

# Healthy Relationships

## *Lesson Plan*

**Resource:** H&PE Elementary Resources

**Unit:** Human Development and Sexual Health

**Grade(s):** 8

**Lesson:** 1 of 5

## H&PE Curriculum Expectations

**2019 H&PE Curriculum Expectations:** A1.1, A1.4, A1.5, A1.6, D2.3, D3.3

## Materials

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)
- **Teacher Resource: Checklist**

## Learning Goals

- We are learning to use our critical thinking skills to analyse the attractions and benefits associated with being in a healthy relationship, as well as the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for ourselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy.
- We are learning to use our self awareness and critical thinking skills to understand consent and the skills we need to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity.

## Overall Assessment

Use the Teacher Resource: Checklist to observe and provide written and verbal feedback on students' ability to analyse the attractions and benefits associated with being in a healthy relationship, including the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy, their understanding of consent and skills needed to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity.

## Minds-On

Share the learning goals with the class and co-construct success criteria with students. Consider posting the success criteria in the learning space for reference throughout the lesson.

Use the following teacher prompt to lead a group discussion to establish ground rules/agreements (consider displaying the common ground rules/agreements in the learning space for reference throughout the unit).

**Teacher prompt:** "What rules or agreements do we need to have, to create a safe and inclusive learning space for everyone?"

*Student responses:*

- "We need to listen to each other and respect what others say."
- "Don't use put downs; be sensitive to others' feelings and be careful about making careless remarks."
- "We need to be respectful of each other's differences."
- "It's okay to pass if we don't want to speak."
- "We need to feel that it is ok to ask questions we have; don't ask personal questions of others."
- "We need to use correct names of body parts and terminology to show respect for our body."
- "We need to remember to discuss topics regarding puberty responsibly outside the classroom, so we have a respect for confidentiality."
- "When we refer to another person, use "Someone I know..." rather than the person's name."
- "It's okay to have fun."

Divide students into groups of 4-5 and provide access to a shared document. Have groups create 4 circles on their document, labelling one circle “Benefits”, one “Drawbacks”, one “Risks” and one “Considerations”. Use the following teachers prompts to have groups list some of the benefits, drawbacks, and risks of being in a relationship, recording their ideas in the appropriate circle.

- **Teacher prompt:** “There are pros and cons to being in a healthy relationship, and when you are in a relationship, there are positive aspects, drawbacks, and risks. There is a wide range of intimate behaviours that people can use to show care and connection, and there are different levels of risk associated with different levels of intimacy (e.g., vulnerability in a very close relationship). Intimate behaviours can also include holding hands, hugging, kissing, touching bodies and genitals, and engaging in sexual intercourse in a sexual relationship. All of these factors are important to consider. What are the benefits and drawbacks of being in a relationship? What are some of the risks associated with the different levels of intimacy in a relationship?”

Student responses:

- - “Having someone to confide in, that you know you can trust.”
  - “Having someone to support you and encourage you when you are facing challenges.”
  - “Having someone who really understands you.”
  - “Having fun with someone you really like.”
  - “One drawback is that you can really get hurt when relationships end or trust is broken.”
  - “When you have a partner, sometimes you might start hanging out with different people or spending less time with some of your friends.”
  - “You might have less time to spend with family.”
  - “In more sexually intimate relationships, there is a risk of contracting a sexually transmitted or blood-borne infection (STBBI). It can also affect your long-term health if a STBBI is not treated.”
  - “There is a risk of becoming a parent before you are ready.”
  - “If the relationship is not a healthy one, it could lead to sexual harassment and exploitation or potentially violence.”

- **Teacher prompt:** “When considering the level of intimacy that is appropriate in a relationship, what does a person need to think about?”

*Student responses:*

- - “You have to be careful to avoid neglecting other relationships and activities that are important to you as you become more involved with a partner.”
  - “Both people need to consider their own values and beliefs and treat each other’s choices and limits with respect. If one partner chooses to abstain from a sexual activity – for example, a person might want to kiss but not want to have any genital contact – the other partner needs to respect that decision.”
  - “Both partners need to have the confidence and comfort level to talk about how they can show their affection while respecting each other’s decisions.”

Invite groups to share their responses with the class, encouraging other groups to add new ideas to their own document. Use the responses to clarify and extend student understanding of the benefits, drawbacks, risks for themselves and others, and considerations they need to think about in relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy.

## Action

Write the word “Consent” for students to reference. Use the following prompts to lead a large group discussion about consent. Have groups record class responses on their shared document.

**Teacher prompt:** “Relationship skills are necessary for partners to openly and honestly talk about what is comfortable, safe, and most importantly, consensual in an intimate relationship. It includes having a good understanding of consent. What are some of the important things that we need to understand about consent and how consent is communicated?”

