Figuring Out Friendships

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

Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 4 and 5

TIME: 40 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- "Healthy and Unhealthy Friendships Quiz" – one per student
- "Healthy and Unhealthy Friendships – Answer Key" – one for teacher
- "Trusted Adults" – one per student
- Homework: "Circles of Trusts" – one per student
- Newsprint/Board and markers/chalk
- Markers/chalk
- "Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships" – one per student
- Computer with internet acces and speakers, with the website, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gn7ZQ2x0cOE

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Talk with the IT person at your school to be sure you can access the video, Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gn7ZQ2x0cOE)
- Have the video queued up to the start to avoid any ads or delays at the beginning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Describe at least 3 healthy and 3 unhealthy characteristics of relationships. [Knowledge]
2. Compare at least 2 positive and 2 negative ways friends and peers can influence relationships. [Knowledge]
3. Identify at least two trusted adults they would talk to about a relationship. [Knowledge]

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Tell students that today you are going to talk about healthy and unhealthy aspects of relationships and who they can talk to about them. Ask students, "What do you think of when I say the word 'relationship?'" If students respond that it means dating or romance, ask "Does a relationship always have to mean two people dating?" (No). "What are some different kinds of relationships that people can have?" (Possible answers include: friendship, romantic, relationship between family members or between a child and an adult such as a parent, teacher, coach, doctor, etc.). Tell students that for this class you want to focus on relationships that children or teens might have with each other, whether friendships or dating relationships. *(3 minutes)*

STEP 2: Tell students that they are going to watch a video about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Next, hand out the Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Quiz and ask students to pair up with someone and complete it together. Then have the pairs discuss those that they might not agree on. *(10 minutes)*

STEP 3: Bring students back together as a large group. Go over the quiz by asking for volunteers to give the correct answer and to explain their reasons for their answers. If there are disagreements or misunderstandings, provide explanations for correct answers included in the answer key. Then say, "Now that we know some traits of healthy and unhealthy relationships, let's think about the things friends can say or do to make the friendship strong and healthy, or may cause the friendship to be unhealthy. Hand out the worksheet, "Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships."

Allow students five minutes to fill these out. Then, reconvene the class and ask students to share some examples from their sheets.

Note to the Teacher: *The individual worksheets are intended for assessment purposes. After filling these out, students can add ideas to them as the lesson progresses and they continue to learn. After the lesson, have students hand these in.*

Ask, "What are some examples of things that friends might do or say that can support our friendship and make it stronger?"

Note to the Teacher: *Some possible responses are: They keep your secret; they help you learn a new game; they don't get upset with you if you cannot do things that they can do; they include you in games and other activities; they stay with you when they are sad; they listen to your ideas even if they are different from their own; they take turns in games or deciding what to do; they are honest with you; they care about your feelings, etc.*

Then ask, "What are some examples of things that friends might do or say that can be harmful to a friendship or cause the friendship to end?"

Note to the Teacher: *Some possible responses are: They ignore your feelings if you are sad or upset; They jump in front of you in line; They take things from you without asking; They don't invite you to play when a group is together; They hurt your feelings and do not apologize; They tease you even though you ask them not to; They stand by while you are being bullied and do not do anything or tell anyone; They talk about you behind your back; They lie to you; They pressure you to do things you do not want to do, etc.). (20 minutes)*

STEP 4: Tell students, "It can sometimes be hard to know if you are in a healthy or unhealthy relationship. It can be confusing. As we just talked about, even people in healthy, good relationships argue and disagree. Also, they can hurt each other's feelings without meaning to. What can you do if you are having a problem or trouble with a relationship?" Ask for student responses. These may include: Tell the other person how you feel; end the relationship; talk with someone about it. Ask students, "What if you notice a friend is in a relationship that isn't healthy? What might you do or say to help them?" Probe for:

- Let them know you care about them and you're always around to talk
- Let them know you can go with them to a trusted adult if they have questions or need help
- Share with them an example of a time they were treated badly by someone else, and how it made you concerned
- Invite them to spend more time with you, in case they need help avoiding another person

After collecting some responses, tell students you want to focus on talking with someone about it.

Note to the Teacher: *If students don't come up with this idea on their own, suggest it to them and then begin the follow-up discussion below.* *(2 minutes)*

STEP 5: Tell students that there are many different people they can talk with if they are having a problem in a friendship or other relationship. Sometimes people talk with other friends or classmates, but sometimes it can be really helpful to talk with a trusted adult. Pass out the "Trusted Adult" handout. Read and review it with students, then ask students to think of a few adults in their life who they have gone to with a question or a problem or who they can imagine going to with a problem in the future. Divide the board/newsprint into three categories: Family, adult neighbors and friends, and Adult helpers in the school or community. Ask students, "What types of people could possibly be trusted adults in your life? As students brainstorm suggestions, record their answers under the appropriate columns.

