



CORE WELLNESS

# Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk

**3 CE Training**

**[corewellceu.com](http://corewellceu.com)**



**Presented by:  
Avi Landa, MS, LCPC**



# Disclaimer

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## About the Presenter

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**Avi Landa**, MS, LCPC is currently the pastoral counselor (mashgiach) at Talmudical Academy (TA) of Baltimore Middle School and High School. He obtained rabbinical ordination from Ner Israel after twelve years of studies. He completed his Masters in Counseling from Johns Hopkins University and works as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC). Since 2013, Avi has been helping clients get to a self-sufficient place, utilizing evidence-based tools and interventions. As a curriculum writer for Darcheinu and nationwide presenter, Avi has extensive experience educating adolescents, parents and professional about helping teen navigate the often-confusing journey to healthy adulthood.



## About the Presenter

### **Avi Landa, MS, LCPC, NCC**

- *Master's degree in mental health counseling*
- *LCPC Clinician*
- *Director of Landa Counseling Center ([www.LandaCC.com](http://www.LandaCC.com))*
- *Curriculum Writer for Darcheinu under the auspices of Amudim and Rabbi Elya Brudny*
- *Pastoral Counselor (Mashgiach) at Talmudical Academy of Baltimore*
- *Began at Ner Yisroel – Adolescents, then TA MS*



# Course Schedule



CORE WELLNESS



## Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk

The Kedusha Talk was created in  
Partnership with Guard Your Eyes

(<https://guardyoureyes.com/>)

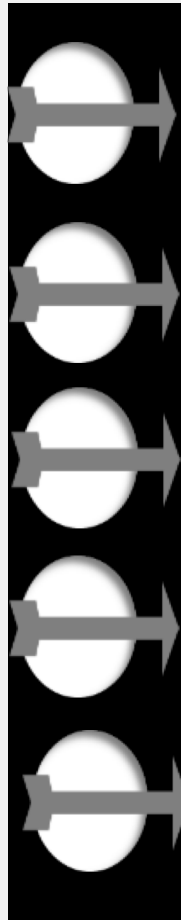
its endorsements apply to the published booklet and  
not this presentation

Part 1: Overview of Teen Sexuality, Parental/Educator Involvement

Part 2: Orthodox Jewish Views on Sexuality,  
Implementation of The Kedusha Talk, & Common Challenges

Part 3: Troubleshooting, Follow up, Case Studies and Q & A

# 5 Goals for Today



Learn general views on teen sexuality and development.

Learn about the theory and culturally sensitive goals of discussing sexuality with Orthodox Jewish parents and teens.

Learn about the culturally sensitive challenges of Orthodox Jewish teen sexuality.

Learn how to communicate and educate culturally sensitive lessons related to Orthodox Jewish sexuality.

Learn how to answer questions as well as integrate Orthodox Jewish sexuality religious beliefs into the treatment process.



## **Think and Share**

What experiences have you had?

Can you imagine yourself speaking about such topics with your client?

Is sexuality something that has come up in session for you? (change identifying details when sharing)

# Course Schedule

## Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk

Part 1: Secular Overview of Teen Sexuality, & Parental/Educator Involvement



## EARLY ADOLESCENCE

What age? What defines?

- from around the age of 10
- self-preoccupied and concerned about body image and privacy
- some separation from family and an increased focus on relationships with peers and group activities
- abstract thinking starts to develop, especially in less personal areas, such as academics
- experimentation and exploration is normal, and does not indicate identity
- it is not uncommon for adolescents to experience same-sex attractions
- studies report that more than 80% of same-sex-attracted girls and 60% of the boys acknowledged opposite-sex attractions

## MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE

What age? What defines?

- From around the age of 15
- full establishment of secondary sexual characteristics and growth deceleration
- omnipotence and invincibility favoring the development of autonomy
- cannot weigh consequences appropriately but can assess risk percentage (e.g. drunk driving fatality is a relatively low %)
- increasingly concerned with whether they are attractive
- more importance on their peer group

## LATE ADOLESCENCE

What age? What defines?

- from around the age of 18
- brain development, particularly of the prefrontal cortex, can continue until age 22 years in female subjects and 25 years in male subjects
- focus on autonomy and thinking beyond themselves
- think abstractly and are future oriented and more insightful
- secure with their body image
- transitioning to adult roles in relationships, school, and work
- still more impulsive

## TRENDS IN ADOLESCENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE U.S.

What % engaged in sexual activity by age 13?  
In HS?

- 5.9% engaged in sexual activity before the age of 13
- 46% engaged in sexual activity from 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade
- the United States continues to have one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the developed world
- in 2009, the national US teen birth rate was 39.1 births per 1,000 females, a 37% decrease from 61.8 births per 1,000 females in 1991

## PARENTAL EDUCATION

- sexual health education can be provided by parents through discussion & modeling
- open communication in the home
  - typically creates an environment in which teens may behave more responsibly, learn from their mistakes, and accept their feelings around sexuality
  - is a strong predictor of young people's likelihood of turning to parents in times of trouble
- parents should:
  - share their values, work on gaining trust, and provide information and resources about sexual health.
- parents should:
  - look for “teachable moments” and use gentle humor as a means of acknowledging awkwardness around this particular topic

## ANXIETIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- What would be some anxieties for parents to openly discuss sexuality with their children?
- What would be some anxieties for children to openly discuss sexuality with their parents?

