

## Robyn's Story

Hello, my name is Robyn. I'm going into grade 9 this fall. Right now, my favourite colours are green and yellow. I like photography and reading science-fiction novels. My favourite foods are chocolate (yes, it totally counts!) and bagels. My favourite subjects in school are history and drama. I really liked my grade 8 class and am feeling sad that everyone from my class is going to different schools this fall. I'm especially going to miss Riley. Riley and I started dating at the end of the year and have been going out for a month and a half. Riley and I get along so well—we both love dogs and spending time in nature. One of our favourite things to do together is belt out the words to cheesy pop songs in public places—sometimes people give us really funny looks and then we look at each other and CANNOT stop laughing!

On our first date, Riley held my hand. It was really exciting—I felt as if my heart would leap out of my chest! The fourth time we hung out, we kissed on the lips for a couple of minutes, we even used our tongues—I felt really, really, REALLY nice. The last time we hung out, I wanted Riley to touch parts of my body that are normally covered in clothing, like my chest. Riley wanted to too. After talking about it, I touched Riley's chest and stomach. It felt great and I started to really look forward to Riley touching my chest and my stomach. But then Riley suddenly pulled away and got really quiet. I asked what was wrong and Riley said "Nothing." We stopped touching, kissing and holding hands. Even though Riley said that nothing was wrong, it didn't really feel like nothing because Riley asked to watch TV for the rest of the afternoon. The next day, Riley left for a family vacation and I haven't heard back since—it's been about two weeks.

I'm worried that I did something wrong and that Riley is going to end our relationship. I'm also worried that we won't be able to stay friends and that we will grow distant this fall since we're not going to the same high school. I know that I will find other people to date in high school, but feel terrible thinking that we won't be able to be friends anymore.

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Riley recently got back from vacation, texted me right away, and asked to hang out. Riley wanted to meet up and talk about what happened the day before vacation and told me that when we started touching each other, Riley got nervous about dating someone with a disability. Riley got scared because of not knowing what to expect, especially because Riley's never touched anyone under their clothes before and didn't really know how to, and so just became extra nervous. While on vacation, Riley realized that it would have probably been best to just

ask me what I like and what I don't like and that there was no reason to be nervous because we can easily talk to each other about everything else, so why couldn't we also talk about our bodies and what feels good and what doesn't? Riley apologized for not being able to talk about the reaction, what happened in the moment and also not texting while on vacation.

I appreciated and accepted Riley's apology and we dated for a couple more weeks but yesterday I decided that I wanted to end the relationship because we're going to different schools. We talked about it A LOT today and even though we're both really sad, we both agree that it is for the best. We also agreed to continue to be friends and will still belt out the cheesiest pop songs we can think of!

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What surprised you about this story? Why do you think that these aspects surprised you?
2. What do you think this story was about?
3. What assumptions did you have about this story at the beginning and how did those change (if at all) towards the end?
4. What strategies could Robyn and Riley use in their relationship to address the conflict/uncertainty as it happened?
5. What assumptions does Riley make? Why? How do you think that these assumptions could have been avoided?
6. What assumptions does Robyn make? Why? How do you think that these assumptions could have been avoided?
7. Do you think that the conflict/uncertainty that arose is unique to people with a disability? Why or why not?
8. Does this story challenge or reinforce stereotypes about sex, sexuality, and disability? (Or maybe it does not do either). Whatever your group thinks, tell us why.