

Healthy Relationships: A Resource Guide

Hello to all Teachers,

First and foremost, I would like to take a minute to thank each of you for being on the front line of our educational system in our community. Your dedication to your students and their wellbeing is apparent, and without you, the children and young adults of this community would be lost and unprepared. Thank you for being proactive in their lives and striving to find every available resource that may be useful and beneficial to their future and encouraging them to be open minded and respectful.

The goal of this department is to make sure that some of those available resources are educational tools that can provide information to your students. Information regarding, relationships, gender identity, social media safety, rape culture and bullying, are crucial topics of discussion and instruction for the young people in our community. Within this Teacher's Guide, you will find short and informative lessons on a specific topic; critical thinking activities for your students to do at home or in the classroom; and links to fun and engaging videos that will go along with the lessons and topic content.

As we all strive to better our community and look to the future, thank you for taking the time to engage your students in difficult and challenging topics. Topics that speak to them on a personal and relatable level so they may be better prepared for their future in all aspects of life, both academically and socially. I hope you enjoy this guide and can effectively utilize the content within, as we all have the same goal: the wellbeing of the youth in our community.

Thank you,

Austin Dougherty

Director to Community Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Austin Dougherty', written in a cursive style.

Felix Zeid

Educator and Art Graphics Designer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Felix Zeid', written in a cursive style.

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Section 1: *What Creates a Healthy Relationship?*

Everyone wants to have healthy relationships, whether that relationship is with your parents, siblings, teachers, coaches or a sexual and romantic partner. But what constitutes a healthy relationship? How do you know the relationships in which you surround yourself on a daily basis, are healthy?

There are four (4) key elements in any healthy relationship:

Trust:

Trust could be considered the cornerstone of all healthy relationships. It is hard for any relationship to grow without trust. Trust can be defined as having faith in someone—faith the person will do what they say. Trust also refers to believing those people with whom you are in a relationship, will be fair and honest in their dealings with you. When someone says, “I trust you,” it implies many things such as: I don’t have to check up on you, I know you will follow through with whatever we have agreed on, I believe that you have my best interest at heart.

Mutual Respect:

Mutual respect is a sense of admiration for one another in any relationship. It means, “I understand your position on any issue and I will support your right to have that opinion— even if it differs from mine.” People will sometimes say someone must “earn” respect. In this sense we often wait to see if people say what they mean and mean what they say. We want to see if people live their lives according to the principles they tell us are important to them. Even if we don’t

agree with their beliefs, we will respect them if they demonstrate a commitment to those beliefs.

Mutual respect occurs when both parties acknowledge respect for one another.

Open Communication:

Open communication is, when people feel comfortable expressing their thoughts about any issue that is relevant to a relationship and are equally able to listen to the other person's thoughts.

Open communication is honest communication. It is the sharing of information that is relevant to a particular context with the expectation you will be heard and receive feedback that further facilitates the discussion. This honest exchange will lead to a healthy relationship. Most friendships will not last without open communication. As a matter of fact, some would say it is a prerequisite to any real friendship. You should feel comfortable around your friends. There should be a sense of give and take: a rhythm to your communications that is fluid and mutual. You don't choose your words carefully. You simply say what you think. You are not guarded in your responses. There is a wonderful sense of freedom that comes from open communication. With friends, open communication also provides comfort. You know you can say whatever you feel and still be accepted.

Boundaries:

Appropriate boundaries in any relationship are both physical and psychological. These boundaries vary depending on the people and the type of relationship. People should feel comfortable in their interactions with others about personal space. This space includes your mind as well as your body. Boundaries may expand or contract with changes in any given relationship. Certain requests may be considered "out of bounds" in certain relationships.

Boundaries vary depending on your unique comfort level, the type of relationship you are engaged in, and changes in you as you grow. Boundaries can always be adjusted and most certainly will change throughout your life.

Empathy:

Empathy is the ability to respect and understand the emotions and feeling of others. Everyone exhibits the same types of emotions, (ex. happiness, anger, sadness, frustration, excitement) and we usually portray these through non-verbal communication, which will be discussed later.

Empathy cultivates compassion, and a relationship without compassion will struggle. Therefore, in order to have a healthy relationship, people must be aware of this fact and understand that these shared emotions, help connect us and bring us closer together.

Activities to help students understand the concepts in greater depth:

Activity 1: Have your students pick one of the four elements needed for a healthy relationship.