Sources of Anxiety for Parents	Sources of Anxiety for Teens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Real or perceived ignorance</li> <li>•Not knowing the answers</li> <li>•Not knowing the correct language to use/sounding crude</li> <li>•Being wrong or corrected</li> <li>•Having different answers than other parent or adult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Real or perceived ignorance</li> <li>•Not knowing the correct language to use/sounding crude</li> <li>•Not knowing the right questions to ask</li> <li>•Being wrong or corrected</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Saying too muchProviding more information than your child is ready for</li> <li>•Revealing too much personal information (TMI)</li> <li>•Revealing family secrets</li> <li>•Disclosure of abuse (of self or another)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Saying too muchRevealing sexual thoughts or behaviors to the parent that might elicit criticism or punishment</li> <li>•Disclosure of abuse (of self or another)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear of difficult questions about how babies are made</li> <li>•About contraception, fertility, abortion, pregnancy, and so forth</li> <li>•About parent’s own adolescent behaviors or adult sexuality</li> <li>•About prior relationships, separation, divorce, or death</li> <li>•About abuse experiences</li> <li>•About the sexuality spectrum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear of difficult questions</li> <li>•Questions about current sexual behavior</li> <li>•Questions about abuse</li> <li>•Questions about the sexuality spectrum</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Finding out something unknown about child: Is already sexually active, uses contraception, or had an abortion</li> <li>•Has experienced abuse or vulnerability to abuse</li> <li>•Is LGBTQIA</li> <li>•Has been exposed to pornography</li> <li>•Has “sexted” or sent explicit language or photos via social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Finding out something unknown about parent</li> <li>•About their current or past sex life</li> <li>•A negative family secret</li> <li>•Disclosure of abuse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear of teen’s reaction/perception</li> <li>•Sounding stupid</li> <li>•Sounding “old-fashioned” or out of touch</li> <li>•Teen will not be open to the conversation/topic</li> <li>•Disclosure of abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear of parent’s reaction/perceptionSounding stupid</li> <li>•Parent will not be open to the conversation/topic</li> <li>•Asking something that shocks, offends, or angers the parent</li> <li>•Asking something the parent refuses to answer</li> <li>•Disclosure of abuse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discomfort with topic</li> <li>•Embarrassment</li> <li>•Shame</li> <li>•Fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discomfort with topic</li> <li>•Embarrassment</li> <li>•Shame</li> <li>•Fear</li> </ul>

## CHALLENGES TO SCHOOL CLASS-BASED SEXUAL EDUCATION

- Finding common educational baselines of information and exposure
- Teacher/administrator/counselor time
- Class time
- Conforming to the values of the individual families and parents
- Encourages peer to peer education and discussion, leading to exposures and misinformation
- Treating the subject matter lightly and jokingly
- One-on-one school counselor or private therapist appointments are few and far between and not universal



# Course Schedule

## Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk

Part 2: Orthodox Jewish Views on Sexuality,  
Implementation of The Kedusha Talk, & Common Challenges

ORTHODOX JUDAISM:  
SEXUALITY & SEXUAL  
EDUCATION

- Orthodox Jewish Community Insulated
- Religious Principles Incorporated
- Exposure vs. Sheltering
  - Cross-gender/Alcohol
- TKT (The Kedusha Talk) is Universal
  - Puberty
  - Designed for boys
- Private, despite the secular culture
- Not Secret
- Purposeful
- Enjoyable
- Not to be discussed in group form
- Consider even the language and terminologies used
- Delaying Exposure while preempting
- Delicate balance

# MY APPROACH

MASHGIACH (SCHOOL  
PASTORAL COUNSELOR) VS.  
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

- Not only to help with problems (friends, bullying, classes, teachers...)
- Be there for the student who otherwise would never see the counselor/therapist
- Part of supplemental staff, including one-on-one
- Confidentiality, trust, and communication

# MY APPROACH

Cont.

## THE KEDUSHA TALK SCHOOL BASED SETUP

- Involve/Inform Parents
- Involve/Inform Rabbi-Teacher
- Making the Appointments
- In What Setting: Safe, Private

## WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS? THE PARENTS

- Ideally parents but:
  - They don't want to
  - They won't do a good job
    - Emotional fear and worry
      - e.g. "Of course you would never do..."
  - The child doesn't want to

HAVE ANY OF YOU BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF SUCH A TALK (“BIRDS AND THE BEES”) OR HAVE YOU GIVEN SUCH A TALK AS A PROFESSIONAL OR A PARENT?

