

Healthy relationships

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- [Healthy relationships scenario cards](#)
- [Healthy relationships answer sheet](#)

Instructions:

- Open a discussion about the role of communication in healthy relationships.
 - Ask students to think about the different ways we communicate with others.
 - Possible answers include: using words, such as communicating verbally face-to-face or on the phone, or communicating in the form of text (text messages, emails, instant messages, letters, etc); using non-verbal communication, such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions.
 - Explain that it is very important for people in all sorts of relationships to have good and healthy communication, meaning that ideas and feelings are shared in a way that is effective.
 - Ask students what makes for good communication between people.
 - Possible answers include: using clear language; using language the other person will understand; making an effort to understand what the other person is trying to say; choosing the right time and setting to talk; being attentive/not being distracted (e.g. not scrolling through your phone); using a calm tone; being polite and respectful.
 - Ask students to think about what happens when there is poor communication between people.
 - Possible answers include: misunderstandings; conflict or arguments; injury; one or more people may be offended or insulted; rumors; one or more people may become frustrated; one or more people may not get what they want/need.
 - Introduce the concept of assertive communication and its importance:

Teaching Tool

Grade 6: Healthy Relationships

- When we are the ones trying to communicate an idea or a feeling, it is important that we try to be as clear and direct as we can. In other words, we want to use what is called “assertive communication”.
- Assertive communication is important for communicating positive ideas and feelings, as well as negative ones.
- The big changes we experience during puberty can also bring about some very challenging situations in our relationships with others. In those situations especially, it is important to use assertive communication.
- Ask students what it means to use assertive communication:
 - Possible answers include: the language will be clear and firm; body language (i.e. stand up straight and make eye contact); choosing words carefully; staying calm and controlling emotions; being respectful and using respectful language.
 - If students do not mention it, introduce the concept of “I statements” (e.g. “I feel... when you ... because...”)
- Note: Explain to students that our concept of assertive communication might vary depending on our cultural background, so this does not apply to everyone.
- Explain to the students that they will be given some scenarios that will allow them to practice making decisions and communicating to promote healthy relationships and a positive self-concept.
- Organize students into small groups or pairs (2-3 students).
 - Have a student read the first scenario aloud.
 - Allow students 3-4 minutes to work in their groups, discussion or role-playing a response.
- Encourage them to consider the following questions, whenever appropriate:
 - What is the issue?
 - How might you feel in this situation?
 - How could you respond?
 - If applicable: How could you use assertive communication?
 - What could help you make a healthy choice in this scenario (e.g. skills, values, interests, etc.)?

- Return to a whole-class discussion and invite each of the groups to share their responses and reflections with the rest of the class.
- Supplement and clarify information using the Core Knowledge Content, as needed.
- Continue in the same manner with as many of the scenarios as possible.

Variations:

- Introduce this activity immediately following the S.H.A.R.E. slide in the PowerPoint presentation.
- Create a gallery walk with a different scenario at each station with one group at each station and rotating to the next one after a designated period.
- For formal assessment: Have each student compose an individual written response to one of the scenarios to be collected for assessment.
- Allow students to create their own scenarios.
 - **Quick Review:** Whenever time permits (5-10 minutes), have students discuss and respond to a scenario to do a quick review of content learned about resiliency, self-concept, and healthy relationships.