



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

An Interpersonal Violence Prevention Curriculum-Aid For Educators
Who Teach Life Skills To Adolescents Living In The Bahamas

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Vision

To provide a resource for teachers that highlights evidence-based life skills and concepts that should be taught to adolescents to support the development and maintenance of healthy relationships.



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Acknowledgements

The Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) and The Bahamas Ministry of National Security would like to express sincere thanks to The Bahamas Ministry of Education for their invaluable contributions to the development of this *Healthy Relationships* curriculum-aid. Special recognition is extended to Mrs. Sabrina Skinner (Senior Education Officer) whose support was vital to moving this project forward. Appreciation is also extended to the enthusiastic teachers who attended the 2019 Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) Summer Workshop. Their input greatly assisted in the final editing of this document.

Acknowledgement and gratitude are further extended to the CSJP Consultants responsible for creating and editing this document. Ms. Arvis Mortimer, Dr. Rochelle Lightbourn, Dr. Valerie Knowles and Dr. Dorcas Cox worked together to assemble the evidence-based content and craft the contextually appropriate scenarios contained within.

It is envisioned that HFLE teachers working in The Bahamas will use this document as a means of curriculum support, and these efforts are expected to contribute to a reduction in interpersonal violence among adolescents living in The Bahamas.



Introduction

In The Bahamas, the importance of equipping young people with crucial life and health improvement skills is well recognized. The Bahamas Government, through the Ministry of Education, has committed to achieving these aims by mandating that all students, in the public education system receive pertinent health information and life skills training through the teaching of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE). The HFLE curriculum is suitably adjusted to each grade level. The content taught includes health promotion and disease prevention concepts, goal setting and decision-making techniques for positive life outcomes, and interpersonal skills to reduce violence. The Ministry of Education, and the teachers who instruct students must be commended for seeking to provide training in not only the hard skills (such as reading, writing and arithmetic) but also soft skills (such as effective communication, problem solving and team work) – which, in many instances, prove more valuable in one’s day-to-day interactions. However, despite the availability of the HFLE course and curriculum, cultural trends indicate a worrying increase in incidents of violence among adolescents in The Bahamas.

Rationale for The Intervention

Data from the *2019 Interpersonal Violence High School Survey*, conducted by the Citizen Security and Justice Programme within the Ministry of National Security, showed that, from a representative sample of public senior high school students living in New Providence (n=1556), seventeen percent (17%) were in a physical fight on school grounds in the past thirty (30) days, thirty-nine percent (39%) believe that there could be some justification for a man hurting or physically hitting his girlfriend; wife or partner if she makes him upset, and sixty-three (63%) percent believe that hitting, beating or physically hurting a child who misbehaves could be warranted. The survey also showed that fifteen percent (15%) of students in grades ten through twelve experienced bullying on school property within the last twelve (12) months. Clearly, it is imperative that skills for interpersonal violence prevention continue to be taught to adolescents as a means to positively impact life outcomes – both in the short-term and long-term.



The Intervention

The Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) and Ministry of National Security recognize the importance of partnering with the Ministry of Education to reduce interpersonal violence. Therefore, this curriculum-aid specifically focuses on interpersonal skills and it is designed to support teachers by outlining the crucial concepts necessary for behavioural change. Further, a monitoring tool is incorporated into this document to help teachers report their successes in delivering the content to young people.

This *Healthy Relationships* curriculum-aid presents evidence-based curriculum concepts that have been proven effective in influencing interpersonal violence prevention among students. These evidence-based and recommended skills also encourage the development of healthy relationships and discourage violence within friendships and dating relationships. The core components recommended for senior high school students are:

- 1) **Key Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships**
- 2) **Dating Abuse and Who Can Help**
- 3) **The Importance of Effective Communication**

Creativity

The core content is shared in the form of lesson plans and, in keeping with the class structure of the Ministry of Education's timetabling imperatives, it is anticipated that each plan can be taught in about forty-five (45) minutes. Additionally, the content can be shared with students in a number of creative ways. This creativity will be guided by the teacher's experience and expertise. However, it is recommended, as sound pedagogy dictates, that a combination of multisensory techniques be employed. It is also recognized that every class is unique and has its own set of idiosyncrasies, therefore a singular approach to content delivery is not assumed to be ideal for all students. Nevertheless, all core sessions should be taught so that the greatest number of positive student outcomes could be achieved. If one does encounter time restraints to implementation it is possible to combine some sessions/plans to ensure that all of the critical components are shared with students.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Student knowledge, perception and attitude change will be assessed with pre- and post-tests which should be administered the week prior to the commencement of teaching and the week following the final session. The Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at the CSJP will arrange score collection with the Senior High School Administrators and HFLE instructors.

To establish a record to show that the core curriculum content for healthy relationships were taught, simple checklists—beginning on page 43 of this booklet— are inserted to help you. These checklists will be collected by the CSJP Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.

Additionally, in 2020 another *Interpersonal Violence High School Survey* will be administered in each of the public senior high schools in New Providence to identify any shifts in student behaviours and beliefs.

Summary

The cognitive support for the use of interpersonal violence by Bahamian adolescents, as shown in the CSJP survey, is discomfoting. It is essential to acknowledge the pivotal role that educators play in the lives of young people. Teachers have the ability to positively influence, motivate and mentor young people on a daily basis. And, by providing this curriculum-aid to senior high school teachers in The Bahamas, it is anticipated that the information shared could contribute to increased knowledge and improved behaviours for healthy relationships and violence reduction.

