



Grade 7: Healthy Relationships

Overview

Students learn the characteristics of a healthy relationship, including communication, respect, and equity. They participate in a group activity where they respond to questions about healthy relationships and provide examples of healthy behaviors. Students also learn about red flags to look out for in unhealthy relationships, as well as how to support a friend.

Timing

45 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Describe characteristics of healthy relationships
- Describe characteristics of unhealthy relationships
- Develop strategies to help a friend who may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship

Standards

Washington State Sexual Health Standards

- Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
 - Describe characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. HI.Se5.7
- Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
 - Demonstrate communication skills that foster healthy relationships. H4.Se5.7a
 - Explain importance of setting personal boundaries and showing respect for the boundaries and values of others. H4.Se5.7b

Materials Needed

- Computer/projector/speakers to display PowerPoint, including video streaming
- Exit ticket/Assignment: Healthy Relationships Scenarios
- Activity: Healthy Relationships

Teacher Preparation

- Print and post Healthy Relationship Statements 1-6 around the room, place the corresponding worksheet below

Agenda

Introduction – 2 minutes

Slide 1

- Teacher Script: *Today we are going to talk about healthy relationships. Many of the things we talk about today can apply to both friendships or romantic relationships. Some of you may have new friends or friends you've known for a long time. Some of you may be in romantic relationships, others may be interested in having a relationship one day, and others may have no interest in romantic relationships at all. Any of these are okay! For today's lesson, you can think about a current, future, or ideal friendship or relationship to help guide the discussion.*
- Remind students of class ground rules.

Slide 2

- Review slide.

Discussion - 10 minutes

Slide 3

- Teacher Script: *Can someone share out how you would define a healthy relationship? What are some characteristics?*

Slide 4

- Teacher Script: *On the next slide you will watch a video called "What Makes a Relationship Healthy?" Watch and listen for the 3 main characteristics of a healthy relationship.*

Slide 5

- Play video

Slide 6

- Review slide and solicit student responses.

Slide 7

- Teacher Script: *In the video, the three main characteristics of a healthy relationship were named. Can anyone tell me what they were?*
- Click to animate slide and reveal characteristics.
- Teacher Script: *That's right - respect, equity, and communication. These are important characteristics for any relationship.*
 - *In a healthy relationship, respect often looks like valuing each other's identities, thoughts, feelings, interests, privacy, and belongings. Each person in the relationship should also respect the time the other person spends with other people, such as friends or family.*
 - *Healthy relationships also have honest communication. This means each partner feels comfortable speaking honestly and feels they are being heard. When there are disagreements, each person shares their opinion and work together to find solutions.*
 - *Additionally, healthy relationships need to be equitable. This means that one partner does not have control over the other. Both people get to make decisions in the relationship. Next, we're going to do an activity that further discusses these qualities.*

Activity - 20 minutes

Slide 8

- Teacher Script: *This activity discusses some of the characteristics of a healthy relationship. The purpose of this activity is for group members to share their knowledge and opinions about healthy relationships.*
- Facilitate activity using Activity: Healthy Relationships document and instructions.

Discussion – 8 minutes

Slide 9

- Teacher Script: *Behaviors and qualities you may notice in an unhealthy relationship are called "red flags." You might've noticed the heart waving a red flag around in the "What Makes a Relationship Healthy?" video. There are many red flags to look for in an unhealthy relationship.*
 - *One common red flag is a lack of equity. This can look like one partner always making the decisions or controlling what their partner wears, who their partner speaks to, or who their partner spends time with. This can also look like someone isolating their partner from their support system, over texting or expecting 24/7 access to their partner, or extreme jealousy.*
 - *Another red flag is a lack of respect between partners. This means someone regularly teases their partner, puts them down, or uses their insecurities against them.*
 - *Lastly, communication issues is another red flag. Communication issues involves a lack of honesty, escalating disagreements, ignoring disagreements, refusing to apologize, or apologizing but not changing the behavior. This can lead to a lot of hostility and anger. Someone's words should match up with their actions.*

