

Healthy Relationships Curriculum

Weeks 7-10

Description

Using lecture, an interactive activity, and group discussion, students will understand the behaviors and actions that define healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, acquire foundational knowledge of how to respond to unhealthy and abusive relationships, and become familiar with campus and community resources that are designed to support those who are impacted by power-based personal violence.

Learning Outcomes

- **Objective 1:** By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify evidence-based behaviors of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships.
- **Objective 2:** By the end of this lesson, students will know where to seek more information and resources pertaining to power-based personal violence.

Connection to Intended Course Outcomes/Class Objectives

- **Self-efficacy:** Students' personal belief to identify behaviors of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships will be enhanced by increased knowledge and skills of healthy relationship concepts. Students will learn the concepts of these relationships and observe them being applied appropriately in the scenario activity. Students will also gain an enhanced personal belief to seek assistance if needed by learning about available community resources.
- **Self-awareness:** Not everyone will share the same perspectives and experiences when it comes to healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. Students must be willing to acknowledge different opinions in order to engage in meaningful dialogue about this topic.
- **Sense of purpose:** The conversation about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships extends beyond romantic partners. It also includes family, friends, classmates, coworkers, employers, etc. As students grow within their fields of study and prepare for their professional and personal lives, it is important they know how to respond should they see or experience unhealthy or abusive behaviors in any environment.
- **Actively engaged:** Students can engage in this topic on campus and in the community by, for instance, attending Green Dot or STAND Up trainings, making interpersonal violence prevention a part of their philanthropy, or simply volunteering their time to a local organization.
- **Socially integrated:** Students will navigate many different types of relationships during their time at Texas A&M University. This lesson gives students the space to learn about healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships as well as how to take action when they or someone who they know is being disrespected or hurt.



Materials, Methods for Instruction, Preparation, & Facilitator Roles/Responsibilities

Materials

| Using Digital Materials | Using Printed Materials |
|--|---|
| Pre-class email. This email is pre-typed and available in the Instructor Repository. | Pre-class email. The email is pre-typed and available in the Instructor Repository. |
| A copy of the lesson plan & script | A copy of the lesson plan & script |
| <p>Scenario Cards. Accessible through the <i>Scenario Activity</i> tab on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website</p> <p>→ Students can launch their assigned scenario directly from this site and work through them on their own personal devices, or through screen sharing on Zoom.</p> | <p>Scenario Cards: Accessible through the Instructor Repository.</p> <p>→ Print one complete of each: Healthy Relationship (19 cards total) Unhealthy Relationship (21 cards total) Abusive Relationship (21 cards total)</p> |
| <p>Choice Charts. Posted in the Instructor Repository.</p> <p>→ These are for your reference only. They are a visual of how students can get from start to finish on each scenario. Save one copy of each to your device. Use them if students need to backtrack through a scenario.</p> | <p>Choice Charts: Posted in the Instructor Repository.</p> <p>→ These are for your reference only. They are a visual of how students get from start to finish on each scenario. Print one copy of each and use them if students need to backtrack through a scenario.</p> |
| <p>Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. Launch this on your screen and have students access it on their own device (phone, laptop, tablet):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships • Definition of interpersonal violence • Green Dot and STAND Up training information • List of campus & community resources • List of Title IX definitions and Title IX reporting procedures • Relationship scenario summaries • Group debrief questions | <p>Know This About Healthy Relationships Handout. Print one copy for each student. This handout mimics the Healthy Relationship Curriculum Website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships • Definition of interpersonal violence • Green Dot and STAND Up training information • List of campus & community resources • List of Title IX definitions and Title IX reporting procedures • Relationship scenario summaries • Group debrief questions |



Methods for Instruction

- Online: Using a platform such as Zoom, the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website, and digital versions of the scenario cards (created through Twine, and available through the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website), this lesson can be delivered in an online format:
 - For the scenario activity, you would assign your students to smaller groups within Zoom. They would then each be able to access their assigned scenario through the Healthy Relationships Curriculum website and work through it on their own digital devices or through screen sharing.
 - You would then bring them all back together for a larger group discussion about their specific scenarios.
- Hy-Flex and In-Person: Depending on the format of your room (classroom with individual tables, auditorium with row seating, conference room with long tables) you will have to break your students into groups for the activity while honoring social distancing:
 - We highly encourage that you use technology within the classroom to launch and display the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website and have your students work in small, distanced groups on their own personal devices to go through their assigned scenario (each scenario can be accessed on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum website).
 - However, if technology is unavailable in this space, you may print the *Know This About Healthy Relationships* handout and distribute a copy to each student. For the scenario activity, you can physically print out the cards for each relationship scenario (you will need one set of each) and give these to students after assigning them in small groups.