Core Curriculum Content: An Overview

All relationships fall on a scale. This scale ranges from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy patterns falling somewhere in the middle. It is the goal of the *Healthy Relationships* curriculum-aid to highlight the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, define dating abuse and inform students of those in our society who can help if abuse occurs. It will also explain the importance of effective communication in all relationships and human interactions, and acknowledge the importance of practicing effective communication skills daily for conflict resolution. As adults it is our responsibility to equip young people with the information and skills necessary for them to make good decisions and achieve healthy, supportive and fulfilling relationships.



Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

It is possible to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships:

Relationships often differ from person to person but there are key characteristics that help us identify healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships (see table 1). This component focuses on illuminating these different relationship patterns through fact sharing and discussions so that adolescents living in The Bahamas can better recognize healthy relationships and avoid unhealthy and abusive ones.

Table 1: Characteristics of Healthy, Unhealthy and Abusive Interpersonal Relationships

Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
Communication: you are able to talk openly about anything, including any problems that may arise. You both also listen to each other and respect the opinions shared by each individual.	Lack of Communication: There is a dearth of communication and when problems arise fighting ensues because of the absence of discussion.	Hurtful Communication: One or both persons communicate in a demeaning or threatening way, and insults are often thrown at each other.
Trust: You each believe what is said by the other without having to prove that trust truly exists.	Lack of Trust: One person doesn't believe or accept what the other person says, and may feel that it is necessary to violate the other person's privacy to verify information.	Physical Violence: One or both persons hurt the other by hitting, punching, slapping, pushing or choking when they perceive trust has been violated.
Respect: You value one another in your present state - as you are, along with each individual's personal principles, values, emotions and boundaries (including sexual boundaries).	Some Disrespect: There is a noticeable level of disregard and/or a lack of consideration for feelings and personal boundaries between the persons in the relationship.	Complete Disrespect: There is full disregard and/or a lack of consideration for feelings and personal boundaries.
Honesty: When you communicate with one another you do so truthfully - you are honest with one another. However, each person has the right to keep some things private.	Dishonesty: One or both persons in the relationship tells lies, and or withholds information to manipulate the other person.	Blame: One or both individuals dishonestly blames the other for all the problems and harmful behaviours in the relationship while excusing and/or minimizing their own behaviour.



<p>Equality in Decision Making: Decisions are made together, and one person is not entitled to more rights/choices than the other.</p>	<p>Inequality in Decision Making: One person makes most (or all) of the decisions and feels that they are entitled to do this.</p>	<p>Control: Usually one person forces the other person to do things they do not want to do with threats, blackmail and/or physical violence.</p>
<p>Personal Time/Space: Each person can enjoyably spend time apart or with other people.</p>	<p>No Personal Time/Space: You only socialize with each other or one person's family, friends, community.</p>	<p>Isolation: Usually one person tells the other who they can or cannot associate with and where they can or cannot go.</p>

Dating Abuse and Who Can Help

Abuse does not have to be tolerated, help is available:

In this session students will learn about and have an opportunity to discuss the impact of abusive behaviours. When we apply the information in *Table 1* to boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, it is possible to identify critical warning signs or red flags that indicate abuse.

Abusive behaviours include:

- Physically hurting someone;
- Sexually assaulting someone;
- Extreme insecurity and/or jealousy;
- Frequently insulting one person in the relationship;
- Isolating someone from their family and friends - putting stipulations on who they can and cannot see;
- Being possessive - demanding all of someone's time, attention and love;
- Controlling someone - telling him/her what to wear and/or do; and



- Invading someone's privacy - checking their phone, email, or social media account(s) without permission.

Personality traits prone to abusive tendencies include:

- A violent temper; and
- Frequent mood swings - kind one minute and then angry/insulting the next.

Being aware of what constitutes abuse in relationships and knowing that it is unacceptable and inappropriate, adolescents are better able to seek and get the help that they need if they find themselves or their loved ones in a physically and/or emotionally harmful situation. A list of helpful resources should be shared in this session.

The Importance of Effective Communication

You can develop healthy relationships:

The foundation of healthy relationships is effective and honest communication - this is the key to resolving issues, which do happen from time to time, in a healthy and peaceful way. Teachers focus on helping students learn key tips that will help them open the communication channels and build better relationships.

Important tips for effective communication include:

- Finding the right time to have a conversation - ideally when you and the other person are relaxed, not rushing, distracted or stressed;
- Speaking in person/face-to-face about important or serious matters;
- Being honest;
- Not using harsh language;
- Making eye contact and listening when one person is speaking; and



- Responding to de-escalate conflict. Try not speaking when extremely angry. Instead, stop, take deep breaths and calm down (by engaging in another activity to distract you from the angry feeling such as reading a book, listening to music, watching television or speaking with a friend). When calm, think over the situation that triggered the extreme anger, identify the cues, and explain your feelings using the points mentioned above to guide you. After sharing your thoughts and feelings, remember to listen to the other person's responses. When you behave this way, you are treating the other person with respect and they are more likely to respond positively if they sense that they are being respected. This strengthens the relationship. Effective communication is two sided. Each person should have the opportunity to express him/herself and contribute to the sense of wellness in the relationship.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Health and Family Life Education Teachers



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT 1:
CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Session 1: Healthy, Unhealthy and Abusive Relationships

Overview:

Through discussion and fun activities students will begin to understand the characteristics of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships. They will also have the opportunity to consider the way they want to be treated in any relationship (whether a casual friendship or dating relationship).

