *lehavdil* from the many venues of suggestion in the secular world, it can spark a natural innocent curiosity. Often, already from a young age, a child is aware that there is a private area of life revolving around specific parts of their body. When their bodies or some of their friends' bodies begin to develop, it reignites this curiosity, as it should, since it is now becoming more applicable to them.

Children might find dictionary entries, or encyclopedic passages describing some aspects of this *kadosh* part of life. I have also seen science books sometimes only discussing animal procreation, and the child extrapolates from the animal to themselves. This is without even mentioning the use of the internet, which opens up a plethora of wrong and non-*Torahdik* information. Even if the child himself does not search for such information, someone in the child's environment whether it be a classmate, a neighbor, a relative, or someone in shul, may

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talk about this topic often within earshot of the child. The less we educate our children and students in this area, the more they will search for or find information in other places.

So first, a little history. We wanted to design a presentation, a “talk”, which could be had with each child individually. It need not be a long talk, but it needs to educate the children regarding what is, or will soon be, happening with their bodies. It would include the basic accurate information from the Torah perspective, which is the true perspective.

With meticulous work, we prepared and presented our “talk” to some of the *Rabbanei Ha’ir* here in Baltimore and received tremendous praise. They saw the necessity for it to be done. Their main critique was, be more explicit than less, to avoid confusion, and to let every boy know that we are aware of the terms that they might have heard, and much more. They should feel confident that we as Mechanchim can guide them in this topic just as we as we can guide them in many other areas. In the same way the Torah guides us towards true understanding and behavior in our day-to-day activities, and monetary matters, it also guides us in this very pertinent and sensitive topic. Children can get a sense of how our Torah is a true *Toras*

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Chaim, how it speaks even to the most personal areas of our lives.

Such talks have *BH* been successfully communicated to more than 1000 bochurim already, and we have received much positive feedback.

The Kedusha Talk is now a part of Darcheinu: the full Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Curriculum adapted for our Torah Schools under the guidance and Haskama of Rav Elya Brudny and Torah Umesorah.

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Part 1: Introduction to “The Talk”



Who should conduct “the talk”?

One of the main goals of this talk is not only to provide basic education to our children and students, but to make it clear to them that while this is a private topic, it is not a secret topic. With the right people (Parents, Rabbeim, Menaholim, and Mashgichim), they can and should ask questions and voice concerns. Thus we see it as preferable that whoever presents this talk to the children should be available for follow up in the future. It should be someone who is a part of the school on a regular basis. Due to the sensitivity of the topic it would be advisable that the student already has somewhat of a relationship with this person. He sees this person as someone to look up to and respect. While the current Rebbi might seem like an easy option, it could present a conflict for certain students to feel comfortable being open in the conversation and in follow-up conversations. Being in the classroom every day with the Rebbi could be strained by the delicate nature of this talk. It would be ideal therefore for the talk to be given by someone like a Mashgiach who might have already met with each bochur just to schmooze a little, or perhaps has given group classes on Hashkafa or Middos. If this is not possible, perhaps a menahel, an assistant menahel, or even a Rebbi from a different grade can fill this role.

When should the talk be presented?

There have been many recent attempts to include basic “personal safety” education for our students starting already in the early and even pre-elementary school years. This helps a student be aware of what is necessary to properly protect themselves from abusive behaviors and relationships. We can all agree that certain materials require a certain level of maturity. So while it is appropriate to teach kids at a very young age that it is unacceptable for anyone to touch them in certain spots on their bodies, it would be a mistake to try to teach those very young kids the details regarding this drive that would motivate people to do such things. The question thus becomes, when should we teach kids about these details? Should we wait until they are engaged to be married? We would argue that while *certain* details do not need to be shared with our children until they are ready for marriage, understanding what is happening or soon will be happening to and in their bodies is very appropriate.

As mentioned before, this natural development will spark much curiosity and we should help them get the right Torah-based information. This is a beautiful part of a child growing up; we should try to decrease confusion and increase understanding of what is happening while it is

happening. In addition, speaking to the children before many of them begin struggling with urges and *tayvos* in this area, allows for the child to digest ideas of self-control and *zehirus*. The child can then get used to these ideas and it will be easier to maintain throughout adolescence.

