

Creating A Safe School: Celebrating All

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum
Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

ID.8.ADV.1 – Develop a plan to promote dignity and respect for all people in the school community

ID.8.AI.1 – Access accurate information about gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation

PS.8.SM.2 – Demonstrate ways they can respond when someone is being bullied or harassed

TARGET GRADE:

Grade 8 - Optional Lesson 1

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Desktop or laptop computer with PowerPoint on it
- LCD projector and screen
- PowerPoint: "What is School Like for LGBTQ Students?"
- Worksheet: "LGBTQ Inclusion Worksheet," enough copies for half the class
- Homework: "LGBTQ Issues: What Did You Learn?" cut in half, enough copies for each student to receive one
- White board and markers
- Pencils in case students do not have their own

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Go through the PowerPoint slides so that you have a little bit of familiarity with the facts they contain before the class session. You may also wish to view the GLSEN School Climate Survey or its Executive Summary to be prepared for questions that may come up in class: <http://www.glsen.org/article/2013-national-school-climate-survey>.
- Print out, photocopy, and cut in half the homework assignment worksheets.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe at least two things their school does well around LGBTQ inclusion, as well as two things it could do better. [Knowledge]
2. Explain what that they, as students, can do to improve the school environment around LGBTQ inclusion. [Knowledge]
3. Name at least one reliable website about sexual orientation and gender identity for their age group. [Knowledge]

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Ask, "What kinds of things make you feel like school is a safe environment for you?" Write students' responses on the board, proving for the following as applicable (feel free to contribute one to get the brainstorm going):

- There are a lot of adults around
- There is a buzzer at the front of the school so no one can get in without being buzzed in
- There are posters up on the walls with pictures of students who look like me
- Adults greet us in the morning
- The adults know my name and things about me and my family
- There is a security guard/metal detector when we first come in the building
- There is a hall monitor who checks to make sure we belong in the school
- I have a locker (whether solo or shared) so I have a place to put my stuff

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Ask, “What is it about these things that make school feel safe? How do you think it would feel if any one of these was missing? What if none of these took place here?” After a few people have responded, say, “What this tells us is how we feel when we’re at school makes a big difference in whether we want to be there – as well as how we do in our classes. Everyone has the right to feel like they belong at school. But what if they don’t?” (7 minutes)

STEP 2: Say, “Today we are going to be talking about sexual orientation and gender identity and our school environment to see how well we make school feel like a welcome place for people of all orientations and genders. We’ll also look at where we see room for improvement; and how we would propose making some changes.”

Note to the Teacher: Depending on your school environment, this can be a one-day assignment, or be turned into a class or even school-wide project. This lesson is designed to create the foundation to enable you to create what you feel you can do in your own setting. (2 minutes)

STEP 3: Say, “We’re now going to look specifically at what schools are like for students who identify as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer.” Start the PowerPoint, “What Is School Like for LGBTQ Students?” Read the first slide aloud, explaining that you are going to share a few facts from a national survey of LGBTQ middle and high school students.

Ask a different student to read each slide. After each slide has been read, say or ask the following:

Slide Two: “This school is our school—it doesn’t just belong to the teachers or the students, nor is it designed only for certain students. So every student has the right to feel safe and a sense of belonging here. What that looks like is different from community to community and school to school. Some places do it well, and some don’t.”

Slide Three: “The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network does a survey of schools across the US every few years on how LGBTQ students are treated, and the impact of that, both positive and negative.”

Slide Four: “Verbal harassment is being taunted for who you are. It’s not the same as teasing. It usually targets a certain aspect of your personality, background or appearance—like your skin color, country of origin, how much money people think your family has, who is raising you, etc. Harassment can go on for a while if it’s not stopped.”

Slide Five: “Has anyone ever heard someone use a mean or hateful word to someone else when you’ve walked by? How do you think it made that student feel?”

Slide Six: “In many schools, it’s not just about students not harassing other students. It’s about the school making a strong statement that harassment and bullying won’t be tolerated. And the school has a responsibility to have policies in place that specifically make students of all sexual orientations and gender identities feel equal.”

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Slide Seven: “When we don’t feel good—when we’re sad or angry or anxious – we don’t feel smart. We don’t feel safe. And the way this shows itself at school is that students who don’t feel like they belong or don’t feel safe sometimes stop going to class, or even to school altogether. Their grades start to go down and they may stop having goals for the future. They feel hopeless.”

Slide Eight: “The good news is, just as not having these things can make a school environment feel less safe and have a negative impact on LGBTQ students – taking some specific steps can also make school feel safe and welcome. And if one group of students feel like they belong at school, it can help all students know that they are welcome, no matter who they are.”

Process the information you presented by asking the following questions:

- What are your reactions to what I just shared with you?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What do you think schools have a responsibility to do for these students – or any student – to feel like they belong in school?
- What about students? For what do you think they should be held responsible?

***Note to the teacher:** If you have any backlash or defensive reactions such as, “If they didn’t act/dress that way, then maybe people wouldn’t harass them,” take the time to discuss that. If students are not able to come around to the idea that no one has a right to bully or harass others, no matter how they present themselves or identify, highlight your school’s anti-bullying policy to remind them of what the school believes. (13 minutes)*

STEP 4: Say, “The good news is, there are things that a school community can do to make sure all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, feel like they are safe and included. We’re going to take a look at our school now.”

Divide the class into pairs. Once they are in pairs say, “I am going to give each of you a worksheet and ask you to work together for the remainder of class to complete it. The first side is a checklist of possible things a school can do to make sure it is respectful and accepting of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Please be honest! How do you think the school does on each of these? Once you’ve completed the checklist, think about what grade you’d give our school – but just as it relates to LGBTQ issues, not in general. Please do not go on to the second side yet.” Tell them they have about 5 minutes in which to complete the first side (7 minutes).

STEP 5: As students are working, write “A B C D F” in a column on the board. After about 5 minutes, ask students how many would give each of the grades, by a show of hands, and write the number of raised hands next to each grade.

Say, “Clearly, there’s some work we need to do here.”

***Note to the Teacher:** If you are in a school that is more socially progressive around LGBTQ issues and you have mostly good grades, you can say, “We’re doing a pretty good job! But what can we be doing better?”*

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Ask students to flip their worksheets to the other side and answer the questions there. Explain that they are going to be identifying specific things that they feel need to improve at school, as well as steps that they, as students, can take to help those happen. Tell them they have about 10 minutes to complete their task. (15 minutes)

STEP 6: After about 10 minutes, stop the students as they're working. Make sure they have put their names at the bottom of their worksheets. Say, "We don't have time to go through all the sheets, but does anyone have an idea they think is really great that they'd like to share?" As time allows, have a few pairs share their ideas.

Note to the Teacher: If you have time in the next class to come back to this – especially if this ends up being an actual project – you can go through the other worksheets/ideas then.

Praise the good ideas and work the students did and explain the homework assignment in which they will be looking at websites where they can find information about sexual orientation and gender identity. Distribute the homework and collect the worksheets. (6 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The plans of action generated by the paired activity will enable the teacher to determine whether the first two learning objectives. The homework assignment will demonstrate their ability to access a reliable resource on LGBTQ issues.

Note to the Teacher: There are very few online resources that are age-appropriate for middle school. The websites in the homework assignment, although written by teens, is age-appropriate for this lesson and purpose.

HOMework:

Homework: Have students visit <http://sexetc.org/info-center/post/athlete-ally-hudson-taylor/> and complete the three questions on their homework worksheet.

Is Our School LGBTQ-Inclusive?

(Adapted from The Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students)

Instructions: Read each characteristic. Do you think this is something our school has? A little, a lot or not at all? Please check the box that best matches how you feel.

Characteristic	We Totally Do This!	We Kind Of Do This	We Don't Do This	Don't Know/ Doesn't Apply
1. Anti-bullying lessons and efforts include LGBTQ students				
2. School forms include different families (say "parent/gaurdian" vs. "mom and dad")				
3. Dress code allows people of any gender to dress anyway they want that is appropriate for school				
4. There are gender-neutral or private bathrooms or changing areas, not just "Boys" and "Girls" rooms and locker rooms				
5. We talk about LGBTQ people in at least some of our classes				
6. The library has resources for and about LGBTQ people				
7. Assignments include LGBTQ people or issues				
8. We have a gay-straight alliance (GSA) or similar club or group				
9. Our sports teams and other activities include LGBTQ students				
10. School's publications cover LGBTQ people and issues				
11. School dances/events are safe for and inclusive of LGBTQ students				
12. Valentine's Day celebrations include LGBTQ and non-coupled students				
13. There is at least one LGBTQ identified or friendly teacher/staff in the school.				
14. There are posters or other visuals that reflect LGBTQ people or couples in the classrooms, offices or hallways.				
15. Observations of Mother's Day and Father's Day that affirm all family structures, including someone who has an LGBTQ parent or caregiver.				