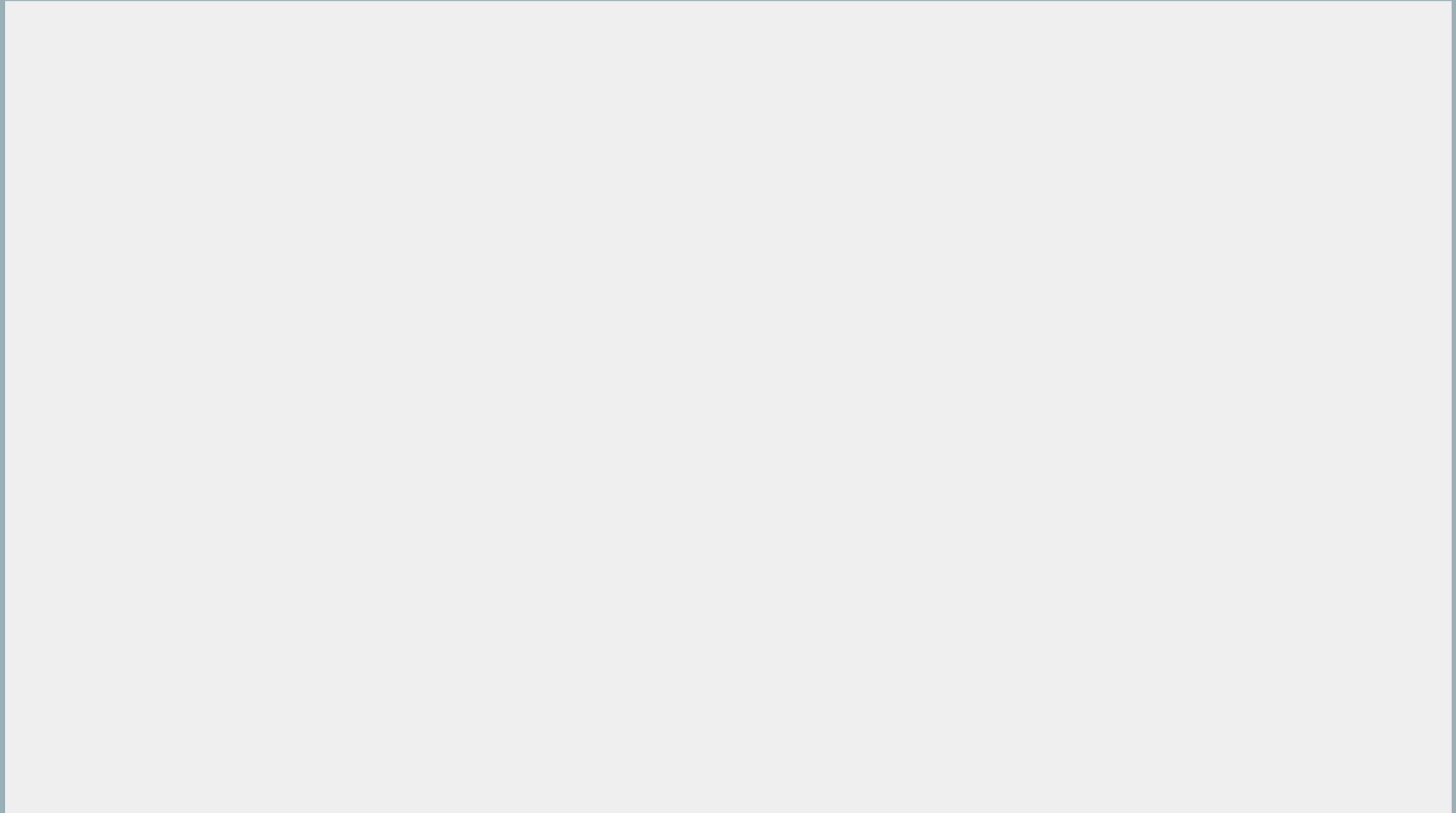
- Please share how it went?
- What would you do differently?

## WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS? THE SCHOOL

- Requires systemic approach
- In general this is an underlying problem with school
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okpg-IVVVLbE&t=28s> (Downsides of Current Education)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqTTojTija8> (Sue the School System)

VIDEO CLIP #1

OUTDATED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM





## VIDEO CLIP #2

Sue the School System



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?  
THE SCHOOL  
CONT.

- Limit peer to peer education and exposure
  - Solutions
    - Working with the Rabbeim
    - Working with the Parents especially if something seems off
    - Expectations not to discuss while normalizing everyone knowing BUT no details

## WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? THE THERAPIST

- Avoids pitfalls of parents, and school
  - Less awkwardness, no emotional baggage, individualized with parental input
- My experience in this venue as well
- Added sense of privacy and confidentiality even governed by law
- Sense of greater importance and professionalism
- More like a 1-2 session psychoeducation package than psychotherapy
- More streamlined therapeutic intervention when nec.

## COMMON CHALLENGES: RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUALITY

Exercise: Rate the following scenarios from very comfortable (1) to very awkward (5)

(5 min.)