Slide 10

- Teacher Script: *What could you do to help a friend that may be in an unhealthy relationship?*
- After student discussion, click to animate and review possible responses.
- *There are many things you can do to help a friend in an unhealthy relationship.*
 - *You can reach out and tell them you are worried for them. Say, "I'm worried about you" or "I've noticed some things that concern me."*
 - *You can show your support by listening to your friend; let them know when you're available to talk.*
 - *Share your knowledge with your friend; let them know that anything that happened to them is not their fault.*
 - *Help your friend develop a safety plan; this can look like making a plan to stay safe during a break up.*
 - *You can also protect your friend's privacy; don't share private information about their relationship with others without your friends' permission.*
 - *Finally, avoid victim blaming your friend; avoid making statements like, "I would not have put up with that!"*

Slide 11

- Teacher Script: *If you notice your friend using unhealthy tactics in their relationship, there are a few things you can do.*
 - *First you need to be able to see the problem; don't ignore the unhealthy behaviors.*
 - *Next, help your friend recognize the behavior.*
 - *Then, help your friend reframe the situation; instead of focusing blame on their partner, help your friend see that they contribute to issues as well.*
 - *And finally, support your friend; stay in touch and let them know you're a resource.*

Closing – 5 minutes

Slides 12

- Teacher Script: *This all may seem like a lot of work, and that's because it is! Healthy relationships take a lot of work to maintain. Relationships should also feel good and add something positive to a person's life. But there are also red flags to look out for to make sure that everyone remains safe. Even when a couple breaks up, they can still practice healthy communication and show respect for each other.*

Slide 13

- Pass out exit ticket slip, ask students to read scenarios and write prompted response.
- Note: If preferred, this could be assigned as homework instead of an exit ticket

Slide 14

- Credits

Vocabulary

Key words in this lesson:

- Healthy relationship – a relationship that is communicative, respectful, and equitable
- Red flags – warning of danger, to identify or draw attention to a problem or issue

Additional Resources

Websites:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/>

Fact sheets:

- Preventing Teen Dating Violence: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv/TDV-factsheet_508.pdf

Handouts and Assignment – on following pages

- Activity: Healthy Relationships
- Exit Ticket/Assignment: Healthy Relationships Scenarios



Activity: Healthy Relationships
7th Grade Sexual Health Education

Teacher Preparation:

- Print out station signs and worksheets
- Create 6 stations where students will meet - tape the statement signs on the walls around the room so they are visible, then place the corresponding worksheet on a table or clipboard below the sign. Try to place stations so they go numerically in order in a circle around your room.

Directions:

1. Count students off 1-6, which will assign them a group number.
2. Ask students to walk to their station based on their group number (where you posted the statement signs). Each student should bring a writing utensil with them.
3. **First cycle:** Inform students that there are 6 stations around the room with different statements about healthy relationships, and their group will visit 3 stations in this activity. Direct students to read their assigned statement and description, then respond as a group to the prompts on the worksheet. Ask students to NOT fill up the whole sheet because another group will also be writing on the same sheet. Allow 5 minutes for them to complete.
4. **Second cycle:** Have students rotate to the next station, with group 6 moving to group 1. Direct students to repeat process but that their responses should be different from the previous group's writing on the worksheet. Allow 5 minutes for them to complete.
5. **Third cycle:** Have students rotate one last time. Direct students to read the 4 responses written by the previous 2 groups. Each student in the group will then select the 2 responses they like the most, and indicate by a star or checkmark next to the statements. Allow 3 minutes for them to complete the voting.
6. **Debrief:** Ask each group to take turns reading their statement and the 2 responses with the most votes (stars/checkmarks). If time is short, the groups can return to their seats, and instead, the teacher can circulate and read these top statements to the class. Thank students for their participation and thoughtful responses.

Worksheet Answer Key (possible responses if students are having difficulty)

- 1) Each person is valued for who they are
 - Response to Question: It allows someone to fully be themselves around their partner
 - Examples: Respecting their partners pronouns; acknowledging their partner's feelings
- 2) Both people are treated as equals
 - Response to Question: So each partner feels they have a say in their relationship
 - Examples: Someone asking their partners' opinion about something that affects both of them; someone feeling secure when their partner spends the day away from them
- 3) Say what you mean, and mean what you say
 - Response to Question: It helps build trust in a relationship