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Worksheet

Overall, what grade would you give our school on how we do on LGBTQ inclusion?

A B C D F

Which of the things listed above do you think our school could do better on? (List the numbers of all that apply here).

What steps could you, as students, take to make these changes happen? Select one of the things you feel the school could do better on, and three specific actions you and other students can take to see those changes take place:

Change: _____

We, as students, need to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What, if anything, could get in the way of your making these changes?

What could you do to overcome those so that change can still happen?

Names: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Homework - LGBTQ Issues Online: What Did You Learn?

Instructions: Please visit the *Sex, Etc.* website and read the article Athlete Ally Hudson Taylor found here: <http://sexetc.org/info-center/post/athlete-ally-hudson-taylor/>

1. What is your reaction to how Hudson Taylor describes the typical homophobic climate of some school sports? If you have participated in team sports, does it match your experience?
2. Why did Hudson, who identifies as heterosexual, champion the cause of LGBTQ athletes? How do you think his peers responded to his passion about this issue?
3. What is something you still have questions about after reading the article?

.....

Name: _____

Date: _____

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1. What is your reaction to how Hudson Taylor describes the typical homophobic climate of some school sports? If you have participated in team sports, does it match your experience?
2. Why did Hudson, who identifies as heterosexual, champion the cause of LGBTQ athletes? How do you think his peers responded to his passion about this issue?
3. What is something you still have questions about after reading the article?

What Is School Like for LGBTQ Students?



There's Bad News and Good News...

- School can be a hostile, unsafe place for LGBTQ students (depending on where you live).
- School can be a welcome and affirming environment for students of all sexual orientations and genders.
- Which it will be depends on all of us!



Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

2013 National School Climate Survey

<http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2013%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20Full%20Report%200.pdf>



Harassment of LGBTQ students is still prevalent nationwide.

85% of LGBT students surveyed
had been verbally harassed.



More than half of the students frequently heard comments like “fag” or “dyke.”



Sometimes the Bias Isn't Violent, but It's Still Discrimination

56% of LGBTQ students were discriminated against by school policy, such as being punished for PDA, not allowed to form a GSA Club, or not allowed to attend a school function with a date of the same gender.



What's the Impact?

LGBTQ students victimized at school:

- May have lower grades
- Are less likely to plan to go to college
- Often feel worse about themselves



There Is Good News!

- When schools and students make efforts to be more inclusive, the negative impacts go down or disappear altogether!
- Efforts can include:
 - A GSA or LGBTQ club
 - Course materials and books that include LGBTQ people in positive ways
 - Teachers and other school staff who promote the safety and inclusion of all students
 - Anti-bullying policies that specifically mention sexual orientation and gender



Campuses Are Safer When These Efforts Are in Place

- The use of hate speech goes down.
- Students feel more connected to their school community
- Students are less likely to miss school due to safety concerns
- Student GPAs go up

The World Around Me

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NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

PD.8.INF.1 – Analyze how friends, family, media, society and culture can influence self-concept and body image.

PR.8.INF.1 – Examine how alcohol and other substances, friends, family, media, society and culture influence decisions about engaging in sexual behavior.

HR.8.INF.1 – Analyze the ways in which friends, family, media, society and culture can influence relationships.

SH.8.INF.1 – Analyze the impact of alcohol and other drugs on safer sexual decision-making and sexual behaviors.

TARGET GRADE:

Grade 8 – Optional Lesson 2

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Scenario: Leah (enough two-sided copies for one quarter of the students in the class)
- Scenario: Malik (enough two-sided copies for one quarter of students in the class)
- Students' journals (or sheets of lined paper, one per student, if journals are not being used in class)
- White board and markers
- Pencils in case students do not have their own

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name at least two people or entities from which young people receive messages about relationships and sexuality. [Knowledge]
2. Describe at least one message young people might receive about sex and sexuality from each of these sources. [Knowledge]
3. Explain how these messages can have an impact on a young person's sexual decision-making. [Knowledge, Skill]
4. Reflect on how examining these influences can have an impact on their self-concept and body image, which can affect their own sexual decision making in the future. [Knowledge, Skill]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Introduce the topic by telling students, "When we make decisions about significant things in our lives, we rarely do so without considering the thoughts, experiences and messages we get from various sources in our lives. We ask people in our lives for their advice – and sometimes we get it even when we don't ask for it! Other times, we are barely aware of how outside messages do or don't have an influence on us and our decision-making."

Draw a large circle on the board, about 18" in diameter. On the top of the circle write a name that reflects the population of your students (for the purposes of this example, we will use "Matthew"). As you are drawing the circle and writing the name, "Matthew," or another name at the top, say, "Imagine for a moment that we have a teenager named Matthew. Even though he's still in school, he's thinking about what he wants to be when he grows up." In the center of the circle, write,

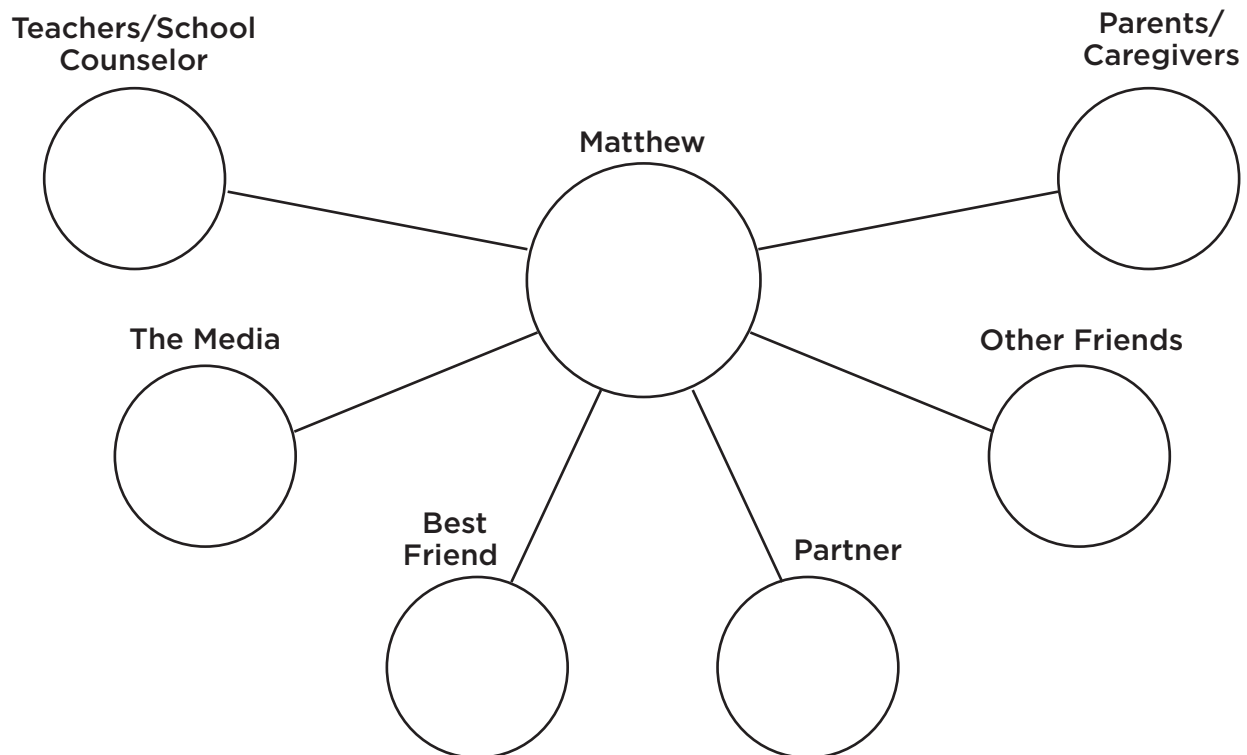
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“Career.” Say, “He’s really good at art and photography and is thinking he might want to make that his job. From what types of sources might he expect to receive messages about his future career choices?” Probe for the following:

- Parent(s)/Caregiver(s)
- Teachers or Counselors at School
- Other Family Members
- Professional Artists and Photographers
- The Media
- Partner
- Best Friend
- Celebrities

As students contribute a particular source, draw a line from the center circle to another smaller circle that you draw. Then write the category of person or source at the top as you did with the first circle. Depending on what is contributed, you should end up with something that looks similar to this:



Go through the examples and ask the class one message Matthew might hear from his parent(s)/caregiver(s) about this possible work choice. Probe for, “Great, go for it!” or “Don’t do it, it’s not practical.” Write that example in the circle titled, “Parent(s)/Caregiver(s).” Go around the rest of the cluster and add in one message, positive or negative, that he might expect to hear from each possible source.