The final decision of what is the right age to have the talk can be based sometimes on the nature of the families and communities that the children are a part of. The more sheltered and closed the community is, the later it can perhaps be had. But in general, we estimate that the middle school years for boys, would be the appropriate time for the talk to be had. It is around this age that most kids will experience puberty or at least pre-puberty development. We chose 7th grade, right before Bar Mitzva specifically, since the bochorim have more maturity than they had in 6th grade, and many of them have not reached puberty yet, as they will by 8th grade.

Still, there are always exceptions, even within a given community. Sometimes a particular group of youngsters or certain few individuals are less mature than average. Care must be taken in making decisions to leave someone out of this talk when the rest of the grade is having it. Coordinating with the parents would be crucial in making such decisions.

How much should the Rebbi be involved?

As is true with all areas of education and growth for each bochur, the child's Rebbi is an essential part of the team. Having this talk with each 7th grade Rebbi ahead of time can be very helpful. The last thing we would want is for the Rebbi to get flustered by a boy making a crude or inappropriate comment and the Rebbi not knowing where it might have come from. If the Rebbi is aware of what is going on, he can handle situations that come up in class in a much more successful and smooth fashion. Furthermore, the Rebbi can speak to any individual bochur privately if he is often bringing up this topic. Getting feedback from the Rebbi can be very helpful towards guiding the one who originally gave the talk in proper follow up with the bochur as well as his parents.

And the parents?

Ideally, parents should be the ones having this talk with their children, but as we discussed, this is often not happening. However, we, the mechanchim, should be partnering with parents as much as possible. Ideally, a meeting should be had with all of the 7th grade parents, at

the beginning of the year, and the entire talk can be given to the parents. While it is a delicate topic, it is necessary for the parents to know very clearly what is going to be said to their children. If it is possible to sit down with every parent individually and give over the basic points of the talk, that would be ideal. Practically, it might only be possible to give this talk over to the parent body as a group. On the surface it might make sense to have only the fathers at this meeting. However, often times a mother knows her son best and will be able to provide the best feedback regarding any concerns or follow up. In addition, when the mothers ask their husbands for a summary of the talk that night, much can be lost in hearing it second-hand. This could lead to unnecessary confusion. Thus we would strongly recommend both parents being present at this meeting.

If this is not feasible, parents can be encouraged to read this booklet to understand how the whole process works.

We would also suggest offering the parents an opt-out option. If a parent feels this talk should not be presented to their son, they should please let us know, and we can always be in touch with them at a later time as we make our way through the list of students, inquiring again as to whether they still have reservations. Lastly, while the talk with the student should include the secular terms for

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clarity purposes (as per the advice of the *Rabbanei Ha'ir*, as we mentioned earlier), when presenting to the parents, that would not be necessary. The parents can be told that when the talk is had with their son, each concept will be presented with the secular terminology and then continued with the Torah and Chazal's *lashon*.

Parents should be prepared for their sons to ask them questions after having the talk. After all, the talk encourages such conversation with parents as well as everyone else involved in the child's chinuch. It is important to explain to the parents that they never need to answer a question on the spot. Saying, "Great question, let me look into that for you," is a wonderful and validating response. The parent can then discuss with the Mashgiach, Rebbi, Rav and others how to best answer that particular question. This booklet can be a helpful resource to the parents as well, in knowing how to answer questions that might come up.

How should the boys be called out?

Whenever I would like to speak to a boy, I inform the main office. They then call the boy out of class to come to the main office and then they send him to my office. This system makes it less obvious to everyone in the room that

the particular bochur is being called in to have the talk. Additionally, as mentioned above, if the presenter calls boys out to “schmooze” about other topics, it would also be less obvious for what purpose the boy is coming to his office.

One-on-one or in a group?

Due to the sensitive nature of this talk, we feel it should be presented to the boy one-on-one. While a small group or even whole class discussion might feel less intimidating, much can be lost by having this talk in a group forum. Chazal in *Chagiga* :ח' discuss misunderstandings that can come more easily when discussing these concepts in group forum. Additionally, the potential for *leitzanus* is greatly increased when there are multiple boys listening together. A slight smirk from one end of the room can easily spark a laugh and comment from the other side of the room. In addition, this is a more private topic, and we would want to encourage the boys from the start, not to discuss it amongst friends. Thus we feel the right approach is to have this talk one-on-one. While it will take more time, it is well worth it. The presenter can also have the opportunity to observe each individual boy and allow for personalized questions as well as specific observations.

