Learning About Personal Space

Personal space is the space between you and another person, or how far you usually stand from other people, animals or things. This distance can be different with different people or situations. But we usually don’t think about personal space at all. We just find the right distance for us without being aware of what we’re doing.

But during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been asked to stay further away (at least 6 feet) from people we don’t live with. So that’s made us think more about personal space and has changed what we do, at least some of the time.

In the following exercise, you can illustrate how close to other people, animals or things you usually like to be.

In this exercise, a drawing of a person, animal or object is on the right side of a line (which looks like a ruler) that marks a distance of 10 feet. Your job is to draw yourself on that ruler, to show how far away you would usually stand from the person, animal or object shown on the right. When you do this, try to imagine yourself in that situation, in real life.

You can just draw a stick figure, or some sort of an outline of a person like this:
How far would you stand from a **puppy**?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from your neighbor?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from a snake?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from your mom?
Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from a bear?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from a **bed of flowers**?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from a garbage can?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from a cake?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
How far would you stand from the President of the United States?

Draw yourself on the ruler.
Questions to think about after the exercise:

What did you notice while you were doing this exercise?

What made you stand further away from some things, and closer to others?

Have any of these distances changed since the pandemic started? If so, which ones?

What do you think it means when you stand further away from something?