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Once you have put one example in each circle, ask the students to tell you what they notice about the messages, which may be consistent or inconsistent. Ask, “Has anyone ever asked more than one person for their opinions about something and gotten two totally different answers? If so, what does that feel like?” Probe for, “confusing,” “overwhelming,” “helpful,” etc.

Ask, “So, whose opinions do you think will carry more weight with Matthew?” After a few responses, acknowledge what was shared and if it has not been shared already say, “It also depends on his relationship with each of these entities. If he is particularly close with someone, or has relied on their advice in the past and it’s helped him, he may consider their thoughts more seriously than other people’s.” (13 minutes)

STEP 2: Say, “Now we are going to look at sexual decision-making and the people and entities that can have an impact on these decisions.” Break the class into groups of four. Once they are in their groups, tell them they are going to work together on a scenario in which they’ll have a character who they will be mapping as they did with Matthew. Distribute the Leah scenario to half the class and the Malik scenario to the other half. Let them know they will have about 15 minutes in which to do their work (17 minutes).

STEP 3: After about 15 minutes has passed, ask the groups to stop their work. Tell the students that half of groups worked on one scenario, and the other half on a different one. Ask for students from various groups that had the Leah scenario to read the scenario, alternating students for each paragraph. Ask groups to share the influences they noticed, and their responses to the questions asked.

Next, ask for students from the other groups who had the Malik scenario to read their scenario, alternative students with each paragraph. Ask groups to share the influences they noticed, and their responses to the questions asked. (14 minutes)

STEP 4: Acknowledge the work they did, and ask them to hand in their worksheets. Ask students to take out their journals and write the following questions on one of the pages (have these written on the board or write them as you speak):

1. “Who or what do I consider before making decisions about sexuality or relationships?”
2. “How might using alcohol affect how I make decisions about sexuality or relationships, and whether I stick to them?”
3. “How can thinking about people and messages around me help me with my future decisions about sexuality and relationships?”

Ask them to write a minimum of three sentences in response to each question and hand in their journals during the next class. (6 minutes)

Note to the Teacher: *If you are not using journals in class, feel free to have students write these prompting questions on a sheet of paper. You can also post or email an electronic version and have them complete these online and submit them to you once completed.*

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RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The first three learning objectives will be measured by classroom participation in the large group discussion and small group work; as a result, the teacher will need to solicit contributions from different students during the report-back portion of the lesson. Achievement of the fourth learning objective will be determined by completion of the homework assignment.

HOMEWORK:

Students will complete a journaling assignment responding to prompts as provided at the end of class, to be handed in during the next class period.

Leah

Leah has been with Malik for almost a year. Malik has been bringing up whether they should start having sex, and Leah's trying to figure out whether the time is right. She's never had sex before, and she's nervous about getting pregnant or an STD. Malik's had sex once before, but things didn't work out with them. Malik says he's curious, but that he's not sure whether the time's right – he's got a lot of plans for the future, and if he ends up getting Leah pregnant or either of them get an STD, that could really affect his hopes for college and getting a scholarship.

Leah's best friend has had sex, but he goes back and forth as to whether he thinks Leah should, saying, "I think it's different for guys." They hang out a lot and watch reruns of "16 and Pregnant," as well as "East Los High," and talk about all the people who have sex on those shows and what's happened as a result. Leah doesn't feel like she can talk with her mom about this stuff, because her mom was brought up in a pretty conservative household and they've never talked about sex or sexuality. Leah does, however, have a good relationship with her mom's best friend, who she's known since Leah was a baby, and feels like she can talk with her about anything.

Sometimes, when Malik gets stressed out or nervous, he drinks. When he does this, he gets a bit more assertive with Leah – as she tells her best friend, "he's all hands when he drinks." They've almost had sex a few times when he's gotten like this, but Leah's always told him to stop and he has. She loves Malik, she really does – she's just not sure whether the time is right or whether he's the one.

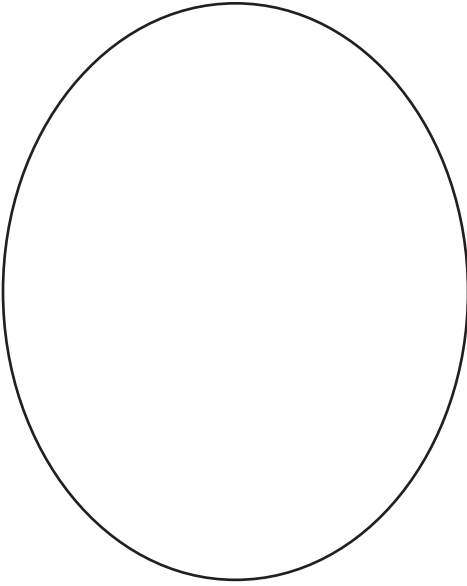
Instructions:

1. On the back of this sheet, map the influences in Leah's life by writing the message(s) she's getting from each in the circles provided.
2. Is anyone missing, even if they're not listed in the story? If so, add them in to the "other" circle and add in what possible messages she might get from them about her decision.
3. We found out that Malik drinks sometimes – how does that come into play when it comes to Leah's decision?

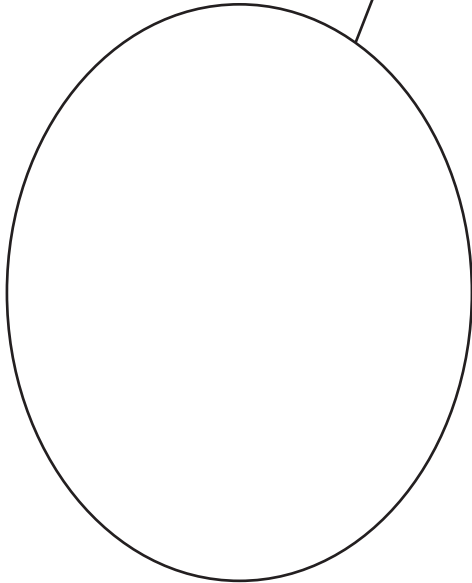
4. Who or what do you think has a LOT of influence on Leah? Why?

