Healthy Relationships for teens

Relationships are difficult & take time to get right!

Presented by:
Developed by Prevention & Promotion
Mental Health & Addiction Services, Western Health
Types of Relationships

- **Family** (siblings, parents, extended family)
- Friends
- **Romantic** (boyfriend/girlfriend)
- **Casual:**
  - **Professional** (such as teachers, clergy or medical professionals)
  - **Acquaintances** (such as people you know & recognize in passing)

*Relationships are difficult & take time to get right!*
Why are Healthy Relationships Important?

- We engage with many people in our daily lives. It is helpful when we can form meaningful relationships with those people.
- Being in a good relationship helps us:
  - Know ourselves
  - Develop as a person
  - Grow emotionally
  - Communicate & maintain meaningful bonds with other people
  - Enjoy life & have fun!
What Makes a Healthy Relationship?

- Respect
- Trust
- Honesty
- Communication
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Relationships</th>
<th>Unhealthy Relationships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You feel good about yourself when you’re around the other person.</td>
<td>You feel sad, angry, scared or worried.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You do not try to restrict or control each other. There is equal amount of give &amp; take.</td>
<td>You feel you are giving more attention than they give to you. You feel restricted &amp; controlled.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication, Sharing &amp; Trust.</strong> You feel safe &amp; trust to share secrets. It requires listening.</td>
<td>You do not communicate, share &amp; trust.</td>
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<td>You like to spend time together but also enjoy doing things apart.</td>
<td>You feel pressured to spend time together &amp; feel guilty when apart.</td>
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<td>It’s easy to be yourself when you’re with the other person.</td>
<td>You feel the need to be someone or something that you’re not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You <strong>Respect</strong> each other’s opinion. You listen &amp; try to understand their point of view even if you disagree.</td>
<td>You feel there’s no respect for you &amp; your opinion &amp; you’re not able to disagree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is <strong>no fear</strong> in your relationship.</td>
<td>You feel fear. Alcohol &amp;/or drugs may cause arguing, physical, emotional, sexual abuse &amp;/or unprotected sexual activity.</td>
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The Media & Relationships

- Exposure
  - How are relationships portrayed in the media?

- Facts
  - Most relationships on TV are superficial, short term & “easy.”
  - Out of the TV shows that contain overt sexual content, only 15% discuss risk & responsibility.

http://www.veoh.com/watch/v22884234saWQWYgN
Respect:
You have to give it to get it!

- Everyone deserves respect.
- Trust & support each other
- Value each other's independence
- Have the freedom to be yourself
- Talk honestly

Stop taking my stuff and get out of my room!

Get off the phone so I can talk to my friends!
Being Respectful

- Respect each person as an individual. A healthy partnership means learning about the other person & valuing what’s important to them.
- Respect in a relationship means that each person values the other & understands – & would never challenge – the other person’s boundaries.
- Respect yourself
- Show respect with your words & actions

Activity – Show Respect or Circle or Respect
Trust

- **Trust** - Means that you feel that you can count on each other & that the other person will be there for you. Trust needs to be earned over time & can be lost with a broken promise.
- Proving you are reliable and responsible
- What happens in a relationship without trust?
  - Second guessing
  - Not believing each other
  - Betrayal by sharing secrets
  - Obsessively checking on the person
- Being honest helps gain & maintain trust.
- Trust is essential in a healthy relationship
Honesty

- Be **Honest** about thoughts & feelings. It is the real me” that our partner wants to get to know.
- Honesty goes hand-in-hand with trust.
- It’s hard to trust or believe someone when they have lied in the past. Once someone has been dishonest, it takes time to regain trust in a relationship.
Communication

- **Communication** - Is how we show our respect, trust & honesty & it requires listening & sharing thoughts & feelings.
- Being able to talk & listen to each other.
- It is based on honesty & trust.
Communicating – Body Language and Tone

- Body language & tone can express more than words!