In what setting should the talk be presented?

It is important for the setting to be private but also safe, for both the presenter and the student. Thus a clear line of vision from the hallway into the room where the talk is had should be maintained. If the boy's back can be towards the hallway, or if the seat of the boy can be just outside the line of vision from the hallway, that would be ideal. It would allow for people walking by to look into the room, but prevent boys walking by from knowing exactly who is in the room, and distracting him.

Lastly as we discussed before and as you will soon see, we will initially mention the secular terms involved. Each school can determine what is necessary for their students. However the downside of not using the English terms must be carefully considered, because if we make it seem like we don't know some of the terms that the children know, they might be discouraged from coming to us and encouraged to go to other possibly harmful resources.

Still, it should be noted, that some Rabbanim would encourage the explanation of the secular terms to only be given in response to a boy coming and asking about them, and not as part of an initial conversation. Thus, each

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school should consult with their Rav to properly shape the talk in accordance with their Torah perspective. Perhaps leaving out a particular word or phrase, or a particular paragraph, and relocating those to the Q&A section would suffice. GYE and I would be happy to help and support any school towards achieving the articulation that achieves such a goal.

We would recommend creating an outline for the talk so that it can be referenced and followed throughout.

Part 2: “The Talk”



Let's Have The Talk

[REQUEST: Although this section is often the first section read in the booklet, it is highly suggested to start from the beginning if you haven't done so already. It would be especially prudent to at least read the last few paragraphs leading into this section, thank you].

(Sit down with the child, begin with some short, small-talk). Then begin:

There is a talk I would like to have with you. Your parents, menahel, and Rabbeim are all aware that we are having this talk. This is a *tzniyusdik* topic, that means it is a private topic, not to be discussed with friends, but it's not a secret topic, meaning, it is not only OK but important to speak to the right adults about this topic if you have questions or concerns. These can include either: your Parents, Menahel, Mashgiach, or Rabbeim, meaning those people involved in your chinuch. If you do speak with other kids about this, or if you go to secular sources for information, you will find a lot of wrong and certainly non-*Torahdik* information. It is to your benefit to discuss it only with the right adults, so that you will get the right information. Let's begin.

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We are the special Chosen Nation, chosen by Hashem. While that means we have many more responsibilities than the other nations do, it also means we have the potential for a much closer relationship with Hashem than they do. They might have seven ways to connect with Hashem, while we have 613 ways. It can feel like a burden at times but with this understanding it can actually be seen and felt as a privilege! We therefore act differently than the other nations in our behavior, attitudes, and what we are careful with; Hashem gave us tremendous kochos to accomplish so much. This close relationship we have with Hashem allows for greater reward and purpose. It's a responsibility to be proud of.

As we go through this tzniyusdik topic, for the sake of clarity, I will initially mention the secular terms for what we are discussing and then I will share with you the Torah and Chazal's terminology, which is often a much more naki, clean language. However, if you are more comfortable using the English words, that is fine.

There is a special eiver (a part of the body) that only a man has that is primarily used for waste, urine. The secular world calls this the penis and Chazal call it the eiver habris, because this is the place that the bris milah, the covenant with Hashem, is stamped on our bodies at 8 days old.

Around your age, this eiver can start to produce a different whiteish stickyish liquid that the secular world calls semen, that has the awesome potential to make a person into a father, to create and bring forth life, to make a baby. The Torah calls this liquid zera or keri. *Zera* literally means seed. Can you guess why the Torah calls this liquid seed? (If necessary, you can provide a hint by saying, "what did we say this liquid could potentially do"? A question helps to ensure the boy is paying attention, and properly understanding).

The secular world calls this part of the liquid that can produce life, sperm. So the liquid itself is called semen, and inside the semen there are little cells called sperm, each one with the potential to become a child. Each sperm can, with Hashem's help, facilitate the creation of a baby, when it encounters the particle found in the female body called the egg. It's amazing that such a small particle can be transformed over time into a developed and complex person, and that you, too, were created this way. It is also amazing to consider how wonderful these cells are, in that each one of them contains a DNA which is like a little computer, yet much smaller than the eye can see. Not only does the DNA inside each sperm cell carry information on every aspect of who we are (appearance, character, kishronos), but it also carries the instructions

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on how to build an entire human being and create life! Do you know what science calls this code? (Genetics).