- Examples: Someone keeping a promise they made to their partner; Someone telling their partner the truth even if it is hard
- 4) Each person is free to express themselves
- Response to Question: So someone feels that their partner cares about what they say and how they're feeling
 - Examples: Someone telling their partner a private thought; Someone actively listening to their partner and caring more about what their partner is saying than coming up with a response.
- 5) Each person works together and compromises in a balanced way
- Response to Question: Because if someone is always doing what their partner wants, and doesn't get anything in return, then the relationship is not equitable.
 - Examples: Two partners taking turns picking which movie to watch; Someone telling their partner what they want, listening to what their partner wants, and making an agreement.
- 6) Discuss disagreements openly and be willing to apologize
- Response to Question: Someone apologizing to their partner shows that they value them and that they are actively working on their relationship.
 - Examples: Each partner has designated/uninterrupted time to talk about their perspective; Someone saying, "I'm sorry I hurt your feelings, I will work harder to not do this in the future" to their partner.

Note: The following pages are the sheets to copy and tape at each station. Each station gets 2 sheets: The first is the station "sign" with the healthy relationship statement and description. The second is the corresponding worksheet with questions for students to answer.



**“Each person is valued
for who they are.”**

Description: When each person is valued for who they are, this is a sign of a respectful relationship. They value each other’s thoughts, feelings and identities. They don’t pressure their partner to change who they are.

①

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of something you might see or hear someone do to show they value their partner for who they are.



**“Both people are
treated as equals.”**

Description: This shows there is equity in a relationship. They help each other out, like a team. One person does not try to control what the other person does. Each person respects the time that their partner spends with friends and family.

②

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of something you might see or hear someone do to show they treat their partner as an equal.



**“Say what you mean,
and mean what you
say.”**

Description: When both people say what they mean and mean what they say, they have excellent communication. They speak honestly about how they are feeling. They follow through with what they say they are going to do.

③

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of something you might see or hear from someone who says what they mean and means what they say.

④

“Each person is free to express themselves.”

Description: Each person feels comfortable expressing themselves honestly without judgment. Each person listens well so the other person feels heard and valued. These are signs of respect.

4

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of things you might see or hear partners do when they both feel free to express themselves.



**“Each person works
together and
compromises in a
balanced way.”**

Description: When each person works together and compromises in a balanced way, this is a sign of equity in a relationship. Two people may not always want the same thing, so it’s important for each partner to voice their opinions and come to an agreement that feels good for both people. They help each other out and want the best for their partner.

5

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of something you might see or hear in a relationship with collaboration and compromise.



**“Discuss disagreements
openly and be willing to
apologize.”**

Description: When there is good communication in a relationship, both people discuss disagreements openly. They work together to find solutions. If someone makes a mistake or hurts their partner’s feelings, they apologize and change their behavior.

⑥

Question: Why is this important in a relationship?

Examples: Give 2 specific examples of something you might see or hear in a relationship when they have good communication to work through disagreements.



Exit Ticket/Assignment: Healthy Relationships Scenarios
7th Grade Sexual Health Education

Please read the following scenarios and determine if you believe the relationship is healthy or unhealthy. Please explain why you believe the relationship is healthy or unhealthy in the space below.

Scenario #1: After talking during lunch and texting for a few weeks, Sam asked Ty to be their girlfriend, and she said yes. Their first date was planned for Friday night at the movies, and they were excited. At the last minute, Ty had to cancel because she realized she had too much homework. Sam was disappointed but wanted Ty to do well in school. Since they couldn't see each other, they decided to FaceTime over the weekend instead. Ty called Sam on Saturday, but Sam didn't pick up which made Ty upset. But, instead of assuming Sam was ignoring her and sending them an angry text, she trusted that Sam would call her back as soon as possible. Later that night, Sam did call her, apologized for missing her earlier call and said they had a surprise for her on Monday to make it up.

Scenario #2: Maria and James have been dating on and off for about three months. They both really like each other and want to be together but are often worried that the other is talking to someone else. James broke up with Maria after seeing her walking in the hall with another boy, and only agreed to date her again if she never spoke to that boy again. Maria laughed at James for being so upset but agreed to what he asked. At school, even though James feels weird about holding hands, Maria makes him do it because she wants everyone to know they're together. After school, the two almost always go to a park so James can play basketball, and Maria complains about wanting to do something else.