Lesson Two

Title: Responsible and Healthy Relationships

Theme: Considering the Characteristics of Healthy Dating Relationships

Time: 125 minutes

Materials:
- Dating Stoplight-Laminated Game (3 lights, 15 scenario cards)
- Daisy Game (Love’s Me/Not centres, 20 relationship petals)
- Magnets or Masking Tape
- Scissors and Blank Paper
- Solving Problems in Relationships Worksheet

Objectives

- To teach students about the concept of positive, healthy relationships.
- To allow students to think about their own criteria for healthy dating relationships.
- To identify healthy and unhealthy characteristics of student’s present, past and future relationships.
- To discuss the good signs, warning signs and bad signs in dating relationships.

Curriculum Expectations

7p2 - Describe age-appropriate matters related to sexuality (e.g., the need to develop good interpersonal skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively with the opposite sex).

7p11 - Use effective communication skills (e.g., refusal skills, active listening) to deal with various relationships and situations.

8p4 - Analyse situations that are potentially dangerous to personal safety and determine how to seek assistance.

8p13 – Apply living skills (e.g., decision-making assertiveness, and refusal skills) in making informed decisions, and analyse the consequences of engaging in sexual activities.
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4MAT Quadrant Codes

1L: Listening; Analyzing; Teacher-Led Discussions; Speaking and Sharing
1R: Making Connections and Integrating Experiences; Large Group Activities; Games

Background Information

This lesson focuses on the issues young people face surrounding dating relationships. The topic is important because these dating relationships gain increasing weight during adolescence and provide teens with the groundwork for relationship building into adulthood. As girlfriends and boyfriends become a more significant influence for teens, it is helpful for them to consider what qualities make a relationship healthy and successful. It is also constructive for students to examine those components of relationships that can be detrimental or even harmful. This lesson is designed to compel teens to think about their personal criteria for healthy dating relationships and to discuss ways to evaluate these relationships in a teacher-mediated group setting. Inevitably, the partners who young people choose to date, and the relationships that ensue, will shape their experiences and self-esteem in critical ways.

Activity One: Daisy Game – 20 minutes

This game is designed to generate and support discussions about healthy and unhealthy relationships. (This activity might take more than 20 minutes.)

Give each student 2 sheets of blank paper (or pre-cut blank petals depending on resources available). Ask participants to draw a petal on each sheet of paper and then cut it out.
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Instruct students to write one healthy relationship characteristic on the first petal and one unhealthy relationship characteristic on the other.

Ask students to use tape/tack to add their petal to the Loves Me or Loves Me Not centre circle to help complete the flower.

Take up this activity by discussing where the participants placed their relationship characteristics. Use the laminated petals to add characteristics that may have been missed.

**Note to Teachers:** The petal that states “uses” can be construed in a number of ways, for example, someone might use someone else, someone might use drugs or alcohol, et cetera. Be certain to explore all of the alternatives.

**Activity Two: Dating Stoplight Game - 30 minutes**

Tell your students that they will be thinking about and discussing characteristics of dating relationships. Ask them to participate frequently during the discussion, as their input on this topic is very important. Start the lesson by asking students to answer a few general questions about relationships. Consider the following ideas.

- **Why is it important to have great girlfriends and boyfriends?**

  These people provide friendship, support and love. As we explore what we have in common and what makes us different, partners can help us learn about ourselves. Through the process of dating, we come to understand what qualities are important to us in a relationship. Dating relationships provide us with the groundwork for relationship building into adulthood.
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- How do you think self-esteem is related to dating relationships?

When our self-esteem is high, and we have a positive self-concept, we are more likely to choose girlfriends and boyfriends who are good for us. There is a saying that, “we teach people how to treat us”. In other words, how we behave towards ourselves and other people gives them clues as to how they should behave towards us. So, when we feel good about ourselves, respect ourselves and treat others nicely, we are showing people how we would like to be treated.

Here are the instructions for setting up the “Dating Stoplight Game”.

On the top left corner of your chalkboard, use tape or magnets to attach the red stoplight card that reads, “These are bad signs in a relationship”.

Place the corresponding yellow and green stoplights underneath, as you see here.

Shuffle the Stoplight scenario cards to ensure that they are not in order.
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The object of this game is to decide which scenarios are most compatible with each of the following three statements: “these are bad signs in a relationship”, “these are warning signs in a relationship” and “these are good signs in a relationship”.

Attach the appropriate answers to the chalkboard beside the corresponding stoplight with tape or magnets.

There are several ways that you can play this game. You can read the scenarios aloud and ask students where they think they best belong. You could give scenarios out to groups of students and they can come to a consensus. You can place the scenarios on overheads and ask volunteers to give suggestions. You might also consider placing the scenarios around the room and asking for volunteers to place them beside the matching stoplight on the chalkboard.

No matter what pedagogical strategy you use to play this game, be sure that you ask students for explanations regarding their choices. The most important part of this activity is the discussion around whether each scenario constitutes a good, a warning or a bad sign in a relationship. It is in this arena that students will be able to discuss their various points of view. Your role in this game is to facilitate and mediate the conversations of your students.

When there is disagreement, you might choose not to place the scenario beside one statement, but rather choose to set it aside for further debate and discussion. If the scenario clearly represents a bad or warning sign, be sure to make this clear for your students.
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There are fifteen scenario cards. Five scenarios correspond with each coloured stoplight: red, yellow and green. While there may be some discrepancies, the following is a list of suggested correct answers.

**RED LIGHT: These are bad signs in a relationship.**

1. You are afraid of this person’s temper.
2. The person you are dating threatens to hurt you.
3. Your girlfriend or boyfriend pressures you to do things you do not want to do.
4. Your boyfriend or girlfriend criticises you or people you care about.
5. Your boyfriend or girlfriend makes you feel nervous about sharing your ideas with him/her.

**YELLOW LIGHT: These are warning signs in a relationship.**

6. You are unsure about your feelings for this person.
7. The person you are dating tells you not to hang out with certain friends.
8. You rarely get to plan what the two of you will do together.
9. The person you are dating often asks where you are, who you are with and what you are doing.
10. You say that you agree with the person you are dating, even though you really disagree with him/her, because you are afraid that a fight might end the relationship.

**GREEN LIGHT: These are good signs in a relationship.**

11. You usually feel happy when you are with this person.
12. Your girlfriend or boyfriend respects your feelings and your opinions.
13. The person you are dating talks to you about his/her feelings.
14. Your boyfriend or girlfriend celebrates your successes and s/he is happy when good things happen to you.
15. You enjoy being with the person you are dating, but you also enjoy spending time apart.
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Activity Three: “Solving Problems In Relationships” Homework Assignment – 5 minutes

Distribute the homework assignment. Discuss expectations and evaluation strategies, allow a few minutes for questions.

Possible Extensions

Once their homework assignments have been submitted, have a discussion with the students asking them to share some of their solutions to one of the relationship problems. Allow for a couple of students to offer their solutions to the same situation, as different approaches are valuable in problem solving.

Also think about having students role-play their way through some of the “relationship problems”. Consider having peer evaluations for their performances, offering alternative suggestions for solving the problems.

Possible Assessment

An opportunity for summative evaluation is present in this lesson; the “Solving Problems In Relationships” homework assignment allows teachers to evaluate student’s problem solving skills. Also, if students are required to complete the role-play activity, teachers could evaluate group work, and communication skills. Students could evaluate themselves and/or their peers based on the final role play presentation.
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References