

**School Based Teen Dating Violence Instruction**

**7th Grade**

**7th Grade Options**

Choose one of the following options for meeting the Teen Dating Violence instruction requirement:

* School Counselor: “Healthy Relationships Middle School” district developed PowerPoint with activity and scenario
* Community: Betty Griffin House - Contact Jeff Gatlin at 904-669-1191 for a grade level assembly or Allison Rose at 904-501-8147 for classroom lessons

**School Counselor: “Healthy Relationships Middle School” district developed PowerPoint with activity and scenario**

1. **Show 7th Grade PowerPoint (see separate document)**
2. **7th Grade Activity -** *Draw a Healthy Relationship (from poehealth.org)*

**Key Objectives –**

To pay attention to the qualities and characteristics that make a healthy relationship

To discuss differing opinions of good and bad relationship characteristics

**Materials Needed –**

Markers

Paper big enough to outline a body

Tape or something to hang paper

**Directions –**

Students will select one volunteer to come and trace a body on a large sheet of paper. Once the body is traced, place the paper on the wall. Students will then take turns coming writing or drawing positive traits of potential partners or relationships on the body. If students have an idea of a negative character or relationship trait, they will write or draw them around the outer border of the body. Once everyone has had an opportunity to write on the body, discuss what was drawn or written.

1. **Scenario – Communicating Effectively (from Healthy Relationship Middle School Educators ToolKit – loveisrespect.org)**

**Introduction**

Open, honest communication should be part of every healthy relationship. It’s okay to get angry in a relationship—everyone does at some point! What’s important is to resolve conflict in a healthy way.

**Overview**

Educators have an opportunity to guide students into understanding what is a healthy versus

unhealthy relationship and how to communicate their needs effectively

**Scenario**

After a disagreement, Sam, the person that you are dating, uses the silent treatment and won’t talk to you for days. During that time, you have a sporting event that’s important to you. Usually, Sam is there to cheer you on, but this time decides not to. You become extremely frustrated, and that night, you send them a text with insulting words demanding a call immediately, even though you have both already gone to bed. Sam responds by saying that it would be best to talk at school in the in the morning.

**Questions**

1. Is the silent treatment an effective way to resolve a conflict? If yes, for how long? If no, why not?
2. Is it okay to communicate by text to try to resolve a conflict? Why or why not?
3. Does anger due to a disagreement excuse using insulting words or behavior? Why or why not?
4. Do you think it is appropriate to demand an immediate response during a fight? Why or why not?
5. Was the text suggesting talking in the morning dismissive or a good idea? Why or why not?
6. Is this behavior healthy, unhealthy or abusive?
7. What are healthy and unhealthy ways to communicate during a disagreement?

**For healthier communication, try to:**

***Find the Right Time.*** If something is bothering you and you would like to have a conversation about it, it can be helpful to find the right time to talk. Try to find a time when both you and your partner are calm and not distracted, stressed or in a rush. You might even consider scheduling a time to talk if one or both of you is really busy!

***Talk Face to Face.*** Avoid talking about serious matters or issues in writing. Text messages, letters and emails can be misinterpreted. Talk in person or on the phone so there aren’t any unnecessary miscommunications.

***Do Not Attack.*** Even when we mean well, we can sometimes come across as harsh because of our word choice. Using “you” can sound like you’re attacking, which will make your partner defensive and less receptive to your message. Instead, try using “I” or “we.” For example, say “I feel like we haven’t been as close lately” instead of “You have been distant with me.”

***Be Honest.*** Agree to be honest. Sometimes the truth hurts, but it’s the key to a healthy relationship. Admit that you aren’t always perfect and apologize when you make a mistake instead of making excuses. You will feel better and it will help strengthen your relationship.

***Check Your Body Language.*** Make eye contact when speaking face-to-face. Sit up and face your partner. Let your partner know you’re listening. Show them you really care. Don’t take a phone call, text or play a video game when you’re talking. Listen and respond.

***Use the 48 Hour Rule.*** If your partner does something that makes you angry, you need to tell them about it. But you don’t have to do so right away. If you’re still hurt 48 hours later, say something. If not, consider forgetting about it. But remember your partner can’t read your mind. If you don’t speak up when you’re upset, there is no way for them to apologize or change. Once you do mention your hurt feelings and your partner sincerely apologizes, let it go. Don’t bring up past issues if they’re not relevant.

