



Healthy Relationships 101

Building Social and Emotional Intelligence

Guidebook for Teachers

Developed by
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The Relationship Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

Learning about relationships is a lifelong endeavor.

Healthy Relationships 101 is a program specifically designed to inform students how to establish healthy, meaningful, and fulfilling relationships.

Relationships affect everyone, everywhere. Challenges stemming from unhealthy relationships have an impact on an individual's educational and professional achievement, productivity, social life, and health. The assignments, projects, and exercises in each of the lessons lay a foundation for effective communication and positive self-image.

The language we use to communicate our thoughts, feelings, and needs has a significant impact on relationships. In *Healthy Relationships 101* students learn how to use the unique language of connection based on Marshall Rosenberg's work, *Non-Violent Communication*.

The course explores the rise in the use of communication technology and its effect on relationships. *The Cell Phone is Not a Leash* is an example of a lesson that enhances the understanding of these phenomena.

Students also learn how to recognize the early warning signs of abusive relationships and ways to avoid them.

We study the history of relationships and the influence of traditions from ancient times to the present. From the dawn of civilization until roughly a century ago, having freedom to choose one's partner was relatively rare. In Western culture today, we are at liberty to determine with whom and how we have relationships. Therefore, modern relationships have uniquely different dynamics than those of the past.

Student journaling has proven to be effective in raising awareness of how relationships are portrayed in modern culture, especially in film, television, magazines, music, and on the internet. This program helps counteract the pervasive hyper-sexuality that is so prevalent today. Through journaling, assignments, and classroom discussion, students are better able to identify their personal values and beliefs. Journaling helps students further examine their perception of relationships, gender roles, and how the media often denigrates both genders.

Most of us have no formal training on this important subject. We learn about this vital component of life by observing friends and family, as well as the portrayal of relationships in the media. Media is a powerful influence, and there are no universally recognized guidelines for a healthy relationship. As a result, much of what we learn about this subject is haphazard.

After a relationship ends, we often hear people say, "I should know how to be in a relationship by now." Yet, how would anyone know how to be in a relationship if there are still elements of confusion and no reliable source of information for learning about relationships? Needless to say, this work also addresses the issue of bullying, which also stems from a lack of understanding of healthy relationships built on respect and effective communication.

How does one prepare for a vocation? By going to school and getting an education.
How does one prepare for a relationship? That is the question this course addresses.

Through these lessons, students learn to cultivate and skillfully maintain a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

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DAY 10	Course Review: Perception of a Relationship • Review what students have learned in developing a new model for a healthy relationships.

Notes on the text:

Each lesson's supporting materials, visual aids, and articles directly follow the lesson.



Light Blue Notes are instructions for the teacher.

Green notes are explanations of the lesson plans. They can be read directly or adapted for classroom use.

Purple notes indicate a non-rhetorical question that the teacher asks the students.

Notes on the timeframe:

Any part of these lessons can be expanded into longer classroom sessions or even multiple days, weeks, or months, depending on the design of the class.

This curriculum is a blueprint that provides a basis from which teachers can plan a course of study. Though originally designed as a two-week segment to be incorporated into a health education curriculum, the material contained within can be adapted to accommodate different schedules and time periods.



THE GUIDEBOOK



Day 1: What is a Relationship? How Do We Perceive and Understand Relationships?

Objective

1. Review class guidelines
2. Identify and address student relationship questions and concerns

Critical Thinking

Students begin the process of defining how they perceive relationships

Supporting Materials

Homework Handout: Key Relationship Questions
Course Guidelines

Vocabulary and Terms

Emulating
Culture
Trial and error
Innate knowing

Class Guidelines – Students read out loud from their class guidelines handout **(4 Min.)**

- What students share in the classroom stays in the classroom. Students sign an informal pledge of confidentiality, pending school administrative policy.
- Students will be graded on the course.
- As this is an academic course, homework, quizzes, and a project will be assigned.
- All teacher and administrative codes of conduct will be observed.
- NO CELL PHONE USE, unless permission is given.
- Tardiness affects the class. Ideally, students will arrive early.
- Students must keep a binder (1 inch) with paper. Students will be handing in many of their notes, therefore all notes must be written on loose-leaf paper.

Do Now – Have students write answers to the following two questions.