Prepare a one-page paper or a 5-slide power point on why that particular element is so important for them in their relationships.

Activity 2: Boundaries, and the ability to recognize when they are crossed, are vital to any healthy relationship. In this exercise, you will look at different scenarios and determine if a boundary has been crossed, and then asked to explain why? (some scenarios may be more appropriate depending on age)

- **Food for Thought:** Establishing boundaries can be difficult for us all, no matter the age. We always want to remember boundaries are not walls, but expectations about the relationship. Boundaries are an essential part of any relationship and they are going to be

different for each person and each relationship. You may have different boundaries with your friends as opposed to a sexual or romantic partner. Communication is the only way to establish your boundaries, and they are always easier to establish at the beginning of the relationship instead of at the point where someone crosses that line.

Scenario 1: *Kelly has been whispering over the phone to her best friend Kristen for an hour.*

Kelly's father notices the conversation seems to be intense. When Kelly hangs up, her father says, "You've been on the phone for an hour. What was that all about?" Kelly responds, "I'd rather not talk about it." Her father says, "Well, you can tell me yourself or I'm calling Kristin's parents to see what required so much whispering."

Scenario 2: *Robert and James have been best friends since the 2nd grade, and now in High School, Robert seems to want their relationship to be more than just friends, but he is not sure James feels the same. Kind of scared, and not knowing what to do, Robert decides to make a fake Instagram account just to find out how James feels about him and what James talks about with other people when he is not around.*

Scenario 3: *Julie can't quite figure out why her neighbor Mr. Gates bothers her. As she is walking home from school, she sees he is outside, watering some plants. She tries to sneak by, but it's too late—he walks over to say hello. He tells her how nice she looks. Julie notices while he talks to her, his eyes roam from the tips of her toes to the top of her head. He also tends to lean in close to her as if he is sharing a secret with her. She is polite, but she makes her escape into her house as soon as possible.*

Scenario 4: *Felipe is proud of the work he has done on his bedroom. He has painted it, purchased a cool sound system, and put up some posters. He generally keeps things neat. His*

room feels like his small part of the world. Yesterday, his mother was in his room collecting dirty laundry. He can tell she also went through some notes and pictures he keeps in his desk. When he confronts his mother she says, "This is still my house and I will inspect your room whenever I feel like it. That's my right."

Scenario 5: *Megan is new to school having just moved. During her first day, she notices a group of popular boys in the hallway are always flirting with the other girls. She walks by the group as she heads to class, and one of the boys says "hey new girl," then puts his arm around her as they walk down the hall. Although Megan likes the attention, she doesn't know how to feel about the situation.*

Activity 3: Trust is a huge element in any healthy relationship, but for many people, it can be difficult to tell if there is trust in a relationship. Many people may also have a difficult time even explaining what trust is and how it is shown in a relationship. This activity attempts to illustrate the concept of trust in a way that asks students to look at their own relationships and the role that trust plays in their lives.

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your definition of trust?
2. Are there some relationships in which trust is more important than others? If so, which ones?
3. Do you think there are certain jobs or professions in which trust is essential? If so, which ones?
4. "Once trust has been broken between two people, it can never be repaired." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

5. How does a person's parents influence his or her ability to trust?
6. Name three (3) people that you would trust with anything.
7. Why do you believe the people you chose above are trustworthy?
8. Is trust something you learn or are you born with it? Explain your answer.

Video links for this section: (please reiterate that these videos apply to all relationships)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB9anEZx9LU> (A short video for younger audiences on the basics of healthy relationships: respect, equity and communication. Watch and discuss in any capacity available!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCQIDvEnrTg> (A video for older audiences regarding romantic relationships and the basic foundational elements that make these types of relationships healthy. Watch and discuss in any capacity available.)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPkO5jPst7u_WVuYwBJn67Q (The YouTube channel of the Rape Crisis Center. Variety of short videos, created in our department, on different topics coinciding with the handbooks.)

Section 2: *Healthy Communication*

Healthy communication forms healthy relationships. Communication helps the other person know what you like and don't like; what makes you angry and upset and what makes you excited and happy. Healthy communication grows the relationship as both people begin to understand each other on a deeper level, whether this is with friends, a romantic partner or parents. Healthy communication addresses and includes each of the four elements mentioned

earlier: open communication, trustful and honest communication, respectful communication and communication which is used to establish boundaries. Communication is a vital part of any healthy relationship.

So, what is “communication?”

