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Healthy relationships and sexual health

Year 7-8, Lesson 1: Healthy and unhealthy relationships



Healthy and unhealthy relationships

This lesson pack for key stages 3–4 explores healthy, positive relationships, harmful relationship behaviours and sexual health. This is the first of two lessons for year 7–8 students, and focuses on features of healthy relationships as well as how to recognise and respond to unhealthy behaviours in relationships.

Learning objective

To learn about the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Resource 1: *Scenarios* [one per pair]

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- describe healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours
- assess factors that can influence someone's attitudes, expectations or behaviours in relationships
- identify the features of healthy, positive relationships
- explain how to respond to unhealthy behaviours in relationships

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include relevant subject knowledge for this topic, guidance on creating a safe learning environment, and curriculum links.

Baseline assessment

Introduction (Slides 9–10, 3 mins)

Begin the lesson by introducing or reinforcing the ground rules, including the right to pass and no personal stories. Introduce the learning objective and outcomes on **slide 10**.

Explain that if students have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Baseline assessment activity (Slide 11, 10 mins)

Working on their own without discussing their ideas, ask students to draw two large circles on a new page in their books. In one circle they should write the features and qualities of a healthy relationship, and in the other, behaviours and qualities that might be seen in an unhealthy relationship. Then, around the outside of both circles, ask them to write what might positively or negatively influence the way people behave in these relationships. Circulate during the activity, then afterwards take some feedback to get a sense of what the class already know and believe in relation to healthy and unhealthy relationships, or any misconceptions they may have. This will help you tailor your teaching throughout the lesson – for example, if students cannot identify what might influence the way someone behaves in a relationship you may wish to spend more time on the third activity.

Core activities

Healthy and unhealthy behaviours (Slide 12, 15 mins)

Ask students to read **Resource 1: Scenarios**. In pairs, ask them to highlight/underline behaviours that they think should be present in healthy relationships and, in a different colour, highlight/underline examples of unhealthy relationship behaviours. They should then annotate the scenarios with what healthy or unhealthy behaviours they think are being shown (for example, 'treating someone with respect').

Take feedback on examples of healthy and unhealthy behaviours. Students might suggest:

- **Healthy behaviours:** *Treating others with respect, listening to and accepting each other's choices and boundaries, communicating honestly about feelings, being supportive during difficult situations, making shared decisions, allowing people to be themselves without pressure or judgement. Healthy relationships help people feel safe, valued and comfortable being who they are.*
- **Unhealthy behaviours:** *Pressuring or manipulating someone, ignoring or making fun of another person's feelings, not respecting when someone says 'no' or shows they are uncomfortable, being dishonest or avoiding communication, behaving in ways that make others feel embarrassed, anxious, excluded or upset.*



Support: Ask students to focus on scenarios 1-3, which will still ensure a range of behaviours are explored.



Challenge: Ask students to discuss and write down any additional healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviours they can think of, not shown in the scenarios.

Attitudes, expectations and behaviours (Slides 13-14, 15 mins)

Explain that people might develop different attitudes towards, or have different expectations of, relationships, which can influence the way they behave. In small groups, ask students to discuss what might be influencing the attitudes, expectations or behaviours of the characters in **Resource 1** – both positively and negatively. (Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific students' circumstances and/or faith, or cultural attitudes to inclusive relationships, to ensure students are respectful during this activity). Take feedback.

Students might suggest:

- **Family members** – parents/carers, siblings or wider family members might show particular behaviours in their relationships, or have expectations of what relationships should be like, based on their own experiences.
- **Friends/peers** – how someone's friends or peers behave, or the attitudes they express, can influence their own views about relationships. Someone might feel pressure to act in certain ways or say certain things based on what others think.
- **Religion or culture** – someone's religion or culture might have expectations about relationships, both what they look like and the behaviours expected within them.
- **Media/social media** – what someone sees represented online, in film or on TV can influence their ideas about relationships, e.g. the ways in which males and females should behave, how someone should express their feelings.
- **Gender stereotypes** – stereotypical ideas about how boys, men, women and girls should behave might influence someone's behaviours in relationships and how they treat their partner.

Then, drawing on the scenarios, ask groups to create a list of qualities they think everyone should expect in a healthy relationship. After a few minutes, ask each group to select their top three qualities and share these with the class. Create a whole-class list, ticking any qualities that are suggested more than once.

