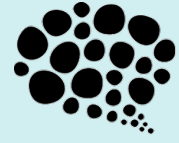


Lesson 6:

Being a Good Friend



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Identify qualities of a friend
- Practice skills for making friends
- Discuss ways to maintain healthy boundaries in friendships

These outcomes are not specifically related to the Alberta sexuality outcomes. Students who have been opted out of sexuality education would still participate in this lesson. This lesson provides skills and information important to student safety.

How To Use

Teachers and staff know their students best: before teaching this lesson, consider each student's individual goals. The overall aim is for students to be healthy and safe while having the best personal and social experiences possible. Avoid assuming that a student doesn't need or want this information.

All the Differing Abilities (DA) lesson plans can be adapted to the needs of individual students and groups. The lessons are scripted, meaning there are answers and explanations for every question asked. The questions, answers and discussion points are prepared for you using plain and simple language at a level best suited to students with DA.

Text in italics is the script designed to be read directly to students. Possible answers to questions, activity instructions and other teacher information, are not in italics.

Classroom Activities

- A. Group Agreements and Check-in
- B. Introduction to Being a Good Friend
- C. What Makes a Good Friend?
- D. Making New Friends
- E. Tips for Making Friends

- F. Good Friendship Behaviours
- G. When Friendships End
- H. Question Box
- I. Closure

Required Materials

Friendship Bingo handout

Good Friendship Behaviour cards

Background Information for Teachers

Language and terms

Talking about anatomy, physiology, and sexual development in terms of people, parts and processes is more accurate than talking about it in terms of assigned sex (female and male) or gender identity (girl and boy). For example, not everyone who gets periods is a girl, so saying “when someone gets their period” is more accurate than saying “when a girl gets her period.” This also helps make sure that everyone is included in the discussion, including trans, nonbinary and intersex youth.

However, some students may find this language confusing and will benefit from using gendered terms more frequently e.g., “when a girl gets her period, she may choose to use period underwear.” It’s important for students to be clear about what may happen to them and saying people who get periods may be too abstract, resulting in confusion. Terms can be used together when explaining concepts e.g., “when someone is first starting to get their period, it may be irregular. Not all girls have a regular period at first.”

Students may have questions about their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Teachers play an important role in helping students feel seen and affirmed when they come to school so that they feel good about their gender expression and identities. These lessons use inclusive language and acknowledge different identities and relationships to acknowledge all students as they develop their sexuality. Learn more about [gender identity and expression](#).

For more on teaching sexual health education, see [Teaching Human Sexuality to Students with Differing Abilities](#).

A. Group Agreements and Check-in

Ensure [group agreements](#) (ground rules) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established group agreements, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

Start with a check-in activity as appropriate for the group. You may want to answer the question box questions from the last class as part of the check-in.

B. Introduction to Being a Good Friend

Healthy friendships can play an important role as youth desire and develop more independence during puberty. Learning to make friends and when to end a friendship are life skills. As teens may consider dating and intimate adult relationships, they can build on these friendship skills. Some students may not have friends outside of school, but they can still develop skills to make friends.

1. *Today we're going to talk about being a good friend. What is a friend?*
 - People you care about, have fun with, treat each other nicely, have something in common with
 - *When you are a teen or child, friends are close to your age. There are adults you depend on, like staff, teachers, and parents. You might care about each other, and have fun together, but they are staff, teachers, and parents, not friends.*
 - Calling your students "friends" can confuse the message about friends being peers, not teachers or parents. Instead, consider using alternatives like students, class, or people when referring to a group. When talking to one person, use their name.
2. *Why do we have friends?*
 - Have fun, and do things together.
 - *Friends also teach us important life skills to help us grow up, like learning to share, working out problems, and setting boundaries.*
3. *People don't always have friends. We'll talk about how to make and be a good friend, so if you don't have any friends now, you'll know what to do when you make friends!*
4. Students may be interested to know that learning healthy friendship skills can help them have healthy dating relationships later on.

