

The road to relationships

Time: 15 minutes

Materials:

- [Relationship progression cards](#)
- Tape or magnets (optional)
- Space on the board or wall (optional)

Instructions

- Introduce the activity by explaining that the students will build a relationship 'step-by-step' according to what they believe are the best steps to follow in a relationship
- Hand out the 'relationship progression cards'. Establish a starting point (likely Eye Contact) and ask the students to line up in the order they think is best with the cards displayed in front of them.
- Lead the group discussion using the following questions as a guide:
 - **Does everyone agree that this is the 'best' order?**
 - If not, what could be changed? There is no 'right' way for a relationship to develop. Everyone is different. Not everyone in the group will agree with the order the group has placed the cards. It is most important that the people in the relationship are happy with the speed the relationship is progressing. Communication and honesty enable couples to go at their own pace and to make changes in the relationship when necessary.
 - **Will all relationships progress in this way?**
 - There are many ways that relationships progress & they differ according to each couples' values, beliefs and past experiences. It is also common for each individual in the relationship to want to progress in a different way and at a different rate. Again, this is why communication is so important.
 - **Where does love fit into the progression?** Can people fall in love at first sight? Does there need to be love before sexual activity?
 - Encourage non-judgemental, open dialogue.

- **Have we built a 'real' or 'ideal' relationship?** Do most teen relationships look like this? Is there a 'point of no return' in this progression?
 - If a couple chooses to be 'sexually active' can they return to abstinence or 'less physically intimate' activities?
- **How long does each step take?**
 - Everyone is different.
- **Are the birth control cards in the right place?**
 - Chances are the group will have put these cards near the end of the relationship. Challenge them to put 'thinking about' and 'talking about' cards earlier.
- Review with the students that relationships are not static. As a couple gets to know one another, new feelings, ideals, and issues can evolve and develop. Encourage students to communicate with their partners and be honest with their thoughts/feelings.

Variations

- Have students display the cards on the board or wall using tape or magnets
 - Distribute a card to each of the students
 - Place the first card on the board as a starting point
 - Ask students to consider their own cards and whether any of them think they have the next card in the sequence
 - If multiple students volunteer their cards, have them read their cards and have the class discuss which of them should be next
 - Have the student(s) post their cards on the board
 - Continue in this manner until all the cards have been posted
 - Proceed with the discussion following the prompts above
- Have the students complete this activity in small groups rather than as a whole class
 - Provide small groups of students with their own set of Relationship Progression Cards
 - Have them work together to organize them in the order they think is best
 - Once the groups have ordered their cards, complete the exercise as a whole group. Whenever there is disagreement, use this as an opportunity to discuss the rationale and how multiple sequences can occur.