

Activity 4 – Scenes of Dating – Healthy or Unhealthy?

Notes for educators

This educational activity is an opportunity for girls and boys to learn what separates healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as what each person values in a romantic relationship. Consider inviting your local youth counselling service/school guidance department to a portion of the group to talk about counselling and other services and information that is available to youth that would be important to them in dating relationships.

Ontario Ministry of Education, Health and Physical Education Curriculum Linkages

Healthy Living: Grade 5

Overall Expectations

- apply strategies to deal with threats to personal safety (e.g., in response to harassment) and to prevent injury (e.g., from physical assault);

Growth and Development

- identify strategies to deal positively with stress and pressures that result from relationships with family and friends;
- identify factors (e.g., trust, honesty, caring) that enhance healthy equal relationships with friends, family, and peers;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- explain how people's actions (e.g., bullying, excluding others) can affect the feelings and reactions of others;

Healthy Living: Grade 6

- apply a problem-solving/decision-making process to address issues related to friends, peers, and family relationships;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- describe and respond appropriately to potentially violent situations relevant to themselves (e.g., threats, harassment, violence in the media);

Healthy Living: Grade 7

- describe age-appropriate matters related to sexuality (e.g., the need to develop good interpersonal skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively with the opposite sex);
 - explain how harassment relates to personal safety;
- Growth and Development*
- use effective communication skills (e.g., refusal skills, active listening) to deal with various relationships and situations;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- identify people and resources that can support someone experiencing harassment;

Healthy Living: Grade 8

Overall Expectations

- identify the physical, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects of healthy sexuality (e.g., respect for life, ethical questions in relationships, contraception);
- identify local support groups and community organizations (e.g., public health offices) that provide information or services related to health and well-being;

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- analyse situations (e.g., hitchhiking, gang violence, violence in relationships) that are potentially dangerous to personal safety;
- identify support services (e.g., the school guidance department, shelters, Kids' Help Phone) that assist victims of violence, and explain how to access them;

You will need:

- Flipchart or chalk board, flip chart markers or chalk
- One photocopy of Is this healthy? Dating situation sheet, cut on the dotted lines, one cut out portion for each student

- Some pencils and pens, one for every two youth
- Some black pieces of paper, one for every two youth

Activity (45 minutes)

1. Recall ground rules for all classroom discussions. Remind youth that you are counting on them to enable each student to respond as an individual and also as a responsible member of a community who is owed respect, is not measured against a stereotype and who will not participate in stereotyping. Ask the group if anyone has anything they would like to share from their journal entry last week.

Last week's journal questions were:

1. What actions can we take individually and as a group to get out of the 'gender box'?
2. Thinking about the survey we did last time, how does everyone make it hard to not live 'in the gender box'.

2. Remind youth that we have been talking about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Explain that boys and girls either their age or older is when many youth start dating or romantic relationships.

3. Introduce the topic with your youth group. Explain that boys and girls their age (11 to 14) and older start dating and may soon have interest in romantic relationships. Learning how to have healthy equal relationships when you are young will help them set healthy boundaries as adults.

4. Briefly review how good communication — good listening and expressing your feelings and views — is key to good romantic relationships and good friendships. Acknowledge that a relationship is a product of the effort both partners put into it. Discuss how learning to deal productively and respect fully with conflict is important in building a satisfying relationship.

5. Hand out a *"Is this healthy? Dating Situations"* to each youth and one by one, ask them to read it out loud to the group and decide if it is healthy or not. Briefly discuss each scenario with the group. Classify each Is this healthy? Dating Situation on the flipchart using a t-chart. Possible questions to ask the youth for each scenario include:

- How did the characters communicate?
- What was the conflict?
- How did the two characters deal with it?
- Did the characters show respect for both themselves and their partner?
- Did the characters respect each other's boundaries?
- What kind of relationship is this? (healthy or unhealthy?)
- What could you say if you were the character who was being treated without respect?

6. Put the whole group into pairs. Ask each pair to make their own Is this healthy? Dating Situation over the next 5 minutes.

7. Ask each pair to present their Is this healthy? Dating Situation to the whole group.

Wrap Up (15 Minutes)

Ask youth to identify where someone could go or phone if they were in an unhealthy relationship (for example, guidance department, friend, adult they trust, local crisis centre or women's shelter).

Ask each student to state the one quality they most want and admire in healthy equal relationships.

Hand Outs

If you haven't done so already please hand out a button to each youth who participated in the activity so they can visit www.whiteribbon.ca and see what other youth are saying about the problem of men's violence against women.

This Week's Journal Questions

1. Do you think you ever want to be in a relationship in your life?
2. If so, who do you imagine the other person to be? What is she/he like?
3. Who can you talk to if you think your relationship or a friend's relationship is unhealthy?
4. What could you tell a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship?
5. Where can a person call to get help or just to talk about their relationship?

Worksheet 4 - Is This Healthy? Dating Situations

<p>He calls her stupid during an argument.</p>	<p>You and your friends go to the corner store to get some candy and pop. Two of the guys start looking at magazines of naked women and talk about their bodies. This makes the girls in the group uncomfortable but they laugh it off.</p>	<p>He gives her a black eye to remind her that he is the boss in the relationship</p>
<p>You take turns picking the band or television show you'll watch</p>	<p>When they get angry at each other, they don't speak about it right away but they always talk it out later</p>	<p>When they are together, they get along well and have fun. When they are in front of his friends, he acts like a jerk towards her.</p>
<p>Your boyfriend/girlfriend says they don't like your friends</p>	<p>Even when you have different ideas about life and school, you can respect each other's views.</p>	<p>They tell each other when they are going through a hard time at home or school.</p>
<p>A group of friends are hanging out at the mall. He arrives and asks her how long she's been there and then he gives her the silent treatment because she was out without him.</p>	<p>He tells his friends that he 'scored' with her last night when all they did was hang out.</p>	<p>He is pressuring her to do more than kissing.</p>
<p>When she doesn't return his cell phone calls right away, he keeps calling her phone. Sometimes she has 83 missed calls.</p>	<p>He feels like he always has to be strong when they are together. When she is angry at him, he listens carefully to what she's saying.</p>	<p>When he doesn't agree with her, he laughs at her and tells her she is stupid.</p>
<p>When she is angry at him, he listens carefully to what she's saying.</p>	<p>Sometimes he yells at her and she starts to cry. She says sorry for stuff that she didn't do.</p>	<p>When one of you has some good news, you celebrate together. You might even get each other a present.</p>
<p>They are getting ready for a camping trip and before they go, they make a list of what they need and do the shopping together.</p>	<p>When they go out together he's always looking at other girl's and women's bodies. Sometimes he comments on how "hot" they are.</p>	<p>He often tells her how much he cares for her.</p>
<p>They both feel like they can trust each other and it matters to him what she thinks and it matters to her what he thinks.</p>	<p>When they go out with all of their friends to the movies, they sit together but still talk and laugh the group. They don't feel threatened but think this is fun</p>	