

Touch is Complicated!

For each scenario, answer these questions:

- What is the intention behind the touch? What is the outcome?
- Is the touch appropriate? Why or why not?

Ali

Ali, a new student, knows no one and sits alone in the cafeteria during lunchtime. In the hallway, a girl from math class recognizes Ali. She runs up to Ali saying, “Hi friend! Remember me?” and slaps Ali really hard on the back. The slap hurts and Ali winces in pain. The girl says, “Oh stop. I was just kidding around!”

Sasha

Sasha’s family makes grandparent visits every winter holiday. It’s usually fun but Sasha is dreading it this year. Last year, when Grandma gave all the grandchildren hugs, she ran her hand up and down Sasha’s back and said, “Oh Sasha, what are those straps under here? Are you wearing a bra? How wonderful!” Sasha didn’t answer and stayed quiet the whole visit.

Jackee

Jackee and Jackee’s siblings are all playing together when they start tickling each other. Jackee laughs so hard that it hurts and calls out, “Stop! Stop! Stop!” but the siblings continue. At some point, they all notice that Jackee is crying. They are stunned and horrified and stop the tickling. Jackee runs away, very upset. The siblings yell after Jackee, “What? But you were laughing the whole time!”

Lou

Lou has a crush on Syd, a long-time friend. At the end of the school year, Lou gathers up the courage and says to Syd, “Hey, I really like you. I mean I *like-like* you.” Syd is surprised, “Oh, I didn’t know, Lou. I’m sorry... I don’t feel the same way. You’re one of my best friends and I don’t want to ruin that.” Lou nods, glad that they could still be friends while feeling more and more heartbroken. They hug—a full and wholehearted hug—and Lou starts to cry.

Shai

Shai is at a track meet sitting on the grass. A group of athletes from another school walk up and one of them says, “I just want to apologize to you ahead of time...because you’re going *down* today.” Everyone in the group laughs. Another one of the group says, “Here, give me a high five, loser!” and holds their hand up. The others laugh harder.