1. A teenager reveals that they have been sexually abused a few years ago
2. A teenager reveals that they are currently being sexually abused
3. A pre-teen reveals that **she** recently looked at pornography and is clearly confused and bothered
4. A pre-teen reveals that **he** recently looked at pornography and is clearly confused and bothered
5. A pre-teen reveals that **he** recently was at a friend's house and they asked to look at their unclothed body
6. A pre-teen reveals that **she** recently was at a friend's house and they asked to look at their unclothed body
7. A middle-school aged student wants to know if there is something unhealthy with masturbation
8. A 5<sup>th</sup> grade student wants to understand how babies are born
9. A 4<sup>th</sup> grade student wants to understand how babies are born
10. A middle-school aged student wants to know what a certain sexually explicit word means that they heard from friends or the media

COMMON CHALLENGES:  
RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUALITY  
CONT.

- What can you do?
- Session should always be non-judgmental & safe
- Do you try your best to hide it?
- Do you express it to the client?
- Can you preempt such a scenario?
  - Without limiting what the client will be willing to open up about?
- Just be honest, and explain everything is fair game that's why were here

## COMMON CHALLENGES: HANDLING IMMATURITY

- What would you do if the client begins to laugh at certain words or concepts?
- Laugh with them?
- Redirect the client?
- Acknowledge and validate?
- What if the client asks a question clearly attempting to direct the conversation to other unintended areas of sexuality?

## COMMON CHALLENGES: CONFIDENTIALITY

- Working with minors and their parents
- Work with the client when necessary to speak to parents: which parent, how to phrase it
- When is it considered “dangerous”
- Review the laws and ethics, even past abuse, even where the perpetrator has died etc.

## COMMON CHALLENGES: DEALING WITH PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL

- What if a parent contacts you wanting to know the whole talk in detail before you give it to the child?
- What if the parent complains to your Principal or Supervisor or directly to you about revealing too much information in the talk?
- What if you are running a school wide program as the school counselor and a particular parent prefers you don't have the talk with their child, they will take care of it?
  - Sure! Give them a copy to help them, remain open for further communication, and let them know they can always change their mind. Inform them of the possibility that their child may notice that they are the only ones not receiving the talk
  - Developmentally disabled child, all agree should not have the talk yet, and towards end of year asked a few times, "so when do I get that talk you are having with students?"
- What if a school asks you to come in to do the talk for their students as an outside contractor and they want to edit the talk?
  - Something is always better than nothing, but stress the advantages of not looking like you are hiding anything. Usually it takes time for people/institutions to ease into this sensitive topic.



# THE KEDUSHA TALK ROLE PLAY

What Did You Like, What Did You Not Like?

## TKT: TIPS TO FOCUS ON

- Framing from an orthodox perspective integrating religion and sexuality
- All the caring people in their life are aware and a part of their team
  - Creates options and a feeling of safety
- Setting the limits of who to speak with and not to publicize
- Mentioning the secular words in addition to the orthodox Jewish words, but clarifying ok to use the secular words
  - Maintaining comfort for the conversation to continue
- Balancing exposure vs. shelter as discussed above
  - Everything puberty related is 100% applicable, marriage related to an extent is a logical progression
- Introducing the self-control aspect of refraining from masturbation and the benefits of building self control

TKT: TIPS TO FOCUS ON:  
PORNOGRAPHY

- Emphasizing harm of pornography
- Be Well Educated:
- <https://gye.vids.io/videos/d49bd1b81e18efce5c/03-the-great-porn-experiment>
  - From 11:40
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95TdISaLW9M>
- <https://guardyoureyes.com>
- <https://fightthenewdrug.org>



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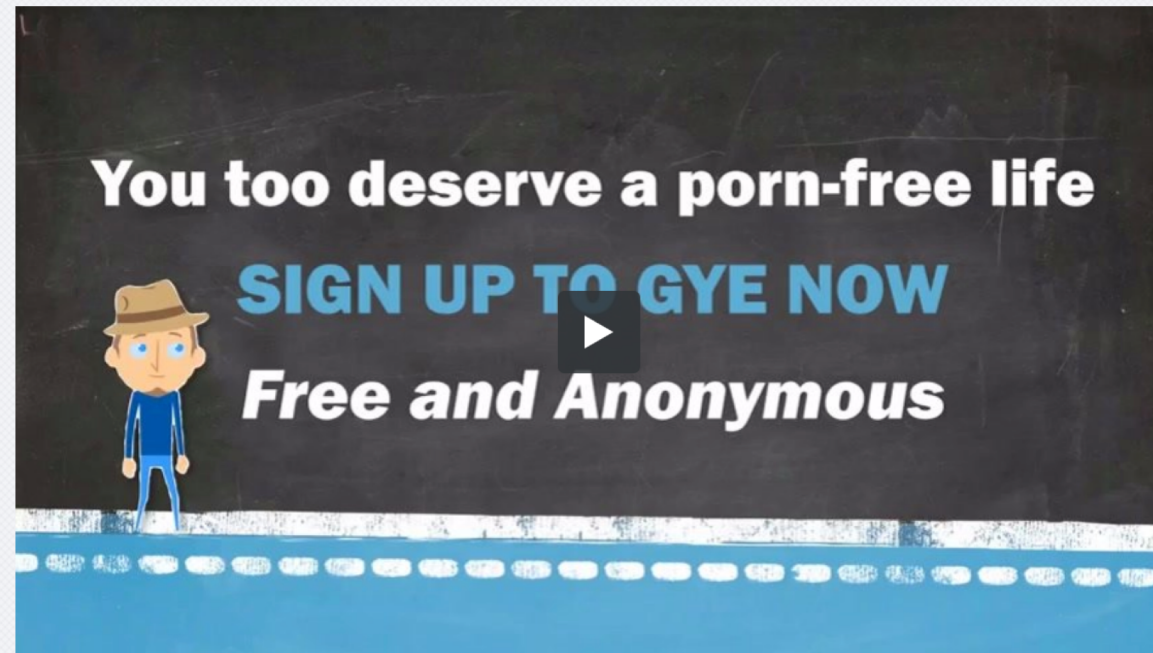
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### Struggling with a porn problem? You too deserve a porn-free life