C. What Makes a Good Friend?

Use books, TV, and movies to show examples of good friendships. Talk about how the characters treat each other, pointing out when someone is or is not being a good friend.

1. Before class, print a **Friendship Bingo** handout for each student.
2. *Part of making friends is working out what you want in a friend or what you like about someone. Let's think about all of the qualities that make a good friend.*

3. *What do you look for in a good friend?* List answers on the board.
Example list:

Considerate	Sincere	Genuine	Trustworthy
Dependable	Unselfish	Good listener	Understanding
Generous	Funny	Helpful	Reliable
Honest	Accepting	Patient	Energetic
Kind	Cooperative	Shares	Loyal

4. *People usually find friends when they have something in common e.g., like the same sports, are in the same class or group, enjoy the same video games. This doesn't mean friends are all the same – part of what makes friendship interesting are our differences. What are some places where you might find people who could become friends? Class, life skills group, sport, after school program, the bus*
5. Give each student a copy of the **Friendship Bingo** handout.
6. *Now, we get to learn about each other to see what things we have in common and what makes us unique.*
 - Have the students interview each other to find out what qualities they have from the bingo card. Some students may need support with this.
 - They write the student's initials in the box that describes their qualities.
 - Encourage students to compare bingo cards to facilitate discussion.
 - Ask students not to mark the same person's initials in more than 2 boxes (depending on class size).
7. Debrief the activity:
 - *Did you find out anything new about your classmates?*
 - *Did you find out something new about yourself?*
 - *How did it make you feel to be noticed for your talents?*
 - Reinforce that everyone has the right to choose their friends and a choice about who they spend time with. It's ok if someone doesn't want to be your friend: there are lots of people in the world to meet.

D. Making New Friends

Students consider where and how they can make new friends.

1. *How does it feel when you are in a new place, like a new class or school?*
Nervous, excited, happy
2. *Where would you go to make new friends in the community?*
Sports, after school programs, religious group
3. *In our school, what activities can you do to meet people?*
Lunch, asking to be partners, school games
4. *How do you know when someone wants to be your friend?*
They will smile and ask you questions, they want to spend time with you, and they sometimes text you or start a conversation
5. *What activities can you do with a new friend?*
Play a game, watch a school sport, go for a walk
6. *How do you know when someone doesn't want to be your friend?*
They don't smile, they ignore you, they seem uncomfortable around you, they end conversations quickly, they say so
7. *Not everyone will want to be friends and that's OK. Listen to someone and accept when they say they don't want to be friends. If someone doesn't want to talk to you, find someone else who does.*

E. Tips for Making Friends

This could be a whole class project to be shared with other students or school administrators.

1. Have students create a resource (postcard, poster, podcast, PowerPoint show etc.) that would show a new student where and how they can meet new people. This can be individual, in pairs or in small groups.
2. Have students plan and make something that would help a new student know about:
 - Where they can make new friends in the school community
 - How they can show they want to be friends
 - How to know if someone wants to be their friend
 - Activities people can do with new friends

F. Good Friendship Behaviours

This activity allows students to practice the skills they are learning while thinking about the same skills. Some students may need an adult to work with their pair to help them practice good friendship skills while they problem solve and complete the activity.

1. Prepare by printing and cutting out the **Being a Good Friend cards**. Print multiple sets for a larger group. Put each set into an envelope.
2. Group students into pairs. In their pairs, have students:
 - Pick a paper from the envelope
 - Read the friendship situation out loud
 - Talk about what they each think a good friend would do in this situation
 - Remind students that being a good friend doesn't mean accepting a person's behaviour no matter what.
3. Have each pair share their ideas with the class, encouraging class discussion.
4. Extend the discussion by discussing good online friendship behaviours:
5. *Sometimes, we have friends on social media. What is social media?*
Online websites or apps that let people share information with each other, like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat.
6. *What is good about using social media? How can you use it in your friendships?*
 - Good way to communicate and make plans when you don't see someone in person.
 - Can be fun as you share posts etc.
7. *What can go wrong with friendships using social media?*
People can share information that you sent as private.
 - People can spread rumours and share things that are not true (you are not there to tell them what really happened).
 - It is easy to misinterpret that text/message.
 - Online bullying.
8. *When sharing anything online or in an app, it's important to:*
 - Treat people online the same way you would treat them in real life.
 - Remember that online and social media isn't private, even if it feels like it.
 - Remember that online and social media isn't temporary, even if it deletes or looks like it goes away.

