

Let's Dive Deeper!

Further discussion/journal prompts for older readers

1. Let's first look at this book for what it tells us as **providers of safe spaces to others**.

Which character or page reflects something you *already do well* to be a safe space for others?

Which character or page pushes you to *learn more or do better* as a safe space?

What is one thing that you can start doing tomorrow to be a safer space for others?

2. We are also all **worthy of our own safe spaces**. We deserve to be treated safely by others — and by ourselves. *We may not all have safe spaces in our lives, but we ALL deserve them, no matter who we are or what we do. We do not need to be or do anything differently to deserve safe spaces.*

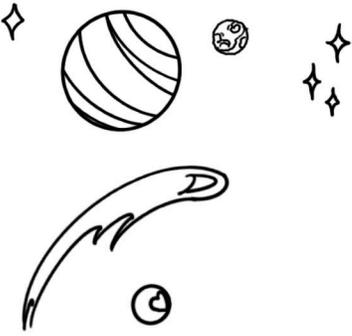
Where or with which person do you feel the safest right now in your life, and why?

Based on what you've learned in this book, what can you do to surround yourself with safer spaces?

What can you do to be a safer space in how you treat yourself?

3. Being a safe space is not the same thing as never talking about things that make us feel uncomfortable. When might we need to talk about something uncomfortable in order to be safe or to be a safe space to others? Can you think of an example from your own experience?
4. Leanne shows us that it's helpful to say our pronouns in introductions, even if we think our own pronouns might seem obvious. How does doing this make spaces safer for others? Can you think of other ways in which people who are not part of a marginalized group can help that group through small changes in language or action every day?
5. Which character or page did you connect with the most and why? If you could add to the story of that page, such as inventing backstory/context, next words/actions, etc., what would you add?

Do you know someone who would really benefit from this book who might not be able to buy it? If so, please let them know that they can request a free sponsored copy at StevieSafeSpaces.com — or request the book through a local library.



You deserve a Safe Space.

Yes, YOU.

And you don't need to be anyone different or do anything differently to deserve it.



WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE? ends with these words:

“If you're working hard on being an ally, communicating about boundaries and consent, respecting people's differences, and including others, then you are well on your way to being a truly Safe Space! **And now that you know that you deserve all of these things, too, we hope you'll always be a safe space to yourself and look for safe spaces in your own life.**”

It's very important for us to learn how to be safe to others. But it's just as important — and sometimes even harder — to seek safe spaces (and be a safe space) to ourselves. This is especially true if we haven't been surrounded by safe spaces in our lives so far.

Here are a few affirmations you can use to remind yourself:

I deserve to be safe to be who I am.

I deserve to be included and treated with kindness.

I deserve to have my boundaries respected.

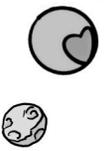
Write two of your own affirmations in the spaces provided below. Decorate them how you like and cut them out to tape to your mirror or a place you can say them to yourself every day.

Tip: If you have a hard time believing or saying these things to yourself, try telling them to a younger version of yourself. You can also pretend you're saying them to a best friend or beloved family member at first to train yourself to be kind to yourself.

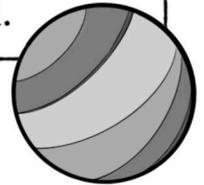


THE ABCs OF SAFE SPACES

by STEVIE BEES and CARRIE SCHNEIDER



In the back of the book *WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?*, you will find the following topics, printed with permission here. Please read and consider them carefully. Then, choose one topic to explore or discuss, preparing to share your findings with the rest of the class/community if directed.



A is for Ally

Being a safe space means being an **ally**. An **ally** is like a good friend who stands up for others, *even when it's hard to do*, to make sure they're treated with kindness and respect. When you're an **ally**, you're willing to listen, understand someone else's struggle even when it's different from what you know, look for ways to help, and work hard to make things better for them.

- Which characters in this book care about other people and support or stand up for them? How are they being **allies**?
- When have you been an **ally** for someone else? Who has been an **ally** to you?
- Look & listen in your community. Which people or groups do you think need an **ally** right now? What can you do to help?



B is for Boundaries

A **boundary** marks where one thing ends and another begins. In geography, it might be a river, a fence, or a line on a map. But did you know that people have **boundaries**? Personal **boundaries** are invisible but very real. They're limits we set for ourselves to protect our safety and wellbeing. One example you may know already is the comfort area around us that we call "personal space" or even our "bubble." We all have **boundaries** like these "bubbles" around our bodies — and our feelings, too.

When someone ignores those limits, that's called **crossing our boundaries**, and it can be uncomfortable and even dangerous. Some examples are: touching people when/where they don't want to be touched; telling or asking people private or scary things; taking things without asking; and more.

- What are examples of personal **boundaries** for you? What can you do if someone crosses them?
- Some things we can say are, "Please stop," "That makes me uncomfortable," "That doesn't feel safe to me," "I need more space," or "That crosses a **boundary** for me." What else might you say to protect your **boundaries**?
- How can we find out what other people's **boundaries** are? What can you do if you think you've crossed someone else's **boundary**?



THE ABCs OF SAFE SPACES



by STEVIE BEES and CARRIE SCHNEIDER

C is for Communication & Consent



Communication and **consent** are closely connected to boundaries. We all need to clearly **communicate** (tell, show, listen) about boundaries so people know what they should and shouldn't do. And we all need to have **consent** (agreement) before doing anything that might cross a boundary. An example is asking "May I hug you?" before hugging someone and making sure others ask before hugging you. **If someone isn't listening when you say "no," please tell a trusted grown-up so they can help keep you safe!**

- Are there examples of **communication** and **consent** in this book? Why is **consent** so important?
- How can you **communicate** about boundaries and **consent** with your family and friends?

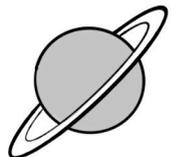
Part of **communication** is **learning**. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable to admit that we didn't already know something important — or that we've been making a mistake. We might even feel like lying or denying:

"I already knew that!"

"That isn't true because I'm a good person, and I wouldn't make a mistake like that!"

But if we stop ourselves from learning, we can't grow into safer spaces! So what do you think would be the *safe-space* thing to say or do after learning an important truth?

D is for Differences



What do you think of when you hear the word "**differences**"? There are *so many* ways people can be different from each other, right? Your **identity** is the combination of all the many things that make you *you*: your gender, race, background, community, interests, strengths, values, and more. And absolutely everyone's **identity** is unique!

It's important to know that people have different **identities**, as well as different experiences and needs. But just being **aware** of **differences** doesn't make us safe spaces for others. To truly be a safe space, we should also:

1. **Accept** that being different doesn't mean being wrong
 2. Help **include** and make things fair for everyone, no matter who they are
 3. Be **proud** of our differences and **celebrate** other people's differences with them
- If someone is different from you, does that make one of you wrong?
 - What does it mean to be proud of who we are? What's something about you that you proud of?
 - How can you help others to feel proud of who they are?

