

WHEN RELATIONSHIPS CHANGE

Lesson 3

GRADE
CALM

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ P10:

Examine various attitudes, values and behaviours for developing meaningful interpersonal relationships. Explain our need for relationships.

Identify positive elements of relationships; i.e. trust, integrity, respect, and responsibility. Describe the skills, attitudes and behaviours for building, maintaining and enhancing healthy, positive relationships. Describe how roles and role expectations change with age, growth and changes in life.

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ P11

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

Identify expectations and commitments in various relationships.

Explain the role of trust and ways to establish trust in a relationship.



MATERIALS:

1. **CARDS:** Relationship Progression
2. **SLIDE:** Healthy Relationship Checklist



INTRODUCTION:

Relationships do not remain static. As a couple gets to know one another, new feelings, ideas and issues can evolve and develop. This lesson encourages students to consider how relationships progress from the first meeting, through dating, and eventually, if a couple chooses sexual activity. Students will have differing opinions about dating, falling in love or beginning sexual activity based on their personal values and/or 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. RELATIONSHIP PROGRESSION ACTIVITY (30-35 min)

Students question how relationships progress from the first feelings of attraction, to dating and perhaps sexual activity.

1. Introduce the activity by explaining that we will be building a relationship, step by step. We will be looking at the components of relationships and putting them in the correct order.
2. There are several ways in which you may want to divide your group. With groups of 15-20 students prepare for one group. With larger groups have two groups – you may want to split the group into males and females.
3. Handout the **Relationship Progression** Cards giving one or two to each person. Ask the students to hold their cards so everyone can see them and line up in order as quickly as possible. Cards can be placed on the table or students can physically stand in line if the room is big enough. Be sure to tell the group where the starting point is of the relationship for each group.
4. Encourage comments to be kept for large group feedback and discussion.



The CALM lessons addressing abstinence and decision-making may provide students with skills and information that help with their relationship choices.



Some students may feel uncomfortable with this activity. Be sure to emphasize that all relationships may progress differently and intimate relationships may start and end at different times throughout their lives.

C. Relationship Progression Feedback and Discussion (10-20 min)

Students discuss relationship progression and personal values. You can lead the group discussion using the following questions as a guide:

1. **Does everyone agree that this is the “right” order? If not, what should be changed?**
 - There is no “right” way for a relationship to develop, everyone is different. Not everyone in the group will agree with the order the group has placed the stages. It is most important that the people in the relationship are happy with the speed the relationship is progressing. Communication and honesty enable couples to go at their own pace and to make changes in the relationship when necessary.
2. **Will all relationships progress in this way?**
 - Many couples choose abstinence in their relationship and it is important that you make it clear that this is a choice.

- Thinking about marriage or long-term commitment may be difficult for teens to contemplate, however this is an opportunity for them to experiment with what qualities they would look for in a person and what qualities they do not like.



Students with differing abilities may experience different types of relationships and may need to spend extra time exploring boundary setting.

3. (If there are two groups) How do the progressions compare with each other? Are they dramatically different? If the groups were split male/female, do you think this has an impact?

- It is important to address gender stereotypes that may come up at this point in the

discussion. Not all males want sex in a relationship and some females will pressure males.

4. Where does/should love be placed in the progression? (You may want to leave this card out until this point in the discussion). Can people fall in love at first sight? Does there need to be love before sexual activity?

5. Have we built a “real” relationship or an “ideal” relationship? Do most teen relationships look like this?

6. Is there a “point of no return” in this progression?

- It is important to emphasize that if a couple chooses to be sexually active they can return to abstinence at any point.

7. What happens if we take the intercourse card and put it near the beginning of the relationship?

- This idea may have been raised when you addressed question 5 above. Some relationships may be “one-night stands” and involve little more than the act of intercourse. What does your group think about this from an emotional standpoint and a safety perspective?

8. How long does each step take?

- Everyone is different; there is certainly no timeline that must be followed.

9. Are the birth control cards in the right place?

- Chances are the group will have put these cards near the end of the relationship. Challenge them to put “thinking about” and “talking about” cards earlier. If one or both people in the relationship want to choose abstinence it is important they have this conversation early in the relationship.

D. INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS DISCUSSION (15-20 min)

Students think about how relationships progress and change from just dating for fun to a more serious relationship.

1. Ask students what we mean by “Mature” and “Immature” love.
 - Often, people feel that they are in love, but sometimes it turns out to be infatuation rather than “mature love”.
 - Immature love may involve one person “taking” more than “giving;” jealousy; one person “calling all the shots”, broken promises; and possibly violence.

2. Using the **Healthy Relationship Checklist²** slide, summarize the lesson with the following:
 - **Show that you care for the other person:** There are many ways to show that you care for someone. This means “being there” when your partner needs you for support.
 - **Have a sense of humour:** Laughter can help us to not take ourselves so seriously and can smooth out the rough times.
 - **Communicate:** Listen to each other and talk openly and honestly about your feelings and what matters most to both of you. Many relationships fail because partners do not let the other know how they are feeling or what their needs are.
 - **Do meaningful things together:** Joining clubs or societies, doing sports or hobbies together can strengthen a relationship.
 - **Maintain relationships with other people:** Ensure you have time for yourself to spend with your friends and family. Your partner should never control what you do, where you go or who you spend time with.
 - **Understand your partner’s decisions:** You may not agree with your partner’s choices but it is important to show respect and support for them.
 - **Need to tolerate each other’s weaker moments:** This is a true sign of acceptance for the other person. Always respect each other and say good things about each other.
 - **Accept each other’s style:** Chances are the reason you chose to date your partner is because you found their style attractive (e.g. attitude toward life, sense of humour). If these things become problematic in the relationship they need to be addressed through communication.
 - **Never use violence or threats.**
 - **Sexual fulfilment:** Not necessarily sexual intercourse. Accept limits about sexual activity, every time. A couple may choose not to be sexually active but enjoy being close to one another in other ways.



QUESTION BOX (10 min)

Answer questions from last class. 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:

- Describe how relationships progress and change over time?
- Identify important qualities of intimate relationships?

Skills:

- Describe skills for building, maintaining and enhancing healthy, positive relationships?

Attitudes:

- Recognize that dating should happen at an individual's own pace?
 - Describe attitudes and behaviours for building, maintaining and enhancing healthy, positive relationships?
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1. Alberta Education. (2002). *Career and life management guide to implementation*. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/health/resources/calmguide.aspx>
2. Canadian Red Cross. (2015). *Violence bullying and abuse prevention: Healthy relationship tips*. Retrieved from: <http://www.redcross.ca/what-we-do/violence-bullying-and-abuse-prevention/youth/healthy-relationship-tips>

Eye Contact

Talking On The Phone

Flirting

Talking About Shared Interests

Exchanging Emails/Text Messages

“Steady” Dating
(Dating only one person)

Touching
(Hugging and long embraces)

Petting
(Touching below the neck)

Dating

Trust

(Being able to tell and keep secrets)

Kissing

Touching

(Holding hands, arm around)

Intimacy

(Loving personal relationship, warmth, affection, closeness)

Making Out

Intercourse

Love

Getting and using birth control and STI protection

Talking about birth control and STI protection

Pregnancy

Thinking about having children

Long-term commitment/marriage

Talking about having children

Sharing goals

(Having similar dreams and ideas about life)

Unconditional Regard

(Knowing someone's strengths and weaknesses
and still liking them)

Thinking about birth control and STI protection

Mutual sex play

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP CHECKLIST

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

- listen to you and take your feelings and ideas seriously
- talk openly and honestly with you about what matters to them
- never use threats of harm, violence or suicide to get his/her own way
- never hit, punch, kick, bite, slap, push or otherwise strike out in anger or jealousy
- not try to control what you do, where you go or who you talk to
- respect you, and say good things to you and about you
- enjoy spending time with you, and show it whether alone with you or in a group
- trust you, and earn your trust by keeping your confidences
- allow you to enjoy the activities and people that matter to you
- accepts your limits about sexual activity, every time.

Canadian Red Cross. (2015). *Violence bullying and abuse prevention: Healthy relationship tips*. Retrieved from: <http://www.redcross.ca/what-we-do/violence-bullying-and-abuse-prevention/youth/healthy-relationship-tips>