Preparation

- We have put together an email that you will need to send to your students the week or a few days before implementing the Healthy Relationships lesson. This will provide students with enough time to perform action items. **This email can be found within the Required Content - Healthy Relationships section of the Instructor Repository.**
- Read the Lesson Plan and divide Instructor and Peer Leader responsibilities.
- Familiarize yourself with the following information, located on the [Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website](#):
 - Definition of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships
 - Definition of interpersonal violence (also referred to as power-based personal violence)
 - Step In. Stand Up campaign
 - Green Dot and STAND Up programs
 - Confidential and non-confidential resources for your campus & community
 - Title IX definitions and reporting procedures

Alternatively, you may print the *Know This About Healthy Relationships* handout and distribute this to your students. You will need one copy per student. This handout mimics the layout and information on the website



- Familiarize yourself with the Healthy, Unhealthy, and Abusive Relationship Scenarios. You can digitally walk through each story on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. It is highly recommended that you do this ahead of your class to be familiar with the content.

Alternatively, you may print one set each of the Healthy Relationships scenario cards, the Unhealthy Relationship scenario cards, and the Abusive Relationship scenario cards.

- Each scenario will contain the following cards:
 - Healthy Relationship: Starter Card, Cell Phone Cards #1-2, Friend Cards #1-4, Hanging Out Card #1, School Cards #1-2, Together Cards #1-9
 - Unhealthy Relationship: Starter Card, Cell Phone Cards #1-3, Friend Cards #1-4, Hanging Out Card #1, School Cards #1-3, Together Cards #1-9
 - Abusive Relationship: Starter Card, Cell Phone Cards #1-2, Friend Cards #1-4, Hanging Out Card #1, School Cards #1-3, Together Cards #1-9, Resource Card #1
- Familiarize yourself with the summaries for the Healthy, Unhealthy, and Abusive Relationship scenarios. You will need to read these as a part of the large group debrief. These are located on the [Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website](#) (or the *Know This About Healthy Relationships* handout, should you opt to use the physical document in place of the website)
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- Review the small and large group debrief questions that have been provided with the lesson plan and on the [Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website](#) (or in the *Know This About Healthy Relationships* handout, should you opt to use the physical document in place of the website)

Facilitator Roles & Responsibilities

- Topic Sensitivity: Discussing healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships can be sensitive for students who have experienced or witnessed dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. We advise that you preface your instruction with the following language:

“Today, we are going to take a look at the characteristics of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. Part of this will be a discussion, but you will also be working with scenarios in small groups. This can be a difficult topic to address, especially for those in the room who might have been directly impacted by relationship violence. As we engage with the topic today, please be respectful in your dialogue and interactions with each other. If you feel that you need to take a break to give yourself some space from the content, please feel free to do so.”



- **Mandated Reporting:** Please remember that as a faculty or staff member who is teaching this course, you are required by law to report any disclosure of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence that occurs on our campus to the Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations (Title IX). Rarely will a student disclose this to you during classroom discussion. However, some may come to you during office hours to discuss a current or past abuse. In any instance, it is important that you tell your students about being a mandated reporter before they potentially disclose to you. If you were to wait and tell a student this information after a disclosure, they may be subject to an investigation in which they were not prepared to participate.

Civil Rights and Equity Investigations
 Title IX Coordinator: Jennifer Smith, J.D.
 Email: CivilRights@tamu.edu
 Phone: 979-458-8407
 Location: Medical Sciences Library, Suite 007

- **Difficult or Controversial Questions:** Please directly connect your student(s) with Health Promotion and/or Civil Rights and Equity Investigations (Title IX) if you are asked any question about this topic that you (1) are uncomfortable answering; (2) don't know how to answer. We will follow-up with you and the student(s).