Note to the Teacher: *Possible answers may include: Under "Family" – parents or guardians, grandparents, older siblings or cousins aunts and uncles; under "Adult neighbors and friends" – family friends, next door neighbor, parent of a friend; under "Adult helpers in the school or community" – teachers, principals, school nurses, police officers, doctors, clergy. Tell students to remember that the most important thing is always to go to an adult who makes them feel safe and comfortable; someone who is trustworthy. If a person they trust does something to make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, there are always other trusted adults they can go to.* *(8 minutes)*

STEP 6: Pass out the "Circles of Trust" homework worksheet. Tell students that the purpose of this homework activity is to show that they are surrounded by adults who care about them and who can help them to solve a problem that may be too big to solve on their own. Tell students that the center circle is labeled "Me." Say, "Around you, you have your family, and each family is unique. For homework, write the names of the people in your family you can talk with or go to if you are having a problem in a friendship or relationship, or some other problem. In the next circle is "Adult Neighbors and Friends." In this circle, write the names of the trusted adults that would fall into this category who you could go to about a friendship or relationship problem, or some other problem. The outside circle is labeled "Adult Helpers in the School and Community." These are the people who surround you when you are away from home. Write the names of people in school and the community who you could ask to discuss a relationship issue or some other problem. On the bottom of the handout, have students fill out the following statement:

"If I wanted to talk with someone about a friendship or other relationship problem I was having, the two people from my circles of trust I would most likely go to first are:"

Encourage students to share their homework with a trusted family member. *(2 minutes)*

Note to the Teacher: *Encourage students to fill out the "Circles of Trust" worksheet in consultation with a family member but tell them that this is not a requirement. It is possible that a student does not have a trusted adult in their home or family. In such a case, the student should feel empowered to fill out the worksheet on their own.*

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Learning objective one will be measured through student responses to the Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Quiz.

Learning objective two will be assessed through the worksheet: "Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships" that students complete in Step 3.

Learning objective three will be measured through student completion of the Circles of Trust Homework assignment.

HOMEWORK:

"Circles of Trust" worksheet as described above.

TRUSTED ADULTS

Who is a trusted adult? A trusted adult is someone you can talk with about anything; someone you feel happy being around; someone who is a good listener; or someone who has helped you before.

What kinds of things can you tell a trusted adult about? Anything you want to; things that make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused; a problem you are having including a problem in a friendship or other relationship that is a problem. A trusted adult will try to help you no matter what the problem is.

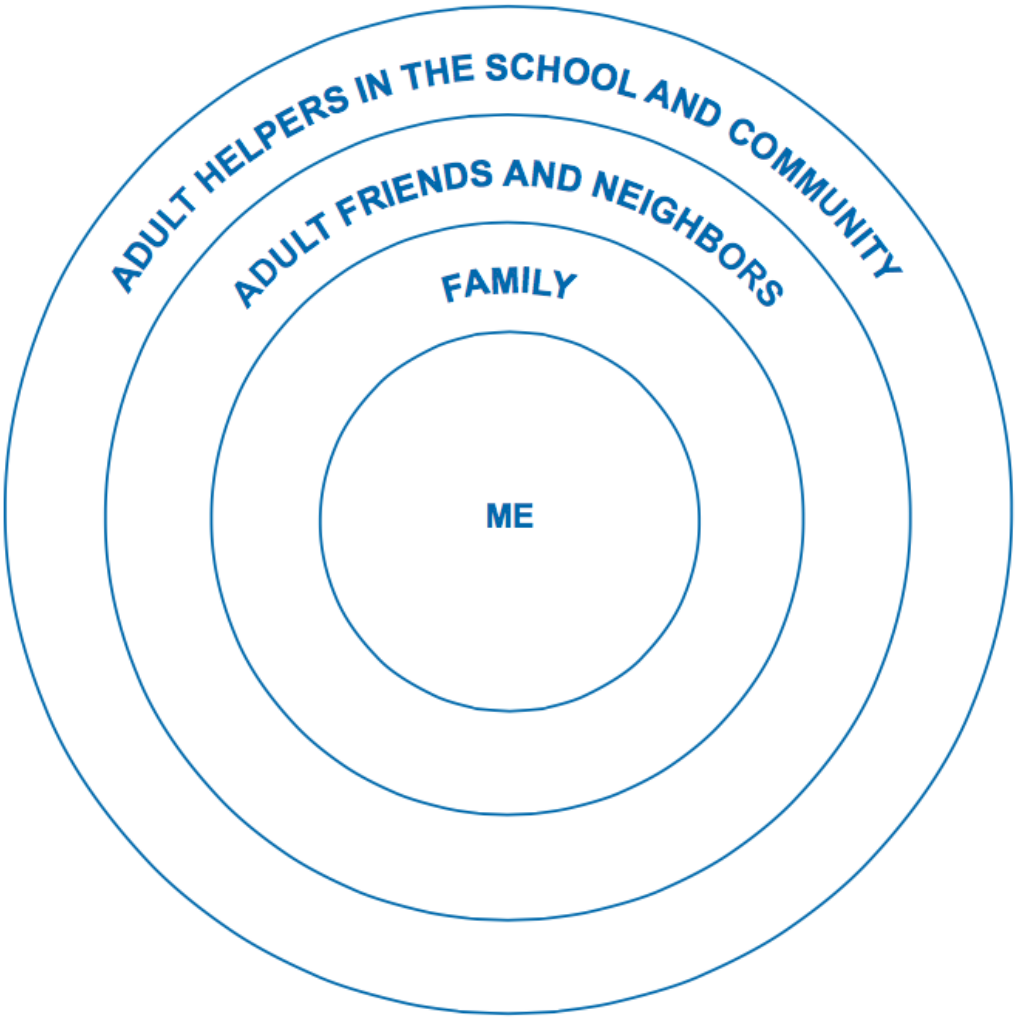
What would a trusted adult do if you told them that something bad or dangerous had happened to you or you were worried that something might happen to you? A trusted adult would try to help you solve the problem, be understanding, get help, and work hard to keep you safer.

