

8th GRADE: ABUSE

LESSON 3 OVERVIEW

Creating Healthy Relationships

**Lesson Time:**

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Lesson Slides [Download](#)

Materials Needed:

- Projector with Video/Audio Capability

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Recognize the key components of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
2. Illustrate a characteristic of healthy or unhealthy relationships.
3. Explain how unhealthy relationships are connected to abuse.



Creating Healthy Relationships

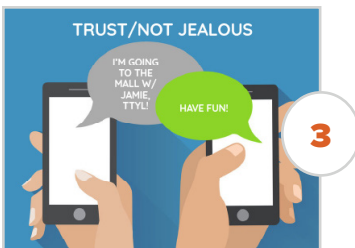
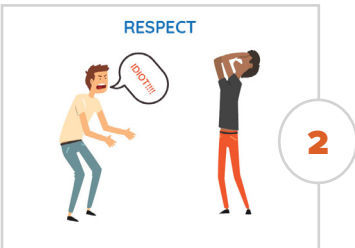
Lesson Introduction: (1 minute)

In the previous two lessons, we discussed the four types of abuse, some possible causes of abuse, and some possible effects of abuse. Today, we are going to discuss the importance of developing healthy relationships. As teenagers, you have or will soon begin dating. It is important for you to understand how to develop healthy relationships in your friendships and when you begin dating. It is important to remember that whether you are talking about a dating relationship, a friendship, or family relationships, maintaining healthy relationships will make each of those more successful and fulfilling.

Core Lesson: Characteristics of Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships (15 minutes)

I want you to take a moment to think about the relationships you have in your life. These are the relationships with your family, your friends, your teachers, your teammates, and even acquaintances that you don't know very well. Some of those relationships are stronger than others. Some of those are stable, comfortable relationships while others may be strained or difficult. As human beings, we need healthy relationships in order to have positive mental health. We will discuss the warning signs that a relationship may be an unhealthy one.

Slide/Handout



Lesson Script/Talking Points

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES:

Slide 1

Be yourself. In every relationship you have to be true to yourself. You cannot be someone other than that. If you are playing a role that is not really who you are, the relationship will be based on lies and cannot last.

Slide 2

Respect each other. Respecting each person in the relationship means that you value the other person for who they are.

Slide 3

Don't be overly jealous. Trust your partner/friend to spend time with others, including friends and family without you around.

Slide 4

Support each other. Make sure that if your friend or partner is having a tough time, you are there to listen and offer comfort.

Slide/Handout

Lesson Script/Talking Points



Slide 5

You have the freedom to have privacy. Being in a friendship or dating relationship doesn't mean that you should have access to the other person's phone, email, or other social media accounts.



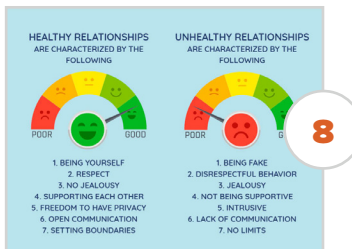
Slide 6

Communicating with each other regularly means discussing your feelings and expectations with each other and is one of the most important keys to a healthy relationship. Communication needs to include face-to-face communication and not just through social media or texting.



Slide 7

Set boundaries. In every relationship, you need to set boundaries about your expectations, desires, and limits, and discuss them with the other person. This will include the amount of time you want to spend together and how you want to handle intimacy.



Slide 8

Now let's look at the flip side of that which is the sure way to ruin a relationship or have difficulty in friendships and dating relationships.

Unhealthy Relationships are characterized by the following:

1. Being Fake - to be someone other than who you are; liking/disliking things just because someone else does
2. Disrespectful Behavior – yelling, name-calling others, disrespecting them
3. No Trust/Jealousy - not trusting your friend/partner to spend time with others
4. Not Being Supportive - only being concerned about oneself and no one else
5. Intrusive - always asking your friends or partners what they are doing, where they are, and why they aren't answering you back (This includes constant texting.)
6. Lack of Communication - assuming that things are a certain way and never confirming with your partner or friend
7. No Boundaries - There are no boundaries to the relationship for one or both partners.

Activity: Relationship Scenarios (13 minutes)

Now we will put what we have learned into practice by looking at a couple of scenarios. As I read each one aloud, consider if this relationship is healthy or not. Also, consider what might be done to improve the relationship.

