

**Building Healthy Relationships
Across Virginia:**

**A Facilitator's Guide for
Teen Dating Violence Prevention**

Unit 6:

**Promoting
Healthy
Relationships**



Promoting Healthy Relationships

Introduction

The activities in this unit provide participants with skills for identifying the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, finding dating partners who complement their own values and personalities, and ensuring that respect is present in interactions between themselves and their dating partner, including any potential sexual interactions. Most of these activities provide numerous concrete examples of healthy and unhealthy relationship characteristics. These examples were updated by groups of teens just prior to the production of this manual in order to make such relationship scenarios feel as realistic and current as possible.



Unit 6:

Promoting Healthy Relationships

Activities and Corresponding Handouts

“I Have the Right...” Bingo

- Bingo Cards
- My Declaration of Rights Handout

Giving Means Gaining

- Way to Know! Being in a Healthy Relationship
 - Red Lights/Green Lights
 - Healthy Relationships

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

- Middle School Flash Cards
- High School Flash Cards
- Signs of Abusive Relationships
- Your Relationship is Healthy If...

Let's Make a Deal: Designing Your Ideal Dating Partner

- Dating Partner Qualities

Activities and Corresponding Handouts-- Page 2

Finding the Right Relationship

May I Have Your Pencil?

Making Consent Real

- **Making Consent Real Discussion Questions**

“I Have the Right...” Bingo

Facilitator’s Notes

Age: Middle School

Level: Introductory

Objective:

To reinforce positive self image and discussion about rights in relationships.

Time: 15-20 min depending on how many times you play

Materials:

Bingo cards (9 pattern variations)

My Declaration of Rights Handout

Instructions:

Preparation before session: Make enough copies of the Bingo card so that each participant gets a bingo board.

1. Distribute a variety of Bingo cards to participants.

(NOTE to Facilitator: You may use different objects for game markers: small pieces of colored paper; M&M’s in small cups or small individual packages; 2 rolls of Smarties).

2. Instruct participants not to clear their cards after the first participant gets Bingo so play can continue.

3. Facilitator calls out random “rights” and participants place markers accordingly. (They will request variations on “Bingo” such as 4 corners, postage stamp, etc. which you and they can decide on when you begin.)

4. When a participant gets “Bingo” they call out, “I Have the Right!” Check answers then award prize to participant (lollypop, wrapped mint, gift certificate, etc). Continue play for two more turns and reward participants.

5. Depending on time available play one or more additional games (clear cards and start over). Give participants the My Declaration of Rights Handout at the conclusion.

6. Close the activity by making the following points (Put these concepts into your own words, and be sure to simplify these concepts when working with younger students):

- It is not always easy to put these rights into practice. We must understand that sometimes, others (friends, family, teachers) will resist our attempts to live by these rights. Standing up for our rights – while not stepping on others – can be a difficult balancing act and is a process.

- It’s like learning anything – for some people “taking time to meet my own needs”, for example, will come very easily. For others – especially those who



learn that their rights are not as important as others – becoming comfortable with this idea will take time and practice.

- Most adults still grapple with these issues. In fact, most of us have **not** been socialized – taught by our culture, society, families, friends - to live by these rules. We certainly do not mean to imply that teens should have it all figured out.
- Ask participants if they can think of any cultural rules or sayings that run counter to the Declaration of Rights list (i.e. “children should be seen and not heard”; “that’s just the way it is...”, “do as I say, not as I do.”).



“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Not dominate or be dominated	Change my goals whenever I want	Take time to meet my own needs	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Change a relationship when my feelings change
Handle opinions different from my own	Be treated with respect	Have and express my own feelings	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention	Not be judged or judge someone else by appearance
Set limits on relationships	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Share my true feelings with others	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs	Be myself without changing to suit others
Be satisfied with my achievements	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Be treated as a capable human being	Take time to be alone	Say “I don’t know”
Have and express my own opinions	Ask “Why?”	Change my mind	Express anger in a healthy way	Feel good about myself

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Feel good about myself without a guy's/ girl's attention	Be satisfied with my achievements	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to know you better”	Share my true feelings with others
Be treated as a capable human being	Say “I don't know”	Express anger in a healthy way	Change my mind	Be myself without changing to suit others
Not be judged or judge someone else by appearance	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Change my goals whenever I want	Have an equal relationship with a partner	Have and express my own opinions
Ask “Why?”	Make mistakes	Be treated with respect	Take time to be alone	Set limits on relationships
Take time to think before I communicate	Feel good about myself	Not dominate or be dominated	Handle opinions different from my own	Change a relationship when my feelings change

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Express anger in a healthy way	Not be judged or judge someone else by appearance	Take time to respond to someone	Feel good about myself	Have my needs be as important as others' needs
Say “I don’t know”	Ask “Why?”	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Take time to meet my own needs	Be treated with respect
Share my true feelings with others	Be satisfied with my achievements	Be myself without changing to suit others	Change a relationship when my feelings change	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness
Take time to be alone	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Not dominate or be dominated	Change my goals whenever I want	Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to know you better”
Have and express my own opinions	Set limits on relationships	Make mistakes	Change my mind	Handle opinions different from my own

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Take time to respond to someone	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me	Take time to think before I communicate	Handle opinions different from my own
Stand up for my beliefs and values	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Be treated with respect	Have and express my own opinions	Have an equal relationship with a partner
Express anger in a healthy way	Not dominate or be dominated	Ask “Why?”	Share my true feelings with others	Change my goals whenever I want
Make mistakes	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs	Say “I don’t know”	Be satisfied with my achievements	Take time to be alone
Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention	Change my mind	Be myself without changing to suit others	Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to know you better”	Feel good about myself