1. What is a relationship?
Briefly describe a relationship from your own experience and understanding. **(5 Min.)**
2. What are three questions you have about relationships? See directions below. **(5 Min.)**

Directions

1. Students will write at least three relationship questions regarding this subject, not limited to just a significant other, but can include a parent/child or friend/peer relationship.
2. Teacher will explain that the questions can be based upon past or current personal relationships, and/or what they have observed in popular culture (i.e. TV, film, and internet).
3. Next in **number 4** are examples of previous students' questions. It is recommended that the teacher read the questions in rapid succession rather than writing them on the board. Therefore, students are more likely to write original questions.

4. Examples

1. How can your relationship affect your family?
2. When do you know when you can trust someone?
3. How do you improve relationships with your parents?
4. How can you have a healthy long-distance relationship?
5. My friend is overly obsessed with her boyfriend. How can I tell her politely to calm down?
6. When is the right time to say, "I love you?" Who should say it first?
7. When is enough, enough when your relationship is going nowhere?
8. Can staying in a bad relationship become a habit? If so, how do you break this habit?
9. Why do some people think that they should date within their own race and/or religion?
10. What can you do if you think your partner is too controlling?
11. Why is it so hard for guys to listen and be attentive?
12. How do you know when you are in love?

Follow Up

(5 Min.)

When students finish their questions they will be asked to take a separate sheet of paper and answer the questions themselves. These answers will provide the teacher with more insight into each individual and demonstrate how, in many ways, we innately know the answers to such questions.

Activity: Sharing of Questions

(10 Min.)

Students will be asked to pick their most pressing question and share it with the class. For purposes of privacy, students will have the option to share or not to share personal questions. Teacher will ask a volunteer to write the questions on the board. Students will be asked to raise their hands if they wrote a similar question. Related questions will be tallied on the board.

Teacher will make note of the most common questions to establish which questions are a priority for the class, as well as reveal the universality of their relationship issues and concerns.

Teacher collects questions and makes copies for analysis, development, and to better understand their students. This will give teachers an initial sense of the students' concerns.

Mini-Lecture: Introduction to Course Material and General Course Concepts

(12 Min.)

- ◆ Defining a Relationship:
In the simplest terms, a relationship is based on the desire of two people to know one another, with the hope of forming a lasting bond.
- ◆ Dynamics of a healthy relationship:
The interactions, shared values and common interests that define healthy communication between partners in a relationship. These can include social, intellectual, political and spiritual exchanges.
- ◆ How we use language in a relationship:
There is no universal language or communication style that is widely recognized. In a fulfilling relationship, partners must learn how to communicate by establishing a shared vocabulary and language that cultivates an ongoing connection.
- ◆ Perception of a relationship and the importance of open communication:
Here we make note that the students' questions start the process of defining a relationship based on their individual experiences and values.
- ◆ Generally speaking, what are the two things that most significantly impact one's life after graduating high school? (Answer: work and relationships).

- ◆ **We spend at least 12 years in school preparing for a career. How much time do we spend preparing for a relationship?**

- ◆ We passively learn about relationships from our home environments, the media, friends, family, and our culture.
- ◆ Often, we **emulate** others, copying what we have previously observed.
- ◆ As we mature, much of what we learn about relationships is by **trial and error**.
- ◆ In what ways does current culture (particularly the media) portray, celebrate, or denigrate relationships? How do you think this has affected the way people think about relationships?

As time allows, the following two questions can be developed as as a "Do Now" and/or class discussion:

- ◆ What words come to mind when you think about being in a relationship?
- ◆ Who are your relationship role models?

Homework Assignment and Day 2 Introduction

(2 Min.)

- ◆ Day 2 Intro - Perception of a happy relationship: what is happy vs. fulfilling; happy vs. healthy; happy vs. meaningful, etc?

Homework - Perception of Relationships

Homework handout on next page

Writing: Spend no longer than 2-3 minutes on each question

1. What is love?
2. What does it mean to be "in love"?
3. What is romance?
4. What is intimacy?
5. What are boundaries?
6. What is commitment?
7. What are trust, fidelity and loyalty?
8. What is a healthy relationship?
9. What does it mean to be responsible in a relationship?



Name: _____

Date: _____

Spend no more than 2-3 minutes on each question.

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Optional Additional Questions for Homework:

1. What is accountability?
2. What is chemistry: physical, mental or emotional?
3. What is a dysfunctional relationship? What is a functional relationship?
4. What does it mean to be emotionally available? Emotionally mature?