

9. Good relationships



Objectives

By the end of this session, group members will be able to:

- List qualities of a good relationship.
- Describe ways to make a relationship healthy.



Background notes

Good relationships are based on love, respect, honesty, and good communication. In a good relationship, both people are honest with each other. Both people feel safe in the relationship and do not worry that the other will betray his or her trust. Both people find enjoyment and pleasure in the relationship, and neither person tries to control the other person or make them do things that they do not want to do. Neither person takes advantage of the other. The best relationships result from both people contributing all of these qualities. But many relationships are far from perfect. The healthiest ones are those that people work to develop, and those that are based on respect, responsibility, understanding, cooperation, caring, and good communication.

Respect: To respect another person means to honour them, think well of them, and to treat them as if they are important even if they are different from you.

Responsibility: To be responsible means that others can depend and rely on you, you do what you say you will do, and you know the difference between right and wrong. For example, you take responsibility for taking care of your own health and that of your partner and your family.

Understanding: To be understanding means to be knowledgeable about another person, to try to relate to his or her feelings, or to listen and support someone. It means trying to understand what life is like for someone else.

Cooperation: To be cooperative means to work with someone to have a good relationship, and not take the other person for granted.

Caring: To be caring is to be concerned and interested in another person's feelings and needs, and to want what is best for that person. It means feeling love or a liking for a person and wanting to protect that person.

Good communication: Being able to express your thoughts, feelings, preferences, dreams, and goals, as well as listening to the other person when they express themselves.



Session guide

1. Facilitate a discussion by asking group members the following questions:
 - What is a relationship?
 - What qualities are most important to you in relationships?
 - How can we make sure our relationships have these qualities?
 - How would you feel about a friend who did not respect you? Who did not put much effort into the relationship? What could you do?
 - How would you feel if a parent or guardian didn't understand you? What would you do to improve the relationship?
2. After discussing all of the questions, share the information from the Background Notes section.



Main points

- Good relationships are based on respect, being responsible, understanding, cooperation, caring, and good communication.
- If someone truly loves you they will listen to what you want and not try to talk you out of it.



Activity: Relationship role play

1. Ask group members to give examples of situations where a parent or friend did not respect them.
2. Once you have four different examples, ask for volunteers to play the roles of the characters in the first situation, acting out how they would respond to someone treating them that way.
3. After the volunteers have acted out the situation, ask group members to talk about the role play.
 - Do they agree with what the character decided to do?
 - Would they have done anything differently?
 - How could the relationship be improved?
 - Is what happened similar to what would happen in real life?
4. After talking about the first role play, repeat the steps above with the other situations.

10. What is love?



Objectives

By the end of this session, group members will be able to:

- Explain the difference between love and attraction.
- Name qualities they would want in a boyfriend or girlfriend.



Background notes

Love is a feeling that can be hard to explain and can mean different things to different people. To most people, love means a deep feeling of liking, attraction, respect, caring, and understanding for another person, even with their weaknesses. It is important to remember that sexual intercourse is not necessarily a way to show you love someone. Having sex does not mean that two people are in love or will fall in love. Remember, love is about respect and caring for each other. Love is never a good reason to do anything that puts your health and future at risk.

Good friendships and relationships help people feel good about themselves. Good friends help with problems and share dreams for the future. Good friends can be people of the same sex or people of the opposite sex. Boys and girls, men and women, can be good friends without having a sexual relationship. The words “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” do not necessarily mean that the relationship is a sexual one. Two people can have a close and loving relationship without sex.

Getting along with the opposite sex can be difficult and confusing because many men and women are not sure what the other wants in a relationship. Remember, most people want the same thing in a relationship. They want respect, trust, honesty, understanding, and caring. Building a good relationship takes time and patience. Sex is not a good way to build a close relationship. Having sex does not mean that two people love each other or that they are close. Sex without true friendship is dangerous for a person’s health and heart.

Two people can spend time together and become very close without having sex. By talking and sharing experiences, they can learn important things about each other. They can learn how each views life, how they would make decisions together, what kind of partner and parent each person would make, and how each feels about the other’s plans for life. Touching each other (without sexual intercourse) can be satisfying by itself and is not dangerous as long as it does not lead a person to lose control and to have sex before he or she is ready.

It can take a long time to develop a good relationship, but one of the most important things in a relationship is good communication. In order to



understand and care for each other, people need to be able to talk with each other and make their feelings understood. By talking to each other and being honest about their feelings, two people might discover that neither one really feels ready to have a sexual relationship. They might find that both of them want to wait until they are sure it is the right time.

Sex is an act you can control. Sex does not equal love, but sometimes people will use this idea to pressure you to have sex. If someone really loves you, they respect you, want you to protect you, and want you to be happy. If someone really loves you, they will not pressure you into sex. If you say no, they will listen to you and accept that.

Love and attraction

Love is a word that is used often but people do not talk about what they mean by love. It is normal to mistake being attracted to someone for being in love with someone. We can feel a very strong attraction and think it must be love. This can get us in trouble, because being attracted to someone is not the same as having a caring and loving relationship with someone.

This table helps to show the difference between loving someone and being attracted to someone.

LOVE	ATTRACTION
It happens slowly as people spend more and more time together	It happens suddenly after two people meet
Each person respects the mind and body of the other	Is based on how a person looks
It is based on knowing each other well	There is a focus on touching and feeling good
It thinks of the other person, wants to protect him/her and does things to make him/her happy	Each person does not need to know a lot about the other
It is trustful, calm, secure, hopeful, and self-confident	It can make the other person jealous and also not feel very good about him/herself
It lasts for a long time	It can change quickly
Understanding of peoples' weaknesses and mistake	May not accept flaws or mistakes

It is important to understand the difference between being in love with someone and being attracted to someone, especially when deciding to have sex with someone. When it comes to sex, remember that you have control over your own body; and you have a lot of time to wait until you are totally sure that you are ready.



Session guide

1. Facilitate a discussion by asking group members the following questions:
 - What is love?
 - What is attraction?
 - How can you tell the difference between love and attraction?
 - How do you know you love someone?
 - How do you know someone loves you?
 - How do you want a boyfriend or girlfriend to treat you?
 - Do you have to have sex to show you love someone? Why or why not?
 - Why is it hard to say no to sex?
2. After discussing all of the questions, share the information from the Background Notes section.



Main points

- Love is a deep feeling of liking, attraction, respect, caring, and understanding for another person, even with their weaknesses. Having sexual intercourse does not mean that two people will fall in love. Love is never a good reason to do anything that puts your health and future at risk.
- It is normal to feel a strong attraction to another person, but remember that these feelings are often temporary and based only on physical attractiveness and not an emotional connection. Being attracted to someone is not the same as being in love.



Activity: Tree of consequences

1. Ask group members what would happen if they behaved well and got high marks at school. How would they feel?
2. Ask group members to explain what would happen if they broke a rule at school. Is it a good feeling or a bad feeling?
3. Explain that these are the consequences of breaking a school rule. Every decision we make has consequences. Sometimes consequences are good, but sometimes consequences are bad.
4. Ask group members to talk about the consequences of having sex before you are ready.
5. Draw a picture of a tree with roots, a trunk, and branches. Explain that the trunk is having sex. The branches are the consequences. Leaves and fruits can be the consequences of the other consequences. Ask group members to explore each of the different branches.
6. Ask group members to talk about the causes – what led to the decision to have sex? Write these on the roots.
7. Ask participants to work in groups of 2-3 people to draw an issues tree for the decision to wait to have sex.
8. After 5-10 minutes, ask each small group to share their drawings with the whole group.