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Stand up for my beliefs and values	Ask “Why?”	Change my mind	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs
Have an equal relationship with a partner	Express anger in a healthy way	Make mistakes	Change my goals whenever I want	Take time to respond to someone
Say “no” and not feel guilty	Take time to be alone	Say “I don’t know”	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention	Be treated as a capable human being
Take time to meet my own needs	Share my true feelings with others	Have and express my own feelings	Tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me	Be satisfied with my achievements
Be treated with respect	Feel good about myself	Handle opinions different from my own	Not dominate or be dominated	Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to know you better”

“I Have the Right to ...” Bingo

Share my true feelings with others	Say “I don’t know”	Express anger in a healthy way	Change a relationship when my feelings change	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness
Not dominate or be dominated	Make mistakes	Take time to meet my own needs	Change my mind	Stand up for my beliefs and values
Take time to respond to someone	Take time to be alone	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs	Have and express my own feelings	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention
Change my goals whenever I want	Take time to be alone	Ask “Why?”	Be satisfied with my achievements	Be treated with respect
Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to know you better”	Have and express my own opinions	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Take time to think before I communicate	Have an equal relationship with a partner

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Be myself without changing to suit others	Feel good about myself	Take time to be alone	Express anger in a healthy way	Ask “Why?”
Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Handle opinions different from my own	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention
Have an equal relationship with a partner	Tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me	Take time to think before I communicate	Change my mind	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs
Be treated as a capable human being	Change my goals whenever I want	Be satisfied with my achievements	Make mistakes	Have and express my own feelings
Take time to respond to someone	Share my true feelings with others	Set limits on relationships	Be treated with respect	Not dominate or be dominated

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Take time to respond to someone	Have and express my own feelings	Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Be satisfied with my achievements	Express anger in a healthy way
Take time to be alone	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Set limits on relationships	Ask “Why?”	Handle opinions different from my own
Make mistakes	Change my goals whenever I want	Have an equal relationship with a partner	Start a relationship slowly & say “I want to get to know you better”	Not dominate or be dominated
Tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me	Change my mind	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Be treated with respect
Not be judged or judge someone else by appearance	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention	Take time to respond to someone	Share my true feelings with others	Say “I don’t know”

“I Have the Right to...” Bingo

Be myself without changing to suit others	Feel good about myself	Take time to be alone	Express anger in a healthy way	Ask “Why?”
Say “no” if I don’t want physical closeness	Handle opinions different from my own	Stand up for my beliefs and values	Say “no” and not feel guilty	Feel good about myself without a guy’s/ girl’s attention
Have an equal relationship with a partner	Tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me	Take time to think before I communicate	Change my mind	Have my needs be as important as others’ needs
Be treated as a capable human being	Change my goals whenever I want	Be satisfied with my achievements	Make mistakes	Have and express my own feelings
Take time to respond to someone	Share my true feelings with others	Set limits on relationships	Be treated with respect	Not dominate or be dominated

My Declaration of Rights

1. I have the right to be treated with respect
2. I have the right to have and express my own feelings
3. I have the right to say “no” and not feel guilty
4. I have the right to change my mind
5. I have the right to say “I don’t know”
6. I have the right to express anger in a healthy way
7. I have the right to be treated as a capable human being
8. I have the right to have my needs be as important as others needs
9. I have the right to make mistakes
10. I have the right to ask “why?”
11. I have the right to have and express my own opinions
12. I have the right to set limits on relationships
13. I have the right to take time to respond to someone
14. I have the right to take time to think before I communicate
15. I have the right to take time to meet my own needs
16. I have the right to take time to be alone
17. I have the right to change my goals whenever I want
18. I have the right to change a relationship when my feelings change
19. I have the right to be myself without changing to suit others
20. I have the right to start a relationship slowly and say “I want to know you better”
21. I have the right to say no if I don’t want physical closeness
22. I have the right to stand up for my beliefs and values
23. I have the right to share my true feelings with others
24. I have the right to feel good about myself without a guy’s or girl’s attention
25. I have the right to be judged only by my actions, and not my appearance
26. I have the right to handle opinions different from my own
27. I have the right to be satisfied with my achievements
28. I have the right to tell someone I don’t like the way they are treating me
29. I have the right to have an equal relationship with a partner
30. I have the right to feel good about myself

Giving Means Gaining

Facilitator's Notes

Age: Middle and High School

Level: Introductory

Objective:

Participants will learn to identify healthy behaviors in a relationship and explore the consequences of an unhealthy relationship.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

Flipchart with a circle or outline of a body (or some other creative shape to represent a “whole” relationship)

Post-it® Notes or small pieces of paper and masking tape

Way to Know Handout

Red Lights / Green Lights Handout

Healthy Relationships Handout

Instructions:

Method #1:

1. Begin a discussion on healthy relationships. What elements are necessary for a relationship to be healthy? Examples can be:

- Being able to talk to each other
- Commitment
- Honesty
- Positive self-esteem
- Shared values
- Respect for self and others
- Awareness of self
- Listening skills
- Shared activities
- Established boundaries

2. As participants give answers, write the answers on pieces of paper and tape them to the circle/shape on the flipchart.