There are actually two tubes that lead to the hole at the tip of the eiver and they converge, come together, into one tube right before the hole. One tube carries the urine to that hole and one tube carries the zera to that hole.

The testicles or beitzim, are shaped like 2 balls, that hang underneath the eiver, and are like a factory producing the zera and supplying it to the eiver. This ability to produce zera, begins to develop around your age and it comes along with other bodily changes like the deepening of the voice, and hair growth in different areas. Hormones, which are special chemicals, develop in the body causing all of these changes. These hormones can sometimes cause different mood changes as well. You might feel happy or sad excited or frustrated. This is normal, but if the feelings are strong, it can be helpful to speak to someone. The secular world calls this whole development, puberty, and Chazal call it “gadlus”, to become a gadol/adult. It is normal to occur anywhere from around your age through as late as 11th grade. Every person is different. Any questions? Did you know all of this already? (Note the answer).

It is no coincidence that this is the eiver that has the most *kedusha* in the body, as it has the bris mila. In fact Dovid Hamelech was bothered to not have any mitzvah with him in the bath house, and upon realizing he had his bris mila he was comforted. This eiver not only has the kedusha of the bris but it is also the place where Hashem gives us this special gift, the *zera*, which is so great and holy, because it has the potential to bring forth life. Thus we also have to be extra careful with this huge gift, and try not to ever waste it, and only use it when we are supposed to, in marriage with a wife. It is in fact an aveira to waste it. We must therefore get clear, what is the process through which the *zera* comes out, and when exactly it is an aveira and when it is not. At the appropriate time, with a wife in marriage, it is not only not an aveira but actually a mitzvah for the *zera* to come out!

Now, when a husband is with his wife the eiver can harden, the secular world calls this an erection – because the eiver becomes erect, and Chazal call it *kishuy* which literally means to get hard. This is the preparatory state for when the *zera* can come out. Meaning, usually, when the eiver is hard, that is when *zera* can come out, and when the eiver is soft, that is when urine can come out. Being with a woman in this way, when this process of the *zera* coming out is taking place, is what the secular world

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refers to as sex¹ and Chazal refer to it as *biah*. Don't worry if you don't completely understand this part of the process, since this is only the beginning of the conversation, the conversation can continue with any questions you might have now or throughout your teenage years, and will include a talk about marriage shortly before your chasuna. However, if you do have any questions on any part of this topic, please ask us; we want you to and we will answer you.

You might have already started to feel a little differently about girls from the way you viewed them when you were younger, or perhaps you will start feeling an attraction to them as you get a little older. This is normal. Hashem put into human nature that boys should be attracted to girls so that when people grow up, they will want to get married and have children. Not only that, but the attraction between husband and wife, helps each person in the marriage become closer to the other person, and

¹ Some would consider this word a “street-term” and inappropriate to initiate. Each parent / mechanech can decide on their own whether to use this term or not. There are benefits and drawbacks. The drawback is that the boy will now understand its meaning when he hears the word, most likely in an inappropriate context. The benefit is that the boy may already have heard it, and will probably hear it soon from others anyway, thus it would be better for him to hear it from us in the proper context. To decide this, it would largely depend on how likely it is that the boy already heard the term, or how likely he is to hear the term on his own, which can be different for each child and each situation. Therefore, it is best that the parent / mechanech make the decision as per each individual case. As mentioned above, any piece of the talk, including this sentence, can be moved to the Q&A section, and only be presented if a bochur asks about the term.

want to give to them more! It is a beautiful part of life that makes a person more selfless and giving, which is what marriage is all about. This is a point that you will understand better as you come closer to marriage.

Before we continue, I want to be extra clear. Going to the bathroom #1 is urine and a completely different liquid and process than zera which is a whiteish and stickyish liquid that comes out through kishuy, the hardening of the eiver. The only similarity is that the two liquids come out of the same hole at the tip of the eiver. Urine is always allowed to come out, and it is even assur to hold it in for too long. When zera first gets produced in the body, the feeling of having it and it coming out, is completely different than the feeling of having urine within the body. Are we clear on this point?