5. What does this tell you about making decisions about big things in your life, like sex and sexuality?

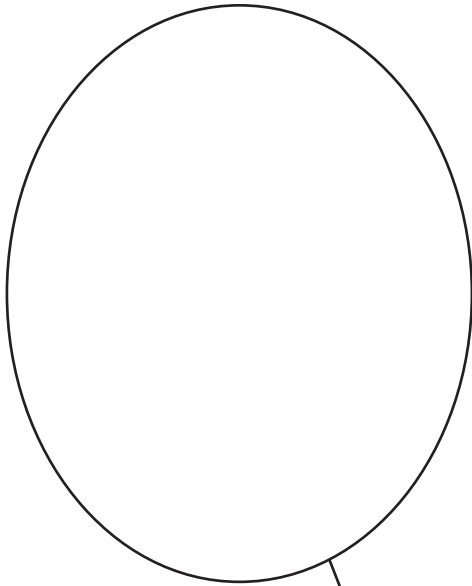
Leah's Mom



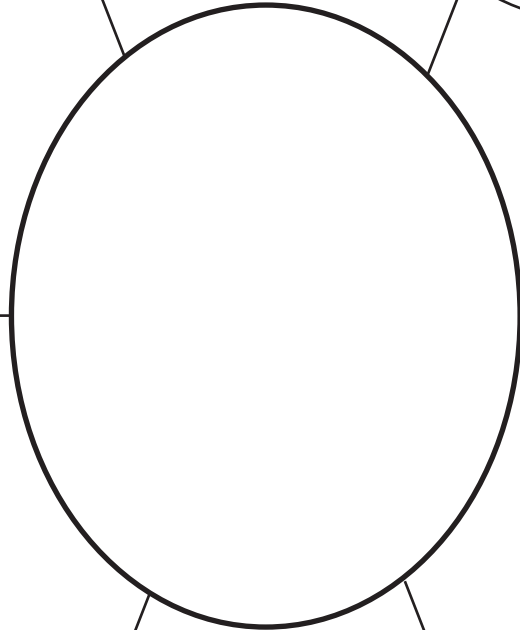
Leah's Best Friend



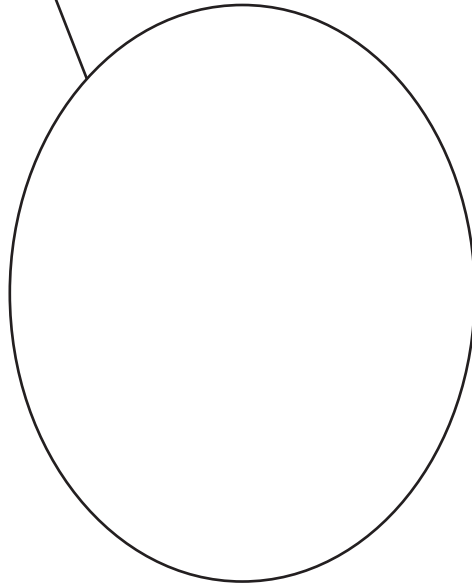
The Media



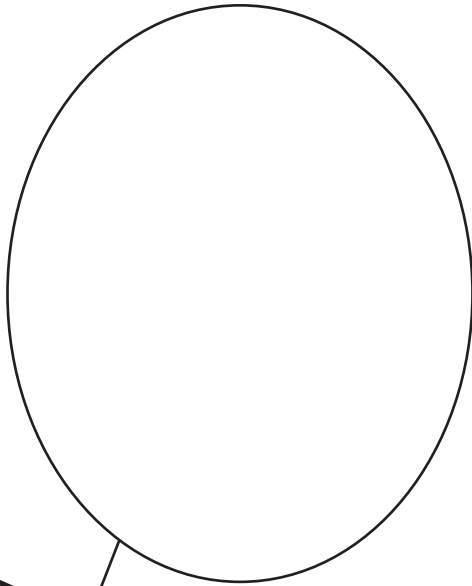
Leah



Other? _____



Malik



Malik

Malik has been with Leah for almost a year. Leah has been bringing up whether they should start having sex, and Malik's trying to figure out whether the time is right. He's never had sex before, and he's nervous about getting Leah pregnant or getting an STD. Leah's had sex once before, but things didn't work out with them. Malik's curious, but he's not sure whether the time's right – he's got a lot of plans for the future, and if he ends up getting Leah pregnant or either of them get a really serious STD, that could impact his hopes for college and getting a scholarship.

Malik's best friend has had sex, and regularly asks Malik what he's waiting for. He's even asked Malik a few times whether he's hesitating because maybe he likes guys, not girls. Malik watches porn sometimes when he's home alone, and is nervous about whether he'll know what to do. Malik's parents are very devout Catholics, and they don't talk about sex or sexuality except to talk about abstinence and waiting for marriage. Malik is the youngest of four children, but his brothers and sisters are all older and don't live at home anymore. He only sees them at holidays and doesn't consider himself close to any of them.

Sometimes, when Malik gets stressed out or nervous, he drinks. That's when he feels most comfortable talking about sex with Leah – and when he feels like they're really close.

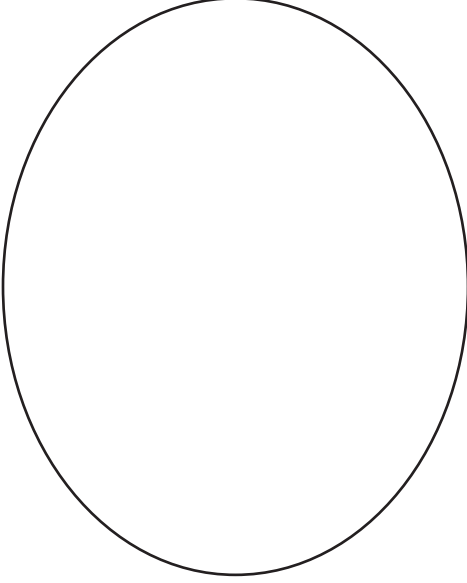
Instructions:

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2. Is anyone missing, even if they're not in the story? If so, add them in to the "other" circle and add in what possible messages he might get from them about his decision.
3. We found out that Malik drinks sometimes – how does that come into play when it comes to his relationship with Leah?

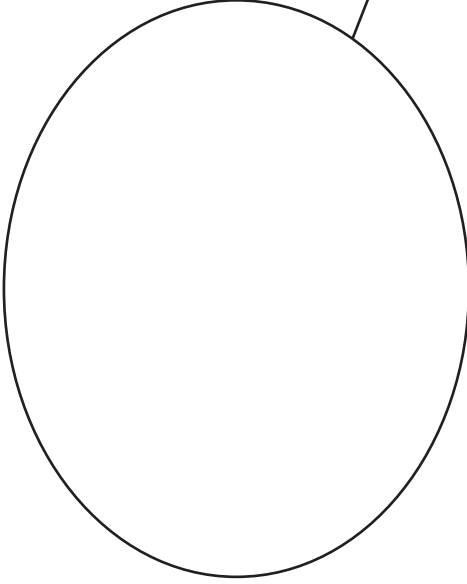
4. Who or what do you think has a LOT of influence on Malik? Why?

5. What does this tell you about making decisions about big things in your life, like sex and sexuality?

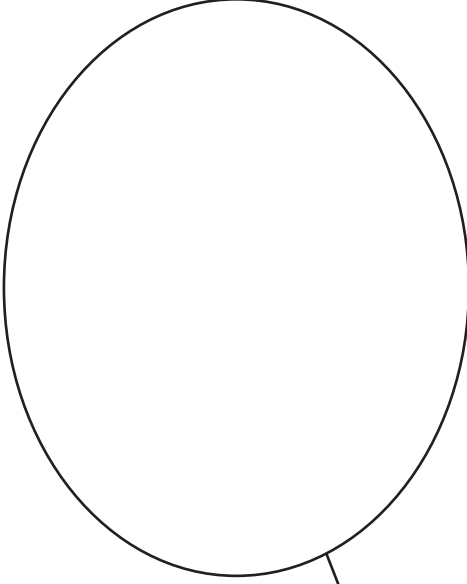
Malik's Parents



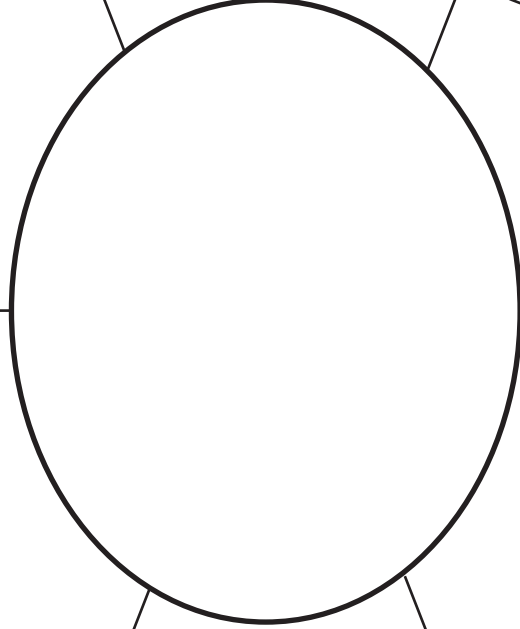
Malik's Best Friend



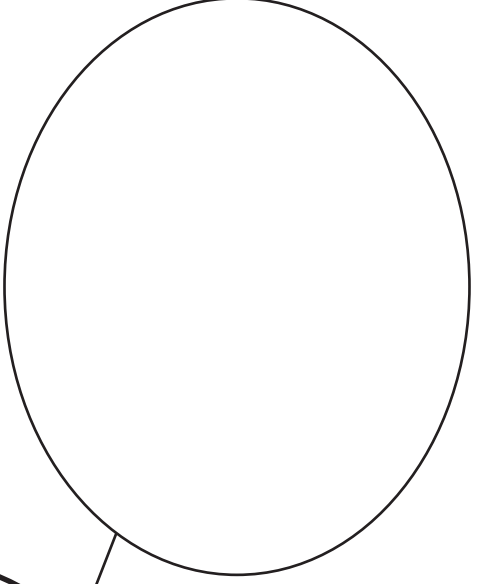
The Media



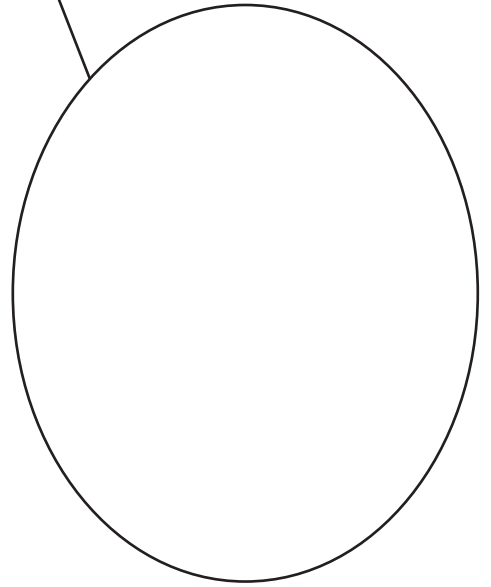
Malik



Leah



Other? _____



Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships?