3. Discuss how each element contributes to a healthy relationship.

4. Ask a volunteer to come up and remove one item from the board. Read it aloud. Discuss how a relationship changes without that particular element.



5. Ask another volunteer to do the same. Discuss several qualities (as time allows).
6. Distribute Way to Know Handout, Red Flags/Green Flags Handout and Healthy Relationship Handout. Highlight the five key parts to a healthy relationship: self-esteem, communication, agreements, connections and balance.
7. Ask participants what they would add to the list. Why?

Method #2:

1. Pass out slips of paper. Ask each participant to write one quality of a healthy relationship and have them tape the paper to the circle/shape on the flipchart.
2. In step #4 above, add unhealthy behaviors and discuss how these elements affect a relationship.
3. Alternative discussions may include:
 - How influences outside the relationship may have a positive or negative impact on the relationship. (An example might be peer pressure to “be a man” or to use drugs or alcohol.)
 - Where/How some of the behaviors discussed correspond with the Teen Power and Control or Teen Relationship Equality Wheels (see **Teen Dating Violence Unit, “Wheel of Misfortune Handouts**).
4. Distribute **Way to Know Handout, Red Flags/Green Flags Handout and Healthy Relationship Handout**. Highlight the five key parts to a healthy relationship: self-esteem, communication, agreements, connections and balance.
5. Ask participants what they would add to the list. Why?

*Adapted from Reaching & Teaching Teens, Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition.
<http://www.ndvsac.org/>*



Way to Know!

Being in a Healthy Relationship

What are at least five things you really like and admire about this person?

How do you think this person would answer the first question about you?

Does he/she encourage you to have other friends and interests?

Do you make decisions together? Give examples.

How do you handle disagreements in the relationship?

What are some of your interests? Some of his/hers? What interests do you share?

Do both people have “equal time” for talking and listening?

Why do you consider him/her to be a good friend?

Does he/she accept the way you dress, talk and act? Do you accept how he/she dresses, talks, and acts?

Do you trust and believe him/her? Does he/she trust and believe you?

How do you feel when you each have different opinions on something important to you?

Do you “talk out” or “take out” problems on each other? How?

Have you each talked about what you want from your relationship? Do you both want the same things from the relationship?

Is your relationship based on choices, not pressure?

Why do you respect him/her?

Why does he/she respect me?

Remember that a healthy relationship is based on equality, trust, respect and open communication.

Red Lights/Green Lights

Red Lights

Blows up at little things.

Wants to isolate you from friends and family.

Blames others for their own faults.

Uses or abuses drugs/alcohol.

Is cruel to animals.

Has a fascination with weapons.

Thinks it is acceptable to solve conflicts with violence.

Has strong gender stereotypes (men have to act..., women have to act ...).

Treats partners like property.

Cannot express emotions verbally. Acts out instead.

Threatens to “out” you if you are LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, questioning)

Pressures you for sex.

Green Lights

Expresses anger appropriately.

Encourages you to do things together and with others.

Feels good about self and others.

Accepts responsibility for their own actions.

Does not use drugs or alcohol.

Maintains positive relationships with family members.

Encourages you and your goals.

Respects personal boundaries and sexual limits.

Handles conflicts without using violence.

Is open-minded to non-traditional gender roles.

Respects and values others.

Effectively communicates verbally.

Respects parental/authority boundaries.

Accepts your sexual boundaries.

Healthy Relationships

Relationships have five key parts:

1) Self-esteem.

Self-esteem is how I feel about myself. When I have positive self-esteem, I can accept feedback and positive statements from others. When I respect my own thoughts, feelings, and needs, I can balance them with the feelings and needs of my friends and partners.

2) Communication.

Communication is how I express myself with others. In relationships, good communication involves the ability to share feelings and ideas. It also involves being a good listener. It is important to be aware of our words, thoughts, and gestures - even when we disagree with others.

3) Agreements.

All relationships have rules that help us connect with each other. Agreeing to be respectful, honest, and accountable as friends or as partners helps build and maintain trust in relationships.

4) Connections.

We each have many relationships or links with others. Examples include links in our community, our school, and with our family. No single relationship should isolate us from other relationships.

5) Balance.

Relationships involve “give and take” on both sides. When one person is always giving and the other is always receiving, it is likely that one person will develop more power or control in the relationship. Healthy relationships work towards a balance.

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Age: Middle School or High School (**Note:** There is a different set of cards for each.)

Level: Introductory

Objective:

To help participants identify healthy vs. unhealthy behaviors in dating relationships and be able to identify “warning signs.”

Time: 20 minutes, but flexible

Materials:

Two signs—one with HEALTHY heading and one with UNHEALTHY heading
Middle school flash cards with examples of healthy and unhealthy behaviors. (*Make sure you have enough to distribute to the entire class.*)

High school flash cards with examples of healthy and unhealthy behaviors. (*Make sure you have enough to distribute to the entire class.*)

Signs of Abusive Relationships Handout

Your Relationship Is Healthy If... Handout

Tape

Instructions:

(NOTE to Facilitator: When using this activity with older teens (or adults), make several cards hard to identify. Use behaviors that can be either healthy or unhealthy, then discuss the difference.)

Method #1:

1. Tape both heading signs on the board.
2. Distribute individual behavior cards face down to participants.
3. State that the cards are not to be read until directed to do so. The participants are then given 30 seconds to turn the card over, read it and tape it under the correct heading sign.
4. Read the cards out loud. Correct any inappropriately placed cards by soliciting correct responses from the students. Discuss behaviors that may be “warning signs” of an abusive relationship.