It is normal for the eiver to get hardened even when a person is not with his wife. Sometimes this happens randomly, for no apparent reason, and even from a young age. This is part of the normal functioning of the body. Any time this happens, don't think about it, just continue with your day, and it will pass. However, this can also be caused by thinking about or looking at something we shouldn't. This is why we stay away from things that can harden the eiver, for example, *pritzus*, meaning women acting or dressed in a revealing manner, as well as stories, pictures,

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and videos of such things. We also try to avoid touching the eiver for this reason, all of these things can lead to the eiver getting hardened which is the preparatory state for the zera to come out and be wasted, and both causing the eiver to become hardened, and causing the zera to come out, are aveiros, that we must try not to do. If we cause the zera to come out, that is the aveira called, *zera livatala*, *zera* being wasted. Is that clear?

By the way, there is a separate aveira to look at or even think about pritzus even if the eiver does not harden or the zera does not come out. You should know that thinking about and looking at such stuff can cause you to become weakened in your ability to keep from looking, as well as your ability to concentrate on good things and in school. For now we will stay focused on understanding the carefulness we have to have with the *zera*, and if you would like to discuss the other aveira of looking at these things in general, please ask me at the end or a different time.

It is important for you to know that zera can come at night while you are sleeping, you might wake up and find a small wet spot in that area. This is part of the normal functioning of the body and since you did nothing to cause it, there is nothing to feel guilty about; this is not considered you

causing the eiver to harden or wasting the zera. However, it can also come out because of looking at inappropriate things, or touching it while you're awake, leading to it coming out either then, or even later at night. This is what Chazal refer to as having caused it to come out, and then you did do an *aveira*.

So what if we do make a mistake and do the aveira? Well, just like with every single aveira in the Torah there is always *teshuva*. This includes 3 steps, first, admit to yourself and to Hashem that you did it, don't pretend you didn't do it. Second, regret it, try to feel like you wish you would have never done it, never *chas vesholom* get depressed, that only makes things worse. The purpose of that regret is to get to the third positive step of never doing it again. You may ask, but how can I know I will never do it again! This is an excellent question, and it applies to trying to do teshuva for any *aveira*; all Hashem wants from us is to what? (to honestly try our best). Sometimes trying your best can include speaking to someone older and wiser that is involved in your chinuch, as we mentioned, Parents, Menahel, Mashgiach, Rabbeim. These people **want** you to come to them and they can give you advice, encouragement, chizuk, and guidance. There are proven strategies that can be very helpful and which I have seen work in many cases. These strategies are readily available

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when you approach the right people. Sometimes even just speaking it out can make a huge difference.

Being careful in this area and building self-control actually helps a person become stronger and able to withstand challenges throughout life! In fact, strength in this area is referred to as *yesod* – the foundation, partly because it helps to maintain strength throughout the rest of the building, the rest of you and your connection to Hashem and Yiddishkeit. Hashem rewards us greatly for being in control of this drive since the natural instinct is to overuse it in an out-of-control way. When we are in control of ourselves, we feel a sense of greatness and strength which is the best feeling in the world! This is the secret to living a truly, deeply, happy life, something we all want more than anything else. Remember, stumbling in this or any area is normal, and all we need to do is try our best.

Any questions?

One last point, a safety point. No one, no matter who they are, whether a relative, a friend, or someone you trust and respect, should ever do anything to excite you or themselves in this type of way. It doesn't matter if they say something, do something, show you something, or anything else, if the purpose is to excite you or themselves in this way, it is absolutely inappropriate. Touching any

parts of the body that are normally covered by a bathing suit would be included in this, as well as any behavior that makes you feel uncomfortable. You must immediately stop what is happening, get out of the situation, and tell someone like your Parents, Menahel, Mashgiach, or Rabbeim. This applies especially if the person tells you *not* to tell anyone. In the secular world as well, there are laws against one person trying to do this to another person. We want to catch that person right away so that we can protect other people and help that person get better from the emotional problem that is causing that person to do these things.

What is the one exception where it is appropriate for two people to act with each other in this type of way? (Allow the boy to answer, if he says, “husband and wife” or “two people who are married”, you know he has been paying good attention, and he understands. If he says himself and a parent, you must correct him and say, no, even parents should never do anything like this where the purpose is to excite you or themselves in this type of way. If he says himself and a doctor, you must correct him and say, no, while a doctor can and should look and even touch the private areas of our body, that is only to make sure we are healthy, during our checkup, but if the purpose is to excite you or himself in this way, then absolutely not. If the child

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is having a hard time, you can give a hint like, “we mentioned it would actually be a mitzvah for these two people”).

