

in their shoes

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT: PERSONAL SPACE

SCENARIO FOURTEEN – BY ANNE STONEHOUSE AM AND OSLO DAVIS.



Have you ever experienced someone being too close physically? How would you feel if you were out with friends and a stranger patted you on the head? What if that stranger picked you up and hugged you?

Many adults have powerful memories from childhood of being pressured or forced to have close physical contact with an adult they did not feel comfortable with. However, there are social norms about to whom, in what situations and how we show physical affection. Usually we look for signs of consent from the other person.

Why is it then, that some adults feel free to touch or demand closeness or physical affection from a child, without first checking the child's verbal and non-verbal communication cues? Even a young baby can communicate whether they want to be held. When we give children time to say yes or no, they will tell us, and their response should be respected.

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