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NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

HR.8.CC.1 – Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

HR.8.SM.1 – Explain the criteria for evaluating the health of a relationship.

HR.8.CC.2 – Describe the potential impacts of power differences such as age, status or position within relationships.

TARGET GRADE:

Grade 8 – Optional Lesson 3

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Two signs, one reading “Healthy Relationship” and one reading “Unhealthy Relationship”
- Enough of the 16 Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships cards for half the students in the class, prepared as described
- Homework: “Healthy Relationships All Around Us,” one per student
- Exit slips – one per student
- Masking tape
- White board and markers
- Extra pencils in case students don't have their own

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON :

- Print out enough of the Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationship cards for half the class. Fold each one in half.
- Tape the Unhealthy and Healthy Relationship signs on the front board with a good distance between them to create a continuum.
- Print out the exit slip sheets and cut them in half, so each student gets one half (which is one complete exit slip).
- Tear off individual one-inch pieces of tape, enough for each sign in the Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships activity, and stick on a ledge or table end so they are available for students to take and use during the activity.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him”, using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Characterize, in their own opinion, at least one relationship trait as either healthy or unhealthy. [Knowledge, Skill, Attitude]
2. Name at least two types of power differential in relationships, as well as their implication for the relationship. [Knowledge]
3. Describe at least two ways in which an unhealthy relationship can become a healthy one. [Knowledge]
4. Apply their understanding of healthy relationships to a couple represented in the media. [Knowledge, Skill]

Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships?

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Ask, “How many of you can think of a couple in your lives – it could be family members, friends, siblings, whoever – who you think are in a healthy relationship?” After some students have raised their hands, ask, “How many of you can think of a couple you’d consider to have an unhealthy relationship?”

Say, “I bet if we described all these couples we would not agree about whether they were healthy or unhealthy. That’s because we have all received a variety of messages about how people should behave in relationships. These messages have a big impact on whether we see something as healthy, unhealthy – or a mix. So today we’re going to take a look at some things that can happen in relationships – and whether you think these things mean a relationship is healthy or unhealthy.”

Break the students into pairs. Give each pair one of the healthy vs. unhealthy relationship cards. Ask them to talk together about whether they think what they have describes a healthy relationship or an unhealthy relationship. Tell them that once they’ve decided, they should turn their sheet over and write down why they think it is unhealthy, healthy or somewhere in between. Explain that they are “Team One,” and so should only complete the first line on the back of the sheet, not the second. Hold up a sheet to demonstrate as you are giving these instructions.

Tell them that once they’ve finished writing their reason(s), they can bring their piece of paper up to the front of the room and tape it up where they feel it goes. Point out that there is a lot of space between the Unhealthy and Healthy Relationship signs, so they can put their card under one of the signs, or somewhere in between if they feel like it has some healthy or unhealthy characteristic, but isn’t completely one or the other.

After about 5 minutes, if all of the cards are not up, encourage students to stick their cards up on the board. Ask them to stay in their same pairs. (8 minutes)

STEP 2: Starting at one end of the continuum, read each of the cards. Once you have read them all, ask the students to look at what’s up on the board and comment on what they notice. Their responses will depend on where the cards have been placed (the activity is intentionally opinion-based, so the board will likely look different each time).

For example, students might say, “These all seem really unhealthy,” or “None of the cards are either completely unhealthy or healthy.”

Ask, “Are there any up here that you would want to move? Which one(s) and why?” As students indicate particular cards, take them down and read on the back why the pair of students who had each card chose to place it where they did. Ask whether that changed their view. Because this is an opinion-based activity, do not actually move any of the cards, just discuss a few.

Note to the Teacher: *Go through up to five of the cards, adjusting for student engagement in this part of the activity. If the discussion lags, stop after three; if it is still vibrant and connected, you may choose to continue beyond the five.*

Here are some suggestions for a few in which there is a lot of grey area and about which you will likely have extensive discussion:

Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships?

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

- A guy walks his girlfriend to school every morning, meets her for lunch every day, and picks her up to walk her home at the end of each afternoon.
- A girl notices her girlfriend is getting a lot of attention from two different people at school. She goes up to each of them separately and warns them to stay away from her, “or else.”
- A couple has an agreement that they won’t put passwords on their phones and can check each others’ texts and social media accounts whenever they feel like it.
(8 minutes)

STEP 3: Ask, “In which of these relationships do you feel like one person has more power than the other person?” Point to the example of a girl who has a girlfriend who is ten years older than she is. Ask, “In what ways could the older girlfriend have more power than the younger one?” Write a “P” on that card to indicate that there’s the potential for one partner to have more power than the other.

As students mention other examples where they feel like there could be a power difference, write a “P” on each of those.

Say, “Power can come in different forms. Sometimes, people realize there’s a power difference and are okay with it – and other times, a power difference can lead to really unhealthy or even abusive relationships. I’m going to ask you to keep the idea of power in mind as you do this next part of the activity.” (6 minutes)

STEP 4: Ask one student from each pair to come up to the board and take one of the cards, not the one they originally worked on, and return to sit with their partner. Tell them that they should talk about what’s on the card, turn the card over and read why the other students labeled it as they did. Then ask them to discuss what would need to change in order for them to feel like this card could go underneath the “Healthy Relationship” sign. Have them write their answers in the space provided. Tell them they have about 5 minutes in which to do this. As they are working, take the “Healthy Relationship” sign and move it to a more centered location on the board. (7 minutes).

STEP 5: Go around the room and ask the pairs to share what they came up with as specific steps or things their couple needs to do to make their relationship healthy. Paraphrase the characteristics they share and write them on the board beneath the “healthy relationship” sign.

For example, if students were to say, “They need to stop checking each others’ phones,” you might write “Trust” on the board and “cell phones” in parentheses next to that. If any of the next pairs repeat something that was already said, put a check mark next to that characteristic. (12 minutes)

STEP 6: Ask students to look at the list they generated and what they think of what they see. Again, because this list is generated from the students, it may look different each time. Process the list by asking the following questions:

- Are you surprised by what’s received the most check marks here? Why or why not?

Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships?

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

- Is there anything missing? Is there anything else that would help make a relationship healthy wasn't mentioned?
- How easy or challenging is it to do some or all of these? For the ones labeled as "challenging," ask why they think that is.
- Ask, "What about the idea of power? Where do you see power reflected in this list?"

Say, "What relationships look like and how they work can be different – but as you see here, there are certain characteristics that people will agree mean that a relationship is healthy. When a relationship is healthy, it's good for both people involved – and it doesn't have a negative impact on the people outside of the relationship who are still a part of the couple's lives, like friends and family members."

Describe the homework assignment and distribute the worksheet. Tell students that you created a list of characteristics that tend to be considered part of healthy relationships, which will include some of what they generated on the board as well as some other ideas. Ask them to talk about a couple they know – whether in real life or from a movie or tv show or a couple from a book or they've read about online -- and say whether they think they are a healthy couple based on those characteristics.

Distribute the Before You Go exit slips to the students and ask them to complete them and hand them to you on the way out of class. (9 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Teachers will be able to assess how well they have reached the first three learning objectives during the in-class activity, discussion and process. The fourth learning objective will be achieved through the homework assignment.

HOMEWORK:

Healthy Relationships All Around Us – Students are to provide three examples of couples in their own lives, or from a tv show, book, movie or other source and explain why they think they are healthy relationships.