- Activity: Using Body Language
Boundaries

- It is your responsibility to establish & enforce your own boundaries. Tell people your boundaries.

- Types of boundaries:
  - **Physical** – This is your personal space.
  - **Sexual** - We define our limits on what is safe & appropriate sexual behaviour.
  - **Emotional** – This is your feelings & reactions & is defined by what you feel is safe & appropriate ways for people to treat you.
  - **Relational** - Parent, partner, friend, colleague, acquaintance, boss, etc. Roles & context define the limits of appropriate interactions. Each relationship has different boundaries.

- Understand & honor boundaries.
- Understand when boundaries can/cannot be crossed – duty to report.
Evaluating Friendships

Some people we spend time with give us energy while others may be draining.

- Think about the people in your life, do they energize you or drain you?
- Is there respect, trust, honesty & communication?
- Is this a real friendship
- Is the friendship worth it?
- Is this a healthy friendship?

*Activity - Ad for a Friend*
When Something’s Wrong…

Using drugs & alcohol can interfere with building the key components of a healthy relationship:

- Respect
- Communication
- Trust
- Honesty

How do you think drugs & alcohol can affect your relationships?
What is an Unhealthy Relationship?

- An unhealthy relationship may include:
  - Teasing or bullying
  - Power struggles
  - Angry outbursts
  - Withholding love
  - Coercion or peer pressure
  - Unreasonable demands
  - Humiliation

A Healthy Relationship NEVER includes these things!
Red Lights

Does the other person…?

- Put you down
- Get extremely jealous or possessive
- Constantly check up on you
- Tell you how to dress
- Try to control what you do & who you see
- Have big mood swings
- Make you feel nervous (like you are walking on eggshells)
- Criticize you
- Threaten to hurt you

Activity – Friendship Spotlight Game
Danger Signs

- Not talking & avoiding problems
- Lack of trust, respect, honesty & communication
- Lack of balance/Trying to control you
- Pressuring you to make the relationship serious
- Pressuring you to have sex
- Extreme jealousy & possessiveness
- Not taking your views or desires seriously
- Trying to stop you from spending time with friends/family
- Having abused a previous partner
- Defending the use of violence by others
Sexuality

- Is your romantic relationship ready for sex?

**Things to consider:**

- Are you **aware** of your options & the consequences of being sexual active? (ex: STI’s, pregnancy)
- Are you **balancing** all aspects of your life in your decision, including your present desires & future goals?
- Make a conscious **choice**.
Females are most often the victims of abuse - 95% of all victims in an abusive relationship are women.

¼ of high school students experience dating violence.

40% of females murdered in Canada are killed by their partners.

Over 70% of pregnant/parenting teens are beaten by their boyfriends.

Dating violence is an indicator of future abuse.

Jealousy & possessiveness are tools used to take control.

Remember...It is not the victim’s fault. Nobody deserves to be abused.
Cycle of Violence

- **Tension Building** Criticism, yelling, swearing, angry gestures, coercion or threats
- **Explosion/Violence** Physical & sexual attacks or threats
- **Calm/Seduction** Apologies, promises to change or gifts

What keeps the cycle in motion?

- **Love for the abuser**: Believing that the relationship is not entirely bad
- **Hope**: Thinking things will change or it's just a phase
- **Fear**: Worrying that threats will become a reality & so are afraid to end the relationship
Power & Control Wheel

Using COERCION and THREATS
- making and/or threats to do something to hurt her
- threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, report her to welfare
- making her drop charges
- making her do illegal things

Using ECONOMIC ABUSE
- preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- making her ask for money
- giving her an allowance
- taking her money
- not letting her know about or have access to family income

Using INTIMIDATION
- making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures
- smashing things, destroying her property
- abusing pets
- displaying weapons

Using EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- putting her down
- making her feel bad about herself
- calling her names
- making her think she's crazy
- playing mind games
- humiliating her
- making her feel guilty

Using MALE PRIVILEGE
- treating her like a servant
- making all the big decisions
- acting like the master of the castle
- being the one to define men's and women's roles

Using ISOLATION
- controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes
- limiting her outside involvement
- using jealousy to justify actions

Using CHILDREN
- making her feel guilty about the children
- using the children to relay messages

MINIMIZING, DENYING and BLAMING
- making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously
- saying the abuse didn't happen
- shifting responsibility for abusive behavior
- saying she caused it
Myths of Dating Violence

- “He/she will never do it again.”
- “I am not being abused.”
- “I will leave when the time is right.”
- “It only happens to girls.”

