



SASKATOON  
**SEXUAL  
HEALTH**



# Healthy Relationships

# Healthy Relationships

**Grade:** 7, 8, or 9

**Lesson Duration:** 60 minutes

## **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this lesson, participants will:

- Understand the foundations of a healthy relationship
- Understand what peer pressure is, and how it can be positive or negative
- Understand how to decide whether they are ready to engage in sexual activity with a partner
- Understand consent, how it is given, and its importance in all sexual contact
- Understand what topics should be talked about with a partner before engaging in sexual activity
- Understand the red flags of an unhealthy relationship

## **Curricular Outcomes Targeted:**

- **USC 7.4:** Demonstrate a personalized and coherent understanding of the importance of nurturing harmony in relationships (with self, others, and the environment), and apply effective strategies to re/establish harmony when conflict arises.
- **USC 7.6:** Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including assertiveness skills, to effectively and skillfully manage peer pressure (e.g., alcohol and drugs, exclusionary behaviours, family expectations, academic pressures, rules/laws).
- **USC8.1:** Analyze and establish effective strategies of support for purposes of helping others increase health-enhancing behaviours.
- **USC 8.2:** Analyze how personal prejudices/biases and habits of mind shape assumptions about family identities, structures, roles, and responsibilities.
- **USC 8.4:** Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of violence (including but not limited to emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, and neglect) on the well-being of and the supports needed for self, family, and community.
- **USC 8.7:** Assess the social, cultural, and environmental influences on and supports for sexual health knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and decisions.
- **USC 9.4:** Analyze the norms and expectations (e.g., community, cultural) associated with romantic relationships as a means to effectively plan for related health promotion.
- **USC 9.9:** Develop and demonstrate the personal insight, motivation, and skills necessary to enhance and promote sexual health and avoid health-compromising sexual attitudes and behaviours.

## Main Components of Lesson:

- Ground Rules (10 minutes)
- Healthy Relationships presentation (20 minutes)
- Consensual or Non-Consensual? Activity (10 minutes)
- KAHOOT! Quiz (10 minutes)
- Question Box (10 minutes)
- Optional Activities



## Materials:

- Paper, pens
- Healthy Relationships presentation
- KAHOOT! Quiz
- Question box & paper slips
- For optional activities:
  - Are You Ready? Handout
  - My Sexual Health Plan
  - Communication Scenarios



The class before this lesson, ask your students to write down any questions they have and put them in the question box. Going through these questions before the lesson can help you determine what areas to focus on.

## Context

Relationships are an important part of people's lives. Being able to recognize whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy is a fundamental skill that allows people to evaluate their own relationships and make decisions about their familial, platonic, and romantic relationships. Important skills in relationships include communicating assertively, setting boundaries, asking and looking for consent, and knowing when to leave a relationship because it is harmful.

Some relationships, typically romantic ones, eventually lead to sex. Sex is a normal and healthy part of our lives; however, if you are having sex, or thinking about having sex, you should be aware of the responsibilities involved with being in a sexual relationship.

The Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education state "Sexual health is a key component of overall health, well-being, and quality of life. It is a major determining factor in the wellbeing of individuals, partners, families, and communities," (SIECCAN, 2019).

## Ground Rules

Before starting the lesson, establish ground rules with your class. These rules, which the class will agree to, help students to feel safe and comfortable throughout the class.

Work with students to list 5-10 ground rules. Some examples include: no put downs, respect everyone, no question is a bad question, confidentiality (what is said in the classroom, stays in the classroom), and respect personal boundaries. This is also a good time to acknowledge that talking about sexual health can bring up a lot of feelings: curiosity, interest, discomfort, etc. All of these reactions are okay. Emphasize that while laughing is okay, it is not okay to laugh at people (for example, at personal stories or at questions).



*Keep your ground rules posted and revisit them before every sexual health lesson.*

## Healthy Relationships

Go through the Healthy Relationships presentation with the class. This presentation covers:

- Sex-positivity
- An overview of ground rules
- Relationship foundations
- Why have a relationship?
- Peer pressure
- Safer sex
- Unplanned pregnancy
- "Lover's License"
- Consent
- Sexuality in a relationship
- Faith and culture
- Maintaining relationships
- Are they the one?
- Red Flags: When to get out
- Resources

*The "Consensual or Non-Consensual?" activity can be done right after the consent slides to give students a break from listening.*

At the end of the presentation, have every student take a slip of paper and write down a question. Students do not have to write down a question if they do not have one, but they do have to place a paper slip in the box (even if it is blank), as this allows questions to be completely confidential.

