

WHAT MAKES A RELATIONSHIP HEALTHY?

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Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

1. Identify components of a healthy relationship, particularly honesty, equality, respect and responsibility.
2. Distinguish between behaviors that are healthy and unhealthy.

Audience

Middle adolescents (ages 14-17)

Rationale

Relationships are an integral part of human existence, however in many cases young people have not had an opportunity to learn about the components of healthy relationships and how to tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors. In addition, many teens have not had positive models of healthy relationships in their lives. This lesson explores the components of a healthy relationship, examines the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, and provides an opportunity to practice making that distinction.

Lesson Outline

Introductions, Group Agreements and Purpose (See **The Lesson Essentials**, p. 3)

Components of Healthy Relationships

Examples of HERR

Healthy 7 Card Game

Conclusion

Materials

- Blank paper
- Pens/pencils
- (Optional) Five songs related to healthy relationships and the corresponding technology to play music, e.g.:
 - “(I’ve Had) The Time of My Life” by Franke Previte, John DeNicola and Donald Markowitz
 - “It Had to Be You” by Isham Jones and Gus Khan
 - “So Happy Together” by The Turtles
 - “Love Me Do” by the Beatles
 - “I Got You Babe” by Sonny and Cher

- Four pieces of easel paper
- Index cards
- **Educator Resource: Healthy 7 Cards** (Copy all three pages, then cut out each card to create a deck of cards. Write “Healthy 7” on the back of each card. Make enough cards for each participant to have at least 10 cards.)

Procedure

COMPONENTS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

1. Begin the lesson by asking for volunteers to be scribes. Divide the participants into small groups of three or four, with a scribe for each group. Hand each group a piece of paper, and instruct groups to select one person to write, preferably someone who can write quickly.
2. Tell participants that when you start playing the song you have selected, they will work together to create a list of components of a healthy relationship. The twist to this activity is that they are competing with the other groups to see who can come up with the most words. Inform participants they will have until the song is over to develop their list. (If you do not have the capability to play music, give the participants three minutes.)
3. After the song is over, ask each group to count their words and share what their total number is. Congratulate all the groups for their ideas and validate all of the groups’ participation in the activity.
4. Invite the group with the most words to share their list with the larger group. Tell the other groups to listen to the list, and note what is not shared from their own list. Ask each group to share remaining words. (Optional: Invite each group to share the five terms they believe are most important.)
5. As the groups are reading their lists aloud, listen for the following words, and write each on a separate piece of easel paper as they come up, or add them at the end if they are not shared: **HONESTY, EQUALITY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY**
6. Validate the words that participants share, highlighting that there are many important components of healthy relationships. In particular, honesty, equality, respect and responsibility are considered to be some of the most important.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How easy was it to come up with components of healthy relationships?

- b. How easy is it to actually have these components in a relationship?
- c. How often do we see these components of healthy relationships demonstrated?

EXAMPLES OF HERR

1. Tell participants that in the next activity, they will think about how HERR can be demonstrated in a relationship. Divide participants into four groups. Hand each group one of the four easel papers with the labels **Honesty, Equality, Respect, Responsibility**.
2. Tell participants that their group will have the length of a song to write down examples of the component of a healthy relationship on their easel paper. Examples could include actions or words or both. (If you do not have the capability to play music, give groups three minutes.)
3. After the song is over, instruct the groups to hand their easel paper to the group on their right. They will add examples to the easel paper they received while the next song plays. Repeat until all the groups have contributed to all four easel papers.
4. After all groups have added to each easel paper, ask for a volunteer from each group to share the examples listed on the easel paper they ended the activity with.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What was it like to come up with examples?
- b. Where did you draw examples from? Movies? TV shows? Friends' relationships? Personal relationships? Family relationships?
- c. Which was the most difficult to come up with examples for?
- d. Which examples would you like in a relationship?

HEALTHY 7 CARD GAME

1. Let participants know that they will be playing a game called Healthy 7 to practice distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy characteristics of a relationship.
2. Divide participants into small groups with no more than eight students in a group. Instruct groups to select one person to serve as the "dealer" for the card game. Give a deck of Healthy 7 cards to each dealer and tell the dealer to shuffle the deck.

3. Once the deck is shuffled, instruct the dealer to give seven cards to each person in the small group, with the *Healthy 7* side on top. Tell participants to take a moment to look at the seven cards and decide which are healthy characteristics and which are not. Tell participants that the goal of the game is for all the cards in your hand to represent a characteristic of a healthy relationship.

4. The player to the left of the dealer will begin play by picking up a card from the deck and discarding a card. The card that is discarded should be a card with an unhealthy characteristic, and it should be placed in a pile with the statement side up.

Note: If there is a card that is difficult to decide upon, group members will need to talk about it and vote whether the characteristic is healthy or unhealthy. The decision will be made by the majority vote of group members.

5. Tell group members to continue to pick up a card and discard an “unhealthy” card at each turn until there is a winner for the group. A winner of a “Healthy Hand” is someone who has seven cards in hand with statements that describe healthy characteristics of a relationship.

VARIATION 1

The winner of a Healthy Hand holds seven “healthy” cards. The seven cards may contain duplicates of the ***same*** healthy statement.

VARIATION 2

The winner of a Healthy Hand holds seven “healthy” cards. The seven cards must have seven ***different*** healthy statements.

6. After each group has a winner, ask the following questions:

Discussion Questions:

- a. How did it feel to play the Healthy 7 game?
- b. Which statements were healthy? Which statements were unhealthy?
- c. Were there any cards that anyone was unsure about? How did your group resolve this?
- d. How might someone feel who’s in an unhealthy relationship?
- e. Are there qualities that you didn’t see that you would add as healthy characteristics?
- f. If you could make your own seven cards for a Healthy Hand, what would you write on the cards?

CONCLUSION

1. Conclude the activity by asking each participant to share one thing they will remember about healthy relationships after participating in this lesson.

Healthy 7 Cards

Sex is the most important thing.

You don't have to pretend to be someone you're not.

You feel energized being with the person.

You feel worn out and tired being with the person.

One person usually decides what to do and where to go.

You have fun being with the person.

You are constantly fighting and making up.

You don't spend time with your other friends anymore.

You're embarrassed or uncomfortable being with the person in a group.

**Your partner accepts you
the way you are.**

**You feel closer to the
person as time goes on.**

**Your time with your
partner interferes with
your studies or work.**

**You spend time by
yourself without the
person.**

**You like being seen with
the person.**

**Your partner respects
your thoughts and feelings
about being sexual.**

**You are not afraid to talk
about what's bothering
you.**

**You keep the relationship
because it's better than
being alone.**

**You're afraid to bring up
the subject of birth
control and condoms.**

Your partner accuses you of fooling around with someone when you are not.

Your partner calls or turns up unexpectedly in order to check up on you.

Your partner occasionally cheats on you.

Your partner gets jealous when you talk to other guys or girls.

Your partner makes sure that you both want to do any physical touching.

You and your partner tell the truth about what you think and feel.

Your partner is constantly text messaging you.

Your partner posted pictures of you without telling you.

WILD CARD!
(Name a healthy relationships behavior.)