Method #2:



1. Distribute most of the cards to participants, keeping a few for presenter to read.
2. Solicit volunteers to read their cards and discuss if situation is healthy or unhealthy. Discuss each card after it is read.
3. If only a few want to read, presenter can read his/her cards, or ask for volunteers to be "readers" and have them gather cards from those who are not willing to read.

The content of this activity was adapted from various sources:

The Shelter for Abused Women, Winchester, VA. <http://www.shelterforabusedwomen.org>

The Domestic Abuse Project, Minneapolis, MN. <http://www.domesticabuseproject.org>

VSDVAA's Red Flag Campaign. <http://www.theredflagcampaign.org/index.php/dating-violence/your-relationship-is-healthy-if/>



Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Middle School

<p>There is no fear in your relationship.</p>	<p>When you feel very angry, you can take a walk to cool down.</p>
<p>I have the right to be myself without changing to please others.</p>	<p>Your friend is always interrupting you when you are talking.</p>
<p>I do not judge someone by the way they look. I get to know them first.</p>	<p>When I'm in a bad mood, I listen to music that helps me feel better.</p>
<p>Your friend threatens you if you don't do what they want you to.</p>	<p>I will not say what I really think because it might hurt someone else.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Middle School

<p>You speak up when a friend tells a joke that puts someone down.</p>	<p>When I'm in a line, and someone cuts in front of me, I will say nothing.</p>
<p>Your friend smashes or breaks things when she/he gets upset.</p>	<p>You express your feelings using "I" statements, such as "I feel angry about..." "I don't want to because..."</p>
<p>I will not tell friends that I don't like it when they constantly interrupt me while I speak.</p>	<p>You tell a person your boundaries, and he/she doesn't listen or respect your wishes, and you get out of the situation.</p>
<p>You are afraid to say anything to upset your friend. He/she is so easily angered.</p>	<p>My friend invites me to eat lunch with his/her new friends to help me get to know them too.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Middle School

<p>Your friend says he/she doesn't like your other friends. He/she tells you to spend all of your free time with him/her.</p>	<p>Your friend always tries to get you to stay out later than your parents have told you to, or tells you to lie to your parents.</p>
<p>You find it very hard to say you're sorry, or that you were wrong.</p>	<p>You saw your friend shove another student into the lockers. You are afraid to say anything about it.</p>
<p>You go to watch your friend play soccer, even though you don't like soccer games much.</p>	<p>You and your friend <u>really listen</u> to each other's viewpoints and feelings.</p>
<p>You have spilled water all over your friend's homework. He/she says, "that's okay, it's only water. It will dry."</p>	<p>You and your friend are arguing, and your friend gets so mad he/she punches the wall.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Middle School

<p>You value your friend's opinion, even when it's different from your own.</p>	<p>I have the right to say "no", even when it may hurt someone's feelings.</p>
<p>Your friend hasn't spoken to you in a week or more because of a disagreement you had.</p>	<p>You and your friend have a disagreement, and still talk respectfully to each other.</p>
<p>You feel forced into apologizing, just to make other people happy.</p>	<p>Your friend tells you to lie to the teacher to help him/her stay out of trouble.</p>
<p>Your friend often blames others when things don't go her/his way.</p>	<p>You feel pressured to steal something at the mall, and your friend tells you "it's no big deal."</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

Middle School

<p>You understand that your friend's interest in others does not mean a lack of interest in you.</p>	<p>Your friend asks your opinion on important issues, and values your input.</p>
<p>Your friends accept you when you tell them you are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender.</p>	<p>Your friend threatens to "out" you unless you let him/her copy your homework.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

High School

<p>You are at a party and you overhear your partner saying nice things about you to his/her friends.</p>	<p>Your partner lost another part-time job. According to him/her, it is always somebody else's fault.</p>
<p>You are late meeting your date at the party. He/she shoves you against the wall, and demands to know where you have been, and why you are late.</p>	<p>Your date continually tries to get you to stay out later than your parents have stated, or tells you to lie in order to stay out later.</p>
<p>You go to the video store to get a video for you both to watch. You are late getting back because you stopped to talk to a friend from school. Your date is very angry and jealous when you return, accusing you of "cheating" on them while you were gone.</p>	<p>"I will kill myself if you leave me."</p>
<p>Your partner tells you he/she doesn't like your friends. He/she tells you to spend all of your free time him/her.</p>	<p>Your partner wants you to change the way you look, who you talk to, or how you show them you care about them.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

High School

<p>Your date leaves you somewhere after an argument, to “teach you a lesson.”</p>	<p>Your partner encourages you to do things he/she knows are important to you, even though he/she doesn’t enjoy them.</p>
<p>Your partner buys you flowers for no reason at all.</p>	<p>I have the right to be myself without changing to please others.</p>
<p>You have spilled water all over your partner’s homework. He/she says, “That’s okay, it’s only water. It will dry.”</p>	<p>You tell your dating partner that you have lost interest in dating them, and they accept your feelings with disappointment, but grace.</p>
<p>You have become secretive, ashamed, or hostile towards your parents because of your relationship.</p>	<p>Your partner is helping you with your homework, and keeps asking you if you are “really that stupid.”</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