Preparation:

Copies of relationship characteristic chart/table (optional)
Workbook/loose-leaf paper
Pens/pencils

Objective:

Students should be able to identify the core characteristics of relationships. Students should also be able to reflect on the different relationships that they have with different people in their lives.

Explain to your pupils:

That today we are going to talk about relationships. The activities to be completed and the discussions that we will have will assist you in all of your relationships throughout your life. This session could help you improve and strengthen the relationship you have with your parents/guardians, family members, friends, classmates, and the people you date.

What we will be discussing:

What healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships look like.

Exploration for definition 1:

- 1) What do you think of when you hear the word 'relationship'? *You may ask a pupil to write the responses on the board as they are shared by the class.*



The list of responses generated will serve as the collective definition of 'relationships' to your class, and can be referred to for the remainder of the session.

Explain to your pupils:

That there are a variety of relationships. *You can then list off some relationship types (for example: parent/child, teacher/student, friend/friend, boyfriend/girlfriend etc.).* Each relationship will be different, however, each should be positive and fulfilling – these are described as healthy relationships.

Exploration for definition 2:

What comes to mind when you think of healthy relationships? *You may then again ask one of your students to write the responses on the board, and this list can be referred to throughout the remainder of the session.*

Alternatively, you can ask your students:

What are some of the ways that people in your life have treated you that have made you feel good about yourself?

Responses may include:

- *They listened to me.*
- *They cared about me.*
- *They encouraged me.*
- *They believed in me.*
- *They respected me.*
- *They trusted me.*

Explain to your pupils:

That there are some core characteristics of **all** healthy relationships, and these qualities should make you feel good about yourself. *You can then begin to list them (on the board) and define them (verbally):*



Good Communication - you are able to talk openly about anything, including any problems that may arise. You both also listen to one another and respect the opinions shared by each individual.

- 1) **Trust** - You each believe what is said by the other without having to prove that trust truly exists.
- 2) **Respect** - You each value one another in your present state - as you are, along with each individual's personal principles, values, emotions and boundaries (including sexual boundaries).
- 3) **Honesty** - When you communicate with one another you do so truthfully - you are honest with one another. However, each person has the right to keep some things private.
- 4) **Equality** - Decisions are made together, and one person is not entitled to more rights/choices than the other.
- 5) **Personal Time/Space** - Each person can enjoyably spend time apart or with other people.

Let your students know:

Though this is the ideal relationship pattern and should be sought in **all** interactions, not all relationships are like this. Relationships fall on a scale, and can be **unhealthy** or even **abusive** (*healthy relationships at one end, unhealthy relationships falling somewhere in the middle, and abusive relationships at the other end of the scale/continuum*).

Exploration for definition 3:

What comes to mind when you think of unhealthy relationships? *You or a pupil may write the responses on the board for referral?*



What comes to mind when you think of abusive relationships? *Again, you or a pupil may write the responses on the board for referral?*

Explain to your pupils:

Like healthy relationships, there are characteristics of unhealthy and abusive relationships. *At this stage you may distribute printed copies of the **Characteristics of Healthy, Unhealthy and Abusive Relationships** table (pg. 33) or you may write each characteristic on the board.*

Reiterate:

- 1) We all have many different types of relationships.
- 2) We want to be in relationships with people who respect us, and our opinions, encourage us and support us.
- 3) It is important for us to be clear about what we do and do not want in our relationships. We must know what healthy relationships are and we must **want** to be treated by others in this way. Some people have learned to like and accept bad treatment.

Activity:

Write down the most important ways that you want to be treated by people that you care about. *(Word choices may include: loved, cared for, encouraged, trusted, supported, treated fairly, listened to, treated equally).*

Closing:

Remind your pupils:

- *To seek healthy relationships (interactions where there is communications, trust, respect, honesty, equality, personal time/space).*
- *That relationships are reciprocal – that means what you expect from others you must also seek to give.*



- *That if they find themselves in an unhealthy or abusive relationship speak to someone they can trust (like a parent/guardian, teacher or counsellor) to get the support that they need to leave.*



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT: 2
DATING ABUSE AND WHO CAN HELP

Session 2: Dating Abuse and Who Can Help

Overview:

Through discussions and activities students will come to understand what constitutes dating abuse and how to get help for themselves, a family member, friend, or loved one if they are in an abusive relationship.

Preparation:

Copies of dating abuse stories (optional)

Workbook/ loose-leaf paper

Pens/pencils

Objective:

Students should be able to identify what constitutes abuse in dating relationships, and know who in our society can help if/when abuse occurs.

Begin with a recap:

Last session we discussed healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships. What are some of the characteristics of:

- 1) **Healthy relationships?**
(communication, trust, respect, honesty, equality, personal time/space)
- 2) **Unhealthy relationships?**
(lack of communication, lack of trust, some disrespect, dishonesty, inequality, no personal time/space)
- 3) **Abusive relationships?**
(hurtful communication, physical violence, complete disrespect, blame, control, isolation)



Explain to your pupils:

That today we are going to talk about abuse in dating relationships. The activities to be completed and the discussions that we will have will assist you in understanding what dating abuse is and how to seek help for yourself, a family member, friend, or loved one.

