

The most important things in a relationship (of any kind) is...

Forming Healthy Relationships



What do you expect from a relationship?

Ground rules



Learning objectives

To learn about the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

To consider how to negotiate and communicate assertively and know when these are appropriate in a relationship.

To learn how to recognise when someone needs help managing unhealthy relationships or risky online behaviours.

To consider ways to access support.

Healthy relationships

Draw what you think a healthy relationship looks like. Label your image to demonstrate the main characteristics you associate with a healthy relationship.

The accuracy of your spelling and grammar does not matter and slang terms may be used if you do not know the correct term.

You might consider:

- What are the right reasons to start a relationship?
- What would you expect from your partner?
- How do you think your partner should act to show you their affection?
- What do you think can be expected of you?
- What do you think would be unreasonable to expect?

Healthy relationships

The answer to the question about what a healthy relationship looks like will vary from person to person and some of you may not have thought about it before previously which is perfectly okay.

What is important when in a relationship is that both partners in the relationship understand what the other wants and expects.

This doesn't have to be a big list or a contract, but both individuals should **try** to understand their partner and take steps to understand them better. It's a two-way process based on respect and trust.

Communication

Communication is an important foundation of a healthy relationship.

How can we improve communication?

- Speak openly to one another about thoughts and feelings
- Make sure each partner feels heard when expressing feelings
- Listen to each other and compromise
- Do not criticize each other when discussing issues, instead explain what has upset you (It upsets me when...)

Boundaries

Boundaries are also very important in a relationship. People want to trust the person that they have chosen to form a relationship with and there will need to be some compromise on what is and is not acceptable in the relationship for both partners- they will need to communicate this to each other as people aren't mind readers!

What can we do to respect each others boundaries?

- Allow each other to spend time with friends and family
- Respect your partner's privacy. This includes using technology in a responsible way
- In healthy relationships each partner is in control of their own body, possessions and finances
- Trust each other and don't require the other partner to "check in" or 'report' to you
- Respect your partner's wishes and don't pressure them to do things that they don't want to do
- Avoid making accusations.

Consent

How would you define this word? Write a definition.

And then watch this video (you may have seen it previously) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Nii5w2Fal>

Consent

Self- assess your definition against this one:

Valid, legal, sexual consent is freely, mindfully, and actively granted in full knowledge of what the person is agreeing to. It uses mutually understandable words or actions and indicates a willingness to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity.

In other words, two people agree to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way, with each other.

Consent

To determine if someone is giving consent, you must be able to answer two questions:

- Does the person want to give consent?
- Is the person capable of giving consent?

Above all, if a partner ever says no during a sexual act or sex, asks you to stop, or is acting in a way that makes you believe they want to stop, you must stop immediately. Saying no should never be treated as a game or as a signal that someone is "playing hard to get." Simply put, **"no" means "no" in any sexual encounter.**

Consent

Is a person ever unable to provide consent? When would this be?

Certain circumstances make it impossible for a person to legally give consent. These circumstances usually involve cases in which a person is **not mentally or physically capable of choosing** whether to engage in sexual behaviour.

If someone is drunk or under the influence of drugs, then that person cannot give consent.

Certain mental health illnesses mean a person is unable to give consent.

Age can also determine whether a person can legally consent to certain sexual behaviours, such as intercourse or oral sex. The age at which a person can give consent is 16. Having sex with someone under the age of consent is a crime even if the person under the age of consent says that she or he wanted the sexual behaviour to take place.

Features of a relationship

Look at the six possible features of a relationship below. Working in pairs or small groups, give an example of how each of these features of a relationship might be either healthy or unhealthy in practice.

1. Spending time together
2. Knowing each other's family and friends
3. Having lots in common
4. Being open and honest
5. Humour
6. Never having an argument

Features of a relationship

1. Spending time together Making time for each other is a good thing – it helps to strengthen relationship bonds. However, spending almost every moment together can be unhealthy because it reduces contact with friendship and family networks. Someone making their partner feel guilty for spending time with others could be controlling the relationship.
2. Knowing each other's family and friends Connecting the people you care about can deepen and strengthen relationships. But rather than assuming introductions should take place early on, it is important that this is done at a pace both parties agree with. If family or friends find out about a relationship before both parties are ready, there can be a lot of pressure. Or if a breakup occurs in a friendship group then it can be particularly difficult, since managing this requires both parties to be mature and thoughtful.
3. Having lots in common Common interests can be what initially sparks a connection with someone, and maintains that connection over time. When couples spend quality time together, it helps to strengthen relationship bonds. However, if the couple spend almost every moment together then this can be unhealthy. Healthy couples maintain a balance between time spent together and with others.

Features of a relationship

4. Being open and honest - Honest communication is healthy. However, being brutally honest is often disrespectful and can damage the receiver's self-esteem. For example: rather than telling someone that you hate their cooking and will never eat anything they make again, it is more loving to offer to cook because you feel you are quite good in the kitchen.

5. Humour Finding things to laugh at together is healthy – it helps couples to connect. However, humour directed at a partner which goes too far can damage their self-esteem and is disrespectful.

6. Never having an argument Getting on so well that you rarely argue can be a sign of a good relationship. However, it could also be a sign that one or both parties are not communicating their wants and needs or that they are being dominated by the other person. Good relationships involve negotiation so sometimes it is healthy to disagree. The way this is dealt with shows the health of the relationship and the qualities of the people in it.

Learning objectives

To learn about the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

To consider how to negotiate and resolve conflict assertively and know when to end a relationship.

To learn how to recognise when you are in an unhealthy relationship and managing unhealthy relationships and behaviours.

To consider ways to access support.

We haven't fully met these yet. Hopefully we have a good starting point but we need to come back to look further at recognising unhealthy relationships and thinking about how to seek help and support.

Forming healthy relationships

Return to the graffiti wall from the start of the lesson. Which one new idea about the most important thing to have in a healthy relationship, would you add?

Write yourself 5 rules about what you are responsible for in a healthy relationship:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Final ideas

There is no rush or correct time to enter into a relationship. Your own religious, spiritual and/or values might have guidance about this and it is something we would encourage you to talk openly about at home.

If and when you do feel ready to enter a relationship, communication, boundaries and consent are vital for everyone.

Considering what is and is not healthy is very important, in any relationship.