Instruction Overview

| Time | Description |
|---------------|---|
| 5-7 Minutes | Introduction of Healthy, Unhealthy, and Abusive Relationships What is Interpersonal Violence? |
| 20-25 Minutes | Activity Introduction/Instructions (5 minutes) Scenario Activity (20 minutes) Healthy Relationship Scenario (Group 1) Unhealthy Relationship Scenario (Group 2) Abusive Relationship Scenario (Group 3) |
| 15 Minutes | Large Group Debrief of Relationship Scenarios |
| 5-7 Minutes | Step In Stand Up Campaign Prevention Programs: Green Dot and STAND Up Campus & Community Resources, Title IX Definitions & Reporting |



Instructions:

- Text in regular font is talking points and should be read out loud to students
- Text in *italics* are notes for the instructor and should NOT be read out loud to students
- Text in **bold** are questions for debrief or reflection and should be read out loud to students to encourage group discussion or sharing of ideas
- Peer Leaders should be prepared to:
 - Work technology for the instructor during the entire lesson
 - Walk around between groups during the scenario activity, listening as students read along and taking note of their comments & reactions
 - Lead parts of the small and/or large group debrief after students complete their scenarios. This is particularly helpful if your peer leader happens to be knowledgeable of this content, volunteers with local organizations (Helpline, the Sexual Assault Resource Center, Phoebe’s Home), or wants to gain pedagogical skill for a future career in teaching, facilitation, public speaking, etc.

Teaching Procedure:

| Facilitator Instructions & Script | |
|--|--|
| Prior to Class | |
| | <p><i>Review all content provided in the lesson plan and on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website (or in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout if you’re not using the Curriculum Website).</i></p> <p><i>Read the summary for each relationship scenario so you know what happens. We also recommend walking through each scenario yourself so you are more familiar with the activity.</i></p> <p><i>Have print or digital copies of the relationship scenario choice charts available to you for this lesson.</i></p> <p><i>Review the small and large group debrief questions located within this lesson plan and on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website (or in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout if you’re not using the Curriculum Website).</i></p> <p><i>If you are using digital materials or teaching in an online environment, make sure your students have a personal device and internet access to view the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. If you foresee any problems with technology, or are choosing not to use the Curriculum Website, please print the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout (one per student) and print the scenario cards (one set for each relationship type).</i></p> |



Introduction of Healthy, Unhealthy, and Abusive Relationships

What is Interpersonal Violence?

5-7 min

The purpose of this week's lesson is to understand the behaviors and actions that define healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. We also will become familiar with campus and community resources that are designed to support those who are impacted by interpersonal violence.

In a few minutes, you are going to work in small groups to explore and discuss different relationship scenarios. Before we do that, I want to briefly discuss the terms you all should have reviewed prior to class.

Launch and display the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. Instruct students to also open up the website on their devices if able (or distribute copies of the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout).

For this lesson, it's important that you all have foundational knowledge of the evidence-based characteristics of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. We know that these relationships exist on a spectrum, with healthy relationships hopefully being our goal when we interact with others.

If you did not have the chance to review the Relationship Spectrum or the definitions of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships, please look at these now as I make the following points:

Expand the definitions of Healthy, Unhealthy, and Abusive Relationships on the Curriculum Website (or direct them to these definitions in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout) to allow students to review while you share the following points:

- (1) The way one person thinks about a healthy relationship will vary depending on multiple factors - their personal values, community values, cultural background, identity, and individual goals may all influence this vision of what it means to be in a healthy relationship with another person. But even with all these influences, healthy relationships are universally defined by open communication, clear personal boundaries, and trust.
- (2) Healthy relationships are not always perfect. Every so often, unhealthy behaviors can become present. What still makes the relationship characteristically healthy, though is how the unhealthy behavior is addressed and resolved. Unhealthy would be ignoring the problem and pretending like it didn't happen. Healthy would be talking about how that problem made each



person feel, how'd they like to work together to resolve it, and move forward in a way that they don't experience that behavior again.