*Student responses:*

- “For any sexual activity to happen, everyone needs to agree to it before starting it.”
- “Anyone can change their mind or stop at any time. If someone says yes and then says no, the activity has to stop right away.”

- “Just because an activity was ok one time, it doesn’t mean it is always ok. Consent has to be given every time.”
- “Consent can be a verbal, physical or emotional action. It involves paying attention to other individuals involved and checking in with physical and emotional cues. If they appear to be hesitant or uncomfortable then the activity must stop.”
- “Only ‘yes’ means yes and it should be from an engaged and enthusiastic partner.”
- “All partners have a responsibility to make sure everyone consents to an activity and that consent is ongoing. They have to continue to check in on each other.”
- “Consent can’t be given when there is manipulation or threats.”

*(The Student responses were adapted from: Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights. (n.d.). [Consent.](#))*

Have students remain in their groups. Using Direct Instruction, explain to students that pressure can exist in relationships (e.g., relating to partner intimacy, or choice of social activities with their partner), as well as in everyday life (e.g., with friends, family, or teammates). Being aware of ways people can exert pressure on others is often the first step in being able to resist the pressure.

Use a [Popcorn](#) strategy for groups to generate and share their ideas about ways people can exert pressure on others. Invite members of the group to “pop-up” to share their group’s ideas. Instruct groups to add the ideas to their document.

*Student responses:*

- Bad/good logic (e.g., “You are a good person/bad person if you do/don’t do it.”)
- Encouragement
- Put-downs
- Modelling
- Guilt
- Incentives or rewards (e.g., “You’ll get this if you do this.”)
- Dares
- Rejection (e.g., “You won’t be included in a group if you don’t do it.”)
- Trust (e.g., exploitation of trust in a relationship to pressure someone)

- Threats
- False generalization (e.g., “Everybody is doing it.”)
- Curiosity
- Intimidation

Post the following scenarios for students to reference:

- The person you have been dating wants to visit you while you are babysitting. They have been very forward with the physical part of the relationship, and you do not want to be put into an awkward situation when you’re doing your job.
- You are watching a movie with a friend, and they start touching you in ways that suggests they are more interested in sexual feelings than in watching the movie. You want to say “no” in a way that clearly communicates your feelings without attracting too much attention in the movie theatre.
- You’re at the park after school with your partner. You don’t want to make out with them but you know they want to. You’re not sure what to say.
- You are at a party, and you overhear a friend say to someone, “come on just do it, I dare you”. The person says that they don't want to. Your friend then says, “well if you don't, I'm going to tell everyone you have a crush on [blank].”

Tell students that when responding to pressure, it is important to think about their beliefs and choices and how to express themselves. It is also important to know how to support someone as a bystander. Practicing can help them develop the skills needed to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity and be a supportive bystander. Have groups select one of the scenarios and create a response or describe an action that is assertive and communicates their choice (e.g., “No, I don’t want to right now.”; “No, this is not the appropriate place and time.” or how to show their hesitancy or resistance non-verbally). Have groups include ways to be a supportive bystander if they see someone pressuring someone else or if the person looks uncomfortable (e.g., asking the person who's being pressured if they are ok, if they would like to do something else; sitting with them and supporting them so they don't feel as pressured, seeking help from a trusted adult). Invite groups to share their responses with the class, using the sharing to emphasize that not hearing an enthusiastic “yes” is always a red light just as hearing “no” is always a red light.

## Consolidation

Have students individually complete an [Exit Card](#) responding to the following questions.

- What are 3 ways an intimate relationship affects other relationships in a person's life?
- What is one benefit, one risk, and one drawback of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy?
- What is one consideration a person needs to think about in relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy?
- What is one new thing you learned today or what is one thing you are still unsure of and would like to know more about?

## Note to Teachers

### Suggestions for Dealing with Disclosures by Students

- Be aware of and respect linguistic differences, ethno-cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, and any other dimensions of diversity that may be involved in the student's concerns or questions.
- Consider the student's feelings and be affirmative in your attitudes: "That's a good question," or "It's great that you are thinking about these things – they are important."
- Maintain a calm and non-judgmental demeanour.
- If you are not sure about the amount of depth behind a question, or whether there are nuances that should be made clear, ask the student to clarify. For example, you can say, "Tell me more about what you'd like to know and how I can support you."
- Know who to go to for help if you need it. Be familiar with internal board support as well as community agencies or organizations that provide contact information for resource people within the school and the community to whom you can refer students.

### Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection

If any person, including “a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children,” has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the act requires that the person report their suspicions “immediately” to a children’s aid society and provide the information on which the suspicions are based. Therefore teachers, principals, and other professionals who, in the course of performing their professional or official duties, suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, must report this information without delay to a children’s aid society. *(Extracted from: Government of Ontario. (2021). **Program Policy Memorandum 9: Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection**.)*