Has anyone ever tried to touch you in these private areas, or in any way that made you feel uncomfortable, even as part of a game? (Record the answer).

Finally, this conversation is not meant to be an extensive education on everything there is to know about this topic. It is meant to give you the basic facts, and perspectives as to why these developments are happening either now or soon, and how to deal with it from a Torah perspective. As mentioned before, there will be another conversation before marriage when additional details will be necessary for you to know.

This conversation was a little awkward right? (if he says no, you should note that and simply say, well it is for almost everyone including me). It should be! This is a sensitive private topic. However, I want you to see that although it is awkward that does not mean it should not be discussed. Your Parents, Menahel, Mashgiach, and Rabbeim all want you to know that you can and should come to us with any questions or concerns you might have. We don't mind that it will be awkward, and neither should you.

Let's sum up some of the practical points we have made today.

- It is assur to waste the zera by causing it to come out in any way before marriage; if it happens by itself when you are sleeping, it's fine. It is assur to cause the eiver to become hardened. In order to protect ourselves from this we must be careful not to look at or think about non-*tzniyus* things, and we must try to avoid touching the eiver. It is natural for the eiver to become hard at times by itself, don't focus on it too much, just try to get busy with something else like sports or activities, and learning Torah, saying Tehilim, or davening can be very helpful.
- We need to do our best to not transgress these aveiros. If we slip and fall in these areas it is normal, we must do teshuva, but never fall into depression. Hashem wants us to try and to daven, and He always loves us, no matter what!
- Finally, it is assur and dangerous for anyone to show you something inappropriate, or to try to touch you in any private area. Remember what to do if someone tries to do these inappropriate things to you. (Wait for him to answer – Stop, Get out, and Tell someone).

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As we mentioned, these private areas of life are called *yesod* (foundation) because they are the foundation of a healthy life. Being careful in these areas not only prevents a person from being lowered down spiritually, but it also builds and strengthens a person. The more careful we are in these areas, the more Torah and mitzvos become meaningful and satisfying to us.

Remember, this is an exciting time in your life, you are becoming an adult! There is no need to be worried, and it is normal to stumble; all we need to do is try our best, and do teshuva if we make a mistake. If you have questions, you know who to ask.

So, do you have any questions? Any aspects that were not clear? You can always come back at a later point in time, thank you for coming.

Part 3: Common Concerns, Questions and Follow Up



Common Concerns

It is important to take short notes on each boy after he leaves. Most if not all, will be somewhat uncomfortable with such a sensitive discussion. Some smiling or uneasiness is to be expected. However, if the boy seems to be visibly agitated by it, and unable to talk at all, even quietly, either at the end or when you ask him the one “exception question” in the safety section of the actual talk, this should be noted. Additionally, if the boy answers that question by saying the exception to the rule is, parents or someone else, it should be noted. Nothing here is necessarily an issue, but it is good information to have if other similar issues come up. It is also important to record how the boy answers whether he was ever touched in a private area even as part of a game.

As we mentioned in the section on partnering with the rebbi, if the boy is talking excessively to other boys about the topic this should be noted in his file as well. The boy can be brought back in and be reminded that this is absolutely inappropriate. The menahel or rebbi can use consequences as with any other problematic behavior in school. However, baruch Hashem after almost 200 boys having the talk with me, we have seen talking about this topic decrease, as we discussed earlier. Once I was around

halfway through with a specific class, it became more obvious to the boys that I was having this talk with them, and they knew they would be called in for it. Talk amongst the boys about the fact that I was having this talk with them is normal. However, we were happy to see that talk about the details of the conversation were almost never had. They all knew it was only a matter of time before they got the whole conversation from the source, from me. This allowed their curiosity to be kept at bay.

In general, anything that seems off, and is different than how most of the other boys reacted, is something to note and perhaps get a second opinion on. A conversation with parents should be had if something concerning is noted. Parents can then get back to you regarding how the boy presented himself when he got home that evening. They can simply observe and then check in with you, or if necessary, reveal to the boy that they are aware that the conversation took place and are checking in with him and how he feels about it in general.