High School

<p>Your partner asks your opinion on important issues, and values your input.</p>	<p>You go to a concert with your partner even though you don't like the band that is playing.</p>
<p>You partner always seems to wait until you are in public to make fun of the way you look, then says you should lighten up.</p>	<p>Your partner doesn't like to dance. It is important to you to go the prom. Your partner agrees to go with you, and makes the best of it.</p>
<p>You are becoming afraid of your partner, as he/she is always yelling at you, and you fear it will soon escalate into something worse.</p>	<p>You are at lunch with some friends, your partner walks in and is MAD. She/he pulls you aside and accuses you of flirting.</p>
<p>You have to give your partner a detailed account of your day just to please them.</p>	<p>Your date is angry at you, and drives the car in a dangerous way, on the way to take you home.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

High School

<p>You notice your new dating partner is excessively cruel to his/her pet.</p>	<p>You have been at a track tournament all weekend, when you get back to school there is an “I love you” card in your locker.</p>
<p>“You are so stupid and ugly, no one else would ever want to go out with you.”</p>	<p>Your date wants to meet your family, and cares that they feel good about her/him.</p>
<p>Your partner calls you after school, again after dinner, and 2 or 3 times before bedtime, and keeps you on the phone for hours.</p>	<p>Your partner calls you after school just to see how you are doing.</p>
<p>You find yourself apologizing to others when your partner treats you badly.</p>	<p>I have the right to say “no” even when it may hurt someone else’s feelings.</p>

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Flash Cards

High School

<p>Your partner ALWAYS plans all the dates without consulting you first.</p>	<p>“It’s you and me, baby. We don’t need anyone else.”</p>

Signs of Abusive Relationships

The following is a list of warning signs for potentially abusive relationships. They are presented as guidelines and cues to pay attention to, not as judgments on the worth of the other person.

Question relationships with partners who:

- Abuse alcohol or other drugs.
- Have a history of trouble with the law, get into fights, or break and destroy property.
- Don't work or go to school.
- Blame you for how they treat you, or for anything bad that happens.
- Abuse siblings, other family members, children or pets.
- Put down people, including your family and friends, or call them names.
- Are always angry at someone or something.
- Try to isolate you and control whom you see or where you go.
- Nag you or force you to be sexual when you don't want to be.
- Cheat on you or have lots of partners.
- Are physically rough with you (push, shove, pull, yank, squeeze, restrain).
- Take your money or take advantage of you in other ways.
- Accuse you of flirting or "coming on" to others or accuse you of cheating on them.
- Don't listen to you or show interest in your opinions or feelings. . .things always have to be done their way.
- Ignore you, give you the silent treatment, or hang up on you.
- Lie to you, don't show up for dates, maybe even disappear for days.
- Make vulgar comments about others in your presence
- Blame all arguments and problems on you.
- Tell you how to dress or act.
- Threaten to kill themselves if you break up with them, or tell you that they cannot live without you.
- Experience extreme mood swings. . .tell you you're the greatest one minute and rip you apart the next minute.
- Tell you to shut up or tell you you're dumb, stupid, fat, or call you some other name (directly or indirectly).
- Compare you to former partners.

Some other cues that might indicate an abusive relationship might include:

- You feel afraid to break up with them.
- You feel tied down, feel like you have to check-in.
- You feel afraid to make decisions or bring up certain subjects so that the other person won't get mad.
- You tell yourself that if you just try harder and love your partner enough that everything will be just fine.
- You find yourself crying a lot, being depressed or unhappy.
- You find yourself worrying and obsessing about how to please your partner and keep them happy.
- You find the physical or emotional abuse getting worse over time.

Your Relationship is Healthy If...

- You trust your partner.
- You treat each other the way you want to be treated, and accept each other's opinions and interests.
- You each feel physically safe in the relationship.
- Your partner likes your friends and encourages you to spend time with them and wants to include them in his/her life as well as yours.
- You make important decisions together.
- Your partner understands when you spend time away from him or her.
- You don't feel responsible for protecting your partner's reputation or for covering for his/her mistakes.
- Your partner encourages you to enjoy different activities (like joining the volleyball team or football team, running for student government, or being in a play) and helps you reach your goals.
- Your partner likes you for who you are – not just for what you look like.
- You are not afraid to say what you think and why you think that way. You like to hear how your partner thinks, and don't always have to agree.
- You have both a friendship and a physical attraction.
- You don't have to be with your partner 24/7.
- Your partner cares about your sexual desires and takes time to communicate with you about what the two of you are comfortable with. Your partner doesn't force sexual activity or insist that you do something that makes you uncomfortable.

Let's Make a Deal Designing Your Own Dating Partner

Facilitator's Notes

Age: Middle and High School

Level: Introductory

Objective:

For each participant to identify what is important to them in a dating partner.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials:

50-100 cards, with various personal attributes written on them

Instructions:

1. Introduce the activity to the group, explaining that you will be handing out cards with different personality traits and characteristics: positive, negative, and physical.
2. Assemble sets of cards by either:
 - Shuffling all cards together and deal out random sets of 8 or 9 cards.
 - Creating piles with an intentional assortment of positive, negative, and physical traits. Sort cards into 3 piles: physical traits, negative traits, positive, or neutral traits. Then, deal cards out: 2 physical, then 3 negative, and 4 positive. For easy transport - stack alternating directions (making a growing L shape) then put a rubber band around. Also, put aside a pile of good cards for trading at the end.
- 3.a. Instruct the participants to look through their cards and decide which cards they want to keep and which they would want to trade. Then, they can get up, move around, and trade with each other to try to create their ideal dating partner. Let them trade for a while 5-10 minutes, until they seem to be done.
- 3.b. (Optional) Ask everyone to sit back down and tell the group that they will have a chance to trade the card they want least for one new card. They won't get to see the new card, but it is probably better than the card they want to discard. They don't have to trade if they don't want to. Go around to each person, with the (extra) good set of cards face down. Take the card that the participant has given back and hold it in one hand; let them choose a good card from the other hand.
4. Then, ask if anyone wants to share the qualities of the person they "created," (They only have to read the top 5 or 6 cards, if they still have characteristics they don't want.) Ask which quality is the most important to them or most what they are looking for.