## Consensual or Non-Consensual?

This activity may be done in conjunction with the presentation slides on consent. The goal of this activity is to develop skills in examining whether something is or is not consent.

Before the lesson, print off the "Consensual and Non-consensual" phrases in Appendix A. Divide the board in two. One half should be labelled "Gave or Asked for Consent", and the other "Did Not Give or Ask For Consent".

Review consent with the class. Remind students that consent should be enthusiastic, voluntary (i.e. not coerced), and sober.

Distribute the cards to the class. If there are not enough cards for each student, have students work in small groups. Give the students 3-5 minutes to decide whether they think the statement on their card is asking for/giving consent or not. Have students place their card in what they believe is the appropriate column on the board. Let them know that if they are unsure, they can place the card on the line between the columns.

Review each card with the class using the answer sheet in the appendix. You may ask each student/group to explain their reasoning, or simply review each statement anonymously. Make any necessary changes by moving cards to their appropriate columns.

## KAHOOT! Quiz

Complete the KAHOOT! quiz with your class to review the lesson. The quiz has 10 questions. Students will need access to computers, tablets, or phones with WI-FI. If there are not enough devices, students can create small teams of players. Take time to discuss answers as you go, so that students can understand which questions they may have answered incorrectly. The quiz can be accessed on the Saskatoon Sexual Health website.

## Question Box

You may want to do one last question box round at the end of the class to allow for any remaining questions. Questions should be answered at the beginning of the next lesson, to allow you time to sort through and prepare answers.

## Optional Activities

Optional activities are listed in the appendix. These activities are not required for the lesson; however, they encourage student participation and increased interaction with the material. Activities may be done throughout the lessons or grouped together at the end.



# Appendices

Appendix A:

# Consensual or Non-Consensual?



I would love to have sex with you too!	Do you want to try doing this with me?
Now is not a good time.	I guess we can do that if you'd like.
You liked it the last time.	C'mon, you know you want to do this, right?
I would love to kiss you too!	Can I kiss you?
I don't like that.	You said you wanted to kiss me before.
Mmmmmmmmmmmmm.	I really want to try this, are you sure you don't want to?
Yes, that's it!	Do you want to stop?
This doesn't feel good.	If you really loved me you would do this.
You know you want to.	Can I take your clothes off?

Are you sure you don't want to have sex?	Oh, yes!
Am I hurting you?	I have to go.
I can't date you if you won't do this with me.	Are you sure you don't want to kiss me?
I'm not ready for this.	You're going to like it, I promise.
Don't stop.	Does that feel good for you?
Can you stop?	We've done this before, what's the big deal?
Please keep going.	I'm not really feeling this anymore.
Can I take this off?	But you had sex with your last partner, why not me?
I want to try this with you, too!	Whoa, can we slow down?
I'm really drunk right now.	I'm really high right now.

# Consensual or Non-Consensual?

## Answer Key



### Consensual:

- I would love to have sex with you, too!
- I would love to kiss you, too!
- Yes, that's it!
- Oh, yes!
- That feels so good.
- Don't stop.
- Please keep going.
- I want to try this with you, too!
- Do you want to try doing this with me?
- Can I kiss you?
- Do you want to stop?
- Am I hurting you?
- Do you want to have sex with me?
- Does that feel good for you?
- Can I take this off?
- Can I take your clothes off?

### Unclear (Subtle Coercion):

- I guess we can do that if you'd like.
- Mmmmmmmmm.
- C'mon, you know you want to do this, right?
- I really want to try this, are you sure you don't want to?
- Are you sure you don't want to have sex with me?
- Are you sure you don't want to kiss me?

### Non-Consensual:

- Now is not a good time.
- I don't like that.
- This doesn't feel good.
- I have to go.
- I'm not ready for this.
- Can you stop?
- I'm not really feeling this anymore.
- Whoa, can we slow down?
- I'm really drunk right now.
- I'm really high right now.
- I'm not sure.
- I want to, but not right now.
- You liked it the last time.
- You said you wanted to kiss me before.
- If you really loved me you would do this.
- I can't date you if you won't do this with me.
- You're going to like it.
- We've done this before, what's the big deal?
- But you had sex with your last partner, why not me?
- You know you want to.

## Appendix B: Are You Ready?



Tell students that many people their age wonder if they are ready to have sex or not. Brainstorm with students what some common questions and concerns might be around having sex. Write these down on the board. You may also want to talk about what effect each question/concern may have on the decision to have sex. For example, if pregnancy is a concern, a person would want to make sure they have adequate access to birth control and condoms before deciding to have sex.