- (3) Unhealthy and abusive relationships are not the same thing. The difference is intent. Two people may enter into a relationship that becomes unhealthy, usually due to (1) lack of a reference point for what a healthy relationship should be/look like; (2) past hurt or trauma that has caused one or both people to develop unhealthy coping skills or attachment issues. With an abusive relationship, one person enters into it with the intent to cause harm to the other. Their end goal is to have complete power and control over the other person, viewing them not as a partner, friend, etc., but more as "their property."

Does anyone have any questions about these definitions before we continue?

Unhealthy and abusive relationships contain elements of interpersonal violence. If you did not have the chance to review the definition of interpersonal violence please read the definition while I make these following points:

Expand the "What is Interpersonal Violence" tab on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website (or direct them to the Interpersonal Violence section in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout) to allow students to review while you share the following points:

- (1) Interpersonal violence happens across the life course, from childhood into older age.
- (2) Interpersonal violence can be physical, but also might include other types of abuse that can't be "easily seen" on a person being harmed.
- (3) Interpersonal violence is always about an abuser wanting power and control over their intended victim. Abuse is never an accident, or just the result of some stress. It's always intentional and always causes harm.

Does anyone have any questions before we transition to the activity?

Keep these definitions in mind as we work through the rest of the lesson.



Activity Introduction/Instructions

20-25 min
**(Instructions-
5 min)**

The scenarios you are about to read are adapted from real-life experiences of students' healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. You will have the opportunity to walk in the shoes of these students for a short time. Some of the scenarios contain details that are difficult to read and talk about. Not everyone in this room is going to have the same perspective on healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. Be mindful of this as you work together, and be respectful in your dialogue.

**(Scenario
Activity- 20
minutes)**

I am going to break you into three groups and each group will get a scenario. You will switch off reading the cards, or one person can assign themselves to be one of the main characters, and you will all have to work together to make choices when these are presented in the scenario.

As you go through the scenario, I want you to think about behaviors and actions that characterize the relationship as healthy, unhealthy, or abusive.

Split your class into three even groups . Make sure the students can see their scenario on the Curriculum Website. If you're not using the website, hand each group their set of scenario cards as you assign them.

Assign Group 1 the Healthy Relationship scenario.

Assign Group 2 the Unhealthy Relationship scenario.

Assign Group 3 the Abusive Relationship scenario.

Remember:

- Your first card will tell you where to go next. You will either have one choice or two. If you have two choices, you will need to work together quickly to select one option. You cannot go back, so the decision you make is final. Read the entirety of each card. You will see that the perspective of both people in the relationship is shared at times.
- When the scenario ends, it will say "End of Scenario" on the bottom and have questions that you should answer in your small groups.

You will have 20 minutes to do this activity. If you get done early, please answer and discuss the questions on the bottom of your cards.

We will then debrief as a larger group.



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| | <p>----</p> <p><i>Give 20 minutes for the activity. Walk around the room and make sure students are following the activity. Answer questions they might have as they work together. About 15 minutes in, ask if any groups are still working. If they are, tell them they have 5 minutes to finish the scenario.</i></p> |
| <p>Large Group Debrief</p> | |
| <p>15 min</p> | <p><i>Plan to debrief for the full time. The debriefing discussion is a critical part of this activity because it allows for participants to learn why certain behaviors are healthy vs. unhealthy vs. abusive. It also gives them a space to unpack persistent misconceptions about these relationship types.</i></p> <p><i>During the large group debrief, some students may make statements that either directly or indirectly place blame on the victim or the person in the relationship who is being targeted by unhealthy or abusive behaviors. This reaction is common, and is sometimes a defense mechanism to distance themselves from the experience. Do not argue with or correct students who present dissenting opinions. Instead, redirect with follow-up questions such as “tell me more about your perspective” to help get at the underlying issue. Remember that this may be new knowledge for some students, and for others it may be relatable.</i></p> <p>----</p> <p><i>Now that you’ve all completed your scenarios, let’s dive into a larger group discussion about this topic.</i></p> <p>---</p> <p>Who had the Healthy Relationship scenario?</p> <p>----</p> <p><i>Wait for Group 1 to raise their hands and indeed confirm they had the Healthy Relationship scenario. On the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website, click on the Scenario Activity tab and read the Healthy Relationship Scenario Summary. If you’re not using the website, reference the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout for this part of the activity.</i></p> <p>----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did you know the relationship was characteristically healthy? Can you share some examples? <i>Restate the characteristics as the group provides them from the scenario.</i> ● For everyone in the room to answer, what are some additional behaviors or characteristics that should be present within a healthy relationship? <i>Restate the characteristics as the group provides them.</i> <p>----</p> |



