Being Clear With Your Friends

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 4

TIME: 40 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Worksheet: "Conflict Situations" - one situation for each pair of 2 students
- Board and chalk or markers and newsprint

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Pre-print on the board or newsprint the instructions for the role play activity:

- Review the situation and decide what to do.
- Decide who will play the roles.
- Decide as a group how the person can be assertive and stand up to their friend.
- Plan a very short role-play about two minutes long.

Pre-print on the board or newsprint the following terms and definitions:

AGGRESSIVE communication: trying to get what you want by bullying the other person into it.

PASSIVE communication: being unclear in expressing your needs or afraid to express them.

ASSERTIVE communication: clearly saying what you want or mean without being hurtful to the other person.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Successfully demonstrate assertive communication when expressing a difference of opinion with another person. [Skill]
2. Successfully demonstrate at least one appropriate refusal skill when facing peer pressure. [Skill]

PROCEDURE

STEP 1: Tell students that relationships aren't always easy, whether they are relationships with family members, friends, classmates, or even romantic relationships. One of the things that happens, even in the best relationships, is that people have different opinions, likes and dislikes, and ideas about how to spend their time. Tell students that when conflict happens, it is very important to be able to communicate honestly. Ask, *"What can sometimes make communication difficult even with someone you really like?"*

Some possible responses might include:

- "I don't want to upset them."
- "I'm too embarrassed to talk about it."
- "We don't talk like that."
- "I don't want them stop being my friend."
- "It's too much work – I just want to have a friend I don't have to stress about."
- "It's none of their business."

Say, "While these are certainly all reasons that make it difficult to communicate in a relationship, no relationship can last without good communication of some kind. And HOW we express ourselves is just as important as WHAT we are trying to communicate. We are going to look at three ways that people communicate with each other: aggressively, passively, or assertively." Reveal the pre-printed definitions and review. Tell students:

"Being AGGRESSIVE is when someone tries to get what they want by bullying the other person into it.

Being PASSIVE is when a person is unclear in expressing their needs or afraid to. Sometimes this means that they won't speak up about what they want, but just go along with what the other person wants.

Being ASSERTIVE is when a person says what they want or mean without being hurtful to the other person. They express their needs or opinions clearly while being respectful of the other person."

Ask, *"What if someone asked you to go see a particular movie that you really didn't want to see. How might you respond if you were passive?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "I'd probably go anyway."
- "I'd say, 'Well, I've already seen it – but that's ok, I'll see it again if you really want to see it'."

Ask, *"What can be problematic about this kind of response?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "Because you'd end up seeing a movie you didn't want to see."
- "Your friend might feel guilty for making you go."
- "You might go but be really annoyed with your friend."

Ask, *"How would you respond to the same question using aggressive communication?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "I'll go to the movies, but we're going to see THIS movie, not that one."
- "Oh, I hate that movie. It's so stupid."
- "Man, you have really bad taste in movies."

Ask, *"What can be problematic about this kind of response?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "Because it becomes all about what I want."
- "Because that's rude, and can make the other person feel bad."
- "Because your friend might get mad and you might lose them as a friend."

Ask, *"How would you respond to the same question using assertive communication?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "I'd love to go to a movie, but not that one. Let's see something we both want to see. What else is playing?"
- "I don't really want to see that movie but I want to hang out with you. Can we do something else?"
- "I think I'm going to skip that movie because I heard it was really scary, but you go and we can hang out later together."

Ask, *"What makes this an effective way of responding?"*

Possible responses might include:

- "Because both people's needs count."
- "Because the person says what they mean, but don't offend the other person."
- "Because they can find a compromise that they would both like."

Note to the Teacher: *It is possible that some students will insist that aggressive communication is the best especially if they really want to get their way. If this happens, try to facilitate a discussion about this. Some questions you can ask include: "If you can get what you want without hurting the other person, might it make more sense to do it that way? Why or why not?" "Would it be worth losing a friend to get your way?" "Would you stay friends with someone who answered you that way all the time to get what they wanted?"*

Summarize this discussion by making the following points:

- Being in a relationship does not mean that a person has to give up who they are and their own needs.
- In a healthy relationship, both people should be able to express themselves openly, and be able to listen to, appreciate, and accept the other person's needs.
- Compromise is a part of every relationship. This means that you give in sometimes, and the other person gives in at other times. But if one person is giving in more often than the other, it is an unequal, unhealthy relationship.
- It is important to stick to what you believe in and the decisions you make, even if they're different from what people around you are saying.
- No one should do anything in a relationship that they do not feel right about doing.

