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## Dating Violence Lesson Plan (Grades 7 & 8)



**Note:** Contact us [by e-mail](#) to receive the Lesson Plan PDF version. Requests will be answered between 7:00am and 3:00pm, Monday to Friday.

### Objectives:

- To learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- To discuss the different types of abuse that may exist in romantic relationships as well as the signs that a relationship may be unhealthy.
- To list supports that are available to youth.

### Material:

Reference Documents are found at the end of this lesson plan

#### Handouts

Activity #1: [Healthy or Unhealthy \(7-8.1 Reference\)](#)

Activity #2: [Recognize Abuse \(7-8.2 Reference\)](#)

Activity #3: [Who Can Help? \(7-8.3 Reference\)](#)

- Activity #1: [Healthy or Unhealthy \(7-8.1 Reference\)](#)
- Activity #2: [Recognize Abuse \(7-8.2 Reference\)](#)
- Activity #3: [Who Can Help? \(7-8.3 Reference\)](#)
- Activity #4: [Test Your Knowledge! \(7-8.4 Reference\)](#)

### Handouts

- Activity #1: [Healthy or Unhealthy \(7-8.1 Handout\)](#)
- Activity #2: [Recognize Abuse \(7-8.2 Handout\)](#)
- Activity #3: [Who Can Help? \(7-8.3 Handout\)](#)

### Other Materials

- SMART board/chalk board to summarize responses on
- Chart paper and markers for groups to use
- Computer/projector to display slides (optional)
- Index Cards

## Time:

- A. Icebreaker
- B. Introduction: **5 minutes**
- C. Activity #1: Healthy or Unhealthy: **15 minutes**
- D. Activity #2: Recognize Abuse – Chart: **15 minutes**
- E. Activity #3: Who Can Help?: **5 minutes**
- F. Activity #4: Test Your Knowledge!: **15 minutes**
- G. Conclusion: **5 minutes**

Total: **60 minutes**

## Presenter Preparation:

- Review the [Dating Violence section](#) of the Centre for Youth Crime Prevention.
- Review the [Objectives](#) of this lesson plan.
- Identify ways in which you are personally linked to the subject matter. This presentation is general in nature, and will be more effective if you tailor it to your personal experiences, the audience and your community.
- Guest speakers can really have an impact. If there is someone in your community who has been affected by dating violence, invite them to speak with the youth. NOTE: Activities will need to be removed to allow for this adjustment.
- Make sure the teacher has a copy of the "How Healthy is Your Relationship?" self-assessment and has the students answer questions prior to the presentation.
- Print the lesson plan and the Reference Documents.
- Print required handouts. Make a few extra copies just to be sure.
- Gather materials needed.
- Ensure your location has any technology you require (computer, projector, SMART Board etc.).

## Lesson:

### A) Icebreaker

- Have the cartoon strip on the board as students are coming in.
- Use the cartoon as an icebreaker.
- Briefly discuss how dating violence is portrayed in the cartoon.



[ [Image Description/Larger Image](#) ]

## B) Introduction

- Introduce yourself
- Tell the students about your job and why you are there to talk to them. Tell the students that in today's class, they will talk about dating violence. They will discuss the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, go over the types of abuse that may exist and signs that a relationship may be unhealthy. Also, identify supports that are available to those who are in unhealthy relationships.
- If you are a police officer, briefly discuss the role of police officers when it comes to dating violence.
- Pass out one index card to each student. Explain that this card is to be used anonymously for any questions that students may have during the presentation and do not want to ask out loud. Students are to write their question on the card and officers will collect them towards the end of the presentation and answer the questions.

## C) Activity #1: Healthy or Unhealthy?

**Goal:** To differentiate between a healthy and an unhealthy relationship.

**Type:** Choose the correct response

**Time:** 15 minutes

### Step #1:

- Place students in groups of 3 or 4.
- Ask the students to define what a "healthy relationship" and an "unhealthy relationship" means.

- Invite a student to volunteer to write the answers down on a chalk board, SMART Board or chart paper under the categories "What is a healthy relationship?" and for "What is an unhealthy relationship?"

Use the phrases below to ensure that important characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships are discussed:

- In a **healthy relationship**, both partners:
  - Treat each other with respect
  - Listen to each other
  - Talk to each other openly and honestly
  - Say good things about each other
  - Enjoy spending time with each other
  - Trust each other
  - Accept each other's limits
- In an **unhealthy relationship**, one person (or in some cases, both people):
  - Disrespects their partner
  - Distrusts their partner
  - Uses threats of harm, physical and/or emotional violence to get his or her way
  - Is jealous and/or controlling (about what their partner does or who they talk to)
  - Takes their anger out on their partner

### Step #2:

- Once a general consensus is reached on what constitutes a healthy and an unhealthy relationship, distribute [\*Activity #1: Healthy or Unhealthy? \(7-8.1 Handout\)\*](#) to the students.
- Tell students they have 5 minutes to read the scenarios and indicate whether each scenario is an example of a healthy or an unhealthy relationship.