- *These are things you should be hearing. If not, give an example and prompt a student to give an explanation of what they think that means:*
 - **Open communication** - *the people in the relationship feels that their opinions and values are heard/respected*
 - **Trust** - *the people in the relationship are confident enough in their relationship that jealousy and drama are minimal to non-existent.*
 - **Boundaries** - *the people in the relationship have knowledge of, and continue to understand, each other's needs and limits. Examples would include giving your partner space for "me time" or to spend time with a friend or family member; respecting that your partner may be okay with kissing and touching over the clothes, but may not want to have sex until they know they're ready; and perhaps respecting that they once had a family member with a drinking problem, so they don't like to go to events where alcohol is being served.*
 - **Honesty** - *the people in the relationship are not afraid to be respectfully honest with each other and talk about their perspective, even when that might cause discomfort.*
 - **Compassion** - *the people in the relationship genuinely care about each other's needs and goals.*
 - **Independence** - *the people in the relationship are adjusted enough to where they can spend time apart and not worry whether the relationship is going to end.*
 - **Responsibility** - *the people in the relationship know how they are responsible for each other. For example, if they are living together and divide up responsibilities for household chores, grocery shopping, etc.*
 - **Loyalty** - *When your partner is reliable and you feel confident that they have your back. Some examples are when your partner is respectful and faithful, sticks up for you, doesn't take sides against you but helps you see the middle ground, and keeps your secrets safe. In a healthy relationship, you don't have to test the other person's loyalty, because you just know it's there. Sometimes people say "we all make mistakes" and "nobody's perfect" to make excuses for disloyalty. If you find yourself saying that more than once, it's a red flag that the relationship may not be healthy.*
 - **Compromise** - *Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, but it's important that you find a way to compromise if you disagree on something. Try to solve conflicts in a fair/rational way.*
 - **Equity** - *The people in the relationship have the same say and put equal effort into the relationship (instead of feeling like one person has more say than the other). Examples are feeling like you are heard in your relationship or feeling comfortable speaking up, making decisions*



together as opposed to one person calling all the shots, and equally compromising on decisions in your relationship that make the other person feel important or respected.

Who had the Unhealthy Relationship scenario?

Wait for Group 2 to raise their hands and indeed confirm they had the Unhealthy Relationship scenario. Read the Unhealthy Relationship Scenario on the Curriculum Website (or in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout if not using the website)

- **How did you know this relationship was unhealthy? Give me some examples.** Restate the characteristics as the group provides them.

- **For everyone in the room to answer, what are some additional behaviors or characteristics that would indicate a relationship is unhealthy?**

These are things you should be hearing. If not, give an example and prompt a student to provide an explanation of what they think that means:

- **Breaks in communication** - The people in the relationship are unwilling to talk about difficult topics. As a result, there are misunderstandings that never get resolved or they never seem to be on the same page, resulting in feelings of confusion, distrust, and jealousy.
- **Pressure** - using tactics such as repeated asking, guilt tripping, or tantrums to push a partner into doing something they don't want to do
- **Dishonesty** - This could take the form of one person in the relationship lying to the other, or purposefully withholding information in the hope that their partner won't find out. Everyone has boundaries and sometimes the relationship needs to develop before one person discloses sensitive information to their partner, but a healthy relationship requires the willingness to be open about themselves and their needs.
- **Inconsiderate Behavior** - If one partner in a relationship feels constantly disrespected, this is definitely something that needs to be addressed. Disrespect can include name calling, breaking boundaries, and/or constantly questioning and criticizing the other person's choices and decisions.
- **Lack of Fairness & Equity** - While it's true that when in a relationship a couple is a social unit, it's important to remember that each person in a relationship is an individual. Every person needs to have a certain level of independence. If one partner is constantly dependent on the other,



making decisions for the other, or giving up what they want, then the relationship is unhealthy.