What we will be discussing:

Dating abuse

Exploration for definition 1:

What do you think of when you hear the word dating? *Ask for a volunteer to write the responses on the board (this will establish the collective class definition).*

Explain to your students:

Dating can be described in a number of ways but the definition that will be used in this class is:

Dating – a romantic relationship (where there are special feelings of attachment) between two individuals. This relationship does not have to be sexual but may have the purpose of assessing each other’s suitability as a potential partner or spouse in an intimate relationship. (Adapted from Love Is Respect)

Ask for a volunteer to read scenario 1:

Marco’s Story (Fictional)

Aaliyah and Marco met for the first time in seventh (7th) grade at H.O. Nash. In tenth (10th) grade, while at C.R. Walker, they decided that they would ‘go with’ (date) one another. She would be his girlfriend and he would be her boyfriend. They began spending time together and were soon inseparable. Eventually Aaliyah felt the need to be with Marco all the time. As soon as the bell rang, she would rush out of her classes so that she could meet him. She wanted him to spend all of his free time with her. His friends did not have any opportunities to hang out with him anymore. Marco thought this was Aaliyah’s way of showing him that she cared about him.



Aaliyah's desire to be with Marco continued to grow and soon she started to become very jealous. She would accuse Marco of flirting with and liking other girls. One day, she even slapped him. Marco was confused. Was this the same Aaliyah he had known since seventh (7th) grade?

The day after slapping him, Aaliyah came back – asking for forgiveness. She showed up with his favourite breakfast – tuna and grits with an orange juice. They got back together again but things did not improve. The relationship became more stressful over time. Aaliyah would fight and argue all of the time. She would call his house and cell phone and hang up when he answered. Eventually Marco tried to break up with Aaliyah for good, but she threatened to harm him and herself if he did.

Marco's parents were concerned and asked the principal and the guidance counsellor of C.R. Walker to try and keep them apart. It was very difficult to do this since they were in the same school and shared a few classes. Aaliyah would take every opportunity to make loud rude remarks about Marco, hoping the other students would laugh at him. She spread lies about him to his friends, hoping to get them to gang him. She and her friends threatened and beat any girl who showed interest in him. She also spread insulting WhatsApp messages about him and any girl he talked to.

The story ended tragically when Aaliyah told her neighbour that she saw Marco trying to talk to his girlfriend. The neighbour became enraged and attacked Marco after school one day, stabbing him with a knife. The neighbour eventually found out that Aaliyah had lied. Everyone wondered what had gone wrong. Why hadn't they seen how serious the situation was? How could they have known? After all, Aaliyah and Marco were only teens.

Explain to students:

Dating abuse is a very real issue for many young people, and even begins as early as the pre-teen years. Adults who use violence in their dating relationships often began exhibiting this behaviour during adolescence (usually sometime between junior and senior high school). **Most victims of dating abuse are female**, though males often experience it too (as described in Scenario 1). Both males and females are perpetrators (committees) of dating abuse. If abuse happens once in a relationship it usually (almost always) happens again – it is recurring. The abuse also almost always gets more severe over time, with the most extreme consequence



being death. Some teen victims of dating abuse may become depressed and contemplate committing suicide. Others may 'act out' in school, become truant or drop out entirely because of the distress caused by the abuse. Additional consequences of dating abuse may include becoming dependent on drugs and alcohol to cope with the situation or becoming antisocial – that is, isolating oneself from family members, friends and loved ones.

Dating abuse is behaviour used by a dating partner to:

- 1) Manipulate,
- 2) Control,
- 3) Exert power (physical or psychological) over the next person,
- 4) Instill fear, and
- 5) Make the next person insecure so that they would do what the abuser wants them to do.

Abusive behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Physically hurting someone (hitting, punching, pinching, shaking, choking, using a weapon, biting, spitting etc.);
- Extreme insecurity and/or jealousy;
- Frequently insulting one person in the relationship;
- Isolating someone from their family and friends - putting stipulations on who they can and cannot see;
- Being possessive - demanding all of someone's time, attention and love;
- Controlling someone - telling her/him what to wear and/or do;
- Invading someone's privacy - checking their phone, email, or social media account(s) without permission;
- Forcing a dating partner to have sex or do other sexual things when they do not want to;
- Humiliating a dating partner in public, private or through social media; and
- Telling lies.



Warning signs of an abuser:

- A violent temper;
- Frequent mood swings - kind one minute and then angry/insulting the next; and
- Preventing a dating partner from leaving when they want to.

It is important for teens and adults to take dating abuse in teenage relationships seriously.

Activity

Have the class separate into groups of seven (7) or eight (8) and share Scenario 2 with them.

Explain that each group will need a reader and presenter. The reader will read scenario 2 aloud and, together, the group will respond to the questions. The students will then organize their answers and the presenter will share the responses with the class.

Each group should have approximately five (5) minutes to present.

Scenario 2 (to be copied and shared with students)

Cassandra's Story (Fictional)

Jaydon and Cassandra have been dating for about two (2) months. One Saturday night, Jaydon asks his older brother Jason to drop him and Cassandra off at Fusion Superplex to watch a movie and then pick them both up when the movie was over.

Cassandra spent all day Saturday thinking about what she'd wear. She decided to put on a new outfit that she purchased from Body Beautiful with a gift certificate her mother got her for her birthday. She was excited to wear her new jeans pants with an off-the-shoulder blouse because she knew they looked good on her, even her mother said so.

Jaydon knocks on Cassandra's door, and when she opens he sees her in the new outfit. He greeted her warmly and then asks her if she's going to change before they go out. Cassandra is shocked and hurt. She explains to Jaydon that she just bought this outfit and wants to wear



it to the movie tonight. Jaydon smiles, pats her on the shoulder, and says, “Cassandra, stop joking, don’t forget, no one but me would ever date you. We’re not going anywhere until you change that outfit.” He then suggests that she wear a blouse with a collar and a long skirt instead.