Using **slide 14**, highlight the importance of care, equality, honesty, respect, trust, consent, communication and safety in relationships. Explain that it's also important that someone develops a healthy relationship with themselves, recognising their own values and interests and what they bring to relationships with others.



Support: Share some features of healthy relationships with students (e.g. care, equality, honesty, respect, trust, consent, communication, safety) and ask them to decide which they think are most important and why.



Challenge: Ask students to suggest ways someone might show these qualities in their relationships with family and friends or in romantic relationships.

Responding to unhealthy behaviours (Slide 15, 10 mins)

In pairs, assign students one of the scenarios that show unhealthy relationship behaviours (2, 4, 5 or 6). Ask them to discuss:

- what the characters in their scenario might do or say next in response to the unhealthy behaviours/expectations/attitudes being shown
- how the relationship might be improved in future.

Take feedback, drawing out key learning:

- *Someone might respond to unhealthy behaviours by: explaining how they are feeling; not making demands of the other person; speaking up and saying why the behaviour is upsetting/harmful/disrespectful and how it makes them feel; setting clear boundaries (e.g. explaining why they want to spend time with friends/family as well as with their partner); talking about the behaviours they would like both people to show in the relationship; asking for advice or support from others; making choices that protect their own wellbeing and feelings of self-worth.*
- *Relationships can improve when people communicate honestly, listen to each other's feelings, challenge unfair expectations or stereotypes, respect differences and, if appropriate, make changes to their behaviour to create safe, respectful and equal relationships.*

Reflection and endpoint assessment

Endpoint assessment (Slide 16, 5 mins)

Ask students to demonstrate their learning by returning to their baseline assessment activity. Remind them of the learning outcomes and ask them to make any changes to their original answers, or add in any new learning from this lesson, in a different colour pen. Show the prompts on **slide 16** to help them:

- What are the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships?
- What might influence someone's attitudes or behaviours in relationships?
- How might someone respond to unhealthy behaviours in relationships?

This will help to evidence students' progress and highlight any gaps that may need addressing in future lessons on this or related topics.

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 17, 2 mins)

Use **slide 17** to remind students where they can access help and support if they have concerns or worries related to relationships. They can always speak to a trusted adult at home or in school, such as their teacher, head of year or the designated safeguarding lead. They can also find support online, through trusted websites such as:

- Childline www.childline.org.uk; 0800 1111

Extension/embedding activity

Relationships on TV (Slide 18)

Ask students to identify two relationships within a television show that illustrate healthy or unhealthy relationships and explain the key reasons why they think this.

Healthy relationships and sexual health

Year 7-8, Lesson 2: Managing conflict



Managing conflict

This lesson pack for key stages 3–4 explores healthy, positive relationships, harmful relationship behaviours and sexual health. This is the second of two lessons for year 7–8 students. It focuses on positive communication with family and friends and how to manage relationship conflict in families.

Learning objective

To learn how to manage relationship conflict.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- explain how effective communication can improve relationships in families
- explain different communication styles and their likely impacts
- assess examples of effective communication

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Resource 1: *Communication strategies* [one per pair]
- Resource 1a: *Teacher suggestions* [teacher copy, cut up as needed for support option]
- Resource 2: *Conflict scenarios* [one cut-up scenario per small group]
- Resource 3: *Storyboard scenarios* [one cut-up scenario per pair]
- Resource 3a: *Teacher notes* [teacher copy]

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include relevant subject knowledge for this topic, guidance on creating a safe learning environment, and curriculum links.

This lesson could be upsetting for students with a family history of violence. And as you cannot know exactly who may be personally affected by the lesson, give all students a warning ahead of the lesson and put appropriate arrangements in place for those who need to leave or miss the lesson.

Baseline assessment

Introduction (Slides 9–10, 2 mins)

Remind students of the ground rules, and introduce the learning objective and outcomes on **slide 10**.

Explain that if students have worries or questions during or after the lesson that they do not want to raise in front of the class, they can write their question on a piece of paper, anonymously or with their name, and put it in the question box.

Baseline assessment activity (Slide 11, 8 mins)

Ask students to divide a page into four and write their answers to the following questions, one in each quarter:

- How might it feel to argue or disagree with people?
- How might these feelings impact someone's actions?
- Why does the way someone responds to conflict matter?
- How might someone manage or respond to conflict?