Healthy Relationships All Around Us!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Think about relationships you've seen in your life. These could be characters from a tv show or movie, public figures or people you know personally. Please provide three examples of healthy relationships and explain why you think they're healthy, based on what we talked about in class. Be sure to explain your reasons with examples, too!

EXAMPLE

Couple: Beyonce and Jay-Z

Know them from: Music videos and award shows

Why do you think this is a healthy relationship? Please give examples:

They talk about each other a lot in the media, always in positive ways. They started a family together and both seem really into each other whenever you see them in pictures.

Couple 1:

Know them from:

Why do you think this is a healthy relationship? Please give examples:

Couple 2:

Know them from:

Why do you think this is a healthy relationship? Please give examples:

Couple 3:

Know them from:

Why do you think this is a healthy relationship? Please give examples:

BEFORE YOU GO...

The characteristic of healthy relationships that most stood out for me from today's class

was _____

because _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

BEFORE YOU GO...

The characteristic of healthy relationships that most stood out for me from today's class

was _____

because _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

After spending a lot of time together, a couple wants to start having sex. They talk about safer sex and decide to use condoms every time.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

----- (FOLD HERE) -----

A guy walks his girlfriend to school every morning, meets her for lunch every day, and picks her up to walk her home at the end of each afternoon.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A couple have been together for a month and are talking about having sex. One has had sex before, but the other hasn't - but says they have because they're embarrassed.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A girl notices her girlfriend is getting a lot of attention from two different people at school. She goes up to each of them separately and warns them to stay away from her, “or else.”

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

**A couple has an agreement
that they won't put
passwords on their phones
and can check each others'
texts and social media
accounts whenever
they feel like it.**

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

----- (FOLD HERE) -----

Partner one wants to have sex. Partner two says they're not ready, but after talking about it, gives in and has sex, even though they didn't really want to.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A guy and a girl have been together for six months, and things haven't been going so well. She decides to stop taking her birth control without telling him, because she thinks if she gets pregnant he won't break up with her.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

----- (FOLD HERE) -----

One partner usually decides when, where, and what they do together. The other partner says they don't like making decisions and is fine with this.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A guy has been with his boyfriend for five months. They've said "I love you" to each other, but when they're around other friends at school, one guy pretends they're not a couple. He says it's because he hasn't yet told his family that he's gay.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

----- (FOLD HERE) -----

A couple text all the time. But when they get together, whether alone or with friends, they feel uncomfortable talking to each other.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A guy has a very strong religious background. He's having sex with his girlfriend, but after each time, he says he feels disgusting. His girlfriend tells him to get over it.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A girl tells her partner that they're in a one-on-one relationship, but she is having sex with other people. Her partner does not know; she figures she's sparing their feelings by not telling them.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

**A guy finds out he has an STD.
Since it's easily cured with a shot, he doesn't tell his partner about it and figures that if they get it, they can just get treated, too. They continue to have sex without using condoms.**

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A guy and a girl have been together for six months and are having sex. Whenever the guy does something the girl doesn't like, she tells him that she won't have sex with him until he does something nice for her.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A girl has a girlfriend who is ten years older than she is. Her older girlfriend has a job, a car and a place to live where they can be alone together. When they go out, the older partner always pays.

Team Two: How this could be a healthier relationship?

Team One: Why we rated this the way we did:

(FOLD HERE)

A guy notices his partner is getting a lot more texts than usual. When he mentions it, the partner says he's imagining things. When his partner goes to use the bathroom, he checks their phone and reads their texts.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Choose Your Words Carefully

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum
Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

HR.8.IC. – Demonstrate communication skills that foster healthy relationships.

HR.8.IC.3 – Demonstrate effective skills to negotiate agreements about the use of technology in relationships.

TARGET GRADE:

Grade 8 – Optional Lesson 4

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Large strips of newsprint statements, prepared as indicated
- Masking tape
- Choose Your Words activity statements, prepared as indicated
- Envelopes with Choose Your Words activity statements, prepared as indicated (there should be one envelope per every two students)
- Homework: “iRelationship” – one per student
- Teacher’s Guide for Homework – one copy
- White board and markers

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- On a sheet of newsprint, write the following statements in large letters:

Hey, can I talk with you about something?

Sure, what’s up?

I can’t go to your game, I’m sorry.

I’m not going to your game.

Let’s talk later.

Cut the newsprint so that each statement is an individual strip, at least three inches high each.

- Print out enough copies of the Choose Your Words activity statements for half the number of students in your class. Cut each copy into individual strips and place the strips into an envelope so that each envelope has an entire set of strips in it. You should have envelopes for half the class. Label half of the envelopes “Partner A” and half “Partner B.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify at least two characteristics of healthy communication in a relationship. [Knowledge]
2. Apply their understanding of healthy communication to a scenario between two people who are discussing technology use within a relationship. [Knowledge, Skill]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

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PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Ask, “Has anyone ever had to talk with someone about something really important – but you weren’t sure how to do it?”

Choose Your Words Carefully

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Acknowledge the raised hands and ask, “What specifically can make it challenging to talk with someone about something important to you?” Probe for:

- You don’t want to hurt their feelings
- You’re not sure whether you should talk with them about it
- You’re embarrassed about it
- You don’t want to make them mad
- You just don’t want to deal and hope that ignoring it will make it go away
- You like them as more than a friend and you’re worried if you talk about something serious they won’t want to hang out with you anymore

Say, “Whether it’s a friendship or a relationship, it’s important to be able to talk about things that come up. If a friend always teases you and you really hate when he does that – but you never tell him that you hate it – it’s not his fault if he keeps doing it and makes you mad, it’s yours because you didn’t say anything about it!

The big question, of course, is how do you talk with someone about something that’s important to you?” (6 minutes)

STEP 2: On the board write, “Partner A” at head level, followed by “Partner B” about five feet to the right of it. As you’re writing, say, “Let me give you an example. Let’s say I was Partner A, and the scenario was that my significant other wanted me to stay after school and watch their basketball game.” Between the two headers, write “Basketball Game.” Now, I want to be supportive, but I already told my best friend I’d hang out with them. So how do I bring this up?”

Post the large flipchart strip that reads, “Hey, can I talk with you about something?” Say, “This is always a good place to start. Giving the other person a heads up that you need to talk will get their attention and let them know that it’s important they listen.” Under the Partner B sign, post the flipchart strip that reads, “Sure, what’s up?”

Say, “If you’re Partner B, you want to respond to let the other person know that not only is it okay for them to talk, but that you’re also going to pay attention to them – not anyone else, not your phone, not a video game – but them. Make sense?”

Under Partner A, post “I can’t go to your game, I’m so sorry.” Ask the students what they think of this as a way of breaking the news to the other person. Ask, “What might be some ways Partner B might respond?”

Once you’ve gotten some reactions, take down, “I can’t go to your game, sorry” and ask, “How would Partner B respond, do you think, if I’d instead said this?” and post the large flipchart strip that reads, “I’m not going to your game. Let’s talk later.” Have a few students respond. Ask, “What’s different between the two?” Probe for the fact that the last statement doesn’t explain why and sounds like Partner A is mad or like something’s wrong.

Say, “Clearly, I have some choices as to how I can bring this up – but regardless of what I choose, it’s going to have an impact on how the other person responds. I won’t necessarily know what that impact is until my significant other responds – but I can think before I speak and choose my words carefully. Which is what you are about to do.” (12 minutes)

Choose Your Words Carefully

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

STEP 3: Divide the class into pairs. Then put two pairs together to form a group of four. Say, “In each group of four are two pairs. Each pair will represent one person in a relationship, partner A or partner B. This couple needs to talk about an important part of any relationship: how they’re going to deal with technology in their communication with each other and with others about their relationship.”

Hold up an envelope and say, “One pair will receive an envelope that reads ‘Partner A’ and the other, ‘Partner B.’ Inside are strips of paper with individual statements. You are going to create a conversation between the partners using these statements. Here are the rules:

- a. You can only use each slip once.
- b. You are both interested in staying together – you want the relationship to work!

