



Relationships and Decisions – Grade 9

75 minutes in length

Overall Expectations:

C. 2. Demonstrates the ability to apply health knowledge and living skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being.

Specific Expectations:

C. 2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships (e.g., peer, school, family, work) and intimate relationships.

Learner Outcome:

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

Describe factors that lead to responsible sexual relationships.

Demonstrate understanding of the pressures on teens to be sexually active.

Materials:

1. PowerPoint Presentation: Relationships and Decisions
2. Chart/poster paper
3. Markers
4. Handout: Relationships and Decisions

Introduction:

During adolescence, healthy relationships provide opportunities for increased self-esteem and personal growth. This lesson encourages students to think about how they develop and maintain healthy relationships. This lesson also allows students to describe ways in which personal values influence choices to be sexually involved or to abstain from sexual involvement.

Approaches/Strategies:

A. Ground Rules (5 minutes)

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning the lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson. Some suggestions for ground rules could include:

- We have personal boundaries that must be respected
- We have a right to “pass”
- We have a right to our own beliefs and opinions
- We are responsible for our own learning
- Our questions or comments will be respected and taken seriously.

B. Discussion Questions (10-15 minutes)

1. Ask students to define the term “relationship”
 - We form relationships as soon as we are born with parents, siblings and family. As we move outside the home, school or neighbourhood friends may become important. As we get older new relationships such as teacher-student, employer-employee, are formed. A relationship involves a connection between people and although we come into contact with many people in our daily lives only a few encounters will result in relationships or friendships. Some people have many relationships, a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, and others prefer only a few close friends.
2. Ask the students to list some of the benefits of relationships.
 - The list may include:
 - Love
 - Companionship
 - Safety
 - Shared interests
 - Affection
 - Sharing hopes, dreams, problems
 - Someone is there for you
 - Shared culture or religion
 - Someone to have fun with

C. Healthy Relationships Comparison (20 minutes)

Students identify the characteristics of a healthy and unhealthy relationship.

1. Divide the students into groups of 2-4.
2. Assign the topics “healthy relationships” and “unhealthy relationships” to the groups.
3. Give the groups 5 minutes to brainstorm as many characteristics of their topic that may be possible.
4. Ask each group to write their list on chart/poster paper and present 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 how to identify if a relationship is a healthy one.)

The list may include the following:

Characteristics of a Healthy Relationship

- Happiness
- Trust
- Love
- Affection
- Equality
- Mutual Respect
- Friendship
- Laughter
- Common interests
- Support
- Fair Arguments
- Acceptance
- Comfort
- Good communication
- Kindness
- Strong self-esteem
- Humour
- Fun
- You can be yourself
- No fear of each other
- Honesty
- Independence

Characteristics of an Unhealthy Relationship

- No trust
- No respect
- Jealousy
- Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual)
- Poor communication
- Low self-esteem
- Power Issues
- Unfair arguments
- Other person tries to change you
- Lies
- Coercion
- Manipulation
- Lack of understanding
- No fun
- Inequality
- Blaming
- Fear
- Feel like you can't be yourself
- Lack of trust
- Not independent people

5. Lead discussion by asking:

- How do you feel in a healthy relationship?
- How do you feel in an unhealthy relationship?
- Why do some people stay in unhealthy relationships?

Resources: It's choice" (DDSB approved pamphlet information on healthy relationships)

Note: Sexual Health Clinic pamphlets can be ordered using our resource order form using the link below:

<https://forms.durham.ca/Health-Care-Provider-Resources-and-Order-Form>

D. Sexual involvement vs. Abstinence (25 minutes)

Students identify what influences their decisions to become sexually involved or not.