GuardYourEyes (GYE) provides free and anonymous help for all levels of the struggle. Here you will find the tools, support and guidance that you need to break the porn habit and experience the sweet taste of freedom again. GYE has helped thousands break free. Sign up to find the tools that work and to receive the push you need.

# GYE Q&A

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## The GYE Handbook

Our Handbook contains the tools that can help for all the levels of the struggle, as well as attitude and perspective tips to guide you through the process.

[Read Handbook](#)



## Partner Program

A partner in this struggle can do wonders in helping us. In the Partner Program you can find a partner or mentor. If you're clean for a while, you can also offer to be a mentor to others.

[Sign Up](#)



GYE Boost - Shomer Steps



## What about a girl having "dirty thoughts"?

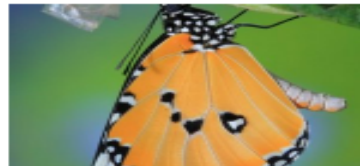
THE GUARD WEDNESDAY, 09 FEBRUARY 2020

Girl's question: ; ; Everybody always talks about how a woman must dress tzniusdik to avoid the man having "dirty thoughts". I have "dirty thoughts" about men and they don't have such extreme Halachos OE tznius. Is it normal that I'm having these thoughts? Does the Torah acknowledge a woman's th...



## Disclosure While Dating

THE GUARD WEDNESDAY, 08 JANUARY 2020



## Conversion Therapy for SSA

THE GUARD TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2019

Question: I know conversion therapy is highly controversial and deemed unhelpful and unhealthy in the mental health field. What is GYE's SSA's approach's relationship to conversion therapy modalities? Dovid from GYE's SSA division responds: Thanks for sharing the question and I am glad to answe...

## Zera Without Sperm

THE GUARD TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2019

Hi, I have an unusual situation: I don't spill seed when I masturbate because I don't have a vas deferens: it's the link between the testes and the penis that brings actual sperm. I just emit white liquid. I actually don't have a problem staying away from masturbation however, I have struggled wi...



## I can't stop looking at girls!

THE GUARD SUNDAY, 18 AUGUST 2019

Q: I'm es. I don't masturbate or watch porn but I find girls tantalizing. Being shomer negiah, there isn't any release, and I'd like to be able to interact with girls without being a creep/perv. What can I

# GYE Q&A



## Dating Advice

THE GUARD

WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 2019

Q: I am 24 years old and in shidduchim and I feel lost in the whole process, how to deal with my lust issues legabay Shidduchim. I don't know if this is something you could help me with but I am in need of guidance and I don't have where to get it from. A: There are two delicate issues when it ...



## The Game Called Life

THE GUARD

TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 2019

Question: I find myself able to hold strong with the routine challenges, like I know when I go here there's going to be that etc I'm prepared, but I almost have no defense when the challenge arises in a completely unexpected time or place. It's almost like my yetzer hara says, "you can't be respo...



## What Rabbis Who Criticize the 12-Steps Need to Know

THE GUARD

MONDAY, 04 MARCH 2019

I think that this recording (Shiur #8 of Dov's Shovevim Chebureh) was a very good one, in my opinion. The entire subject and what he writes (in the Kuntress "Derech Emes", is controversial. I think if you listen carefully, you will understand very well why so many Erummies end up a bit less Er...



## How to do Teshuvah for disseminating shmutz?

THE GUARD

MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2019

I, unfortunately, shared a lot of girls and women pictures over the years. I've tried to do whatever I can to delete and prevent circulation now but I know that some people still have them.



## Should a therapist be his client's Webchaver buddy?

OSBORN TEL

FRIDAY, 04 JANUARY 2019

# GYE: Videos

- FORUM >
- 90 DAY CHART >
- PARTNER PROGRAM >
- GYE BOOST >
- ARTICLES >
- VIDEOS >**
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[Sign Up](#)



**GuardYourEyes Videos**

39 VIDEOS

GYE's organizational videos, describing what we do, how we help people, and what Rabarim and others say about GYE.