Question for students to answer:

- 1) How does Jaydon want Cassandra to feel?
- 2) Why does Jaydon want Cassandra to feel this way?
- 3) What does Jaydon do and say to get Cassandra to feel this way?

After the presentations:

Explain to your students that sometimes people are abusive in order to control how the other person feels. Many people often make excuses for their abusive behaviour **but no excuse is good enough**. When abuse is experienced in a dating relationship the person experiencing the abuse should know that the behaviours being directed towards them are **not okay**, and **they should seek help**. No one has the right to treat you as an object that they own. No one has the right to ask you to disrespect your values and goals to make their life easier. Be careful about selling your personhood to buy friends.

IMPORTANT

If someone tells you that he or she is in an abusive relationship it is important that you **listen** to them, **believe** them and encourage them to **get help**. Often, people who are abused don’t tell anyone out of the fear that they won’t be believed. They may be embarrassed or they think it is normal behaviour and a part of everyday life.

Help can be obtained from:

- A parent/guardian,
- A school administrator, teacher or guidance counsellor,



- A trusted pastor, coach or other adult,
- The Police (call **911**),
- Crime Stoppers (call **302-8430/1**),
- The Crisis Centre – a non-profit organization in Nassau, The Bahamas that assists and treats victims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse (call **328-0922**).

Please Note:

If the adult you ask for help encourages you to stay in the abusive relationship, walk away and find somebody else to speak to. There are some adults who believe that abuse is okay. Do not be persuaded by persons who think this way.

Closing:

Remind your students that:

- 1) *If abuse occurs once in a dating relationship then it is likely to happen again.*
- 2) *Abuse and violence are typically used to exert power and control over a person in a relationship.*
- 3) *If one is in a physically or emotionally abusive relationship they should seek help. Abuse should never be tolerated. **You are inherently worthy of love and respect, and anyone who endeavours to hurt you, in any way, does not deserve to be with you.***



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT: 3
THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Session 3: Effective Communication

Overview:

Through discussions and activities students will learn that effective communication is important to build and sustain healthy relationships.

Preparation:

Copies of SAFE skill handout and LaRay and Asia's Story (optional)

Workbook/loose-leaf paper

Pens/pencils

Objective:

Students should know how to communicate effectively with others so that healthy relationships can be built and sustained.

Begin with a recap:

Last session we discussed abuse in boyfriend/girlfriend (dating) relationships. Dating abuse is used by the perpetrator to control and establish power over the person that they are in a relationship with. It is not always physical (*slapping, punching, pinching, shoving etc.*) but can be emotional/psychological (*being possessive, isolating someone from their family and friends, insulting or humiliating a person*). Dating abuse, and abuse of any kind, is **unacceptable** and help should be sought.

Explain to your pupils:

We are going to discuss communication. Honest and open communication are necessary for every healthy relationship. It is normal for anger and disputes to arise in relationships but effective communication allows for resolution in a healthy way.

What we will be discussing:

Effective Communication.



Explain to your pupils:

Effective communication is immensely important and should be practiced with everyone in your life. It is always important, but especially important when difficulties arise. When you have an argument with someone it is necessary to communicate in a way that de-escalates the conflict.

SAFE Skills can be helpful in an argument – preventing one from being hurtful or abusive. We will review some skills for effective communication in relationships:

Review *SAFE* Skills with your students (ask them what they think each means):

S – Stay Calm

- Use calming strategies (such as deep breaths) to stay cool and collected.

A – Ask Questions

- Ask honest open-ended questions to better understand the situation.
- Avoid jumping to conclusion.
- Listen carefully to the answers, you may realize that there was a misunderstanding.

F – Find Out Feelings

- Find out how the other person feels about the situation causing the argument/disagreement.
- Express your feelings. Be honest and specific when referring to the situation that upsets you.
- Use “I” statements to express your feelings (e.g. *I feel _____ when you _____*)

E – Exchange ideas so that a possible solution can be found.

- With the information, suggest possible solutions.
- Agree on one that works best for you both and discuss.

Explain to your pupils:

SAFE Skills can be helpful in arguments – preventing one from being hurtful or abusive. These communication skills are useful for sharing your thoughts and feelings with another person in a



healthy way. These skills are more effective if used by both persons in the relationship. If only one person is being SAFE, it may influence the other person to respond more calmly.

To reinforce the skills just learnt:

Ask for a few volunteers to read the scenario and dramatize the dialogue between the characters...

LaRay and Asia's Story (Fictional)

Asia and LaRay are in 11th grade and have been girlfriend and boyfriend for about three (3) months. They attend the same school and in that short time they have spent a lot of time together. Even after school they often studied for their exams together. When they were apart, they talked on the phone and sent WhatsApp messages back and forth.

In the new school term, which began in January, Asia decided to try out for the girls' basketball team and successfully got the coveted captain position. LaRay is very proud of her. It's an honour to be on the basketball team because their high school has won the senior girls' championship for three (3) years in a row.

Asia has been working very hard all week. After school she has basketball practice for two (2) hours. However, today is Friday and the coach let them leave early. She rushed home and called LaRay to ask him to meet her at the mall. She was eager to see him, as she hadn't spent much time with him since joining the basketball team. LaRay was happy to hear that Asia was out of practice early and went to the mall right away.

Discussion between LaRay (L) and Asia (A):

L: What's up A!

A: Man, I'm so glad to see you. I have so much to tell you. (They walk to the food court together and sit down.)