*Questions and concerns can also be added to the question box if you need time to research an answer.*

Hand out a copy of "Are You Ready? Questions" to each student. This can serve as a reference to them as they work through the reflection activity. They can also add any questions that were brainstormed to this list.

Hand out a copy of "My Sexual Health Plan" to each student. This sheet is from Action Canada's **Beyond the Basics**, a set of resources for educators on sexuality and sexual health. This activity is included in the appendices.

*Beyond the Basics has many other resources available to expand on these lessons!*

Give students 5-10 minutes to go through and create their own plans individually. Remind students that they can use the "Are You Ready? Questions" to help them evaluate their own feelings towards their sexuality. This is a quiet reflection activity; reassure students that their answers will be kept completely private and they do not need to share with the class nor with the teacher.

You may want to do a round of question box at the end of the activity to give students time to ask questions that have come up while they were filling in their plans.

# Are You Ready? Questions



A lot of people wonder if they are ready to have sex, but there is no easy answer to this question. Whether or not you are ready for sex does not depend on how old you are or how long you have been dating someone. It depends entirely on whether you feel you are ready to have sex.

These are some questions you can ask yourself to decide whether or not you are ready to have sex:

**1. Am I feeling pressured into having sex by my partner, my friends, or my peers?**

If you are feeling pressured into having sex by your partner, friends, or peers, then you may want to wait before having sex. Your desire to have sex should not come from peer pressure.

**2. Will having sex fit with my religious or moral beliefs?**

If having sex doesn't fit with your religious or moral beliefs, then you may want to wait before having sex. You may also want to talk with a trusted adult about any concerns you may have.

**3. Will I feel guilty if I have sex? Why?**

If you think you will feel guilty if you have sex, you should ask yourself why you will feel that way. Some people feel guilty just because they think they should feel guilty when having sex. Other people feel guilty because they don't want to have sex.

**4. Do I want to have sex to get love, affection, or attention?**

Sex is a great way to demonstrate love, affection, and attention between partners. However, sex should not be the **only** time when you receive love, affection, and/or attention from your partner.

**5. Do I want to have sex to prove that I am sexually attractive?**

Sex is a great way to feel sexually attractive. However, sex should not be the **only** time you feel sexually attractive.

**6. Am I afraid that my reputation will be hurt if I have sex?**

Some people are afraid that their family, friends, or peers will judge them if they have sex. If this is a concern you have, you can talk to a trusted adult.

**7. Is the only reason I want to have sex because I hope it will bring my partner and me closer together, both emotionally as well as physically?**

Sex is a great way to deepen a relationship, both physically and emotionally. However, sex is not the only way to feel closer to your partner.

**8. Do my partner and I both want the same things from sex?**

Sex is best when everyone is on the same page. You should talk to your partner about why you both want to have sex so that everyone feels comfortable and prepared.

**9. Does my partner want to have sex with me?**

Before having sex, you need enthusiastic consent from your partner. Enthusiastic consent means that your partner really wants to have sex with you, and is telling you so. If your partner seems uncomfortable with or indifferent to the idea of having sex, you shouldn't have sex with them.

**10. Can I talk to my partner about pleasure during sex? Can I talk to my partner about what I like and don't like, or what I want and don't want, during sex?**

Communication during sex is important. You should feel comfortable talking to your partner about your likes and wants during sex so that both of you have a pleasurable experience!

**11. Can I talk to my partner about sexually transmitted infections and how we can protect ourselves?**

It's important to talk to your partner about whether you both have been tested, whether you have been diagnosed with an STBBI, and how you can protect yourselves during sex (for example, by using condoms).

**12. Do I have a safe place to have sex?**

A safe place to have sex is a place where both you and your partner will feel comfortable.

**13. If applicable: Can I talk to my partner about birth control and can we share the responsibility for birth control?**

If sex with your partner may lead to pregnancy (i.e. one of you has a vagina, the other has a penis, and the sex you want to have will involve penetration), you will want to talk to your partner about birth control. Discuss what options you have openly and honestly.

**14. If applicable: If birth control fails, are we ready to deal with an unplanned pregnancy?**

If sex with your partner may lead to pregnancy (i.e. one of you has a vagina, the other has a penis, and the sex you want to have will involve penetration), you will want to talk to your partner about how you would deal with an unplanned pregnancy. Options include having the baby, adoption, or abortion.