Do I only need one trusted adult in my life? Some people have one person who they talk with about any issue or problem they are facing. Some people have different trusted adults they talk to depending on what they want to talk about. It is good to be able to identify who you would talk to in different situations.

Circles of Trust
Homework

Name: _____

Directions: In each circle surrounding “Me,” write the names of the trusted adults who you could go to about a friendship or relationship problem, or some other problem.



If I wanted to talk with someone about a friendship or other relationship problem I was having, the two people from my circles of trust I would most likely go to first are:

_____

_____

Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships

Worksheet

Name: _____

1. What are some examples of things that friends might do or say that can support our friendship and make it stronger?:

Examples: They sit with you when you are sad; they help you learn a new game

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What are some examples of things that friends might do or say that can be harmful to a friendship or cause the friendship to end?

Examples: They hurt your feelings and do not apologize; They don't invite you to play when a group is together;

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY FRIENDSHIP QUIZ

True or False: *In a healthy relationship friends and or romantic partners...*

1. _____ Put pressure on each other to do something they may not want to do.

2. _____ Interested in how the other person is feeling, share personal information and trust each other.

3. _____ Do what the other person wants so they won't get mad at them.

4. _____ Don't get insulted or take it seriously when the other person teases them (like calling them names like stupid or lazy or swearing at them).

5. _____ Always think the same way and never argue.

6. _____ Do what the other person wants to do even if they don't want to or don't think it's a good idea.

7. _____ Support and encourage one another, and stand up for each other when they are being teased or bullied.

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY FRIENDSHIP QUIZ

1. **TRUE.** People in healthy relationships don't insist that the other person do what they want to do. Putting pressure on someone to do something is not a sign of respect or friendship.

2. **TRUE.** People in healthy relationships often share personal concerns, stories, and experiences with each other that they wouldn't share with other people who may not be close friends or who they just don't know very well. They should be able to have the expectation that the other person will keep that personal information private and not tell anyone, unless they feel that keeping the secret can be harmful or dangerous to their friend, in which case they may tell a responsible adult.

3. **FALSE.** Healthy relationships are equal relationships, meaning both people get to have a say in what they do together. If one person gets angry because the other won't do what they want, that is not respectful and is not an equal relationship. It's okay to be annoyed with someone who doesn't want to do what you want to do, but that doesn't mean the other person has to give in if they feel strongly about it.

4. **FALSE.** People in healthy relationships should never call other people names, or tease one another with words that can be hurtful. Healthy joking around doesn't include insults, put downs or threats.

5. **FALSE.** Disagreements are fine and perfectly healthy. It would be more unhealthy if there were never any disagreements because that might suggest that one person is getting their way all the time and the other person is giving in all the time. People in healthy relationships discuss their viewpoints and feelings together to reach a solution.

6. **FALSE.** Just like it is not okay to pressure someone into doing something they don't want to do, it is not healthy to do what another person wants if you don't want to. It is okay to compromise sometimes but if something just sounds like a really bad (or dangerous, or wrong, or just not at all interesting) idea, you shouldn't do it.

7. **TRUE.** It can be really difficult for someone, even a good friend, to stick up for someone who is being teased or bullied because they are afraid that they may then be bullied, too. When friends stick up for each other, however, they are less likely to be bullied. If it is impossible to stick up for them because it doesn't feel safe, it is important to find an adult to tell who can intervene. Helping a friend when they are in trouble is very important to a healthy relationship.