(10 minutes)

STEP 2: Explain to students that while most people in relationships respect one another when one of them doesn't want to do something and take each other's feelings into account, sometimes, people just don't take "no" for an answer. Say, "In these cases, it is really important to be able to stick to your beliefs and your decisions. But it can be hard,

especially if the other person is putting pressure on you. So, let's discuss some good refusal skills for those situations." Explain that there are three good strategies they can use:

- Say "no" clearly and firmly.
- Keep repeating your refusal until the person stops asking (tell the person that they are pressuring you and they should stop).
- If all else fails, simply walk away and refuse to discuss the issue further.

(5 minutes)

STEP 3: Tell students that you will now practice using assertive communication in responding to potential conflict situations. Explain that in this activity they will role play carrying out a decision they make and communicating it clearly and assertively. Divide students into pairs. Show the class the pre-written instructions so everyone can see:

- Review the situation and decide what to do.
- Decide who will play the roles.
- Decide as a group how the person can be assertive and stand up to their friend.
- Plan a very short role-play about two minutes long.

Hand out the scenarios from the "Conflict Situations" to each pair.

Note to the Teacher: *Feel free to add specific scenarios that may related to something that has actually happened in your class or that you feel is appropriate for your students. Choose the ones that will have the most relevance and meaning for your class. You can also give the same scenario to more than one pair and see how different pairs decide to demonstrate assertive communication.* *(8 minutes)*

STEP 4: Give groups about 5 minutes to plan. Then have each Pair present its role-play. After each role play, discuss the following questions:

- Was the student assertive?
- What technique(s) did they use? (Said "No" clearly; Kept repeating refusal; Walked away)
- Do you think they were effective? Why or why not?

Finish by telling students that standing up for what they believe in or what they want without being mean or hurting their friend's feelings is not easy to do but is a very important skill to have. It is important to practice assertive communication whenever they can so they can get good at it. *(17 minutes)*

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The role plays are designed to assess Learning Objectives one and two. Through role play, students should be able to demonstrate assertive communication and appropriate refusal skills.

HOMEWORK:

None.

Being Clear With Your Friends

Worksheet

CONFLICT SITUATION – 1

Monique's parents expect her to come home directly from school each day. But today, Jamila wants Monique to come to her house for a little "get together" after school. Some of the other kids are coming over and Jamila's mother won't be home. Monique doesn't want to go because she knows her parents will be really angry if she goes and she isn't sure it is safe without any adults there. Jamila doesn't want to take "no" for an answer because Monique is her best friend.

Question: How can Monique use assertive communication skills to tell Perry how she feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Monique using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Jamila might respond and what else Monique can do.

CONFLICT SITUATION – 2

Santi asked Jared if he could borrow his bike to go to soccer practice. This is a brand new bike Jared just got for his birthday, and he really doesn't want to lend it to Santi. Santi promises to take good care of it and says he would lend his bike to Jared if he asked because they are friends so Jared should do the same thing.

Question: How can Jared use assertive communication skills to tell Santi how he feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Jared using assertive communication to express his views. Think about some ways that Santi might respond and what else Jared can do.

CONFLICT SITUATION – 3

It was a hot day and Ben and Maya had played hard. They both want to get cold drinks from the corner store but don't have enough money. Ben suggests they walk to his house since his Mom always leaves her purse around and they could take some money from there.

Question: How can Maya use assertive communication skills to tell Ben how she feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Maya using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Ben might respond and what else Maya can do.

CONFLICT SITUATION – 4

It was a hot day and Ben and Maya had played hard. They both want to get cold drinks from the corner store but don't have enough money. Ben suggests they walk to his house since his Mom always leaves her purse around and they could take some money from there.

Question: How can Maya use assertive communication skills to tell Ben how she feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Maya using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Ben might respond and what else Maya can do.

CONFLICT SITUATION – 5

Michael invited Tracey to come over to his house after school. As they were walking to Michael's house they see a younger kid they know from school. The younger kid is by himself riding his skateboard. Michael wants to mess with this kid, jut to play around, but Tracey is uncomfortable with that idea.

Question: How can Tracey use assertive communication skills to tell Michael how she feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Tracey using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Michael might respond and what else Tracey can do.

CONFLICT SITUATION – 6

Noor's friend Taylor found her mother's cigarettes on the kitchen table. Taylor took them and said she always wanted to try one just to see what it was like. Taylor asked Noor if she would please try one with her so they could compare notes. Noor is a little bit curious but really doesn't want to try it. She is afraid she will become addicted and really can't stand the smell. What should Noor do?

Question: How can Noor use assertive communication skills to tell Taylor how she feels?

Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Noor using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Taylor might respond and what else Noor can do.