Communication is simply the act of receiving and delivering a message.

There are two ways in which we deliver a message: Verbal and Non-verbal communication!

Verbal Communication:

Verbal communication consists of using a structured language to communicate thoughts, ideas, feeling and emotions to others, on a daily basis. (talking, texting, sign-language)

Non-Verbal Communication:

Non-Verbal communication consists of using body language, facial expressions and body posture as ways to communicate how we feel, what we are thinking and what emotions we may be experiencing. (rolling your eyes, slumping your shoulders, smiling, scowling, crossing your arms, tone of voice)

What constitutes healthy communication?

Respectful communication: *Communicating with those around you in a respectful manner helps build a healthy relationship. Aggressive communication, lies and passive aggressive communication break-down relationships*

Honest communication: *Being truthful and honest in your communication will help strengthen your relationships. Being forthright in how you feel, what you like and what makes you happy or mad, is honest communication.*

Supportive communication: *Everyone has those days that bring us down. It is important in healthy relationships, that people use supportive communication instead of insulting and humiliating communication, to show the other person they care and are here to help.*

Active listening: *It is not just about communicating your wants and needs but listening to the other person with whom you share a relationship. Being available to listen is a powerful tool in building a healthy relationship. Make sure there is a give and take in the communication arena, and allow each person time to deliver the message and receive the message; it is a two-way street.*

Activities to help students understand the concepts in greater depth:

Activity 1: Have your students prepare a one-page essay or a 5- slide power point, on how the internet, texting and social media have affected the way in which we all communicate with each other.

- **Food for Thought:** In society today, with the advent of the internet, texting, emojis and Instagram, we tend to lose the face to face interaction with others and with that comes the inability to gauge someone's facial expressions, posture or body language. This limits our ability to truly understand how that person may feel, what they are thinking and how we should respond. (90% of our communication on a daily basis is non-verbal communication) For instance, if I text a friend, and ask "how they are dealing with a

difficult homelife”, and they text back, “doing ok.” I have no reference or context, no way of judging this response based on their facial expressions, body language or posture, and this can make the conversation difficult.

Activity 2: It is obvious when we point fingers at people we have already decided they are wrong. We are accusing them, blaming them for something. When we begin conversations by referring to what the other person said or did, we are avoiding saying how we feel. Moreover, the person on the receiving end will no doubt respond in a defensive manner. Productive conversation is unlikely. On the other hand, if we state how we feel by using “I” language instead of “You did this” messages, we are likely to get a much better response.

Instructions: Read the passages below. Rewrite each one so that it expresses the author’s opinions and feelings from an “I” perspective.

***Example:** You promised to take me! You can’t do this to me! This makes you a liar. Rewrite: I am really disappointed.*

***Rewritten using “I” statements:** Not only was I looking forward to going, but I am also upset you broke your promise to me.*

1. You never let me do anything by myself! You treat me like a baby. You hover over me constantly. Do you really think I am that incompetent? **Rewrite:**

2. You’re such a busybody! You don’t know how to mind your own business. You’re always trying to run my life. Get off my back! **Rewrite:**

3. You make me feel like giving up. You never have anything positive to say. You should learn to be more supportive. **Rewrite:**

Activity 3: Challenge your students to watch a T.V. show with the volume muted so they must rely on just body language, facial expressions, social cues and posture to follow the story. Then have them answer these questions!

- 1) Where you able to follow the story or gauge how people were feeling? If yes, what elements of non-verbal communication made that possible? (give examples) If no, describe what made it difficult.
- 2) Since you cannot hear them speak, you miss out on the character's tone of voice, which can portray feelings, sarcasm, hesitation and feelings of being unsure. How important is "tone of voice" to you when you speak and when you are being spoken to?
- 3) In the T.V. show, did you notice if there were characters who were easier to follow during different scenes? Were there characters who were more difficult to follow? If yes, why do you think? If no, what were some of the challenges of this exercise?

Video links for this section:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvEci5Bjgd4> (Everyone's favorite T.V. show FRIENDS, shows us how to portray a wide variety of emotions, feelings and actions with non-verbal communication! Watch and discuss in any capacity available!)