**Understanding Addiction**

33 VIDEOS

What is the nature of porn addiction, how does it develop and what can we do about it?



**Technology Dependence**

48 VIDEOS

We live in a world where more and more people are becoming addicted to technology. Awareness is the first step in dealing with it.



**Inspirational Videos**

14 VIDEOS

Keep strong in your struggle through these inspirational videos which will help you keep the proper perspective on overcoming challenges, maintaining an 'attitude of gratitude', and strengthening our Emunah.



**Overcoming Challenges**

17 VIDEOS

Many people complain that their challenges hold them back from becoming who they could have been. But the opposite is true. It is through overcoming our challenges that we become who we were meant to be.



**The Power of Giving**

13 VIDEOS

Addiction is largely a disease of self-centeredness. The bedrock of recovery in the 12-Step program is learning to "focus outward" and be of service to others and to G-d. Watch these inspiring videos to strengthen your outward muscles!



**Attitude of Gratitude**

7 VIDEOS

Addiction often has its roots in feelings of "entitlement". The world "owes me more", "I need more", "I deserve more". In recovery, we learn to be thankful for the many blessings we have in life instead of always seeing what we don't have. An 'attitude of gratitude' is crucial to recovery.



**Parenting In the Digital Age**

30 VIDEOS

Good parenting is critical in today's world where so many kids are suffering from emotional issues and addiction. How can we prevent this happening to our children?



**Abuse Prevention**

14 VIDEOS

Many addicts were abused as youngsters. What can we do to prevent this happening to our own children?



**Dealing with Depression**

VIDEO CLIP #1 from GYE

Starting from 11:40 describing ED and speaking to teens

**TED**<sup>x</sup>Glasgow

**x** = independently  
organized TED event



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## The GYE Program

### The 20 Tools

20 tools in progressive order, beginning with the most basic and fundamental approaches to dealing with this struggle/addiction, and continuing through increasingly earnest and powerful methods.

- [The 20 Tools](#)

### The 30 principles

30 principles for maintaining the proper attitude and perspective on purity struggles.

- [21 Attitude principles for lust struggles.](#)
- [9 Attitude principles for addiction.](#)

For a **free** copy of the GYE Handbook, see [here](#).



**WE ARE A**  
**NON-RELIGIOUS**  
**NON-LEGISLATIVE**  
**NONPROFIT**  
501(c)3

POSTERS WITH THE MESSAGE: **CONSIDER BEFORE CONSUMING**

POSTER WITH THE MESSAGE: **CONSIDER BEFORE CONSUMING**



**RAISING AWARENESS**

**& EDUCATING ON THE**

**HARMFUL EFFECTS**

**OF PORNOGRAPHY**





**USING ONLY  
SCIENCE,**



**FACTS, &**

**PERSONAL ACCOUNTS**



VIDEO CLIP: Fight The New Drug





Peer Reviewed Research On How  
**PORNOGRAPHY**  
**AFFECTS THE BRAIN.**

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Peer Reviewed Research On How  
**PORNOGRAPHY**  
**AFFECTS THE HEART.**