### Step #3:

- Review the answers by asking students to share their responses. As you are going through the answers, make sure to discuss what makes each example healthy or unhealthy. Answers can be found in [\*Activity #1: Healthy or Unhealthy? \(7-8.1 Reference\)\*](#) at the end of this lesson plan.

## D) Activity #2: Recognize Abuse

**Goal:** Students will discuss the different types of abuse that may exist in dating violence, as well as the signs that someone may be in an unhealthy relationship

**Type:** Choose the correct response

**Time:** 15 minutes

### Step #1:

- Distribute [\*Activity #2: Recognize Abuse \(7-8.2 Handout\)\*](#) to the students.
- Have students remain in their groups of 3 or 4 from Activity #1. With their groups, ask them to

read over the chart and fill in the appropriate type of abuse on the back of the sheet "*Recognize Abuse*" to become familiar with the different types of abuse in dating violence.

- Additionally, ask students to create a few tweets about either recognizing the types of abuse or recognizing the occurrence of dating violence in general. The tweets are to be handed in at the end of class.

### **Step #2:**

- With the students, list one sign of abuse as an example for each type of abuse indicated in the chart. Ask the students to continue adding examples of possible signs that someone may be a victim of each of the different types of abuse, stating that it is very possible that some signs may be used in more than one type of violence.

### **Step #3:**

- Ask the students to share their answers (examples can be found on: [Activity #2: Recognize Abuse 7-8.2 Reference](#)) at the end of the lesson. Stress that while some signs of dating violence occurring may be very obvious, others may not be and you never really know what someone may be experiencing.
- Remind students that if they or someone they know is a victim of dating violence, they should talk to an adult they trust immediately.

## **E) Activity #3: Who Can Help?**

**Goal:** To list supports that are available for youth

**Type:** A worksheet

**Time:** 5 minutes

### **Step #1:**

- Tell students that sometimes we may find ourselves in situations that we don't know how to get out of. We might have a hard time admitting to our friends and family that we are in an unhealthy relationship, or that we are a victim of dating violence. Or, perhaps we recognize that we are not treating our partner the way they deserve to be treated. No matter what we're dealing with, it's important to know that we are not alone; there is always someone who can help.

### **Step #2:**

- Provide students with a copy of [Activity #3: Who Can Help? \(7-8.3 Handout\)](#). Tell the groups to list any sources of support they can think of. Prompt the groups by suggesting that they think about people in their lives, school, and community when filling out the page. Give the groups about one minute to complete the worksheet. When they are finished, ask each group for their suggestions and write them down on the chart paper/SMART board. The teacher should post them on the wall in the classroom as a future reference for students.

## **F) Activity #4: Test Your Knowledge!**

**Goal:** Summarize the information delivered throughout the presentation and dispel some of the myths surrounding dating violence.

**Type:** Jeopardy Style Game

**Time:** 15 minutes

### Step #1:

- Separate students into two teams and read the questions found on the [\*Activity #4: Test Your Knowledge! \(7-8.4 Reference\)\*](#) sheet out loud. The first team to raise their hand gets to answer the question. If they get it right, they receive the point and if they get it wrong, the other team gets a chance to answer. After all the questions have been read, the team with the most points wins.

### Step #2:

- Keep note of the response that they did not mention and discuss it with the group once the game is complete.

## G) Conclusion

- To conclude the lesson, summarize the important points and highlights of your discussion throughout the session.
- Collect all index cards from the students. Take some time to answer any questions from the cards that the students may have had.
- Briefly discuss the self-assessment that was done at the beginning of class, and what it means to get mostly A's, B's or C's.
- Leave students with information about how to contact you if they have any follow up questions they didn't want to ask in class.

## Reference Documents

### Activity #1: Healthy or Unhealthy? (7-8.1 Reference)

Read each scenario below. Circle whether the relationship below is a healthy or unhealthy relationship.



#### Scenario #1

Michael walked to the corner store with his sister and her friend after dinner one night to get ice cream. When he returned home a half hour later, he saw that he had several missed calls and a few text messages, including one that said, "Are you cheating on me?" from his girlfriend Cindy.

Healthy or **Unhealthy**

***Even when it is difficult, it's really important to trust your partner and not assume the worst when they don't respond to text messages or phone calls right away.***



## Scenario #2

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Last night, Katherine and her boyfriend Adam got into a fight. Today, she got her mark back for last week's math test, and she didn't do well. After a bad day, she normally talks to Adam, but she hesitates to call him, wondering if he will even answer. She decides to call Adam; he's happy to hear from her, and they chat about why they were upset the night before.