Look up the Disney Short "Piper" on YouTube!(Pixar and Disney do a fantastic job of utilizing non-verbal communication, especially in the short films that always come before the feature film. The short film "*Piper*", definitely illustrates non-verbal communication, even in animal form!!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1vskiVDwl4> (A longer video from Ted Talks, dealing with the art of communication and listening, in a world driven by technology, social media and a lack of face to face interactions.) **(Older students preferred)**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPkO5jPst7u_WVuYwBJn67Q (The YouTube channel of the Rape Crisis Center. A variety of short videos, created in our department, on different topics coinciding with the handbooks.)

Section 3: *Consent*

When most of us think of consent, we may associate it with a sexual or romantic partner, but in essence, it simply means to give permission to or a mutual agreement. Therefore, consent should be a part of every healthy relationship. Whether a friend asks to borrow your phone; a sibling wants to wear your clothes; or if someone asks if they can hold your hand when you are together, these are all consensual based scenarios and need to be respected. This again illustrates the importance of communication, verbal or non-verbal. In a sexual or romantic partnership, some of this can be communicated non-verbally. If you go to hug your partner, and they hug back, this is an indication they accept your action; but if they shy away or do not engage in the activity, this is a clear sign they may not approve of this action, but you must be paying attention to their non-verbal cues!

To truly be consent, we need to understand these five (5) foundational elements:

Coherent and Incoherent:

Coherency is a vital part of consent. To be coherent, one must be able to clearly understand what is being asked of them, without any outside influences affecting their ability to make a clear decision or skewing their perception of the situation. For instance, if someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, these elements influence that person's ability to clearly understand the question being asked of them. Whether the question is "to borrow a phone," or to "engage in a sexual activity," that person cannot give consent because their decision is being affected by outside influences; they are incoherent. (Outside influences could also be cold medicine, or if that person is half-asleep or being intimidated/ under pressure) Now, please understand that numerous different scenarios and situations could be brought up and discussed, with each being very specific to each person. Obviously, we cannot address all the scenarios that may possibly arise when dealing with consent in social situations, just remember that if anything is affecting a person's ability to make a clear decision, then they technically cannot give consent. You should always be on the safe side when it comes to consent.

Clear:

When giving consent or not, you must be clear in your response, leave no room for alternate interpretations. Your verbal communication must match your non-verbal communication. If you state "yes" you can borrow my phone, but your body language, (hesitation) tone of voice (monotone and slow to really answer) and body posture (slumped shoulders), make it look like you are unsure, then there is an issue. A clear response is one that can only be viewed as a "yes," or "no;" by using both communicational elements, you make yourself perfectly understood, without any doubt.

Willing:

*When someone is a willing participant, having given consent, then they have done so without being coerced or pressured. Sometimes in relationships people may feel like they are being pressured to make a decision, one that they may not be comfortable making. People may use threats in order to pressure someone, whether it is a friend or romantic partner. Threats like, “if you don’t ditch with us, then I’m going to tell everyone at school you’re a” Or a romantic partner may say, “if you don’t have sex with me, then we are done.” Threats and peer pressure like this can cause someone to say “yes” when they **really do not want to**, and therefore cannot be a willing participant.*

Ongoing:

*The idea of consent being ongoing, is one many people do not quite understand, and one that can get many people in trouble. Let us say for instance I let my friend borrow my phone charger this morning, does that mean that every morning, if they ask to borrow my charger, I am obligated to do so? **No!** Consent is ongoing and must be given each and every time, for each and every time involves different variables, emotions and feelings than the previous. For many people in a sexual or romantic relationship, once a certain stage of that relationship is reached, they believe it is now what should be expected every time they are together, **but this is not true.** “Ongoing” can also pertain to the right-here-right-now; if someone consents to an action or activity, but then changes their mind, that is perfectly within their right to do so, and should be respected.*

Enthusiastic:

If your saying “yes” to something but you are not happy or enthusiastic about it, then you are saying “yes” for the wrong reasons, and you need to figure out why. You should be happy when saying yes to something, or feel positive about your decision, however, if this is not the case, then there may be other elements affecting your ability to freely make that decision.

Activities to help students understand the concepts in greater depth:

Activity 1: Have your students find an article in the news, online or otherwise regarding consent. (There should be plenty of content, especially worldwide) Once found, have them prepare a one-page essay or 5-slide power point, summarizing what they have learned and how it applies to their personal life.