There might be some confusion among the groups between an “unhealthy” versus “abusive” relationship. If this happens, revisit the definitions of the relationship types from the beginning of the lesson:

- *Unhealthy relationships are based on unintentional or intentional attempts to control the other person. Decisions about the relationship are made without regard for each other. Pressure is used as a tactic to get what they want out of the relationship, and there is a failure to see (more often than not) how this can cause harm. There are feelings of guilt when spending time apart.*
- *Abusive relationships are based on one person’s intentional and misplaced need to have complete power and control over their partner. One person in the relationship makes all the decisions. Their partner is not able to provide their opinion, and when they do it is met with criticism, insults, jealousy, and physical violence. An abusive person also isolates their partner from friends and family, and makes them fearful about leaving the relationship and/or communicating with others about what is going on (e.g. threatening escalated harm or death; threatening self-harm). Over time, abusers can manipulate their partner into complete social and financial dependence - making it difficult if not impossible to leave the relationship permanently.*

Relationships can be unhealthy, but while one or both people in that relationship are struggling to find common ground, neither of them are operating with the intent to completely take away independence from the other.

Who had the Abusive Relationship scenario?

- **So that leaves us with the abusive relationship scenario.**

Read the Abusive Relationship Scenario Summary on the Curriculum Website (or in the Know This About Abusive Relationships handout if not using the website).

What are some elements that would indicate an Abusive relationship?

Restate the characteristics as the group provides them.

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- *These are things you should be hearing. If not, give an example and prompt a student to give an example of what they think that means:*



- **Manipulation** - Manipulation can take many forms, but some examples include mind games, convincing a partner to ignore their wants/desires, and using guilt.
- **Isolation** - While couples should enjoy spending time with each other, they should also spend time with other people and have a life outside of their partner. Isolation is an often-used tactic by abusers to make the victim/survivor dependent on them by cutting off their ties to support networks, thus increasing their power and control in the relationship.
- **Criticism** - Constructive criticism is one thing, but being overly and unnecessarily critical of a partner can be bad news. If it seems like a partner uses criticism to tear the other partner down, this could be a form of emotional abuse.
- **Jealousy** - Even in healthy relationships, jealousy can be present (but ~~it~~ also discussed and addressed). However, jealousy becomes unhealthy when it's constant or excessive and becomes about one partner possessing the other. On the reverse side, if one partner is constantly trying to make the other partner jealous, that can also be a sign of an unhealthy or abusive relationship.
- **Unequal Control of Resources** - one person in the relationship controls everything, from where their partner is going and when, who they are spending time with/talking to, how much money they have, etc. People in a relationship should be equals and while they should be responsible to each other, they should not have to report their every action to the other person. Other examples of controlling behavior include demanding social media passwords, checking text messages, and using intimidation or coercion to get their way.
- **Acts and/or threats of violence (physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, verbal, digital, financial)**

Thank you all for participating. Forming healthy relationships is an important goal, and sometimes we need a good reference point to start to build those relationships for ourselves. However, it is unfortunately not uncommon for young people to have experienced or witnessed unhealthy or abusive relationships before they even get to college. There are a few key things you can do to help address this problem. This includes learning how to be an active bystander, learning how to respond to someone who has experienced interpersonal violence, and knowing campus & community resources.



Step In Stand Up Campaign

Prevention Programs: Green Dot and STAND Up

Campus & Community Resources, Title IX Definitions & Reporting

5-7 min

Display the Step In Stand Up Campaign tab on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website (or in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout if not using the website) .

How many of you have seen this campaign advertised around campus?

The Step In Stand Up campaign was developed by students to bring awareness to all forms of interpersonal violence and empower students to take action against it.

As a part of the Step In Stand Up campaign, our campus has two programs that help students learn how to intervene. Green Dot teaches individuals how to stop acts of violence before they have a chance to occur. STAND Up, teaches Aggies how to safely and meaningfully support someone who has already experienced trauma from power-based personal violence.

Display the Green Dot and STAND Up part of the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. Expand these tabs so students can see the program descriptions (or in the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout if not using the website).

The Green Dot and STAND Up programs are offered to students for free every semester, and they can also be requested through the Health Promotion office on campus. I encourage all of you to attend one of these trainings - the skills they teach you can be used toward interpersonal violence, but are also transferrable to stopping other forms of harassment, violence, and discrimination.