If in fact there is a genuine concern, making sure to involve the right people (the family, the school and/or a professional) is part of your job regarding the chinuch of the children under your care. Since you, baruch Hashem, brought this to the forefront, you need to facilitate it being properly dealt with. Following up in a few weeks' time is

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recommended as well. In these situations and really in general, an organized and accessible note taking structure is very important.

Common Questions

The boy might ask questions attempting to understand biah more in detail. This might be coming from simple curiosity or possibly due to exposure and hearing certain terms from friends or others. Either way the questions should be noted for future reference.

As far as how to deal with such questions. We do want them to come to us and not their friends or Google for the answers. If we can tell that the child will be satisfied with us repeating, that this is only chapter 1 and chapter 2 will be had shortly before their chasuna, as mentioned in the talk, then that is sufficient. However many times it is necessary to tell the child a little bit and then add, remember you have nothing to worry about in terms of not knowing what you need to know for marriage since this is only the beginning of the conversation. Another conversation will be had with you shortly before your chasuna.

Often times the child will hear a term from a friend who thinks he's cool by repeating something he heard at home, in the media, or elsewhere and other boys don't know what it means. For example, a boy might come to school using the word gay or homosexual. We have to be prepared for another boy coming in to ask us as we have asked him to do, wondering what that word really means. It would be important to give a basic understanding to the boy like, "Some people have an unnatural attraction towards another man instead of to a woman, which is not the way Hashem made the world. Hashem only created this attraction to help people bring children to the world, but this kind of attraction cannot lead to having children. It's important to know that the Torah strongly forbids us from acting on such feelings. This is not something we really need to discuss at length, unless you yourself have concerns about it". If we don't answer the question at all, he most probably will find another resource to go to. He does not want to be the only one who doesn't understand, even though there are probably others who don't understand as well.

If the boy does express concerns regarding homosexuality, it is important to consider that in the vast majority of cases where a boy feels some level of attraction to another boy, it is not to the exclusion of being able to be attracted to a

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girl. This is especially prevalent in religious segregated schools where boys may develop attraction to boys as well, since that is all there is in their immediate environment. This would not constitute “homosexuality” and would not necessarily interfere with being able to get married and have a family.

The child might ask how exactly a baby is born, or how exactly does the *zera* get into the woman where the baby comes out of? Again, giving a little information like, “That is an excellent question, there is an opening corresponding to the male ever on a woman’s body into which the *zera* goes, and the *zera* can combine with a microscopic egg that a woman has in her body. This combination can grow into a baby. Remember, all the details involved in this will be discussed at length with you shortly before the *chasuna*”. In general all questions relating to the details of marriage can be answered with some accurate information and then concluded with a reassurance that the full extent of information will be taught shortly before the *chasuna*.

There might be some clarifying questions which must be answered very clearly. For example, “where exactly does the *zera* come out of? “Can I run out of *zera*? Here you can say basically no, but overuse of any part of the body can

damage it over time. They might ask, “How will I know when it comes out”? Or “Is it the same as urine”? In fact I heard of a situation where a boy was holding in urinating to the point of pain thinking that it was an aveira to let it out, misconstruing *zera levatala* with going to the bathroom. The bottom line is, any question relating to clarifying what is going on in their bodies now or soon, should be clarified completely. Any question relating to more abstract, and marriage related topics can be answered somewhat, with the proper reassurance that clarity regarding marriage will come at the right time.

It goes without saying that every question should be treated with sincerity and should be called a great question. If you don't know the right answer or are unsure it is always ok to say, let me look into that and get back to you shortly, and then get back to him in a timely fashion.

Success & Follow Up

The most obvious accomplishments such a talk can achieve are, educating the child towards eliminating unnecessary confusion and worry, as well as empowering the child to make the right decisions. These can include both personal strengthening of self-control and developing the strength to resist negative peer pressure.

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If a boy becomes more conscious in these areas, the talk has done its job.

However, a more subtle accomplishment is perhaps also the most universal and fundamental. Simply having this talk with the boy opens the door to the idea that this topic is not taboo, and is actually a kadosh topic. It is something we want him to express and not keep inside, as long as it is with the right people. We are showing him that he can and should come to us (his Parents, Menahel, Mashgiach, and Rabbeim) when he is wondering or concerned about this topic. This is an intention we explicitly relay to the boy in the talk.

