



## Activity: 3-4.4.1

### Key Message

- Everyone has an in built warning system to danger.

### Activity Details

#### Victorian Curriculum

**Health & PE** Describe and apply strategies that can be used in situations that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe VCHPEP090

**Capabilities** VCCCTQ011

**Time** 30 minutes

**Levels** 3 & 4

**Equipment**

- whiteboard and markers
- paper
- drawing materials

# Early warning signals

## Purpose

To develop knowledge and understanding of strategies and skills to reduce harm.

To describe methods for recognising harmful situations.

To develop protective behaviours.

## Teaching notes

There are 3 types of situations where our early warning signals react.

1. When we feel unsafe, but are having fun and are in control of the situation—i.e. it is our choice to be there. For example, watching a scary movie, diving off a high diving tower or riding a roller coaster.
2. When we feel unsafe, it is not fun, but we are still in control. For example, going to the dentist or sitting an exam.
3. When we feel unsafe, it is not fun and we have no control over the situation. These situations are personal emergencies as the child is in danger of losing control over what happens to them. For example, being lost, being bullied, or being abused by a relative.

## Procedure

1. Ask students to think about the way their body reacts if they are scared. What do their stomach, throat, knees and palms feel like?
2. Make a list on the board of all the body responses to something unpleasant or frightening.
3. Explain that these signs are feelings we get when we know something is not quite right. Not everyone gets all of the signals each time. Sometimes, it is hard to name what it is that is frightening us but our body already knows we are in danger.
4. Explain that some of these body responses occur when we are excited. For example, when we are taking our first plane trip or about to ride the roller coaster. There are some clear differences, though, to a danger response and an excitement response. A danger response is associated with a sense of dread, while an excitement response anticipates pleasure.
5. Give each student a piece of paper.
6. Ask students to draw an outline of a person on their paper.
7. Ask students to draw and label the early warning signals discussed on the body outline. Include both physical and emotional responses.

## Early warning signals

Sweaty palms, underarms and face; jittery legs, ‘butterflies’ in stomach; feeling like you want to vomit, cry or go to the toilet; headache, dry throat, hard to speak, heart beats faster; breathing faster and more shallow.

