

A Teacher's Guide

Here are a few activities and discussion points that can help your 9th-12th grade students get the most out the sensitive topics covered in *TeenZine: Issue 2*.

Class Discussion Questions:

1. When in a person's life do you think it's important to stay abstinent?
2. Why do you think some people stay in unhealthy relationships?
3. Do you think men can be sexually assaulted? Why or why not?

Healthy Relationships Activity (from Teenwire)

The goal of this activity is to teach teens how to recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship. You will need 45-60 minutes for this activity. You will need copies of the attached article "6 Signs Your Relationship is Bad for You," "HEALTHY"/"UNHEALTHY" signs, printouts of attached quotes 1-6, and a wall.

Part A (approximately 5-10 minutes)

1. Distribute copies of "6 Signs Your Relationship is Bad for You," and ask participants to read the article. If preferred, participants can take turns reading sections of the article out loud.

Part B (approximately 35-45 minutes)

1. Tape the "HEALTHY" and "UNHEALTHY" signs on the wall, far apart.
2. Explain to participants that you will read through six hypothetical quotes from teens about their relationships. Select one of the participants to come to the front and read the first quote.
3. After the quote has been read, ask each participant to stand somewhere between the two signs. Standing close to "HEALTHY" means they believe the quote is a sign of a healthy relationship. Standing close to "UNHEALTHY" means they believe the quote is a sign of an unhealthy relationship. The closer they stand to a sign, the more healthy or unhealthy they think the relationship is.
4. Have participants sit down in the spot they've chosen, and lead a discussion (see attached potential discussion questions).
5. Repeat the process for quotes 2-6.



The Real Deal about Acquaintance Rape and Sexual Assault (from Teenwire)

The goal of this activity is to explain the necessity of obtaining and giving consent before engaging in sexual intercourse, and to provide tools for teens to help them stay safe in a variety of situations. You will need 10-15 minutes for this activity. For materials, you will need copies of the attached “Ask the Expert” question (without the answer).

- Hand out copies of the “Ask the Expert” question. Break students into pairs. Ask the students to discuss and answer the girl’s question.
- Bring the group together and discuss the groups’ responses. Explain that sexual assault is the use of force or intimidation, physical or psychological, to make a person engage in sexual activity. Rape is a kind of sexual assault. It is coerced sexual intercourse. Remind students that it is illegal to have sex with someone without their consent, even if they have previously consented to having sex, and even if they are in a relationship.
- **Note:** The activity is not designed to address age of consent laws, but if the topic comes up, you should be prepared to discuss it. Call the office of the attorney general in your state to find out what the laws are in your state, or visit: www.coolnurse.com/consent or www.avert.org/teensex.
- Read the “Ask the Expert” answer to the group.

Ask the Expert Answer:

Sexual assault is the use of force or intimidation, physical or psychological, to make a person engage in sexual activity. And rape is a kind of sexual assault. It is coerced sexual intercourse.

We all have the right to say no to sex — all girls and boys, all women and men. Consent — freely choosing to say “yes” — is not binding. That means that you have the right to change your mind at any time, for any reason. You are the only person who has the right to set — or change — the boundaries around what feels comfortable and good to you! If you consent to something but then change your mind, you have the right to stop it immediately. If both people are truly consenting to sex, it means that they continue to listen to each other every step of the way.

Having sex when you don’t want to can be very painful and difficult to deal with, but you have already taken the first step — you’re reaching out for help. Remember that it is important to give yourself the time you need to deal with the hurt you feel inside. It is important to continue talking about your feelings. You can call the RAINN hotline for free, confidential, counseling 24 hours a day at 1-800-656-HOPE.

6 Signs Your Relationship is Bad for You

by Shiri Ourian

Eating too many fried foods is bad for your health. Smoking cigarettes is bad for your health. And some relationships are bad for your health, too — your emotional health. Parents and doctors tell us which activities are bad for us, but how do we know when a relationship is bad for us? It's not easy. Bottom line, an unhealthy relationship usually make us feel unsafe or bad about ourselves.