- **Food for Thought:** There are quite a few instances, both in the United States and globally, involving how the courts, or ruling authorities, interpret the idea of consent. It is easy to discuss consent in a classroom setting, the idea of a clear no or yes; however, in real social circumstances, consent can sometimes be blurry, and people have a difficult time with what qualifies as consent in certain situations, especially at the court level. Consent is one of the biggest issues facing students and the youth of our community regarding healthy relationships. Knowing real life situations and real stories can help them critically think through the situation and understand where the idea of consent may have broken down, in their opinion.

Activity 2: Have your students think of a time in their life when they may have said “yes” to something, but were unsure, or not happy, about the situation. Then answer these questions:

- 1) How did you feel about saying “yes,” in that situation?
- 2) If you were unsure or not happy about saying “yes,” what were some factors that lead you to say “yes?”
- 3) What would you change about the situation to make you feel more comfortable, saying “yes,” or “no?”
- 4) In the future, what can you do to help prevent yourself from being in similar situations?

Activity 3: Have your students ask SIRI, “What is consent?” A small screen will pop up and she will begin to read. Take a screen shot of the definition. Then identify 5-9 specific words or phrases that encompass the basic elements of consent. (**For the teacher!** ex. Permission, indication of agreement, voluntarily)

Video links for this section

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laMtr-rUEmY> (2 minutes on consent! Watch and discuss with your students, in any capacity available, why each situation is not consensual!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5D9nQVutkk> (Could be a triggering video! Meant for older audiences. The blurry lines of consent in the court system and in social situations. Watch and discuss with your students in any capacity available.)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPkO5jPst7u_WVuYwBJn67Q (The YouTube channel of the Rape Crisis Center. A variety of short videos, created in our department, on different topics coinciding with the handbooks)

Section 4: *Closing*

As the Healthy Relationships Lesson is now complete, please reinforce the fact that everyone is in a relationship and that each of us want our relationships to be healthy. These relationships include, but are not limited to, family, friends, teachers, parents, coaches and romantic partners. A healthy relationship is built on **empathy**, **trust**, **support**, **respect** and **communication**, especially when dealing with establishing boundaries and regarding consent. As our society becomes more reliant on social media to have conversations, flirt, engage others and communicate feelings, emotions and thoughts, it is also making it ever more difficult for students and people to find a balance in their lives and cultivate healthy relationships. However, by making sure our students are aware of these issues, educating them with the proper information, and providing appropriate resources, hopefully they will be better equipped to build healthy relationships in the future.

PRE/POST SURVEY

For each statement below, choose the single BEST response!

1) All healthy relationships require which basic five elements?

- a) love, support, trust, fear, loyalty*
- b) mutual respect, open communication, trust, boundaries, empathy*
- c). trust, guidance, love, support, mutual respect*
- d) love, respect, trust, commitment, boundaries*

2) “Open communication” in any relationship refers to:

- a) *being able to share personal and private information*
- b) *being open to discuss any topic*
- c) *being able to mutually share information which is important to relationship*
- d) *being willing to hear opinions at any time of the day*

3) Examples of “Non-verbal” communication are:

- a) *Texting and posting on Instagram*
- b) *Sign language and*
- c) *Crossing your arms*
- d) *Tone of voice*
- e) *C and D*

4) Which communication method(s) does NOT constitute healthy communication?

- a) *Respectful communication*
- b) *Active Listening*
- c) *Limited communication*
- d) *Honest communication*

5) Consent is given when it is...?

- a) *Willing*
- b) *Enthusiastic*

- c) Clear*
- d) Coherent*
- e) Ongoing*
- f) All of the above*

6) Consent is only important with...

- a) A romantic relationship*
- b) Your family relationships*
- c) Only close friend relationships*
- d) Teacher relationships*
- e) All of the above*

Answer Key for the Pre/Post Survey

1) B

2) C

3) E

4) C

5) F

6) E

Resources:

Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico: 9741 Candelaria Rd. Albuquerque, NM. 87112

Office: (505) 266-7712

- Friend us on Facebook
- Follow us on Instagram
- Check our website, www.rapecrisiscnm.org, for information about volunteer opportunities.
- 24-hour Crisis Hotline
 - 505-266-7711
- Free Counseling: Individual-Group-Family-Art-EMDR-Yoga

Domestic Violence Resource Center: 625 Silver Ave SW Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

- Phone: (505) 242-6304
- Website: www.dvrcnm.org
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DVRCNM/>

If You Need Help Right Now

AGORA CRISIS LINE
(866) HELP-1-NM
TREVOR LIFELINE
(866) 488-7386
NM CRISIS & ACCESS LINE
(855) 662-7474

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