If you are looking for ways to directly support survivors, you can find a list of confidential and non-confidential resources on this website that are specific to your campus:

Display the confidential and non-confidential resources part of the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website. Expand the tabs of your campus/school so students can see what these look like (if not using the website, reference the Know This About Healthy Relationships handout). Encourage them to become familiar with these during their time at Texas A&M and to go to this website first if they need information (looking for resources online can become frustrating for students, especially if they are in the midst of a crisis - we keep this website updated so students can think of it as a one-stop to get information they need quickly).



Confidential resources are those that someone could utilize to discuss their victimization and do not have to worry about the incident being filed as a complaint to the police and/or Texas A&M officials.

Non-confidential resources provide advocacy services, but they do result in a formal complaint made to the police and/or Texas A&M.

On the website we can review how Title IX at Texas A&M defines these behaviors. Civil Rights and Equity Investigations accepts and processes Title IX complaints of sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. This includes sexual assault, domestic abuse, dating abuse, and stalking.

The Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website will be available to you at all times and is referenced in the email I sent before class. So let me or your peer leader know if you have ongoing questions about this lesson. If you have questions about this lesson, want to schedule a 1:1 to learn more about healthy relationships, or want to become more involved in prevention on campus, the Health Promotion office would love to hear from you, too! Please feel free to reach out to them.

*Display the Health Promotion tab on the Healthy Relationships Curriculum Website.
Wrap-up your class as usual, providing any reminders you have about the next class meeting.*



Additional Tools for Instructors & Peer Leaders

Triggered Students

We realize that some students in your classroom may be more personally connected than others to unhealthy and abusive relationships. Reading through scenarios and/or hearing certain words & definitions can cause retraumatization for students in this situation. Here are some steps to help a student who may experience discomfort or distress during this lesson:

→ Step 1: Do not call out the student in front of his/her/their peers. Instead, take note of what is happening and give that student some space to process on their own terms

- If you are in a physical classroom space, they may leave the room for a moment or ask you if they can step out.
- If you are in a digital environment, such as Zoom, they may turn off their camera or privately message you or the peer leader.

→ Step 2: You or your peer leader should gently check on the student:

- If you are in a physical space, step outside and ask how they are feeling about the lesson.
- If you are in a digital space, message them and ask if they are okay and how they are feeling about the lesson.
- In either instance, the student needs to be the one to decide whether or not they want to continue their participation. It is never okay for anyone to force a distressed student to come back into a space by using attendance, participation, or grading policies as motivators.

→ Step 3: Determine whether the student wants to or is able to rejoin the activity or discussion.

- If so, give them the independence to reenter the physical or digital space.
- If not, provide them with information about your campus and community resources:
“I understand and respect that this content is difficult for you. Is there an office or person on campus who you’d like to get you in contact with? I can share a list of resources here on campus and in the community, and that might help you decide whether connecting with or talking with someone is what you want or need right now.”

Regardless of their decision with resources, make sure they are safe or can get to a place (home, friend’s house, parent’s house) where they feel safe.

→ Step 4: Follow-up

- It is encouraged that you check-in on your student, the next day, by sending an email from your university account:

“Howdy [name]: I just want to reach out to make sure you’re doing okay after yesterday’s Healthy Relationships lesson. Please let me know if there is any way that I can help support you academically as we move through the rest of the semester. I am including the link to the Healthy Relationships website, which lists all of our campus and community resources. I look forward to seeing you at our next class meeting”.



- The student may not respond to your email, but you know they have accurate information should they need or want to seek additional help outside of your classroom.
- Remember: if you have concerns about a student's well-being, even if they do not disclose an experience of sexual assault or sexual harassment, you can still submit an anonymous Tell Somebody report (tellsomebody.tamu.edu). This will allow experts at Texas A&M to follow-up with the student without it being specifically linked to you.