If you feel uncomfortable, confused, or simply not ready, you may want to spend some more time talking with your partner about having sex. You may also find it helpful to talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, a teacher, or a school counsellor. If you want more information, visit your local health centre, sexual health clinic, or your family doctor.

## My Sexual Health Plan

1. At this point in my life, engaging in sexual activity with a partner is a good decision for me.

Yes/No/Depends on \_\_\_\_\_

Factors that might play into my decision-making (circle all that apply):

- My values, including religious values if any.
- The values of my parent(s), guardian(s), family.
- Who I can lean on for support. (If you feel like the only people you can lean on for support is your family, consider what you can trust them with in terms of your experiences).
- Whether I feel ready to deal with the potential risks and/or consequences.
- Whether I feel emotionally ready.
- Wanting to/curious about experiencing sexual pleasure with another person.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Consider the following circumstances in which you might feel “ready.” Circle all that apply:

- My desires and boundaries are consistently respected by my partner(s).
- My partner(s) listens to me.
- I trust my partner(s).
- My partner(s) and I communicate well.
- My partner(s) ask for my consent whenever we engage in physical and/or intimate touch.
- I feel safe and comfortable with my partner(s).
- I feel comfortable when naked with my partner(s).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

3. If I were to engage in sexual activity, who would I feel comfortable with? Circle all that apply:

- Someone I don’t really know (e.g., first date, hook-up)
- Someone who’s a friend
- Someone who’s dating me and maybe other people too
- Someone who’s dating me exclusively
- Someone I’m married to
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How will I know if I'm interested in being sexual with someone?  
These are some signs that show me I am:

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5. These are activities I would like to explore:

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6. These are activities I am not interested in:

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7. Am I concerned about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy? If so, what safer sex resources do I want to use? Where will I get them? Circle all that apply:

- Condoms (internal). Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Condoms (external). Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Dental dams. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Gloves. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Lubricant. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- STI testing. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Pregnancy test. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- A place to talk about unintended pregnancy. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_. Where? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Questions about sexuality and sexual health that I have:

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9. Where can I get these questions accurately answered without judgement?

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10. My sexual health plan for the next year is to:

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## Appendix C: Communication



This activity can be played after the presentation or at the end of the class.

Before this activity, print the "communication scenario" pages.

- Write down the four types of communication on the board: assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive. Work with your class to define these types of communication.
  - **Assertive communication** focuses on respecting yourself as well as others by being straightforward, standing up for your rights, and expressing your emotions in healthy ways.
  - **Passive communication** involves giving in, putting others in front of yourself, and not expressing your concerns or negative emotions.
  - **Aggressive communication** involves dominating others, putting yourself in front of others, and using threats or force.
  - **Passive-aggressive communication** attempts to avoid confrontation (passive) but also manipulates others and/or involves saying things behind someone's back (aggressive).
- Ask students which form of communication they think is the best. Explain that in most cases, assertive communication is the ideal form of communication, since it respects both yourself and others and is straightforward.
- Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students. Hand each group a communication scenarios page. Explain that at the top of the page is a short scenario with two characters. Each scenario has a conflict that requires the characters to communicate with each other. The first person in the group will write one line of dialogue, and then pass the sheet on to the next person, who will write the next line of dialogue. They will continue passing the page around until the dialogue is complete. Note that at the end, the characters will have come to an agreement and there will be a conclusion.
- Have each group read their scenario to the class. Discuss with the class whether the communication in each scenario was assertive, passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive. Allow students to add their own suggestions to how the scenario could have been handled.

*If your class has outgoing students, you can ask each group to present their scenario at the end of the class.*

# Appendix D: Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 1: Morgan and River

Morgan and River have been dating for six months, and want to start having sex. They are planning on having sex this weekend, because River's parents are out of town. As they are planning, Morgan tells River that they can bring condoms to River's house. River says that they don't need condoms because there's no chance they will get sexually transmitted infections from each other; plus, condoms make sex feel worse.

**Morgan:**

**River:**

**Morgan:**

**River:**

**Morgan:**

**River:**

**Morgan:**

**River:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 2: Taylor and Akiko

Taylor and Akiko have been going out for a month. Taylor really wants to kiss Akiko, but Akiko is uncomfortable with kissing and asks Taylor to stop.