Take feedback from the class to identify priorities for the lesson and understand any misconceptions. For example, if students are unsure about ways to manage conflict, you may wish to spend more time on the second and third activities. Students should not add new ideas to their work during feedback, as this will be revisited at the end of the lesson to demonstrate progress.

Core activities

Communication strategies (Slide 12, 10 mins)

Explain that communicating effectively is an important skill, especially when managing conflict with others. Being aware of different communication styles and strategies can support this.

In pairs, give students **Resource 1: Communication strategies** and ask them to add examples and a description of likely body language to each strategy.

Take feedback, using **Resource 1a: Teacher suggestions** to support you.



Support: Cut up **Resource 1a: Teacher suggestions** and ask students to sort these cards into the correct places on the grid.



Challenge: Ask students to script an example outcome for a situation where one or more of these communication strategies is used.

Conflict scenarios (Slide 13, 10 mins)

In small groups, give students a scenario from **Resource 2: Conflict scenarios**. Ask each group to discuss the scenario and decide how best to respond, using their understanding of communication styles. Remind students that some situations may need a very different approach to ensure safety – for example, it can be dangerous to confront a violent or intoxicated person.

Take feedback on each scenario. Highlight situations where adapting communication styles and other strategies are unlikely to be enough to manage the situation. Students should recognise there are limitations and challenges even when someone tries to communicate more constructively, and that an external voice can be very helpful in such circumstances. Remind students that there may be times when a very strong, robust approach is required, or when a person may need to walk away from a situation to stay safe.



Support: Give students additional prompts, such as:

- Is it safe for the character to manage this situation themselves?
- How could the character resolve this issue?
- What support might they need to help them manage the situation?



Challenge: Ask students to create a 'top tips' checklist for managing conflict.

Managing conflict (Slide 14, 15 mins)

Give pairs a scenario from **Resource 3: Storyboard scenarios**. Ask them to create a storyboard to demonstrate ways to manage the conflict, including speech and thought bubbles for the characters. (Students could fold a blank sheet of paper into six to create their storyboard sections.)

Agree suitable success criteria, for example:

- Realistic portrayal of a situation
- Positive conflict resolution strategies used
- Highlights further sources of support.

Ensure students focus on ways to assert boundaries and provide effective conflict resolution strategies that feel well matched to the situation concerned.

Ask pairs to peer assess another pair's storyboard using the agreed criteria. Invite volunteers to describe or read out their work, but do not ask students to role-play use of manipulative or aggressive language. **Resource 3a: Teacher notes** provides key elements to focus on during discussion.

Reflection and endpoint assessment

Endpoint assessment (Slide 15, 10 mins)

Ask students to demonstrate their learning by returning to the questions from the baseline assessment activity. Remind them of the learning outcomes for the lesson and ask them to make any changes to their original answers, or add in any new learning from this lesson, in a different colour pen. This will help to evidence students' progress and highlight any gaps that may need addressing in future lessons on this or related topics.

If time allows, take feedback from students and collate a class list of strategies for effective conflict management, which could include:

- Supporting own wellbeing so they are better able to deal with conflict when it happens

- Practising self-regulation strategies to help them manage their emotions and behaviour. For example, using slow-paced breathing or progressive muscle relaxation; reappraising situations by thinking differently about what has happened and adopting more helpful thoughts¹
- Pausing to notice and name emotions, and reflect before responding
- Communicating effectively
- Seeing things from different perspectives
- Coming up with different practical 'win-win' solutions
- Negotiating and compromising where safe and fair to do so
- Stepping away from escalating situations (where people seem to be getting more and more angry)

Signposting support

Signposting support (Slide 16, 5 mins)

Use **slide 16** to remind students where they can access help and support if they have concerns or worries related to relationships. They can always speak to a trusted adult at home or in school, such as their teacher, head of year or the designated safeguarding lead. They can also find support online, through trusted websites such as:

- Childline www.childline.org.uk; 0800 1111

Extension/embedding activity

Blog post (Slide 17)

Ask students to create a blog post featuring top tips for managing conflict. This should include the strategies discussed, effective communication styles and sources of support.

¹ Download our teacher handbook and lesson pack [Wellbeing for Life](#) to learn more about self-regulation strategies.