**How to Communicate if You Are Angry:**

If you get angry with your partner, here are a few steps to take:

***Stop.*** If you get really angry about something, stop, take a step back and breathe. Give yourself time to calm down by watching TV, talking to a friend, playing a video game, taking a walk, listening to some music or whatever helps you relax. Taking a break can keep the situation from getting worse.

***Think.*** After you’re no longer upset, think about the situation and why you got so angry. Was it how your partner spoke or something they did? Figure out the real problem then think about how to explain your feelings.

***Talk.*** Finally, talk to your partner and when you do, follow the tips under Key Themes.

***Listen.*** After you tell your partner how you feel, remember to stop talking and listen to what they have to say. You both deserve the opportunity to express how you feel in a safe and healthy environment.

**Additional Background Information for 7th Grade PowerPoint Presentation**

**SLIDE – What is Dating Abuse**

* One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a dating partner, figure that far exceeds other types of youth violence.
* Only 33% of teen who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse.
* Dating abuse affects around 1.5 million teens annually.

**SLIDE – Defining Healthy**

**Communication** is a key part of building a healthy relationship. The first step is making sure both partners in a relationship want and expect the same things—being on the same page is very important. The following tips can help your students create and maintain a healthy relationship:

***Speak Up.*** In a healthy relationship, if something is bothering them, it’s best to talk about it instead of holding it in.

***Respect Each Other.*** Each partner’s wishes and feelings have value.

Let each other know they are making an effort to keep their ideas in mind. Mutual respect is essential in maintaining healthy relationships.

***Compromise.*** Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, but it’s important that they find a way to compromise if they disagree on something. They should try to solve conflicts in a fair and rational way.

***Be Supportive.*** Offer reassurance and encouragement to each other in a relationship. Also, partners should let each other know when they need their support. Healthy relationships are about building each other up, not putting each other down.

***Respect Each Other’s Privacy.*** Just because someone is in a relationship doesn’t mean they have to share everything and constantly be together.

**SLIDE - Setting Healthy Boundaries**

Healthy relationships require space. Creating healthy boundaries is a good way to keep relationships healthy and secure.

By setting boundaries together, partners can have a deeper understanding of the type of relationship they each want. Boundaries are not meant to make anyone feel trapped or like they are “walking on eggshells.”

Creating boundaries is not a sign of secrecy or distrust—it’s an expression of what makes someone feel comfortable and what they would like or not like to happen within the relationship.

**Healthy boundaries shouldn’t restrict someone’s ability to:**

* Go out with their friends without their partner.
* Participate in activities and hobbies they like.
* Not have to share passwords to their email, social media accounts or phone.
* Respect each other’s individual likes and needs.
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**SLIDE – Defining Unhealthy Relationships & Dating Abuse**

Relationships that are not healthy are based on power and control, not equality and respect. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, your students may not think the unhealthy behaviors are a big deal. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative, abusive behaviors, are—at their root—exertions of power and control. Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

Dating abuse is a **pattern of destructive behaviors used to exert power and control** over a dating partner. While we define dating violence as a pattern, that doesn’t mean the first instance of abuse is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time.

**Dating violence can happen to anyone**, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background.

Drugs and alcohol can affect a person’s judgment and behavior, but they **do not excuse abuse or** gardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or background.

**SLIDE – Dating violence can be:**

Dating Violence is not just physical. It can take on many forms. Abuse can by physical but it can also be emotional.

Dating violence can be: *Physical:* hitting, slapping, choking, kicking

*Emotional/Verbal:* putting you down; embarrassing you in public (online or off); threatening you in any way; telling you what to do or what to wear

*Sexual:* pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual, including sexting; restricting access to birth control

*Financial:* taking your paychecks; preventing you from working

*Digital:* sending threats via text, social media or email; stalking or humiliating you on social media; logging into your social media or email accounts without permission; forcing you to share passwords.

**SLIDE – Warning Signs of Abuse**

**Warning Signs of Abuse**

Because relationships exist on a spectrum, it can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. The following are warning signs of a relationship going in the wrong direction:

• Constantly putting someone down

• Extreme jealousy or insecurity

• Explosive temper

• Isolating someone from their family or friends, dictating who they can see or hang out with

• Mood swings (nice one minute and angry the next)

• Checking someone’s cell phone, social media or email without permission

• Physically hurting someone in any way

• Possessiveness

• Telling someone what to do or what to wear