



Healthy Relationships

Materials:

- Worksheet

Brainstorm

Ask students to think about how often teen dating violence occurs in the US. Accept responses. Explain: According to the CDC, Nearly 1 in 11 female and 1 in 14 male high school students report having experienced physical dating violence in 2020. In addition, 1 in 8 female and 1 in 26 male high school students report having experienced sexual dating violence. Overall, 26% of women and 15% of men who were victims of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking in their lifetime, first experienced these or other forms of violence before age 18.

Discuss

When you hear the words “unhealthy relationship” what does that mean to you? Accept student responses and clarify: While you may think that unhealthy relationships are limited to physical violence, there are actually many ways in which a dating relationship can be unhealthy, including: physical, emotional and verbal abuse (name calling, threats), sexual abuse (pressure or force to do something you don’t feel comfortable with) and digital (harrassing, looking through your phone, sexting). What are some of the characteristics of healthy relationships? Accept student responses and list them on the board.

Dive in!

Most healthy relationships have 7 characteristics. You can remember them with the acronym **CHERISH**. Let’s look at them in more detail:

1. **Communication:** In a healthy relationship, both people communicate well with each other. This doesn’t mean that you have to agree all the time! They can talk openly about problems and respect each other’s opinions.
2. **Honesty:** Honesty and trust are the cornerstones of healthy relationships. This means that you don’t lie. You can be counted on to keep your word.
3. **Equal:** In healthy relationships, both people are equal. No one person controls the other or tells the other person what to do. You make decisions together without forcing or pressuring the other person. You are able to compromise on important issues.



High School

4. **Respect:** In a healthy relationship, both people respect each other. When you respect someone, you place great value on them. You honor their ideas and opinions and privacy.
5. **Independent:** In a healthy relationship, it's very important for both people to stay independent. This doesn't mean you can't do stuff together. It means that you can still enjoy time apart with your friends or doing activities that you enjoy, such as sports, clubs, or hobbies.
6. **Safe:** In healthy relationships, you feel safe and secure with the other person, You are not afraid of physical or emotional violence.
7. **Healthy Boundaries:** In healthy relationships, both people have space to be themselves without feeling trapped or isolated. Healthy boundaries are set together and are clear.

What could you do if you have a friend who you think might be in an unhealthy relationship? (talk to your friend, talk to a trusted adult or counselor) Discuss appropriate responses with students and provide appropriate local resources.

Activity

Distribute the worksheet to students. Have them work in pairs or groups to read each scenario and decide if it's a healthy relationship or not. Then, have students role play what they could say to the person in the scenario.

Reflect

To wrap up the lesson, ask students to respond to the question at the bottom of the worksheet: Are you in a healthy relationship now? If not, what can you do to change it?

Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your relationships. Are they healthy?



High School

For Further Study:

- CDC: Preventing Teen Dating Violence:
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/factfact.html>
- Love is Respect: *High School Educators Toolkit*:
<http://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/highschool-educators-toolkit.pdf>
- Youth.gov: *Characteristics of Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships*:
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/teen-dating-violence/characteristics>