5. (Optional – only if using step 3b.) Then read the cards they traded in, the cards no one wanted. You can ask if anyone wants to trade for any of these cards, pointing out that what is important to one person might not be to another.

(NOTE to Facilitator: If you read cards that reflect negative feelings about physical characteristics, make the following points:

- **There are almost as many ideas about what is physically attractive as there are people in the world. Many things will influence an individual's physical preferences: culture, family, individual taste, etc.**
- **This exercise is NOT intended to support any single notion of beauty or attractiveness, rather it should generate a conversation about how or why physical attractiveness becomes so important to us.**
- **Ask participants what negative personality characteristics they would be willing to keep, in order to trade a “negative” physical characteristic. Why?**

6. Point out that most people did not want abusive cards: jealous, possessive, controlling, etc. Rather, people were most likely to choose healthy characteristics: fun to be with, respectful, sense of humor, trustworthy, etc. Make the point that, according to the exercise, they all are saying they would not want to be with someone who is abusive and they are looking for healthy relationships. Even if they created the ideal person, but there was still one thing they didn't like, they got rid of it when they had the chance.

7. Conclude by saying that no one is perfect, and healthy relationships take work. Also, getting out of a relationship is not as easy as getting rid of a card – that's why it is important that they support each other in having healthy relationships.

Adapted from PeaceLine: A Violence Prevention Education Curriculum for Middle and High School Aged Youth, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, Radford, VA. <http://www.wrcnrv.org>



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Good Listener

Sincere

Polite

Sweet

Forgiving

Talkative

**Good
Communicator**

Open Minded

Good Kisser

**Similar
Background**

Likes to Cuddle

**Similar Life
Experiences**

Tolerant

Similar Morals

Patient

**Has Religious
Beliefs**

Smart

**Stands Up
for Beliefs**

Affectionate

Best Friend

Understanding

Friendly

Considerate

Motivated

Supportive

Has Self-Worth

Encouraging

**Respects Own
Family**

Independent

Down to Earth

Active

Reliable

Sensitive

Loyal

Easy to Talk To

Genuine

Responsible

Trustworthy

Fun to Be With

Has Self-Esteem

**Family is
Important to
Them**

Has Originality

Respectful

Likeable

Kind

Dependable

Honest

Social

Happy

**Emotionally
Strong**

Hopeful

**Handles Stress
Well**

Positive Attitude

Accepts Change

Outgoing

Goal-Oriented

**Good Emotional
Connection**

Competitive

**Likes Your Family
& Friends**

Likes Music

**Likes the Same
Things You Do**

Spontaneous

Straight-Forward

**Thinks Outside
the Box**

Trusting

Saves Money

Truthful

Good Natured

Healthy

Flexible

Team Player

**Has Their Own
Opinions**

Sense of Humor

Non-Judgmental

Likes Me for Me

Has Integrity

Creative

**Willing
to Change**

Artistic

Ambitious

Like Sports

Committed

Thoughtful

Like the Outdoors

**Respects
Boundaries**

Generous

Athletic

Attentive

**Kind to
Others**

Fashionable

Romantic

Trend-Setter

Loving

Trend-Hopper

Gentle

Similar Interests

Expressive

Has Life Goals

Assertive

Life of the Party

Caring

Successful

**Poor
Communicator**

**Has to
Be in Charge**

Controlling

Jealous

Possessive

**Makes Fun
of You**

Disrespectful

**Makes All
the Decisions**

Rude

Not Dependable

Non-Affectionate

Dominating

Needy

Insensitive

Materialistic

Disrespectful

Moody

**Pushes
Boundaries**

Not Dependable

Irresponsible

Impatient

Controlling

Aggressive

Annoying

**Uncontrollable
Anger**

Alcoholic

**Makes All
the Decisions**

Jealous

Workaholic

Obsessive

Possessive

Demanding

Self-Centered

Forceful

Violent

A “Player”

Embarrassing

**Needs No
Quality Time**

**Makes Fun
of You**

Puts You Down

**Can’t Make
Decisions**

**Has No
Boundaries**

Makes Threats

Lazy

Quick-Tempered

Insecure

**Needs to
Impress People**

Egotistical

A Show-Off

Low Self-Esteem

Rigid

**Emotionally
Needy**

**Makes Rude
Comments**

Ditsy

Insincere

Immature

Unpredictable

**It's
All-About-Them**

Dishonest

A Slob

Mean

Childish

Cheap

Lies

One-Track Mind

Judgmental

Unemotional

Cold

**Emotionally
Distant**

**No Sympathy
for Others**

Passive

Cheats

Steals

Unstable

Physically Abusive

Sexually Abusive

Emotionally Abusive

Verbally Abusive

Manipulative

Not Trustworthy

Computer Geek

**Plays on a
Sports Team**

Party Animal

Does Extreme Sports

Goody 2-Shoes

Likes Anime

A Loner

Plays in a Band

A Flirt

**Straight "A"
Student**

Preppy	Easily Influenced
Sports Fanatic	Has Different Political Beliefs From You
Has a Close Knit Family	Wants to Have a Big Family
Takes Pride in Own Heritage	A Leader