L: I haven't seen you since school started. You're too busy being a big timer I see. (Smiles and fist bumps)

A: Oh, I know I'm busy. I have no time to hang out. I do miss you, but I love basketball. LaRay, it's so much fun! I'm learning so much. I can't wait until the first game when you can come and watch me!

L: That's good, man. I'm happy for you!

A: But just wait until you see me. Dante' is assisting Coach Rolle and he has been helping me with my shooting. He's a good player and I'm learning so much.

L: Dante'?

A: Yeah, he's really good. Have you seen him play before? I am sure he will make the national team.

L: Well, I'm okay at basketball too; maybe I should ask Coach if I can help out.

A: (Laughs) Oh LaRay, you're not even on the senior boys' team. Dante' has been playing since sixth grade. He even won the title of MVP (most valuable player) last year. And he thinks I'm a good player.

L: (Raising his voice) Dante', Dante', Dante'! That's what you call me to come talk about. Dante'. I een on this run you know. If you like him so much why don't you just be with him then?



A: *(Wants to yell back at him, but instead takes a deep breath and pauses a minute. She looks carefully at LaRay.) I don't understand why you're so mad?*

L: *(Shouting) Why I'm mad? (Gets up from his chair) You jokin' right? You're letting some other guy swell up your head.*

A: *(Takes another deep breath and is careful not to raise her voice) LaRay, what you sayin'? Sound like you don't trust me? Playing on the school team is important to me and you've always supported me. Why you freakin' out?*

L: *Because all you have done since we came here is talk about Dante'. What about me? I thought I was your boyfriend. You een even ask me how I doing!*

A: *Yes, you're my boyfriend and I'm sorry for not asking about you. How are you doing?*

L: *Well, I don't know. I don't know what's going on. Since school started again and you joined the basketball team you've been so busy. I wondered if you still like me.*

A: *Yes, of course. I'm not interested in Dante' or anyone else. He just helps me out with my technique at practice. I know that I've been busy lately.*

L: *I know. But I wish things wouldn't have changed.*

A: *Me too. But I don't want to stop playing basketball. What can we do?*

L: *Are you always going to get out early on Fridays?*



A: No, but I can see you in the evenings on Fridays and over the weekend.

L: Yeah, and during the week we have Facebook.

A: Definitely.

L: Look, Asia, I'm sorry I got so mad.

Activity:

Now that we've heard LaRay and Asia's story take a moment to identify the SAFE skills that they used (you can refer to your handout).

With the class go through the SAFE skills for both LaRay and Asia.

Have a discussion about what skills were and weren't used.

Possible questions for discussion:

- How did Asia and LaRay feel at the beginning of the scenario?
(Asia was excited to see LaRay and talk about basketball. LaRay was excited to see Asia but was concerned that they were not seeing each other often.)
- What role did trust and jealousy play in this argument?
(LaRay was jealous of Danté. The lack of trust created tension between the two.)
- Which of the four SAFE skills could LaRay have used to express his jealousy?
(Refer to the Safe Skills list.)
- How could Asia have been more aware of LaRay's feelings?
(Pay attention to his body language and tone of voice.)
- What non-verbal communication did LaRay display?
(He kept raising his voice and shouting. Then he got up out of his chair.)



- *What non-verbal communication did Asia display?
(She takes deep breaths and pauses for a minute.)*
- *How did LaRay and Asia feel at the end?*
- *How would you have handled the situation?*

Closing:

Effective communication is a skill and in order to get better at it you will need to practice. The four parts of SAFE Skills that we have learnt today will help you in any relationship, and should be used especially when you're angry/upset.

Some additional tips for effective communication:

- Be honest.
- Don't use harsh or hurtful language.
- Make sure that the tone and volume of your voice are right for what you are saying.
- Know exactly what you want if you are asking for something. Know what outcomes would be okay with you.
- Think about what you are saying with your body. Are your arms folded? Are you looking somewhere else? Are you turned towards the person or away from them? It is best when your body language is saying the same thing your words are saying.
- Find the right time to have a conversation - ideally when you and the other person are relaxed, not rushing, distracted or stressed.
- Think about how you bring something up. Are you defensive, attacking or angry? Or are you calm and open to hearing the other person's thoughts?
- Be Clear - know what it is you want to say.
- Do not speak when extremely angry. Instead, stop; take deep breaths; calm down (by engaging in another activity such as reading a book, listening to music, watching



television or speaking with a friend). When calm, think over the situation that caused the extreme anger; identify the cause and explain your feelings.

Effective communication often includes:

- “I” statements (“I think ...”, “I want ...”)
- Expressing opinions (“I believe ...”)
- Saying “No” firmly but respectfully
- Asking for what you want
- Initiating conversations
- Expressing positive feelings
- Expressing appreciation
- Stating your strengths and abilities (“I can ...”)