Many boys do come back to discuss further some aspects of the talk, in a way in which it relates to them personally. As opposed to the boy allowing these negative ideas, or behaviors to solidify and possibly turn into strong habits, I have had the opportunity to work with them (or refer them to someone who can work with them) at the start of the problem, or close to it.

Sometimes a boy will come back in to talk about his having been exposed to inappropriate content and/or being motzi zera levatala. It is so much easier to work with a boy in this area and any area, when it has happened only a few times so far, than when it has been going on for years. Of

course, even if habits have formed, there are methods and strategies that can and do work. Darcheinu and GuardYourEyes.com have a booklets for young teens which outline the proper attitude and perspective on this struggle and also provides practical guidance and tools that can help boys who are already struggling with exposure to inappropriate things or *hotzaas zera livatala*.

Please contact us for such a booklet, as well as another booklet written by the same author entitled, "Maintaining Kedusha" (see Darcheinu 10th Grade Boys Unit 2 Session 3). Maintaining Kedusha presents a mehalech for someone in the position to help bochorim struggling with hotzaas zera levatala or inappropriate material. It outlines both Torah and secular sources and tools, to help foster success in these areas.

Some ideas include:

- We should praise him for coming forth to speak about it at a young age, because the earlier it is dealt with, the easier it is to stop before it becomes a more serious problem.
- We should try to help the boy understand that this is a normal struggle, and that Hashem will always love him, no matter what. Some people struggle a bit more than

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others in this area, and there are ways to overcome the challenge.

- Every time he says “no” to the yetzer hara, he builds himself and is ultimately winning the war.
- It will get easier over time, as Chazal tell us, *eiver katan yeish b’adam*, the more we feed it the hungrier it gets, the more we starve it the more satisfied it gets.
- Staying away from areas of immodesty as much as realistically possible, like beaches and malls, and having good filters on any internet devices help decrease the frequency of the *nisayon*.
- We can set up a commitment to stay away from such things for a given period of time, and he should come and tell us if he stumbles. There is always a “reset button”.
- He can try to distract himself when he feels a craving, with something like: leaving the area he is in and/or doing 10 minutes of exercise. This can be a big help towards letting out tension.
- Sometimes small rewards and consequences can be helpful, even when self-administered.
- He should stay out of isolation and connect with friends.
- He could be involved in physical activity and sports regularly.

- He could find hobbies he enjoys and goals he can work towards that interest him and give him a sense of fulfillment (including goals in learning, like finishing a mesechta...)
- He could throw himself more into Torah in general (as we know, “Torah is a *tavlin*”) and he should definitely be davening, asking Hashem for help.

Another approach that can be used with individual bochurim includes “decrease and delay”. That is decreasing the frequency of *hotzaas zera* happening, and even when it does happen, delaying how fast one succumbs to it. Self-control is much like a muscle in the body, as we work it, it gets stronger. Thus, even delaying giving into the urge for one minute has accomplished some strengthening of one’s self control. However, giving in immediately only serves to strengthen the *tayva* and weaken one’s self control. These are all messages that boys can very much hear. They can see that we are asking them to work with us at a reasonable pace, and it shouldn’t seem impossible. It is necessary though that we are starting with a boy who has at least some interest in working on this area and becoming closer to Hashem.

It must be emphasized that every case is unique and can require a different approach. We therefore encourage

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anyone unsure as to how to proceed to get guidance from guardyoureyes.com.

We hope this series has presented a clear path for successfully implementing this important program. It is through such conversation done in a *Torah'dik* and *yiras shamayim'dik mehalech*, that we can even more-so become a part in the successful lives of the talmidim we care so much about. Surely this is included in the intention of Chazal when describing *talmidim* as being *ke'banim*, like our own children.

Continuing the conversation

Darcheinu and GuardYourEyes.com have additional booklets for older teens who may be already struggling with exposure to inappropriate material. These can be a good resource for young teens who come back to further discuss this topic. It can also be an excellent resource for Rabbeim to discuss with their talmidim as they get older, as well as for every parent to have good information to potentially continue the conversation over time. In Darcheinu, see 10th Grade Boys Unit 2 Session 3.

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This Darcheinu Unit includes training educational faculty in:

- How to implement and follow through an Inyanei Kedusha talk for Middle School aged boys. This would include a presentation of the written materials guiding the school (which can be found in this booklet), as well as a role play of having the talk with a student. Future consultation and guidance throughout the implementation process would be provided.