- If you see or read anything online or in an app that makes you uncomfortable, scared or upset, tell a trusted adult – even if you think you weren't supposed to be online.

G. When Friendships End

It can be difficult for everyone when relationships end. Learning about when and how to end friendships can build knowledge and skills to help people be safe as relationships become more intimate.

1. *Most friendships don't last forever and that's ok. Some friendships last years, some last only a few months and some only last a short time, like during a summer camp.*
2. *Some friendships end naturally because people change schools, move away or people just spend less and less time together until they notice they aren't friends anymore.*
3. *Some friendships end because the friendship isn't working out. How do you know that a friendship isn't working out?*
 - Not feeling good around each other, no common interests, different values, lies, being mean, put downs, not fun anymore.
4. *What can you do if a friendship isn't working out?*
 - If it feels safe, talk to the person, and tell them how you feel.
 - Be respectful but honest
 - Don't just start being mean or ignoring the person.
 - Students may want to end friendships online or through other friends. If it's safe, telling the person face to face is more respectful, even if it's hard.
5. *Just like all types of relationships, friendships can become abusive. That means that someone is getting hurt in the relationship. If there are threats, hitting, or forcing you to do things you don't want, like kissing, it is abusive. If you think you might be in an abusive relationship, it is very important to tell an adult you trust, like a parent or teacher.*

H. Question Box

Answer any questions from [question box](#) in the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class.

- Some students may need assistance from staff, either during the class or in between classes, to record their questions.

- Hand out paper to each student.
 - Students who don't have a question can write something else on the piece of paper, such as something they learned or just a comment about their day.
 - When everyone writes something down, the people with questions feel safer writing them.
- Use a box or bag to collect the papers.
- Answer the questions during the **next class**. This allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

I. Closure

- *Today, we talked about friendships. You don't have to be friends with someone if you don't want to.*
- *What is one thing you learned? How do you feel after talking about friendships?*
- *Who can you talk to about what you learned today?*
- *In another class, we'll talk about healthy dating relationships.*

Friendship Bingo

1. Talk to each person in your class to find out which talents each person has.
2. Write the person's initials in the boxes that describes their gifts. Try not to mark the same person's initials in more than 2 boxes.
3. When you have initials in the boxes that form any straight line across, down, or diagonally, yell Bingo!

Has a nice smile	Enjoys listening to music	Likes to dance	Has a good imagination	Is friendly
Likes to spend time alone	Cares about how others feel	Enjoys school	Helps others	Likes making crafts
Is kind	Works hard	FREE SPACE	Shows respect to everyone	Likes Phys Ed
Is artistic	Uses kind words	Is helpful	Likes to play	Someone you can trust
Finishes their tasks	Is a good listener	Makes people laugh	Likes video games	Is joyful



You hear some students talking about your friend behind their back.

A friend would ...

Your friend borrows a computer game from you and has not returned it for several weeks. You have asked to have it returned a few times.

A friend would...

You are upset that your best friend has been hanging out with another person who you do not get along with.

A friend would ...

You notice that your friend has come to school with their shirt on inside out and has not noticed yet.

A friend would ...



Two friends of yours are upset with each other. They demand that you choose between them. You do not want to lose either of them.

A friend would ...

Your best friend invites you to go to a movie, but you are already going to that movie with another friend.

A friend would ...

Your friend wants to spend more time with you than you want to spend with them. You like this person, but you want more freedom to see other friends.

A friend would ...

You go to the store with your friend to buy a snack. You only have \$5.00 with you. When you arrive, your friend realizes that they forgot to bring money.

A friend would ...



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