You will have five minutes for each pair to look through their statements to get a sense of what’s there. Then when I say, ‘Go,’ Partner A will start the dialogue with one of their statements. Partner B will then have a minute in which to put down their response. Partner A shouldn’t move forward until I say so.” Answer any questions and distribute the envelopes to the pairs and ask each pair to look at them together and start planning how they will use them. (6 minutes)

STEP 4: After a minute or two, say, “Okay – Partner A, let’s get the conversation started. Put down your conversation starter. Partner B, don’t respond yet.” After a minute, check to make sure all the Partner As have gone, then say, “Okay, Partner B, put down your response. Partner A, read what Partner B put down on the desk. You have a minute to come up with your response. Partner B, please wait to respond until I tell you to.”

Continue to facilitate this process, giving a minute for each “partner” to go, until each has put down five statements. Walk around the room and check their work, giving guidance as needed. As you walk around, tear off a long strip of masking tape and leave it for each group. (14 minutes)

STEP 5: After the last turn, ask students to stop and reflect on their dialogue. As they are reading through, ask them to take the pieces of tape and tape the dialogue to the desk or table top. Then ask groups of four to carefully walk around the room and read the dialogues of the other groups before returning to their original ones. Ask them to sit together as a group of four for the remainder of class.

Process the activity by asking the following questions:

- What was it like to do that? What was [easy, hard, fun] about it?
- What did you think of the conversation you created overall? Did it work out well or did it seem like they still had things to talk about?
- Thinking about your conversation or any of the ones you observed – what did you notice worked WELL in the “couples” discussions? What did you notice did NOT work well?
- What does this tell you about what’s most important when you’re trying to have a conversation about something important?

Choose Your Words Carefully

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

As students respond, write the phrase, “Take-home messages” on the board and record their answers beneath it. If it’s not included by the students, be sure to share the following:

- However you communicate – whether verbally or via text – it’s important to communicate. Otherwise it’s all a guessing game!
- Technology is a big part of all relationships today. Talking up front about what you do and don’t want, and what you do and don’t expect around privacy and the other things we discussed in class is really important.

Distribute and go over the homework assignment. (12 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The in-class activity is designed to achieve both learning objectives, while the homework assignment will reinforce the learning to ensure the objectives are met.

HOMEWORK:

“iRelationship” video clip and worksheet – students are to watch this brief, online video, respond to questions in the worksheet provided and bring their sheets to the next class session.

Note: This lesson was inspired by “Setting Sexual Limits” from Filling the Gaps – http://www.siecus.org/_data/global/images/filling_the_gaps.pdf.

I really like you.

I really like being with you.

I'm so glad that we're a couple.

I really like it when you post photos of us.

I don't want you to post photos of us unless I've seen them and said ok.

Snapchat's ok, but no Instagram posts.

Why don't you ever post pictures of us?

Can I talk to you about something?

I don't like posting photos - they're just for us.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Okay.

I want you to send me a sexy picture of you.

I'm not comfortable doing that.

No.

No.

No.

Sure.

I don't feel like talking right now.

Why are you pushing me?

Me, too.

I really like that people know we're together.

I feel really close to you.

You can trust me.

Everyone does this.

I'm really serious.

I don't want you to check my phone without my saying it's okay.

We should trust each other.

I don't care if you check my phone.

I have nothing to hide, but you need to trust me.

What are you hiding?

I don't like it when you keep texting me and asking where I am.

I don't like it when I text you and you don't respond.

When you only text one word to me you sound mad.

I don't like texting.

We'll only post photos on...

Instagram.

Snapchat.

Other social media if we both agree.

If one of us posts a photo and the other doesn't like it, we'll take it down.

Choosing Your Words Carefully

Homework

Name: _____ Date: _____

Homework: iRelationship

Instructions: Watch the video, iRelationship, which you can find online at <https://vimeo.com/22365117> and then answer the following questions about it.

1. Things seemed to be off to a good start between James and Jessica. What changed and why?
2. What was the main thing James was confused about?
3. What was the main thing Jessica was confused about?
4. What was different about Jessica and Ryan's encounter on the bus?
5. What could make James and Jessica's situation better?

Teacher's Guide

Homework: iRelationship

The following offers some possible responses to the open-ended questions connected to the homework video. Student responses that recognize something close to these points, or that bring up other valid points in the teacher's opinion, should be considered correct.

1. Things seemed to be off to a good start between James and Jessica. What changed and why?

James didn't respond to Jessica's final text that first night they were texting, which sent Jessica the message that he wasn't interested in hanging out with her.

2. What was the main thing James was confused about?

Whether Jessica wanted to hang out as friends or whether going out meant they were on a date.

3. What was the main thing Jessica was confused about?

Why James didn't respond after she suggested getting together during their first text chat; also, why James eventually seemed interested, and then took off when they were out together in the park.

4. What was different about Jessica and Ryan's encounter on the bus?

Ryan spoke directly to Jessica. He was clear that he wanted to hang out. Jessica also asked him directly whether it would be a date and he said, again clearly, that it would be.

5. What could make James and Jessica's situation better?

If they avoided guessing what the other wanted or was interested in and just asked – or said so clearly. James and Jessica both talked with other friends about what the friends thought might be going on, but James and Jessica never spoke with each other.

STI Basics: Reducing Your Risks

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum
Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

SH.8.GS.1 – Develop a plan to eliminate or reduce risk for STDs, including HIV.

SH.8.AI.2 – Identify local STD and HIV testing and treatment resources.

TARGET GRADE:

Grade 8 – Optional Lesson 5

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Worksheet: “STIs: What Can I Do?” – one per student
- Laptop or desktop computer with the website, http://yourstdhelp.com/free_clinic_locator.html, cued up
- Article: “Taking Charge of My Sexual Health with STI Testing and Communication” – one per student
- LCD projector and screen
- White board and markers (at least 3 different colors of markers)
- Pencils in case students do not have their own

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- Go online to find the closest STI testing and treatment centers to you. If you go to the website, http://yourstdhelp.com/free_clinic_locator.html, you can enter your state, and several of the closest places where STI testing and treatment are available will come up. Note that these will list free and low-cost clinics, which is essential for students at this age; be sure, however, to tell them they can go to their own family doctor or clinician or another clinic they may have heard about from friends.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe at least two ways in which STIs, including HIV, can be transmitted. [Knowledge]
2. Name at least one step they plan to take personally to reduce or eliminate their chances of contracting an STI. [Knowledge]
3. Name at least one health center in their area to which they can go for STI testing and treatment that is affordable and confidential. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

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PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Ask, “I'd like you to think about your day this morning, from when you woke up until just now in class. Everyone please take out a piece of paper and write down everything that's happened from 'woke up' to 'being in this class.'”

As students begin to write, watch for those who finish first. As they finish, ask for 3 volunteers to come to the front of the room and write their lists on the board as the remainder of the class finishes their lists.

STI Basics: Reducing Your Risks

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

While each list will look different, they may look something like this:

Woke up

Took a shower

Got dressed

Ate breakfast

Got to school (probe: How?)

- Took the subway
- Took the school bus
- Took a regular bus
- Walked
- Got dropped off

Had class (probe: Which classes?)

Ate lunch (depending on class schedule)

Go through the lists, asking students to indicate where they had to make decisions along the way. Write the word “decision” in between the steps that required a decision with a different-color marker. For example:

“Got dressed - Decision - Decided what to wear”

Probe for more than just surface decisions, such as “had to decide what to pack for lunch” or “had to decide what to eat from the cafeteria.” For example, how did they decide which classes? Did they have any input or were they decided for them? Did they decide how to get to school, or was that decision made for them?

Ask, “How do you make decisions? What factors come into play?” After a few responses, ask, “Did any of these decisions require you to take risk?” (Probe for there being risk in getting in a car or bus; risk crossing the street; risk in how people react to what you choose to wear; risk that you eat something unhealthy and end up getting sick, etc.)

Ask, “When you were making your decisions, did you know there were risks involved? If so, know that there was risk involved, how did you make each of your decisions?” Possible responses may include, “I didn’t really think about it,” or “I’ve done it so many times I know how to do it,” or “I was (or wasn’t) worried about what would happen if I did one thing vs. something else.”

Say, “Now we’re going to take what we just talked about and apply it to one part of sex ed. There are things in our lives we make decisions about every day, some of which carry risks of different levels. Same thing goes for sexual behaviors.”

Write the phrase, “Sexually Transmitted Infection” on the board. Ask the students to remind you what an STI is. Probe for diseases that can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact. Remind students that to get an STI one person has to have one, STIs are not created spontaneously by doing something sexual with another person.