Redirect Strategies

This lesson highlights healthy, unhealthy, and abusive behaviors in the context of romantic relationships. It is common for students to have questions about how healthy, unhealthy, and abusive behaviors with a partner can be present within and/or impact other social relationships (family, friends, roommates, classmates, coworkers, etc.). Students may also have specific questions about how their identity impacts how they experience healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. To keep the lesson in focus, here are a few ways you can address these questions without completely getting sidetracked from achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I have a toxic relationship with my friends? Could that impact how I interact with my partner?

A: Even though this lesson focuses on a relationship between romantic/intimate partners, you have identified something very important: that you can have an unhealthy relationship with someone who claims to be your friend. They might (1) try to fight your battles for you, (2) criticize or judge you, (3) pressure you to do things you don't want to do, (4) give you advice with the intent of being manipulative or deceitful, (5) provide blind support, or advice that doesn't consider your safety, feelings, or needs. So, think about your scenario - who are the friends and how would you characterize their relationship with the main character(s)? And how do you feel that the healthiness or unhealthiness of that relationship contributed to the feelings of safety or happiness that the main character had with their partner?

So yes, a toxic relationship with friends could impact how you interact with your partner - especially if those friends are spreading lies, encouraging you to fight or confront your partner, or convincing you to stay in a romantic relationship they know is harmful. But also remember that this is not an excuse to blame someone who's being harmed for staying in an unhealthy or abusive relationship - if they don't have a supportive network, then they may have nowhere else to go or feel trapped. That is why it's important that we all recognize when someone might be in distress - even if we don't know them very well - be willing to check-in and offer to listen & help connect them to resources.

Q: This scenario seems really general. Do healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships vary based upon how someone identifies or where they come from?

A: One of our learning outcomes for this lesson was to help students understand the evidence-based



behaviors of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. The scenarios are more general to ensure we reach that particular goal for today. But you make an important observation by asking this question.

Remember the definitions and characteristics of healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships. These fundamental characteristics do not change based on how someone identifies or the community(ies) they associate with. However: within healthy relationships, the way in which two people might choose to compromise or build trust might vary based upon their identity and resources available to them within the community. And especially within unhealthy and abusive relationships, the way in which someone may choose to manipulate or harm their partner will vary based upon their identity and community.

Example: as a part of one person's value system, they may want to wait until they are at least 1 year into a serious relationship before having sex. For a relationship to be healthy and grow in a healthy way, this is a value that person could communicate to their partner early on - who may or may not be of the same value system - and compromise on other ways to personally connect until both feel comfortable engaging in sexual activities.

Example: the partner of an international student might say "if you try to leave this relationship, I'll file a report with Title IX and jeopardize your student visa status."

Example: within a same-sex relationship, one partner might exploit the fears of their partner about bullying, retaliation, harassment, or rejection if they try to seek help from formal resources or lie to them about what legal options are available for protection.

Example: in communities where there is high distrust of formal resources (such as social services and the police) or where it's looked down upon to involve these types of resources in "personal issues" an abusive partner might say "if you report me, you'll only bring shame to this community" or "what makes you think that if the police come up here to arrest me, that they won't just arrest you too?"

If this scenario you're reading was part representative of your personal identity or community, how do you think it might vary?

Q: What if a student experiences an unhealthy or abusive relationship, but is new to the campus and didn't come here already knowing someone, like a friend or sibling?

A: These scenarios gave a potentially beneficial situation of having a social circle. One of the friends was from high school, and the other was a classmate. But someone who is experiencing unhealthy and abusive relationships will not always have this type of social circle at Texas A&M or their college/university. This can be especially isolating for someone experiencing harm, and their partner may use that lack of outside social connection to do further emotional harm.



Remember though that one of the friends in your scenario was indeed a classmate. There is a chance to form even working connections with your classmates, your Peer Mentor, and even us as instructors. If you have a job at or outside of the university, you can also build your social circle with coworkers. You don't have to be best friends, but these environments give you the opportunity to build enough trust in someone who you could talk with and ask for guidance.

On our curriculum website is also a list of confidential and non-confidential resources by campus. This website is always going to be available, so if nothing else we encourage you to use it and give the link to anyone you know who might need it. Starting with a confidential resource can be very helpful to safety plan or receive guidance on how to safely leave a relationship. We always encourage anyone who is experiencing an immediate threat of harm (such as someone attacking them or threatening them with a weapon) to contact 911 to preserve their safety.