**Believes in
Abstinence**

A Follower

Adventurous

In ROTC

Daredevil

**Wants to Join
the Military**

Loud

Poser

Serious Nature

RedNeck

Cautious

Likes Children

Reserved

Rich

Quiet

Likes to Read

Shy

**Interested
in Politics**

Outspoken

Hates Politics

Opinionated

Good Cook

Likes Animals

Country Person

Old-Fashioned

City Person

Plays By the Book

Morning Person

**Makes Up The
Rules As They Go
Along**

Night Owl

“Touchy-Feely”

Gossips

Competitive with Others	Charitable
Competitive with Me	Has School Spirit
Politically Liberal	Doesn't Care About School Spirit
Politically Conservative	Doesn't Have a Job

Popular

Cocky

Not Popular

Organized

Clean Freak

Disorganized

A Perfectionist

Clean

An Optimist

Clever

A Pessimist

Laid-Back

**Cares About
the Environment**

**Looking for a
Free Ride**

Not Religious

Free Thinker

**Has Different
Religious Beliefs
Than You**

Superficial

**Likes Public Dis-
plays of Affection**

Deep

**Dislikes Public
Displays of Affection**

Risk-Taker

Couch Potato

Emotional

Band Geek

**Never Pays
for a Date**

In the Choir

**Disrespects
Your Parents**

Jock

Unique

Cheerleader

**Doesn't Care
About the
Environment**

**Plays Video
Games**

Rugged

Emo

Works Out

Depressed

Older Than You

**Wants to Go to
College**

Younger Than You

Has a Job

Activist

Has a Car

Hippie

Has Siblings

Socially Awkward

An Only Child

Uninvolved

Prissy

Over-Involved

High-Maintenance

Studious

Low-Maintenance

Shallow

Snob

Dramatic

Naive

Drama Queen

Gullible

Easily Offended

Intellectual

Easy-Going

Book Smart

Exotic

Street Smart

Punk

Good Imagination

Messy

Procrastinator

Vegetarian

Slacker

Drinks Alcohol

**Plays a Musical
Instrument**

Uses Drugs

Blonde Hair

Short & Stubby

Red Hair

Love Handles

Brown Hair

Tall

Black Hair

Long Legs

Bald

Brown Eyes

Long Hair

Blue Eyes

Short Hair

Green Eyes

Dyed Hair

Hazel Eyes

Straight Hair

Grey Eyes

Curly Hair

Attractive

Wavy Hair

Beard

Fair Skin

Mustache

Olive Skinned

Facial Hair

Dark Skinned

Body Piercings

Tan

Tattoos

Freckles

Dimples

Large Chested

Curvy

Small Chested

Petite

Nice Butt

Nice Smile

Has No Butt

Hot

Muscular

Sexy

Skinny

Handsome

Flabby

Cute

Finding the Right Relationship

Facilitator's Notes

Age: Middle or High School

Level: Introductory

Objective:

Illustrate through discussion that finding the right person for a relationship depends on knowing what you are looking for.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

Flip chart or blackboard and markers/chalk

Instructions:

1. Have the group generate a list of qualities they would like in their ideal partner / boyfriend / girlfriend by asking them questions like:
 - What do you look for in a relationship?
 - How do you know someone is right for you?
 - What attracts you to someone?
2. Write the list on a board so that everyone can see it. Once it is complete, divide the group in half.
(Option 2) – Ask participants to pair up with someone they don't know very well.
3. Ask each group/pair to decide on the four most important qualities. Bring group back together to present their choices.
4. Discuss the differences:
 - What are their differences?
 - How do differences in needs affect relationships?
 - Can two people love each other if they value different qualities in each other?
 - Should your partner value in you what you think are your good qualities? Why?

Adapted from Sexual Assault Victims' Volunteer Initiative, Warrenton, VA. <http://users.starpower.net/altrusa/SAVVI>



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May I Have Your Pencil? (aka “The Consensual Pencil”)

Facilitator’s Notes

Age: Middle or High School

Level: Introductory

Objective:

Introduce the concept of consent and discuss the importance of establishing consent in relationships.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials:

No materials needed

Instructions:

1. Present the VSDVAA definition of sexual violence (written on newsprint).

Sexual violence is conduct of a sexual nature which is non-consensual, and is accomplished through threat, coercion, exploitation, deceit, force, physical or mental incapacitation, and/or power of authority.

2. Inform participants that a key part of the definition of sexual assault is the word NON-CONSENSUAL. People have the right to say NO to sexual activity. When someone says no, it is the responsibility of the other person to respect the NO and STOP the activity. In other words, if there is not consent for the activity, it should not happen.

(Note to Facilitator: You may or may not want to add the point about consent being a little tricky for young people. For anyone under the age of 18, the laws differ as to the extent they are allowed to give consent).

3. Facilitator will ask to borrow a participant’s pencil or pen. The participant will usually give you their pencil without thinking. Ask all the participants:

- Did I have permission to take the pencil?
- How did I establish or get permission?
- Return the pencil to the owner.