(11 minutes)

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STEP 2: Ask, “How many of you are hoping to get an STI at some point in your lives?” Students will hopefully laugh, and none of them will raise their hands (except for a class clown or two). Say, “Of course – no one wants to get an STI – just as no one wants to get the flu or any other kind of infection. The fact of the matter is, though, lots of people will get STIs at some point in their lives. It’s actually really common, especially among young people. So it’s important to know a few key things about them:

While some STIs can be cured, others can stay in your body for life and be treated. Others can be fought off by your body’s immune system and go away on their own. Some can affect whether you can get pregnant or get someone else pregnant, and others can affect sexual functioning – or even, if left untreated, cause death. So if you’re going to be in a sexual relationship in the future, you want to be sure you do so in ways that keep you healthy and reduce your chances of getting an STI.”

Tell the class that you are going to be giving them individual worksheets and that they’ll have about 8 minutes to complete them. Tell them that the sheets are asking them to think about what they’ve heard about how people can get STIs – and to write down how the students plan to avoid getting them and if you’ve already experienced an STI, what your plan would be for not getting one in the future. Tell the students that they will be asked to share their completed sheets with at least one other person in the class, so they should keep that in mind as they write down their answers. Distribute the sheets. (8 minutes)

STEP 3: After about 8 minutes, ask students to stop where they are. Divide the group into pairs, and ask students to share their plans with each other. Tell them that if they hear something from the other student about how you can get an STI that doesn’t sound quite right to mark it on their partner’s paper with a star so they can come back to it later or ask you about it. Ask the students to tell each other what they think of each person’s plan, and to provide any suggestions they think might help. Tell students they’ll have about 5 minutes in which to do this. (9 minutes)

Note to the Teacher: If you know that students have personal experience with STIs – for example, a family member with HIV – you may wish to intentionally pair certain students together to be sensitive. Otherwise, random pairing is fine.

STEP 4: Ask the students to stay in their pairs and ask how they think they did on their own plans. Ask what they thought of their partner’s plan, and whether they got any helpful feedback on theirs.

Ask the students to share what they’ve heard about how STIs can be transmitted. Write these on the board, asking students not to repeat something they’ve heard already. If anyone says something that is incorrect, be sure to correct it and write the correct information on the board. (14 minutes)

STEP 5: Say, “It’s great to think this through and to create a plan for yourselves. But what about the other person with whom you may end up having sex? How would you know whether they had an STI? What can you do to find out?”

Probe for:

- Ask the person (remind students that many STIs have no symptoms so they might not know they have one)

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- Ask other people who know the person (which could also make that person mad)
- Go together to a doctor's office or clinic to get tested for STDs.

Say, "A really important thing to keep in mind is that there is no one test that covers all STIs. So if someone says to you, 'I've been tested already,' ask that person what they've been tested for. Sometimes, they've been tested for HIV – but there are different tests for the other STIs. A doctor or clinician will ask you some questions to determine which STIs you may or may not be at risk for and then conduct the tests based on that. So it's really important to give honest information and answers to that doctor or clinician."

Project the website, http://yourstdhelp.com/free_clinic_locator.html, so that the class can see it on the screen or white board. Using the dropdown menu on the top left side of the landing page, put in your state and hit "go." Scroll down for the city or town closest to you to show what is in your area. Have student write down the website address for future use and remind them that they can always come back to you in the future to be reminded of the URL.

Answer any questions, then ask students to hand in their individual plans. Then distribute the article, "Taking Charge of My Sexual Health with STI Testing and Communication" and ask them to read it for homework and answer the journal questions that appear at the end of the article. (8 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The individual worksheet, paired discussion and large group process will be directed at achieving the first two learning objectives. In addition, by collecting and going through the individual plans, the teacher will be able to catch any remaining myths/misinformation by correcting them on the sheets and returning each student's plan to them.

Posting the website and showing students the link, as well as the search results that come up for local STI testing and treatment centers, will achieve the third learning objective.

HOMEWORK:

Article: Have students read the article, "Taking Charge of My Sexual Health with STI Testing and Communication," and then respond to the assigned questions in their journals or on a piece of paper.

STIs: What Can I Do?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Please answer the following questions. You will be sharing this with at least one other student in class, so be sure what you write here is something you're comfortable with another person knowing!

1. How can STIs be spread from one person to another? See if you can list up to THREE ways:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Explain why the following three strategies can be the most effective way to protect yourself or someone else from getting an STI.

Abstinence

Using condoms or other barriers correctly each time you have sex

Getting tested for STIs (and making sure your partner does too) before you have sex together

3. If you were to find out you had an STI, what could you do to make sure you don't pass it to someone else?

Taking Charge of My Sexual Health With STI Testing & Communication

By Amy Robles, 19, Contributor

Though I've never had an STI scare, I've always gotten tested before having sex with a new partner. The first time I was screened I was still in high school and living at home with my religious parents who I didn't want to know I was sexually active. I knew they would disapprove and likely punish me or make my life very difficult if they knew I was having sex.

I had done my own research online about sex and sexual health, which is pretty much the only reason I was educated enough to know that it was important to get tested, that I could have a sexually transmitted disease (STI) even if I didn't show symptoms and that Planned Parenthood would provide confidential testing. My sex ed in middle school had been lacking, and the one week in my high school health class had been even worse. I got lucky because I found a lot of sex-positive education sites and blogs, like Sexetc.org, and good online resources, like Planned Parenthood's website. The information I got from these resources gave me a really strong conviction that I wanted to be in charge of my sex life and sexual health and showed me ways I could do that, like getting tested regularly and talking to my partners.

I've always made sure to have a talk about our STI statuses and what we're each comfortable with sexually before ever engaging in sexual behaviors.

STI Testing at Planned Parenthood

I'd heard about Planned Parenthood from my friends and other girls at school, so I made an appointment there. At the time, I was in my first relationship in which I could have been at risk of being exposed or exposing my partner to an STI. So before having sex with my then-partner for the first time, I wanted to be completely sure I was STI-free and could keep me and my partner safe. I knew the best way to go about that was getting tested and talking to my partner.

At Planned Parenthood I got tested confidentially and inexpensively. Plus, they were really supportive and informative when I went to them. I remember nervously making the phone call to the clinic in my car so my family wouldn't hear me. I was reassured and encouraged when making the appointment was much simpler than I imagined. All I had to do was reserve a time, and when I went in, I filled out some paperwork to qualify for free care as a minor. When it came time for my appointment, I gave a urine sample, so they could test me for chlamydia and gonorrhea. Since I didn't have any specific concerns, they just tested me for two of the most common STIs

After the test, I had a short consultation with one of the clinic doctors about my general sexual health. The doctor provided me with some condoms and lubricant, as well as a prescription for birth control pills, which didn't cost me anything. As a part of their "Take Charge" program, I got birth control for free because I was a minor.

Talking with the staff about my sexual health and getting birth control and safer sex methods to help myself and my partner prevent pregnancy and/or the transmission of STIs was extremely liberating for me. It gave me a sense that I was in control of my own sexuality. And it still makes me feel that way.

The last time I was tested was before engaging in sexual behaviors with my current partner. I was tested again for the same STIs at my doctor's office. Because I had a comfortable environment to be tested the first time, it really encouraged me not to be nervous about getting screened for STIs in the future. And now it's no big deal to have it done!

Talking With My Partner about STIs

Getting tested is only part of the story, though. With each new partner I've always made sure to have a talk about our STI statuses and what we're each comfortable with sexually before ever engaging in sexual behaviors. At a point when I know I want to take the next step with a partner and have sex, I always initiate conversations with my partners when we aren't doing anything sexual—one was while driving, another in the park. It gives me the chance to be honest with my partners about wanting to be sexual with them and broach the subject of us potentially having sex at some point. We talk about whether they would want to have sex too, what specifically they would be comfortable with as well as making sure we plan to practice safer sex and get tested for STIs.

STD Testing Was Worth the Work

I've been lucky to be with people who have already been tested since their last partner and who are completely willing to get tested if they hadn't. While I may have been nervous going into some of the conversations—because it's always bound to be a little nerve-wracking to straight up admit that you want to have sex with someone, even if you're dating—every time it has been a positive experience. It has always been a relief to hash things out like that, and each time I've done it, it has brought me closer to my partner and improved our communication as well as intimacy.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

1. Three things I plan to talk with my boyfriend or girlfriend about STIs before we start having sex are...
 - A)
 - B)
 - C)
2. If I thought I had an STI, I would get tested because _____

3. If I were to get tested for an STI, I'd want _____
to come with me.