Final statement:

All relationships fall on a spectrum (they can be healthy, unhealthy or abusive). Being able to identify these relationship types is a necessary part of consciously choosing interactions that are supportive and healthy. Though healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships are not solely relegated to intimate partnerships, abusive patterns often present themselves early during dating relationships; and therefore it is necessary to know when power and control are being exerted to undermine one’s agency and wellbeing. When this is recognized help should always be sought. Finally, one of the most important way to attain and maintain healthy relationships is to communicate effectively. The four SAFE skills for communication could be of great assistance.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Materials for Copying



Characteristics of Healthy, Unhealthy and Abusive Relationships

Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
<p>Communication: you are able to talk openly about anything, including any problems that may arise. You both also listen to one another and respect the opinions shared by each individual.</p>	<p>Lack of Communication: There is a dearth of communication and when problems arise fighting ensues because of the absence of discussion.</p>	<p>Hurtful Communication: One or both persons communicate in a demeaning or threatening way, and insults are often thrown at each other.</p>
<p>Trust: You each believe what is said by the other without having to prove that trust truly exists.</p>	<p>Lack of Trust: One person doesn't believe or accept what the other person says, and may feel that it is necessary to violate the other person's privacy to verify information.</p>	<p>Physical Violence: One or both persons hurt the other by hitting, punching, slapping, pushing or choking when they perceive trust has been violated.</p>
<p>Respect: You each value one another in your present state - as you are, along with each individual's personal principles, values, emotions and boundaries (including sexual boundaries).</p>	<p>Some Disrespect: There is a noticeable level of disregard and/or a lack of consideration for feelings and personal boundaries between the persons in the relationship.</p>	<p>Complete Disrespect: There is full disregard and/or a lack of consideration for feelings and personal boundaries.</p>
<p>Honesty: When you communicate with one another you do so truthfully - you are honest with one another. However, each person has the right to keep</p>	<p>Dishonesty: One or both persons in the relationship tells lies, and or withholds information to manipulate the other person.</p>	<p>Blame: One or both individuals dishonestly blames the other for all the problems and harmful behaviours in the relationship while excusing and/or</p>



some things private.		minimizing their own behaviour.
Equality in Decision Making: Decisions are made together, and one person is not entitled to more rights/choices than the other.	Inequality in Decision Making: One person makes most (or all) of the decisions and feels that they are entitled to do this.	Control: Usually one person forces the other person to do things they do not want to do with threats, blackmail and/or physical violence.
Personal Time/Space: Each person can enjoyably spend time apart or with other people.	No Personal Time/Space: You only socialize with each other or one person's family, friends, community.	Isolation: Usually one person tells the other who they can or cannot associate with and where they can or cannot go.



Marco's Story (Fictional)

Aaliyah and Marco met for the first time in seventh (7th) grade at H.O. Nash. In tenth (10th) grade, while at C.R. Walker, they decided that they would 'go with' (date) one another. She would be his girlfriend and he would be her boyfriend. They began spending time together and were soon inseparable. Eventually Aaliyah felt the need to be with Marco all the time. As soon as the bell rang, she would rush out of her classes so that she could meet him. She wanted him to spend all of his free time with her. His friends did not have any opportunities to hang out with him anymore. Marco thought this was Aaliyah's way of showing him that she cared about him.

Aaliyah's desire to be with Marco continued to grow and soon she started to become very jealous. She would accuse Marco of flirting with and liking other girls. One day, she even slapped him. Marco was confused. Was this the same Aaliyah he had known since seventh (7th) grade?

The day after slapping him, Aaliyah came back – asking for forgiveness. She showed up with his favourite breakfast – tuna and grits with an orange juice. They got back together again but things did not improve. The relationship became more stressful over time. Aaliyah would fight and argue all of the time. She would call his house and cell phone and hang up when he picked up. Eventually Marco tried to break up with Aaliyah for good, but she threatened to harm him and herself if he did.

Marco's parents were concerned and asked the principal and the guidance counsellor of C.R. Walker to try and keep them apart. It was very difficult to do this since they were in the same school and shared a few classes. Aaliyah would take every opportunity to make loud rude remarks about Marco, hoping the other students would laugh at him. She spread lies about him to his friends, hoping to get them to gang him. She and her friends threatened and beat any girl who showed interest in him. She also spread insulting WhatsApp messages about him and any girl he talked to.

The story ended tragically when Aaliyah told her neighbour that she saw Marco trying to talk to his girlfriend. The neighbour became enraged and attacked Marco after school one day with a knife. The neighbour eventually found out that Aaliyah had lied. Everyone wondered what had gone wrong. Why hadn't they seen how serious the situation was? How could they have known? After all, Aaliyah and Marco were only teens.



Cassandra's Story (Fictional)

Jaydon and Cassandra have been dating for about two (2) months. One Saturday night, Jaydon asks his older brother Jason to drop him and Cassandra off at Fusion Superplex to watch a movie and then pick them both up when the movie was over.

Cassandra spent all day Saturday thinking about what she'd wear. She decided to put on a new outfit that she purchased from Body Beautiful with a gift certificate her mother got her for her birthday. She was excited to wear her new jeans pants with an off-the-shoulder blouse because she knew they looked good on her, even her mother said so.

Jaydon knocks on Cassandra's door, and when she opens he sees her in the new outfit. He greeted her warmly and then asks her if she's going to change before they go out. Cassandra is shocked and hurt. She explains to Jaydon that she just bought this outfit and wants to wear it to the movie tonight. Jaydon smiles, pats her on the shoulder, and says, "Cassandra, stop joking, don't forget, no one but me would ever date you. We're not going anywhere until you change that outfit." He then suggests that she wear a blouse with a collar and a long skirt instead.



SAFE Skills for Effective Communication

S – Stay Calm

- Use calming strategies (such as deep breaths) to stay cool and collected.

A – Ask Questions

- Ask honest open-ended questions to better understand the situation.
- Avoid jumping to conclusion.
- Listen carefully to the answers, you may realize that there was a misunderstanding.

F – Find Out Feelings

- Find out how the other person feels about the situation causing the argument/disagreement.
- Express your feelings. Be honest and specific when referring to the situation that upsets you.
- Use “I” statements to express your feelings (e.g. *I feel _____ when you _____*)

E – Exchange ideas so that a possible solution can be found.