Check out these warning signs:

- 1. DISRespect** - Insults, putdowns, and teasing are all forms of disrespect. That also includes digs about your race, culture or religion. Disrespect can sound something like: "You say the stupidest things," or "You look fat in that dress," or "You're nothing without me." No matter what it sounds like, disrespect hurts — probably longer than the relationship itself, because it can do major damage to your self-esteem.
- 2. Jealousy** - Jealousy is bad news for a relationship. Some people mistake jealousy for love. "My ex used to get jealous if I talked to other guys. I thought it was cute that he cared about me so much that he wanted me all to himself, but after a while it got to be suffocating," explains Jenna, 16. There's nothing cute about jealousy. A person who is jealous doubts the other person's love or commitment. Jenna's ex didn't trust her. If your partner doesn't want you talking to other people or doesn't like you hanging out with your friends — girls or guys — there's a major problem in your relationship.
- 3. Lies, Lies, and More Lies** - Telling lies or being lied to always spells trouble. Small lies usually lead to big lies, and many lies can destroy a relationship. Honesty is essential for a healthy relationship, and if you can't tell the one you love the truth, there's something wrong. Some people think keeping the truth from a partner is OK. What she doesn't know won't hurt her, right? Wrong. Keeping secrets isn't being honest either. Some things to think about: Why are you doing something that you have to lie about? Are you so scared of your partner's reaction that you have to keep it to yourself?
- 4. No Fair!** Anthony and Vanessa dated for four months. They fought a lot about little things — like why he didn't call her and why she was always late. These little fights escalated when neither one could admit they were wrong. And sometimes even when Anthony did admit he was wrong and apologized, Vanessa held it against him for weeks! Sound familiar? If you or your partner can't admit your mistakes and expect forgiveness, your relationship could be causing you a lot of unnecessary anger and heartache.
- 5. Control Freak** - Who's the boss of you? You are. No one has the right to tell you what to do, where to go, or how to dress. Jessie had a feeling things weren't right in her relationship when her boyfriend started to make her ask his permission to go places without him. Another clue was that he got to decide everything about what they did — from which movie they saw to when she could work at her job. Jessie was right. She and her ex did not see each other as equals. In a healthy relationship, no one is in charge of the other person.
- 6. Can You Hear Me Now?** You'll need more than good reception on your cell for good communication in a relationship. Talking openly about your feelings with your partner and listening to each other without judgment is what good communication is about. If you have a hard time talking to your partner about your relationship or your feelings because you're worried about being judged or being yelled at, that's a sure sign your relationship is unhealthy.

If you're having doubts about your relationship or if one or more of these warning signs describe your relationship, talk to someone you trust about it. Sometimes having an outsider's perspective is helpful. Many couples work through their issues, but it takes hard work and commitment from both people. Some even go to couples counseling. And sometimes, as hard as it can be, it's best to throw in the towel and recognize your relationship might be more trouble than it's worth.

The Real Deal about Acquaintance Rape and Sexual Assaults

Ask the Expert Question:

Dear Experts: "My boyfriend wanted to have sex, and being stupid as I sometimes am, I said "yes." But I got to thinking and then I said "no." I said I wanted to go home, but he wouldn't let go of me. He said I had to have sex with him before he would let me go home. I didn't want to, but this guy can get a little crazy. I had to do it... Does a girl have the right to change her mind? Was I raped?" - Marie

Additional facts that you may want to discuss in your group:

- Two-thirds of all rapes are committed by someone who is known to the victim.
- Acquaintance rape is sometimes called "date rape," but people don't have to be on a date to be sexually assaulted by someone they know.
- Consent is needed every time people have sex, even if couples have had sex in the past.
- Everyone has the right to change their mind at any time – even in the middle of a sexual encounter.
- Anyone, male or female, can be the victim or perpetrator of a sexual assault. At least 10 percent of sexual assault victims are men.
- It is illegal to have sex with anyone who is incapacitated by alcohol or other drugs or who is asleep or otherwise unable to consent.
- Not saying "no" is not the same as giving consent.
- Nothing people do, including using alcohol or drugs, going to "dangerous" places, wearing particular clothes, or being sexual with a person, gives anyone else the right to have sex with them without their consent.

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