Activity - Myth or Fact Domestic Violence & Teen Relationship Abuse
Relationship Violence: Crossing the Line Activity

- Size
- Gender
- Friends
- Interests
- Clothing
- Brains/Grades
Helping a Friend
– Warning Signs

▪ Is your friend:
  ▪ Becoming more isolated from family & friends?
  ▪ Not participating in activities he/she formerly enjoyed?
  ▪ Spending an excessive amount of time with the other person?
  ▪ Displaying physical & emotional signs of abuse?
  ▪ Constantly canceling plans for reasons that don’t sound true?
  ▪ Always worry about making their boy/girlfriend angry?
  ▪ Give up things that are important?
  ▪ Tell you that they get pressured into having sex, or talk about feeling like a sex object?
  ▪ Have a boy/girlfriend that wants them to be available all the time?

If the answer is “yes” to many of these questions, your friend could be in an abusive relationship.
Helping a Friend Deal with an Unhealthy Relationship

- Help them to recognize that feeling bad about themselves is not "normal" & that they deserve a healthy, non-violent relationship.
- Be a good listener & offer support.
- Offer to go with them to find a counselor or support group, or to talk to someone they trust like their family, friends, guidance counselor, teacher or nurse.
- Encourage them to find strength & be brave.
- Don’t make them feel bad for their choices - even if you think these choices are wrong.
- Be patient, it can take time for your friend to make changes.
- Remember that you cannot "rescue" them.
What Should You Do?

- In an unhealthy relationship, you can:
  - Work it out
  - End the relationship

- If you are being abused:
  - Tell someone about the abuse.
  - Talk to your partner & explain that you will leave if the abuse don’t stop.

- If you are abusing:
  - Talk to a friend, counsellor or someone you trust. Abuse is a learned behaviour & you can change it!

- If you’re in a relationship that you feel you can't get out of, try talking to someone you trust & who may be in a position to help!
Coping with a Break Up

Understanding & accepting that a relationship is over can be tough. You might feel sad, angry, confused, lonely, embarrassed & like you'll never find love again – That’s Normal!

There’s no magic cure for a broken heart, here’s ways to help you cope:

- **Keep busy.** Get involved in different activities. Focusing on other things can help you move on with your life, meet new people & discover new interests.
- **Focus on your good qualities.** It's easy to feel discouraged. Be kind to yourself. Remember your good points. Are you a good friend or talented athlete? Do you have nice eyes or a great smile?
- **Give yourself time to heal.** It may take a few days, weeks or even take months. It's normal to feel like you won't ever get over it. Recovering from a break up isn't easy so give yourself time.
- **Talk about it.** Sharing with others can help you feel like you’re not alone.
- **Write about it.** Putting your thoughts on paper is a safe & private way to cope with stress.
Resources

If you feel you or a friend is in an unhealthy relationship, talk to someone you trust like your guidance counsellor, school nurse, parents, doctor/health care provider or contact your local Mental Health & Addiction Services Office.

Mental Health Crisis Line  1-888-737-4668
Kids Help Line          1-800-668-6868
Health Line             1-888-709-2929
Transition House       1 866 634 4198
Sexual Assault Line    1-800-726-2743
RCMP                   1-800-709-RCMP
RNC                    1-800-363-4334
NL Sexual Health Centre 1-877-666-9847
Aids Committee NL      1-800-563-1575
Questions?

Presenter Name
Presenter Contact Information