- With the information, suggest possible solutions.
- Agree on one that works best for you both and discuss.



LaRay and Asia's Story (Fictional)

Asia and LaRay are in 11th grade and have been girlfriend and boyfriend for about three (3) months. They attend the same school and in that short time they have spent a lot of time together. Even after school they spent time together studying for their exams. When they were apart, they talked on the phone and sent WhatsApp messages back and forth.

In the new school term, which began in January, Asia decided to try out for the girls' basketball team and successfully got the coveted captain position. LaRay is very proud of her. It's an honour to be on the basketball team because their high school has won the senior girls' championship for three (3) years in a row.

Asia has been working very hard all week. After school she has basketball practice for two (2) hours. However, today is Friday and the coach let them leave early. She rushed home and called LaRay to ask him to meet her at the mall. She was eager to see him, as she hadn't spent much time with him since joining the basketball team. LaRay was happy to hear that Asia was out of practice early and went to the mall right away.

Discussion between LaRay (L) and Asia (A):

L: *What's up A!*

A: *Man, I'm so glad to see you. I have so much to tell you. (They walk to the food court together and sit down.)*

L: *I haven't seen you since school started. You're too busy being a big timer I see. (Smiles and fist bumps)*

A: *Oh, I know I'm busy. I have no time to hang out. I do miss you, but I love basketball. LaRay, it's so much fun! I'm learning so much. I can't wait until the first game when you can come and watch me!*



L: That's good, man. I'm happy for you!

A: But just wait until you see me. Dante' is assisting Coach Rolle and he has been helping me with my shooting. He's a good player and I'm learning so much.

L: Dante'?

A: Yeah, he's really good. Have you seen him play before? I am sure he will make the national team.

L: Well, I'm okay at basketball too; maybe I should ask Coach if I can help out.

A: (Laughs) Oh LaRay, you're not even on the senior boys' team. Dante' has been playing since sixth grade. He even won the title of MVP (most valuable player) last year. And he thinks I'm a good player.

L: (Raising his voice) Dante', Dante', Dante'! That's what you call me to come talk about. Dante'. I been on this run you know. If you like him so much why don't you just be with him then?

A: (Wants to yell back at him, but instead takes a deep breath and pauses a minute. She looks carefully at LaRay.) I don't understand why you're so mad?

L: (Shouting) Why I'm mad? (Gets up from his chair) You jokin' right? You're letting some other guy swell up your head.



A: *(Takes another deep breath and is careful not to raise her voice) LaRay, what you sayin'? Sound like you don't trust me? Playing on the school team is important to me and you've always supported me. Why you freakin' out?*

L: *Because all you have done since we came here is talk about Dante'. What about me? I thought I was your boyfriend. You een even ask me how I doing!*

A: *Yes, you're my boyfriend and I'm sorry for not asking about you. How are you doing?*

L: *Well, I don't know. I don't know what's going on. Since school started again and you joined the basketball team you've been so busy. I wondered if you still like me.*

A: *Yes, of course. I'm not interested in Dante' or anyone else. He just helps me out with my technique at practice. I know that I've been busy lately.*

L: *I know. But I wish things wouldn't have changed.*

A: *Me too. But I don't want to stop playing basketball. What can we do?*

L: *Are you always going to get out early on Fridays?*

A: *No, but I can see you in the evenings on Fridays and over the weekend.*

L: *Yeah, and during the week we have Facebook.*

A: *Definitely.*

L: *Look, Asia, I'm sorry I got so mad.*



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Monitoring Tools



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT CHECKLIST: 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Class Taught: _____

Number of Students Present: _____

Date of Instruction: _____

Please indicate if the following were taught and the extent of fidelity to the suggested lesson plan:

1) Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

2) Characteristics of Unhealthy Relationships

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

3) Characteristics of Abusive Relationships

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

Comments/Feedback:



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT CHECKLIST: 2

DATING ABUSE AND WHO CAN HELP

School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Class Taught: _____

Number of Students Present: _____

Date of Instruction: _____

Please indicate if the following were taught and the extent of fidelity to the suggested lesson plan:

1) What Is Dating

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

2) Marco's Story (Scenario 1)

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

3) Why Does Dating Abuse Occur

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

4) Cassandra's Story (Scenario 2)

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No



5) Who Can Help

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

Comments/Feedback:



CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT CHECKLIST: 3

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Class Taught: _____

Number of Students Present: _____

Date of Instruction: _____

Please indicate if the following were taught and the extent of fidelity to the suggested lesson plan:

1) Effective Communication

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

2) SAFE Skills

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

3) LaRay and Asia's Story

Taught: Yes No

Were changes made to the content? Yes Some No

Comments/Feedback:



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources may be helpful when planning your *Healthy Relationship* sessions:

- 1) *Healthy Relationships High School Educators Toolkit*. <http://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/highschool-educators-toolkit.pdf>
- 2) *Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum*.
<https://www.hazelden.org/web/public/safedates.page>
- 3) *Healthy Relationships Toolkit: A Teacher's Guide*.
<https://www.health.utah.gov/vipp/pdf/DatingViolence/Healthy%20Relationships%20Toolkit.pdf>
- 4) HIV and Sexuality Education. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/health-education/hiv-sexuality-education>
- 5) Without Consent: Without Intent. <https://valerieknowles.wixsite.com/stolenchildhoods> or email vaknowles@gmail.com





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