**Taylor:**

**Akiko:**

**Taylor:**

**Akiko:**

**Taylor:**

**Akiko:**

**Taylor:**

**Akiko:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 3: Reese and Charlie

Reese and Charlie are siblings. Reese borrowed Charlie's favourite shirt without telling them, and accidentally left a big stain that won't wash out. Reese felt really bad and decided to tell Charlie what happened. Charlie feels really hurt and doesn't want to accept Reese's apology.

**Reese:**

**Charlie:**

**Reese:**

**Charlie:**

**Reese:**

**Charlie:**

**Reese:**

**Charlie:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 4: Dylan and Avery

Dylan and Avery have been friends for years. Dylan has had a crush on Avery for a while. They've decided to tell Avery how they feel. However, Avery is not interested in dating Dylan.

**Dylan:**

**Avery:**

**Dylan:**

**Avery:**

**Dylan:**

**Avery:**

**Dylan:**

**Avery:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 5: Alex and Jasmin

Alex and Jasmin are good friends. Recently, Alex started dating someone new, and has been spending way less time with Jasmin. Jasmin misses Alex and is jealous of Alex's partner.

**Jasmin:**

**Alex:**

**Jasmin:**

**Alex:**

**Jasmin:**

**Alex:**

**Jasmin:**

**Alex:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 6: Elliot and Harper

Elliot and Harper are dating, and have been having sex for a couple of months. They were planning to have sex tonight, but just as they are about to have sex, Elliot realizes they forgot to buy more condoms. Harper doesn't think it's a big deal because they trust each other not to cheat and they're both feeling really healthy, so they probably don't have any STIs.

**Elliot:**

**Harper:**

**Elliot:**

**Harper:**

**Elliot:**

**Harper:**

**Elliot:**

**Harper:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 7: Kai and Parker

Kai and Parker have been in the same class for years. Kai thinks Parker is really cool, and wants to be friends with them. This year, they are in the same biology class, and Kai wants to ask Parker to be their lab partner. Parker has never really noticed Kai before.

**Kai:**

**Parker:**

**Kai:**

**Parker:**

**Kai:**

**Parker:**

**Kai:**

**Parker:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

# Communication Scenarios



## Scenario 8: West and Finley

West, Finley, and their friends are hanging out at the local coffee shop. Someone walks into the coffee shop wearing a really brightly coloured dress. West and their friends start making fun of the person's dress and giggling. Finley feels really uncomfortable and tries to change the conversation, but West says they're just joking around.

**Finley:**

**West:**

**Finley:**

**West:**

**Finley:**

**West:**

**Finley:**

**West:**

**Agreement:**

**Conclusion:**

## Appendix E: Common Questions and Answers



### **"How do I know if the person I'm flirting with is 'playing hard to get' or actually saying 'no'?"**

It is always best to err on the safe side. If someone doesn't seem interested in you, then assume that they are not interested in you - not that they are "playing hard to get".

### **"Does asking for consent ruin the mood?"**

Lots of people think that asking for consent ruins the mood because it's not "sexy" or because it's "awkward". The truth is that asking for consent can definitely be romantic! It lets your partner know that you really care about them and that you want them to enjoy the experience. If you're worried about sounding awkward, instead of asking "do you consent to this?", you can ask things like "does that feel good?", "do you want me to do this?", and "how does this feel?".

### **"What do I do if they say no?"**

Respect their answer! Being rejected never feels good, and it's normal to be annoyed or disappointed if someone says 'no' to you. It's also important to remember that everyone has the right to say "yes" or "no" to others. If you are feeling annoyed or disappointed, you can take time away from the person to work through your feelings.

### **"I don't like saying no to people. How do I make it clear that I don't want to do something without hurting their feelings?"**

There are four steps to setting a boundary:

1. Name it: Tell the person what part of the situation is making you uncomfortable.
2. Direct it: Tell the person what they can do to make you feel comfortable.
3. Repeat it: Repeat the first two statements.
4. End it: Leave the situation.

This is the verbal part of setting a boundary. You can also use your body language to convey that you are uncomfortable; for example, you can pull away from them. As part of the "Direct it" step, you can suggest some alternative activities that you would be comfortable with. At the end of the day, the person might still get their feelings hurt, but it is important to remember that is not your fault. You have the right to say "no" to anything you don't want to do, and you have the right to make your boundaries clear.

### **"Can consent be taken back?"**

Yes. Consent occurs under specific limitations: for example, a person consenting to receiving oral sex does not mean that they are also consenting to receiving penetrative sex. Consent can also be taken back **at any time**. For example, if a person consented to oral sex, but then decided that they were no longer into it, they can take back their consent and say "actually, I don't want to keep doing this".



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