Healthy or Unhealthy

***One of the most important things in a relationship is to be able to count on your partner when things are tough; having small arguments is no reason to end a bond, provided they do not occur often. Partners must be able to work together to overcome these issues.***



## Scenario #3

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Stacey doesn't really like her boyfriend Terry anymore, but she doesn't want to break up with him because his parents have a lot of money and he often buys her nice things. She's even invited to go to Florida with his family over spring break.

Healthy or Unhealthy

***It's important to be with someone for the right reasons. Using someone so they'll buy you things, take you places, or because you are too scared to hurt their feelings is never a good idea. This is unfair to the person you are dating and to yourself. You need to be honest about how you feel.***



## Scenario #4

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Keith gets really mad when his girlfriend, Carrie, talks to her friends about their relationship. He wants her to keep everything they say private because it's no one else's business.

Healthy or Unhealthy

***Sometimes, it may not seem like a big deal to tell your friends about certain aspects of your relationship; however your partner may feel differently. That being said, if you feel as though the person you are with restricts you from telling other people anything and demands that everything remains private, there could definitely be an issue.***



## Scenario #5

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Sean and Justin always go to the movies on Tuesday nights, however, this week Justin told Sean he

could not make it late Tuesday afternoon. Although Sean was initially upset because he was looking forward to their night out, he took advantage of his free night to hang out with his sister.

**Healthy** or Unhealthy

***It's normal to be upset when something comes up and plans change. But it's also important to be understanding about unforeseen circumstances.***



## Scenario #6

Jessica is always asking John to come to her events (soccer games, family barbecues, study sessions, parties, etc.). While John attempts to go as often as he can, sometimes he is too busy. When he does miss one of Jessica's events, she ignores him for a couple of days.

Healthy or **Unhealthy**

***A relationship where one or both partners are extremely dependent or expect to be with each other 24/7 can be very unhealthy, and it may not give you the opportunity to grow as individuals.***



## Scenario #7

Caitlin and Monica are walking through the hall at school and they see Allie and Jeff arguing (yet again). Caitlin whispers to Monica, "Oh, looks like Jeff is in trouble." She answers by saying, "I doubt it; they fight over everything. I'm sure it's nothing. They will be arguing about something else an hour from now."

Healthy or **Unhealthy**

***Arguments occur in most (if not all relationships), but a relationship can become unhealthy if two people are arguing excessively. It could even lead to physical or emotional abuse.***



## Scenario #8

Keith seems to be very different since he has started dating Mary. He seems withdrawn and hasn't showed up to swim practice for the last couple of weeks. His best friend notices a big bruise and scratch marks on his arms. He nervously laughs and responds that he just banged on the door frame at his grandparent's house.

Healthy or **Unhealthy**

***When a person's personality changes when they start a new relationship, it should raise a flag. If someone seems to be withdrawing from his or her usual activities or has odd***



**explanations for injuries, there may be underlying physical violence. It's important to remember that both men and women can be victims of dating violence.**

## Activity #2: Recognize Abuse (7-8.2 Reference)

Type of Violence	Definition	Examples	Signs of Abuse
Psychological Abuse	Emotional abuse is when one partner uses words or actions to control, frighten or isolate another or take away their self-respect. Emotional abuse is sometimes called psychological abuse.	Put-downs, intimidation, bullying, controlling what a person wears or who they see, threats, isolation, ignoring, rejection, etc. ( <a href="#">Department of Justice</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Low self-esteem</i></li> <li>• <i>Has a lot of anxiety</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoids eye contact</i></li> <li>• <i>Dramatic changes in appearance or grades</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeps their opinions to themselves, especially when they are around their partner</i></li> </ul>
Neglect	Emotional neglect is when an individual is not provided with the basic emotional or psychological needs for his/her well-being.	Lack of acknowledgement, love, safety and self-worth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Doing things out of character for acknowledgement</i></li> <li>• <i>Dramatic changes in appearance or grades</i></li> <li>• <i>Low self-esteem</i></li> <li>• <i>Has difficulty trusting people</i></li> </ul>
Physical Abuse	Physical abuse is any non-accidental act that results in trauma or physical injury without consent. It also constitutes assault.	Kicking, hitting, pushing, shaking, burning, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Unexplainable bruises/ odd explanations for bruises</i></li> <li>• <i>Makes excuses for his / her partner's behaviour</i></li> <li>• <i>Wears long sleeve shirts and pants, despite warm weather</i></li> </ul>

Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse is when one person forces another to engage in a sexual activity or sexual touching. It is abuse when there is one person in a dating relationship who does not consent, or is too young to consent ( <a href="#">Department of Justice</a> ).	Inappropriate or unwanted touching, sexual assault, forcing someone to engage in sexual intercourse, forcing someone to watch sexual acts, movies or read pornographic material. ( <a href="#">Kids Help Phone</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Seems agitated when people get physically close to them</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoids touching other people (even if it is just being forced to sit close to someone)</i></li> </ul>
Harassment/ Criminal Harassment	Harassment is when someone does something repeatedly over time that causes the victim to fear for their safety. No physical injury needs to occur for something to be considered harassment. Harassment can be sexual and/or non sexual.	Stalking, making unwanted sexual comments or sexual suggestions, persistent phone calls, sending many unwanted text messages or text messages with unwanted content, etc. ( <a href="#">Kids Help Phone</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Receives multiple phone calls or text messages from his or her boyfriend or girlfriend, sometimes with very aggressive messages</i></li> <li>• <i>Seems to always have to tell their partner where they are</i></li> </ul>

## Activity #3: Who Can Help? (7-8.3 Reference)

### When I need help, I can ask...

- a parent/guardian
- an older sibling
- a relative
- a neighbour
- a teacher
- an educational assistant
- a friend
- a police officer
- a principal/vice principal
- an older student
- a coach
- Elders
- help lines (ex: Kids Help Phone)
- in an emergency situation call 9-1-1

# Activity #4: Test Your Knowledge! (7-8.4 Reference)

## Summary Activity

1. Name two facts about dating violence.
  - a. *Both men and women fall victim to relationship violence.*
  - b. *You are more likely to be abused by a partner than a stranger.*
  - c. *Relationship violence can happen to anyone, in any type of relationship (friendship, family).*
  - d. *If violence in a dating relationship is ignored, the behavior will likely continue and the problem will evolve.*
2. Name four characteristics of a healthy relationship.
  - a. *Respect*
  - b. *Trust*
  - c. *Support*
  - d. *Honesty*
  - e. *Good communication*
  - f. *Acceptance of their partner*
  - g. *Fairness*
  - h. *Willing to compromise*
  - i. *Understanding*
  - j. *Enjoying each other's company*
3. Name two examples of physical violence.
  - a. *Pushing and shoving*
  - b. *Slapping, punching, hitting, kicking*
  - c. *Choking*
  - d. *Hair-pulling*
  - e. *Throwing objects at the person*
  - f. *Threatening to hurt the person with a weapon*
4. Give two reasons why a person may stay in an unhealthy relationship.
  - a. *Being in a relationship gives a person a sense of belonging. Some people might be scared of being alone.*
  - b. *The victim might be involved in his or her first romantic relationship and wants it to last as long as possible. They might also be embarrassed or not want to hear their parents/ friends says "I told you so" when the relationship ends.*
  - c. *Peer pressure could be involved: the victim might think that having a boyfriend/ girlfriend makes them more desirable.*
  - d. *The victim might think it is his or her fault if things do not work out (this feeling is often reinforced by the abusive partner, who blames the victim for what is going wrong).*

- e. *The victim might confuse the jealousy and possessiveness of the abuser with real love.*
  - f. *The abusive partner might apologize and the victim might become hopeful that things will work out. The victim might want to help the dating partner change.*
  - g. *The abusive partner might threaten the victim. "My life is over without you!"*
5. Correct the following myth: "Being jealous and possessive shows that I love him."
- a. *Jealousy is not love. Becoming jealous to the point of treating the other person like a possession is abusive behavior.*
  - b. *To protect yourself, consider whether you want to continue seeing someone who forbids you to see other friends. Possessiveness tends to get worse over time.*
6. Correct the following myth: "You don't really like someone or want to be with them unless you're willing to go all the way with them."
- a. *Just because you are with someone, it does not mean that you have to go all the way with them.*
  - b. *Someone who really cares for you won't be upset if you are not ready to take the next physical steps with them.*
7. Name 5 signs that a friend may be in an abusive relationship.
- a. *Low self-esteem (the victim feels that she is unworthy and responsible for the abuse).*
  - b. *He or she seems nervous all the time.*
  - c. *He or she has unexplained cuts, bruises, scrapes, burns or bite marks.*
  - d. *His or her weight, appearance or grades have changed dramatically.*
  - e. *He or she is giving up things that used to be important to her, such as spending time with friends or other activities.*
  - f. *He or she stops talking to their friends and is becoming more and more isolated.*
  - g. *He or she apologizes for their partner's behavior and makes excuses for him.*
  - h. *He or she frequently cancels plans at the last minute for reasons that sound untrue.*

Date Modified: 2016-10-11