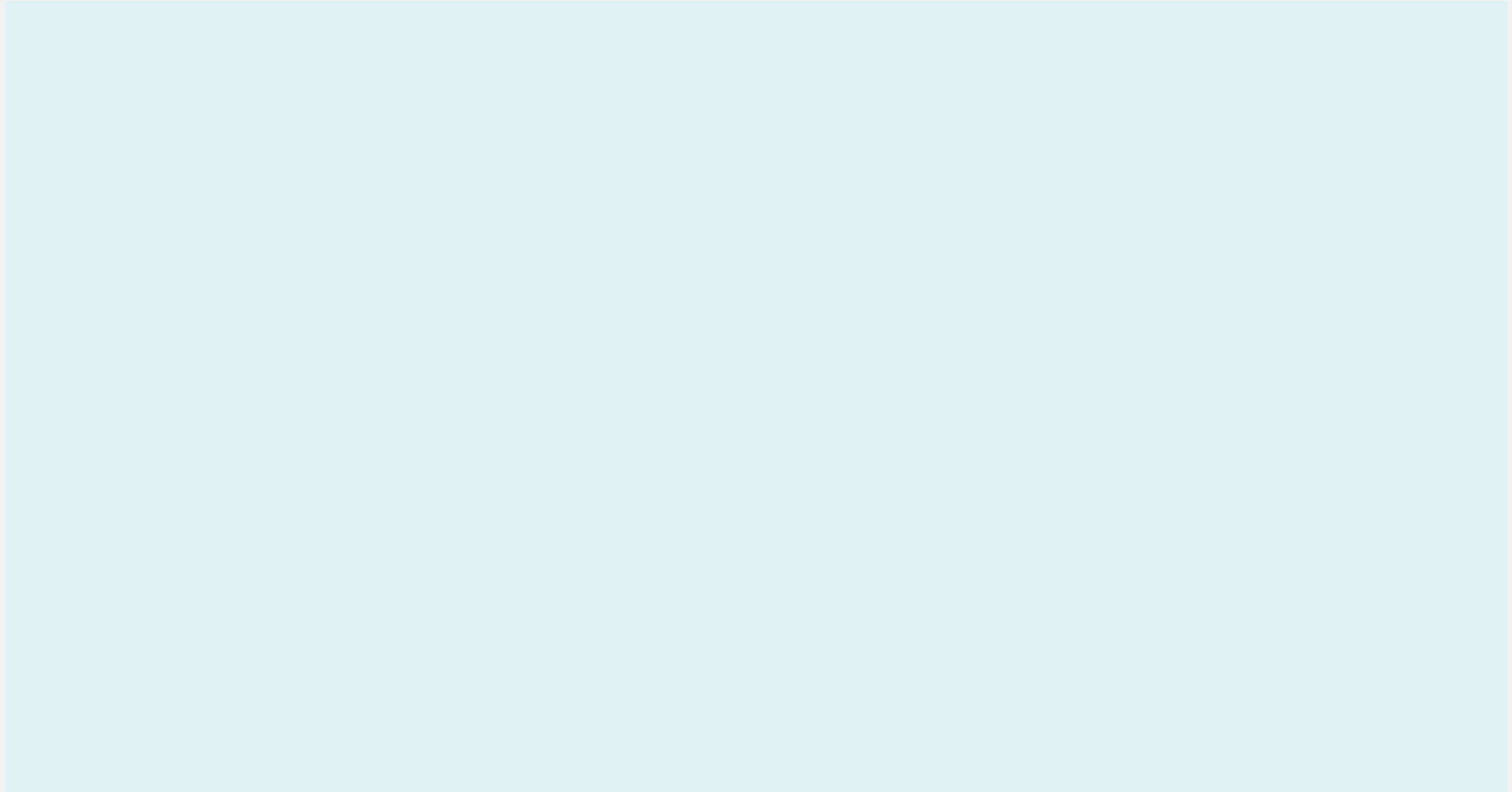
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Peer Reviewed Research On How  
**PORNOGRAPHY**  
**AFFECTS THE WORLD.**

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FIGHT THE NEW DRUG: VIDEO CLIP #2



## TKT: TIPS TO FOCUS ON: SAFETY

- Using this an opportunity for a brief safety conversation including a direct question
  - Story of boy who was praying for this for 6 months
- Normalizing struggles, framing in a positive, non-worrisome light
- One of the main universal accomplishments is to allow for the conversation to continue with you or the parents now that the “ice was broken”.
- Acknowledge awkward, should be! but can still speak about it with the right people.



# Course Schedule

## Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk

Part 3: Troubleshooting, Follow up, Case Studies and Q & A

## TKT: COMMON CONCERNS

- Lack of answering any questions
  - What would you do?
- Obsession with the topic
  - What would you do?
- Students talking about The Talk to each other
  - How would you handle this?
- Anxieties regarding sexual identity
  - How would you handle this?
- Struggles with pornography and self control
  - How can you help?

## TKT: COMMON QUESTIONS

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

- Does it hurt when the sperm comes out?
- How will I know if it is sperm or urine?
  - Story of boy who held in urine...
- Can I run out?
- Can I damage it?
- Everything can be damaged with overuse
- Where exactly does the sperm come out of?
- Can it come out randomly during the day like at night?
- How long will puberty last?
- How long will my voice continue to crack?
  - Boy in choir

## TKT: COMMON QUESTIONS CONT.

### MARRIAGE & SEX QUESTIONS

Disclaimer: In separate orthodox schools the reality is that most boys will not have sex until they are married. They may experiment at other levels with girls at times and there are always exceptions but the vast majority will not. This is in stark contrast to the public schools where in the 80's 57% had sexual intercourse by 18, and now it has declined to 40%

(<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/kids-health/waiting-right-one-teens-having-sex-later-cdc-finds-n775236>).

Thus it is more of an anomaly than the norm for a teenager to be seeking to know every detail regarding sex (whereas in the public school it is a normal and applicable piece of information for them to know). In the orthodox school, the child should be satisfied with some basic information to satisfy their curiosity and allow them to at least feel like they are not left out from what their friends know, and they will get all the details later.

- How exactly does the sperm enter the woman?
- Why does it sometimes not produce a child?
- Is it painful?
- Do you go to the hospital to have it done?
- Are there any tools needed for it?
- What happens if it goes into the mouth instead?
- What does spooning mean?
  - Kiss and cuddle
- What does (insert sexually explicit term) mean?
- How long does it take?
- Is it safe while pregnant?

