

DATING, MORE THAN JUST FRIENDS?

Lesson 2

GRADE
CALM

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ P 10:

Examine various attitudes, values and behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships. Explain our need for relationships. Identify positive elements of relationships (e.g., trust, integrity, respect, responsibility). Describe the skills, attitudes and behaviours for building, maintaining and enhancing healthy, positive relationships.

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ P 11:

Examine the relationship between commitment and intimacy in all its levels.



MATERIALS:

1. Newsprint and Pens
2. HANDOUT: Promoting Safe Dating



INTRODUCTION:

Dating provides teens with the opportunity to develop skills and behaviours for building and maintaining healthy relationships. This lesson encourages students to think about the important qualities of intimate relationships by identifying what first attracts people to one another and what helps a relationship grow and change. There is no set time or age to start dating and students will have differing opinions about this based on their personal values and cultural and religious backgrounds.



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

A. GROUND RULES (5-10 min)

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.

B. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (10-15 min)

These discussion points will help students to clarify what is meant by the term ‘dating relationship.’

1. Ask students to define the term “dating relationship.”

- Dating usually means that two people are spending time together in a close relationship. These relationships can be complex, and usually develop over time and may consist of friendship, romantic love, and/or intimacy involving sexual activity.

2. Do you think there is pressure to date? If so, where does it come from?

- Some teens may feel pressure to date from friends. There is no set age or time to start dating. Many people do not start dating until they have finished school because other things are more important to them such as their school work, a sport they enjoy or just hanging out with a group of friends.
- The media may present images of couples in movies, TV shows and advertising putting forward the idea that everyone is dating. These representations are not always realistic!
- Do you think that males and females have similar expectations about dating?

3. Do you think that males and females have similar expectations about dating?

- This is a good opportunity to discuss stereotypes around dating with your students. You can talk about who asks who out on a date, who pays when on a date etc. The topic of sexual decision-making and sexual pressure may be raised and it is important to dispel the stereotypes that only males initiate



Some students may wish to talk about same sex relationships and this may be uncomfortable and challenging for other students. You may wish to explore this topic further by using the CALM lessons *Sexual and Gender Minorities*.



A teacher can play a very important role in helping students develop respect for sexual diversity. Teachers should also be sensitive to the fact that there may be students in their class who are in varying stages of awareness and acceptance of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

sexual activity and place pressure on their partners.

- Each individual and couple is different and there is no set time in a relationship for these decisions. Communication is very important if couples hope to have an equal and open relationship.

4. How do we know what factors influence the qualities we look for in a partner?

- Suggestions may include: parents/family, TV, movies, magazines, music, and peers. Many of the examples of relationships we see in the media are not realistic and present an over-romanticized image. We are often able to learn from others what we do and don't want from relationships.



Students with differing abilities may experience different types of relationships and may need to spend extra time exploring how to establish healthy boundaries.

C. IMPORTANT QUALITIES IN A RELATIONSHIP—INTERVIEW ACTIVITY (25-30 min)

Students identify the important qualities of a dating partner.

1. Depending on class size of the group divide students into groups of 3-4.
2. Explain that the purpose of this exercise is for groups to devise a set of interview questions they could use to question a prospective dating partner. Groups should think about what they want from the other person in terms of qualities and characteristics (e.g. sense of humour, good listener, etc.).
3. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to record their questions on newsprint.
4. Ask each group to present their list on newsprint to the large group. Ask for further suggestions and add to the lists. You may want to leave these lists up around the room while covering this topic to remind the group of important qualities in a dating relationship.
5. Lead a discussion by asking:
 - If you had to rank the qualities in order of importance, which would be first?
 - Are these qualities the same for males and females?
 - How do we learn about these qualities? For some it may be a matter of trying relationships and realizing what you definitely do not like in a partner!

D. SAFE DATING DISCUSSION (10 min)

Students explore the idea of 'safe dating'. Begin by asking students, "What does 'safe dating' mean to you?"

Raise the following discussion points if not addressed by students:

- Dating should be fun and provide you with an opportunity to get to know the other person. It is important to share decisions around where you will go and what you might do on that date.
- If it is your first time together you may want to go out with another couple or in a group. Stay in places where other people are around.
- Be aware of the effects of substance use and the risk of sexual activity as a result.
- Know your limits around sexual activity. Being clear about your limits makes it easier to express them to a date and to stick by them. It is important to discuss issues such as abstaining from sexual activity before you find yourself in a sexual situation.
- Be honest with your date and use assertive communication strategies. If you no longer want to date the other person explain why clearly and simply.

E. STAYING SAFE WHEN DATING: GROUP WORK (30-40 min)

Students brainstorm ways in which they can stay safe when dating by preparing promotional material with tips and advice.

You may wish to set this task in class if time allows or as an evaluative activity.

1. Form groups of 3 – 5 students.
2. Give each group the **Promoting Safe Dating** handout.
3. Explain that groups must plan and present promotional material as outlined in the handout.
4. Allow groups time to plan and develop their promotional material as outlined in the handout.
5. Have groups present their promotional material to the class.



QUESTION BOX (10 min)

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



SELF REFLECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

Knowledge:

- Define the term “dating relationship”?
- Identify positive elements of relationships (e.g. trust, integrity, respect, responsibility.)
- Identify the qualities they might look for in a dating partner?

Skills:

- Develop skills to stay safe when dating?

Attitudes:

- Recognize that dating should happen at an individual’s own pace.

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1. Alberta Education. (2002). *Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.alberta.ca/media/352993/pos.pdf>

Names: _____

PROMOTING SAFE DATING

Together with your group, produce material for an adolescent audience that promotes safe dating. Follow the steps below.

1. Choose **one** of the following types of promotional material for your group to create:
 - **Poster:** a one-sided poster
 - **Pamphlet:** a fold-out pamphlet
 - **Card:** wallet sized card similar to a business card
2. Do your research. Your promotion must address each of the following questions:
 - a. What is safe dating?
 - b. What can you do to ensure you are safe when out with a date?
 - c. How can you avoid making poor choices and decisions while dating? (e.g. avoiding substance use, be clear about your values around sexual activity).
 - d. Are there any agencies or community support networks that teens can use if they experience problems with dating?
3. Plan the layout/design of your promotion. **Ensure that the promotion would convince an adolescent audience to date safe.** Brainstorm your ideas on a separate sheet of paper.
4. Work together to develop the finished product. Ensure that the promotion would convince an adolescent audience to date safe.
5. Use the following checklist to ensure you have created high quality promotional material:
 - Topic is obvious
 - Design/format appeals to an adolescent audience
 - Design/format is creative
 - Design/format is easy to understand
 - Highlights the most important information
 - Information is accurate
 - Information is appropriate
 - Information is complete
 - ***The promotion would convince an adolescent audience to date safely.***
6. Present the promotional material to the class.