3. Then ask the group to pretend it is the next day and you are back in their classroom. Using the same participant, walk up and take the pencil. Be certain to get the pencil, but don’t use any force. If the participant will not let you “take” the pencil, either tell them to play along or pretend you took the pencil (As a facilitator it’s counter-productive to be seriously forceful taking something against their will to prove a point about consent).



4. Ask participants:

- Did I have permission to take the pencil?
- Can't I just assume that s/he will let me have the pencil because they let me borrow it yesterday?
- Didn't s/he more or less "deserve" to have the pencil taken, just leaving it out for anyone to take?

5. After the demonstrations, ask the participants:

- How is consent or lack of consent with the pencil similar to consent or lack of consent with sexual activity?
- How do you know when it's okay to move forward? How do you know when you have consent?
- What is boundary testing?
- Does consent for sexual activity on one occasion mean there is always consent?
- Does consent for one type of activity (e.g. kissing) mean you have consent for all other activity (e.g. intercourse)?

6. Summarize with the following points:

- We don't blame the participant for the facilitator taking the pencil, nor should we think that the facilitator had the right to take the pencil. Because s/he didn't have that right! S/he didn't ask.
- There is obviously a difference between the pencil and a physical action. If someone takes someone else's pencil, that person can give it back without any harm to body or self. If someone hugs or kisses someone without consent, that can't be taken back. If someone goes further down the spectrum of sexual activity, testing other boundaries regarding sexuality, and forcing someone into a sexual act they do not want, this is the definition of sexual violence! It is not possible to take back a sexual act.

Ask participants:

- "How many people in here want to be harassed or assaulted? How many want to harass or assault another person?" **(NOTE to Facilitator: Usually no one will raise their hand.)** "So, what is the one way we can make sure what we are doing is consensual? Ask. Just like with the pencil, we need to ask permission."



- Now, most of us think asking to give a hug or to put our arm around somebody is strange or awkward. And that might be true. But I think it's a lot more awkward to cross someone's boundary in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable – whether it is a friend or partner. And asking doesn't have to be: "Could I please, possibly-would it be ok if I had the honor of putting my arm around you?" Use your own words, and what makes you comfortable.

- Finally, what message does it send to the other person when we ask? If my partner asks me before they touch me or kiss me, it might be strange, or surprising at first, it also says to me that I am with a person who cares about my opinion. They are thoughtful enough to ask before they barge into my boundaries. They respect me.

7. Challenge participants to try this for the rest of the day. Before they touch, hug, kiss anyone else (again, whether it's a friend or partner), ask them to ask for permission first. Acknowledge that it will feel weird at first, but, if we get used to conducting ourselves in this way, we pave the way for greater communication, and less chance of crossing someone else's boundary.

Adapted from PeaceLine: A Violence Prevention Education Curriculum for Middle and High School Aged Youth, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, Radford, VA. <http://www.wrcnr.org>



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Making Consent Real

Facilitator's Notes

Age: High School

Level: Advanced

Objectives:

To introduce the concept of affirmative consent and to help participants build skills for healthier sexual interactions.

Time: 20 minutes, but flexible

Materials:

Making Consent Real Discussion Questions Handout

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to get into groups of 3.
2. Distribute the Making Consent Real Discussion Questions Handout, and read the **Introduction** out loud.
3. Tell the groups that they are going to discuss the 3 questions, and each should select a person to record the answers and report back to the larger group. Tell them they will have about 10 minutes to discuss the questions.
4. After 10 minutes, reconvene the large group, and ask each 3-person group to report. Emphasize the following points:
 - If you choose to engage in sexual activity, ensuring consent is present should be the bare minimum. Talking about what sexual acts are OK will not “kill the moment” or “suck the romance out.”
 - Affirmative consent means that we view communication (which includes respecting the response resulting from that communication) as the first step to initiating sexual activity, rather than just barging forward with the activity itself.
 - Point out that talking to your partner, finding out what they are into, and respecting their wishes first leads to a more mutually enjoyable experience. In other words, the sex gets better as the communication increases!

“Making Consent Real” Activity created by Brad Perry for VSDVAA.



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Making Consent Real

Discussion Questions

Introduction

A sexual interaction in which consent has been expressed by each person is, at a minimum, safe and legal, and is hopefully enjoyable. The occurrence of any sexual contact (not only sexual intercourse) where consent has not been expressed by each person is sexual assault. In order for consent to be effective at keeping interactions safe, it must be affirmative. College campuses have led a movement around a concept known as “affirmative consent” that has been gaining momentum in the last decade.

Affirmative consent is the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual behavior. Silence and/or non-communication must never be interpreted as consent.

- According to this definition, an initiator of the sexual activity must obtain consent on an on-going basis. A request for consent must be given for each sexual act.
- Affirmative consent means that consensual sexual activity begins with the presence of a “yes” rather than the absence of a “no.”
- It is unethical, and potentially criminal, for a person to continue with a sexual act without having met his/her responsibility to obtain affirmative consent.

1) What do you think about consent being defined as the presence of a “yes”?

2) Imagine you and another person start kissing. You are attracted to this person, and you think you’re getting non-verbal signals that both of you want to “do more” than kiss. As a group, generate 3 examples of something you could say to your partner to determine what to do next. Again, give examples of things you could say to determine affirmative consent from the other person before going any further.

3) Do you think sexual partners talking about what they are interested in experiencing together will lead to a better sexual experience for them? Why or why not?