



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Lesson 2: Attitudes and Consent

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RESOURCES
for LEARNING

“Starting the Conversation”

Lesson 2: Attitudes and Consent

Overview: Students learn the difference between healthy, acceptable behaviors and attitudes, and unhealthy, unacceptable behaviors and attitudes that exist in romantic and dating relationships.

TEKS Standards and Student Expectations:

115.32 (B)(7)(J) analyze the importance of healthy strategies that prevent physical, sexual, and emotional abuse such as date rape

115.32 (B)(8)(A) evaluate positive and negative effects of various relationships on physical and emotional health such as peers, family, and friends

115.32 (B)(13)(A) demonstrate communication skills in building and maintaining healthy relationships

115.32 (B)(15)(A) apply communication skills that demonstrate consideration and respect for self, family, and others

115.33 (B)(3)(E) analyze behavior in romantic relationships that enhance dignity, respect, and responsibility

115.33 (B)(6)(A) apply effective communication skills for building and maintaining healthy relationships

115.33 (B)(15)(C) determine causal connections that promote health in relationships

Learning Objectives:

- Compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Explore how seemingly benign behaviors and attitudes can escalate into aggressive ones
- Identify what does and does not constitute consent

Essential Questions:

- How can otherwise “good people” do harmful things when it comes to dating and intimacy?
- How can common behaviors and attitudes escalate into aggressive or controlling behaviors that lead to unhealthy or abusive relationships?

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

- Consent
- Healthy relationship
- Unhealthy relationship

Lesson Structure

ELICIT

“What did we learn in the last lesson? What were some ways the first lesson made you think or see things differently?”

Invite 2–3 students to share their responses. Responses may include the following:

- Sexual bullying and relationship violence are serious problems. For example, approximately 1 in 3 teenage girls in the U.S. is a victim of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner.
- It is important to analyze what motivates our behaviors.
- There are two key differences between healthy and consensual behaviors versus unhealthy and harmful behaviors: the intention of the person initiating the behavior and whether the other person wants the behavior or activity.

“Today we will be learning about what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy and the beliefs we have that motivate our behaviors. We will also be learning about consent and the building blocks of healthy relationships and encounters.”

ENGAGE

Draw a Venn diagram on the board. Label the left circle *“Unhealthy,”* and the right circle *“Healthy.”* If a dry-erase or chalkboard is unavailable, students may create a Venn diagram on paper, complete it in small groups, and then share with the large group.

“What are some signs of an unhealthy relationship? We can discuss behaviors, feelings, and attitudes.”

The coach writes students’ responses in the left circle of the Venn diagram. Examples may include controlling behaviors (e.g., telling you what type of clothing you can or cannot wear, reading messages on your phone, and asking for your passwords).

“What are some signs of a healthy relationship?”

The coach writes students’ responses in the right circle of the Venn diagram. Students may discuss examples of trusting behaviors (e.g., partners can talk about their problems and concerns openly, partners are okay having different opinions from each other, partners feel free sharing their boundaries and limits and know they will be respected).

“You may have noticed that we have a space in the middle. We’ll return to this space later in the lesson.”

(Note: Return to the Venn diagram in the Extend section to fill in the overlapping section with neutral behaviors that could be healthy or unhealthy depending on the context.)

EXPLORE

“We’re going to watch a video in which two survivors of relationship and sexual violence share their stories. Pay attention to how their lives were affected and think about the motivations and actions of the person who they were with.”

Play Video 2.

Organize students into small groups of 2–3. Instruct students to discuss the motivations and behaviors in Raquel and Sharmita's stories and the long-term consequences of the relationships. Write the following questions on the board:

- *What made the behavior in Raquel’s situation problematic?*
- *At what point did the behavior become inappropriate or abusive?*

- What was the motivation for Sharmita's partner's behavior?
- What might have motivated the men in the scenarios?
- What might have led them to behave in these ways?
- What might the long-term consequences of these situations be?
- If you were there, how might you have intervened as a friend or witness?

(Note: It is important to stress that the behavior of the partners in these videos is never appropriate or excusable. The goal here is to see how certain values and beliefs can make harmful—even criminal—behaviors seem acceptable in certain environments.)

After 5 minutes, call on groups to share their discussions for each question. As you facilitate the discussion, share the following perspectives:

“While most victims of sexual violence are female and most perpetrators are male, it is important to know that anyone can be affected. These problems can affect any type of relationship, regardless of the gender, sexual orientation, or identity of the individuals involved. These problems can affect anyone and, therefore, require the involvement and commitment of everyone.”

“Consensual and respectful relationships come from seeing your partner as a person who deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter what. When we see someone as a ‘goal,’ ‘target,’ or ‘lesser,’ we are objectifying him or her, and we can begin to treat them as less than human. Objectifying makes it possible for many ‘good people’ to do harmful things.”

EXPLAIN

Distribute the Lesson 2: Attitudes and Consent handout. Instruct students to do the following:

“In either small groups or as an individual, classify the statements on the handout as ‘healthy,’ ‘unhealthy,’ or ‘neutral’ (because it depends on the motivation or context).”

Elicit students' responses and facilitate discussion.

“Now let's revisit the results of the Venn diagram as a whole group to see if there are any changes we would like to make. In what ways did your discussions about the statements make you think differently about your initial perceptions of healthy and unhealthy behaviors?”