## CONCLUSION

- Difficult Balance But Doable
- Resolves Much Unnecessary Pain and Confusion
  - Fathers Approach Me After
  - Develop Your Individual Style Just As Schools
    - Girls will need a unique program
  - Be Open and Honest
  - Expect the Unexpected
  - Practice, Be Positive and Confident

# RESOURCES:

The Kedusha Talk: How to speak about Kedusha issues to boys around the age of Bar-Mitzvah (2018) by Avi Landa

**For an understanding of the current secular worldview on adolescent sexuality as well as unique Orthodox Jewish challenges and perspectives, see the following resources:**

[Amie M. Ashcraft, Pamela J. Murray, \(2017\) Talking to Parents About Adolescent Sexuality. Pediatric Clinics of North America Volume 64, Issue 2, April 2017, Pages 305-320](#)

Trisha Tulloch, Miriam Kaufman, (2013) [Adolescent Sexuality. Pediatrics in Review Vol.34 No.1 January 2013, pages 29-37](#)

David S. Ribner. (2003) [Determinants of the intimate lives of Haredi \(Ultra-Orthodox\) Jewish couples. Sexual and Relationship Therapy 18:1, pages 53-62.](#)

Netta Notzer, David Levran, Shlomo Mashiach, Sarah Sqffer. (1984) [Effect of religiosity on sex attitudes, experience and contraception among university students. Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy 10:1, pages 57-62.](#)



The background of the image is a dense, overlapping collection of small, rectangular sticky notes in various colors including blue, yellow, green, pink, red, and white. Each sticky note features a large, black question mark. The notes are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured, busy appearance. In the center of the image, there is a white rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside this box, the text "ANY QUESTIONS?" is written in a clean, black, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically.

ANY QUESTIONS?



**CORE WELLNESS**

# **Orthodox Jewish Culturally Sensitive Teen Sexuality: The Kedusha Talk**

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**Presented by:  
Avi Landa, MS, LCPC**



# THE *KEDUSHA* TALK

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



**Written and edited by:**

Rabbi Avi Landa, Mashgiach TA Middle School, LCPC  
Yaakov Nadel & Yechezkel Stelzer (GuardYourEyes)

**Guidance & Review:**

Rav Aharon Feldman, Rosh Yeshivas Ner Yisrael  
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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## The Kedusha Talk

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ראש הישיבה  
ישיבת נר ישראל

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



# The Kedusha Talk

## 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.

ברכות  
אבי  
גורן

## 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

## The Kedusha Talk

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*



## The Kedusha Talk

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

Such talks have *BH* been successfully communicated to more than 200 bochurim already, and we have received much positive feedback.

Rabbi Avi Landa

*Mashgiach TA Middle School, LCPC*

Email: [Landa1793@gmail.com](mailto:Landa1793@gmail.com)

# 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 7<sup>th</sup> grade, right before Bar Mitzva specifically, since the bochorim have more maturity than they had in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and many of them have not reached puberty yet, as they will by 8<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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

## The Kedusha Talk

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 *leitzaanus* 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

## The Kedusha Talk

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.

## The Kedusha Talk

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

## The Kedusha Talk

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 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. Being with a woman in this way is what the secular world refers to as sex<sup>1</sup> and Chazal refer to it as *biah*. Don't worry if you don't completely understand this part of the process, since this

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<sup>1</sup> Some would consider the previous sentence to contain a “street-term” and inappropriate to initiate. 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.

## The Kedusha Talk

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.

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 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, 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, which is an 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 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.

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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 wasting it. 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? 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? (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 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

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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, mashigach, 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 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

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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).

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. 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

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half way 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 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.

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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 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

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

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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.



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

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course, even if habits have formed, there are methods and strategies that can and do work. GuardYourEyes.com has a booklet for young teens which outlines 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". Maintaining Kedusha presents a mehalech for someone in the position to help bochurim struggling with hotzas 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 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 badam*, 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

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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 anyone unsure as to how to proceed to get guidance from [guardyoureyes.com](http://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**

GuardYourEyes.com has a second booklet for older teens who who may be already struggling with exposure to inappropriate material. This booklet 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.

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Rabbi Avi Landa MS, LCPC, NCC is Mashgiach and Guidance Counselor at Yeshivas Chafetz Chaim (TA) Baltimore, MD. He maintains a private practice in clinical counseling psychotherapy as well. As a representative of GuardYourEyes, he helped to develop materials towards fostering healthy and wholesome living as a person and as a Jew.

You can invite Rabbi Landa to come to your school as a GYE representative. (Email: [Landa1793@gmail.com](mailto:Landa1793@gmail.com))

### **His presentation services to educational faculty include:**

- 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.
- Teaching technology safety and awareness to the students and parent body. Age appropriate curriculum will be presented for students in grades 1-12. Materials to be sent to parents towards proper technology awareness would be shared. Future consultation and guidance throughout the implementation process would be provided.
- Teaching contemporary Hashkafic topics to our students. Examples would include topics such as developing a proper and balanced approach to "girls" and "music". (Presentations on Emuna for Middle School, High School, and older students are also available).

**GYE can be contacted at: 646-600-8100 or [gye.help@gmail.com](mailto:gye.help@gmail.com)**



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