1. Display the slide **Abstinence**: Ask the class the question "what is **abstinence**?" (use the slide to review definition)
 - Abstinence – For some it means having no physical contact with other people. For others, it could mean having limited contact, allowing some activities but not sexual intercourse
 - Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe: meaning that it completely eliminates the risk of STI or unintended pregnancy. This is only true if the definition includes eliminating any intimate sexual behaviour involving skin to genital, genital to genital or body fluid to genital contact.
 - It is possible for pregnancy to occur without intercourse if sperm is ejaculated near the entrance of the vagina or on an area that comes into contact with the vagina. Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as herpes and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) can be passed through skin to skin genital contact.
2. Display slide **Virginity**: Ask the class the question "What is virginity" (use the slide to review the definition)
 - Virginity: Virginity has different meanings to different people and various cultures. Generally speaking, it is defined as never having had sexual intercourse.
 - **Do you have to be a virgin to be abstinent?**
 - **NO.** A person who is abstinent is not necessarily a virgin. A virgin has never had sexual intercourse. Someone who is abstinent may have had sexual intercourse in the past, but is not currently sexually active. The choice to be abstinent can be made at any time, regardless of past experience.
3. Display slide: **Sexual Involvement vs. Abstinence**. What influences teens to be sexually active? What influences teens to practise abstinence?

In groups of 4-5, have students brainstorm answers to the questions above (provide them with chart paper and markers). Have students present their answers to the class.

4. Display and review slides on **factors that influence abstinence** or delay in

having sex, and compare class answers.

5. Display and review slides on **factors that influence sexual involvement** and compare class answers.
6. Debrief this activity using the following question:
 - Why might sexual involvement be different for different people?

E. Relationships And Decisions Handout

Distribute to the class as reference notes.

F. Question Box (5 minutes)

Have students fill out questions anonymously and address those if time permits or review questions at the start of next class. Use it as an exit pass (optional).

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 “relationship”?
- Identify the benefits of relationships
- Identify the characteristics of a healthy and unhealthy relationship?
- Define the term “virginity”?
- Define the term “abstinence”?
- Identify influences or factors of sexual involvement?
- Identify influences or factors of abstinence?

Attitudes:

- Recognize the benefits of a healthy relationship.
- Recognize the factors that influence sexual decisions.

Relationships and Decisions – Handout

Relationships:

We form relationships as soon as we are born with parents, siblings and family. As we move outside the home, school or neighbourhood, friends may become important. As we get older new relationships such as teacher-student, employer-employee, are formed.

A relationship involves a connection between people and although we come into contact with many people in our daily lives only a few encounters will result in relationships or friendships.

Some people have many relationships with a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, and others prefer only a few close friends.

Benefits of Being in a Relationship:

- Love
- Companionship
- Safety
- Shared interests
- Affection
- Sharing hopes, dreams, problems
- Someone is there for you
- Shared culture or religion
- Someone to have fun with



Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships:

Healthy Relationships

- Happiness
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- Affection
- Equality
- Mutual Respect
- Friendship
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Unhealthy Relationships

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- Jealousy
- Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual)
- Poor communication
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- Lack of understanding
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- Feel like you can't be yourself
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What is Abstinence?

- Abstinence – For some it means having no physical contact with other people. For others, it could mean having limited contact, allowing some activities but not sexual intercourse.
- Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe: meaning that it completely eliminates the risk of STI or unintended pregnancy. This is only true if the definition includes eliminating any intimate sexual behaviour involving skin to genital, genital to genital or boy fluid to genital contact.
- It is possible for pregnancy to occur without intercourse if sperm is ejaculated near the entrance of the vagina or on an area that comes into contact with the vagina. Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as herpes and HPV can be passed through skin to skin genital contact.

What is virginity?

- Virginity: has different meanings to different people and various cultures. Generally speaking, it is defined as never having had sexual intercourse.
- **Do you have to be a virgin to be abstinent?**
- **NO:** A person who is abstinent is not necessarily a virgin. A virgin has never had sexual intercourse. Someone who is abstinent may have had sexual intercourse in the past, but is not currently sexually active. The choice to be abstinent can be made at any time, regardless of past experience.

Factors influencing sexual involvement

- Increased sex hormones after the onset of puberty
- Curiosity
- A sign of being “grown up”
- Punishing or rebelling against parents
- For intimacy and closeness
- Peer pressure
- Pressure from boyfriend or girlfriend
- Sexual images and messages in media
- Socio- economic status

Factors influencing abstinence or delay in sexual involvement

- Family influences / Positive parent-teen relationships
- Personal values
- Moral, cultural or religious values
- Fear of being caught
- Fear of pregnancy or getting a sexually transmitted infection
- Not feeling ready
- Too embarrassed
- Have high educational or career goals
- Have knowledge about sexuality
- Have well developed decision making skills
- Have positive self-esteem
- Self-discipline