Scenario 1

Alex, the person you are dating, frequently becomes upset that you don't spend enough alone time with him. Your friend has invited you to go to the mall to spend the day shopping. While at the mall, you run into a group of friends from school and post a picture on social media. After seeing your post, Alex becomes upset because you posted pictures with other people and he begins posting insulting comments on the post.

The next time you are together, Alex accuses you of cheating on him with someone from the picture you posted at that mall and tells you to choose between him and your friends. Alex frequently will take your phone and check to see who you have been texting and talking to. Alex states that if you are going to remain in a relationship with him, you can no longer hang out with your friends. You feel scared and nervous about what may happen.

(After reading the scenario, ask the students the following questions and allow for responses and encourage discussion between you and the students as well as between the students. Before moving on to the next question, summarize the discussion and responses with the statements provided under each question that ensures their understanding.)

1. Is it ok for the person you are dating to demand that you only spend time with them?

(Allow for responses. Ensure that students understand that while relationships are built on spending time with one another and discovering common interests while getting to know who the person really is; healthy relationships are not built on limiting outside friendships and relationships to solely focus on one person.)

2. Are there healthy boundaries in this relationship?

(Allow for responses. Ensure that students understand that there aren't healthy boundaries in the relationship described – as we see in the extensive jealousy, lack of privacy, and lack of respect. However, we can begin to establish healthy boundaries in our relationships at any point, even if we are currently in an unhealthy relationship. Often this may result in that relationship ending, but it will mean that you are beginning to take back control and ensuring that you are engaging in and surrounding yourself with the healthiest relationships for you.)

3. What are some ways that healthy boundaries can be set in this relationship?

(Allow students to respond. Ensure that students understand that even if they are in an unhealthy relationship, they always have choices. They can choose to communicate their needs for friendships outside of the dating relationship. They can choose to communicate their expectations for the dating relationship and what that means and looks like. They can even choose to leave the dating relationship if that is what is needed to ensure their safety and positive mental health.)

Scenario 2

You are at the movies with your friend, Taylor. On the way to the movies, you overhear Taylor telling Jesse, who she is dating, where they are going, and that she would see him later. While you are at the movies, Taylor only checks her phone once and enjoys her time at the movies with you. After the movie is over, Taylor calls Jesse to check in and Jesse asks how the movie was and if she had a good time. The conversation is brief and pleasant from what you can hear. Taylor and Jesse make plans to see each other later that day. You and Taylor then head to get some ice cream and shop a little. Taylor seems happy and relaxed.

Core Lesson (cont)



(After reading the scenario, ask the students the following questions and allow for responses and discussion.)

1. Should it be expected for the person you are dating to allow you to spend time with other people?

(Allow for responses. Ensure that students understand that the best relationships are built on trust, respect, and allowing someone to be their whole self and that means engaging in relationships (outside of the dating relationship) with friends and family.)

2. Are there healthy boundaries in this relationship?

(Allow students to respond. Ensure that students recognize that the relationship described was built on trust, respect and communication; all essential elements of a healthy relationship.)

3. What are some ways that they have a healthy relationship?

(Allow for responses. Examples may include: Jesse is respecting Taylor's time with her friend by not constantly texting her; Jesse is not acting jealous or insecure; Taylor is communicating with Jesse.)

Closing: Essential Question (1 minute)

What are the key components of a healthy relationship? (Allow students to respond.)

Today's lesson focused on the characteristics found in healthy and unhealthy relationships. These are closely tied to our topic of abuse because often negative relationships can become abusive or traumatic. Dating and domestic violence can involve all four types of abuse. It is important to understand that as either a friend or a boyfriend/girlfriend, you have an obligation to understand what factors help make healthy relationships and to protect yourself. No one person has more responsibility than another to establish and maintain the foundation for healthy relationships. Talk to your friends if you fear that they might be in a bad relationship. The older you get, this might become more relevant. You have to actively participate in all of your relationships – from siblings, parents, friends, and more. Putting what you have learned into practice will help you maintain healthy relationships now and in the future.

References:

Healthy relationships in adolescence. HHS Office of Population Affairs. (n.d.).
<https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/healthy-relationships-adolescence>

Kendra Cherry, Mse. (2023, November 9). *Worried you might be in an unhealthy relationship? here are the signs.* Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/signs-that-youre-in-an-unhealthy-relationship-5218237>

Lochrie, A. S. (Ed.). (2023, October). *Am I in a healthy relationship? (for teens) | nemours kidshealth.* KidsHealth. <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html>

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