Elicit students' responses and facilitate discussion.

Note: The discussion should serve multiple purposes, including providing students with these opportunities

- Synthesize new learning about healthy versus unhealthy behaviors and beliefs
- Build an awareness of a spectrum of behaviors that are never acceptable, ranging from sexual harassment, sexual bullying, name-calling, and objectifying others (e.g., “ranking” people based on their perceived attractiveness or sexual history)
- Understand that it is never okay to use guilt, manipulation, pressure, or force for sexual contact of any kind

ELABORATE

“Consent is the permission to cross a boundary. We ask for consent all the time. Want a sip of your friend's water? Want to use a friend's cell phone? You ask for their consent first. You need consent to borrow something, to share something that may be private, or even to hug someone. Can you think of other examples of times when we ask for consent?”

Elicit students' responses and facilitate discussion.

“We get consent all the time as a sign that we respect the privacy and boundaries of another person. When you are crossing physical boundaries or boundaries that may invade another’s privacy, you need enthusiastic consent. How do you get permission to kiss or touch a partner? Only ‘yes’ means ‘yes.’ Do not wait for your partner to say ‘no’ to start looking for consent.”

“Turn to your Lesson 2: Attitudes and Consent handout. I’d like you to take a minute to individually complete the True/False activity about consent. When you are done, write your definition of consent.”

After students have had time to complete the True/False activity and have written their own definition of the word “consent,” read the statements and assess how many students responded with “true” and how many students responded with “false.” Invite a few students to share their definitions of consent. Explore with the class to see if there is consensus about the importance of consent.

Share the following definition of the word “consent” with students:

“Consent means to agree to do or allow something; to give permission for something to happen or be done.”

Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consent>

EVALUATE

Ask students to complete an exit ticket. Write the following questions on the board and ask each student to respond to them:

- *What are my new learnings today?*
- *How can I apply them in my life?*
- *What was most important to me?*

Allow students time to write a response to these questions and collect their responses before they leave.

EXTEND

“Let’s go back to our Venn Diagram. What types of behaviors might go in the middle of our two circles—the common area—where we typically identify similarities? In this case, we are going to identify behaviors that may be considered neutral. These behaviors may not necessarily be considered healthy or unhealthy—it depends entirely on the context.”

Elicit students’ responses and facilitate discussion.

Play the video of Rick Smith, General Manager and Executive Vice President of the Houston Texans. Discuss with students the characteristics and traits that Rick Smith looks for in players.

Lesson 2: Attitudes and Consent Handout

Classify the following statements as **Healthy**, **Unhealthy**, or **Neutral**. Label each statement with an **H** if you think it is healthy, **U** if you think it is unhealthy, and **N** if it is a neutral attitude or belief.

- ___1. “Hooking up” is a conquest, and getting someone to go further is a victory.
- ___2. There are two different kinds of girls or guys in the world—the ones you date and the ones you “do.”
- ___3. Some girls don’t respect themselves, so why should I respect them?
- ___4. We may not be able to control our feelings, but we can control our behaviors.
- ___5. Your partner's well-being is as important as your own. Each partner in a relationship is entitled to respect.
- ___6. We each have a responsibility to help someone who is being harmed by another person.
- ___7. Everyone deserves respect and dignity—they don’t have to earn it.
- ___8. A girl was “asking for it” when she wore a short skirt.
- ___9. Men can’t be trusted.
- ___10. Love shouldn’t hurt. You always deserve to be treated with respect, equality, dignity, and honor.
- ___11. Nice guys don’t get girls.
- ___12. Men who allow women to have equal power in the relationship are weak.
- ___13. Women who get emotional are “just crazy.”
- ___14. Men can’t be abused or victimized.
- ___15. Jealousy is a sign of love.
- ___16. If your partner is controlling at times, it’s because they love and care about you.
- ___17. Your love will change your partner, and make them a better or kinder person.
- ___18. Relationships with higher levels of equality and respect are happier relationships.
- ___19. Relationship violence is often about the perpetrator feeling powerful—it’s never an expression of love.
- ___20. Anyone can be the victim of relationship and sexual violence, regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, or race.

What is consent? Classify these attitudes or beliefs as **True** or **False**. Label it with a **T** if you think it's true or **F** if you think it's false.

- ___1. Consent is a statement of shared goals, desires, and intentions.
- ___2. Consent is part of an ongoing conversation and must be affirmative.
- ___3. Consent can be withdrawn at any time for any reason.
- ___4. Consent is not something a partner is entitled to, even in a committed relationship.
- ___5. If someone is too drunk to drive, slurring their words, or are not communicating clearly, any sexual activity is sexual assault.
- ___6. Asking and hearing an affirming "yes" is required for any sexual interaction.
- ___7. All activities should be wanted, not just permitted.
- ___8. Consent is not important for every kind of romantic and sexual situation.
- ___9. Sexual aggression is often thought of as something that is violent or physically forced between strangers, but it is often between two people who know and may even like each other.
- ___10. Consent is not the absence of "no"—it is an agreement of "yes."
- ___11. Pushing someone until they say "yes" is not consent. They need the option to say "no" freely without guilt, pressure, or fear.
- ___12. You do not need to get consent at each "stage" of a relationship—kissing is consent to move forward.

Consent is:
