

Thrive Learning:

Healthy Relationships

Descriptor:

Healthy relationships are built upon trust, respect, equality, consent, shared interests, open communication and setting boundaries. It's also about knowing who you are as a person and who you can talk to or where you can find out information if you need further support in your relationship.

Outcomes:

- Recognise and describe types of values and actions that demonstrate a healthy relationship; for example, trust, respect, consent, equality, honesty, humor, feeling safe, conflict resolution, boundary setting.
- Recognise values and actions that demonstrate unhealthy relationships.
- Identify forms of open communication.
- Identify appropriate responses to conflict.
- Determine suitable types of relationship supports if required – family, friends, websites, phone numbers/hotlines.

Risks:

- Some participants may have histories of experiencing violence and may be negatively triggered by content.
- Awareness and sensitivity to topics.
- Awareness of complex / challenging behaviours.
- Varied levels of comprehension of participants.

Note, this module may be more effective when delivered to an individual, rather than in a group setting. The facilitator should make the decision as to how, when and with whom they would use the content.

Resources needed:

- TV / computer / interactive whiteboard that plays video.
- Screen to write on / facilitate discussion.
- Basic stationery eg. pens, pencils, paper.
- Access to videos (via internet or USB).
- Physical location – if required a quiet space.

Delivery Guide	Comments / Notes
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Welcome to Thrive Learning. I'm looking forward to finding out what we can learn in today's module. We'll be working together, sharing ideas, watching videos and completing workbooks. Today we'll be focusing on healthy relationships. By the end of the session, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify different types of relationships in our life – Friendly, Professional & Intimate • Recognise and describe types of values and actions that demonstrate a healthy relationship; for example, trust, respect, equality, honesty, safety, conflict resolution, boundary setting. • Recognise values and actions that demonstrate unhealthy relationships. • Identify forms of open communication. • Identify appropriate responses to conflict. • Determine suitable types of relationship supports if required – family, friends, websites, phone numbers/hotlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set rules and expectations / Participants may have others to add. • Discuss layout of room, amenities etc. • Provide overview of today's content: outline descriptor and outcomes.
<p>Warm up – brain gym</p> <p>What can you tell me about your best friend? Are they funny? Do you like to hang out together? Do you like doing the same things? Do you trust them?</p> <p>Let's see if we can come up with ideas about healthy relationships. We're going to do something called round robin brainstorming, with the topic being: <i>what make a good friend?</i> (See right column on how to facilitate round robin brainstorming).</p> <div data-bbox="240 1319 831 1552" style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 20px; margin: 20px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>What makes a good friend?</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the board or large piece of paper, write <i>What makes a good friend?</i> • Form a circle to start the method. Once the topic is shared, go around the circle one-by-one and have everyone offer an idea until everyone has had a turn. • Remember, ideas can be communicated verbally or via other modes – written, signed. • When leading a session, the round robin method allows everyone to express their thoughts. • Treat each idea equally and ensure that everyone contributes. • Summarise ideas.
<p>Before showing the video:</p> <p>In a moment we're going to play a video that introduces you to the topic of healthy relationships. When watching the video, think about your own relationships and how you might continue to build healthy relationships with your friends and/or partner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the idea of using the video and provide overview of what it will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and actions relating to healthy relationships. • Identifying appropriate responses to conflict. • Further supports for healthy relationships.

<p>Watch video We're now going to watch the video. Remember, we are looking and listening for ideas relating to healthy relationships; and wanting to know more about what unhealthy relationships might look and sound like. We also want to find out what internet sites we can go to or whom we can talk with if we need some help in our relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different ways facilitators can lead the video part of the session. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Play the video from start to finish. 2) Play the video in sections and respond / encourage discussion and answers. • <i>Be aware of any potential sensitivities to the content contained in the video as this may trigger a negative experience. If this occurs, please contact Complex Support and/or your leader for further supports.</i>
<p>For staff - content covered in the video Healthy Relationships make us feel good. They are respectful and don't cause us harm or make us feel bad.</p> <p>Signs of a Healthy Relationship are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel good when you are around a person. • You feel comfortable around them. • You know that you can say how you feel. • You enjoy spending time with them. • You feel safe around them. • You can have fun. • You trust each other. • You listen to each other. • You feel safe to say 'no'. <p>A healthy relationship is built on trust, respect, consent, equality, honesty and feeling safe. People in healthy relationships don't always see eye to eye – that is, they may not agree on everything. However, if all people in the relationship communicate their thoughts, ideas and desires in a respectful and open manner, and outcomes are agreed upon, then relationships can continue to grow.</p> <p>Have you heard of Aesop's fable, <i>The boy who cried wolf</i>? It's included as part of this module, but in short, there was a young boy who was in charge of taking care of some sheep. He would cry out "wolf, wolf" and the villages would come running, though there was no wolf. The third time he did, there actually was a wolf, though none of the villages came running to help him as they no longer believed him. In other words, because he didn't tell the truth from the start, nobody believed him when he later told the truth! They no longer trusted what the boy was saying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responses on the left are discussed in the video. Facilitators should encourage discussion of each of the responses. Remember, participants can verbally provide responses, sign, draw, or you may support participants by writing down the responses.

One important value in a healthy relationship is **trust**. If you have a good friend and you trust them, you might:

- Tell them things you wouldn't tell a stranger.
- Ask them to do something for you, like take care of someone or something important to you.
- Expect the person to show up when you ask them to or do something for you when you can't do it yourself.
- Loan them money and expect them to pay you back over time.
- You might be more vulnerable with a person. This means that you might trust the person with something that you find embarrassing – maybe you don't like how parts of your body look yet you show the other person; or you did something in your past that you're not happy about yet you tell the other person.
- If it's your partner, you might become more physically intimate with them. You might become physically close with them.
- Express your thoughts and emotions without fear of getting hurt – physically or emotionally.

If you **don't trust** a person, then you might:

- Not tell them things about yourself.
- Physically stay away from the person.
- Avoid them if they are walking towards you.
- Unfriend them on social media.
- Not share things with them.

When we hear the word **respect**, we might think it means:

- Listening to and doing what our parents ask us to do.
- Obeying the law.
- Being careful about what we say and do around certain people or places.
- Acknowledging the wisdom of our elders and/or other cultures.

In a healthy relationship, respect means:

- Giving the other person time to communicate.
- Actively listening to the other person.
- Providing encouragement and support with kind words and positive body language.
- Valuing the other person's time.
- Appreciating the other person's values and opinions.
- Value the other person's privacy.

In an unhealthy relationship there is usually a **lack of respect**. This might look like:

- Saying mean words or using/showing negative body language when talking with the other person.
- Continuously looking at your watch and showing that you're not interested in what the other person is saying or doing.

- Note each of the points in this document provide opportunity for further discussions and examples from peoples' own lives.
- Don't be afraid to discuss pause and discuss each point.
- When going through each point, you could draw, act out, create a song, find examples on the internet to support a participant's understanding and engagement in the topic.
- When trying to think of examples, think of *who, what, how, where* and *when*.
- Ask questions using phrases such as "what does _____ look like?" or what does _____ sound like?"

<p>It might sound like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making jokes about the other person in front of other people. • Putting the other person down in front of other people. For example, “I can’t believe you would do such a stupid thing!” • Not saying thankyou to the other person after they do something for you. For example, “thanks for cooking dinner for us! I really appreciate the time you spent cooking”. 	
<p>Healthy relationships are based on equality. Equality, however, isn’t always neatly cut down the middle like you would if sharing a chocolate bar with your best friend. For example, you may feel you do more of the cleaning up at home, or the cooking, or you pay for the meals whenever you go out.</p> <p>In a relationship, some people may want to do more of the cooking, and others may feel good when they can pay for something; but, if you feel that you’re continuing to do these things and not receiving anything in return, then the relationship can become unequal. Instead of eating half a chocolate bar, you’re left with...nothing...</p> <p>What would an unequal relationship look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your friend or partner might make all the decisions – where to go out, when to go out, who you can hang out with. • If you have an argument, the other person refuses to compromise. In other words, they don’t back down, and may refuse to say sorry even if they know they are wrong. • The other person always has the last word. For you, this may mean you cannot voice your concerns or meet each other halfway. <p>In an unequal relationship, one person has power and control over the other person and there is no balance in the relationship.</p>	
<p>What do we mean by the word consent? In a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are the expert in your own life. • You have the right to make decisions about your life. • No one else should tell you what you should and shouldn’t do. <p>In healthy relationships we have the right to say ‘no’ if we’re not feeling comfortable about something such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being near a particular person. • Going somewhere. • Inappropriate language • Pressured to change the relationship eg. I want you to be my girlfriend. • Touching someone or being touched by someone else. 	

<p>In healthy relationships, we always ask whether it is okay first.</p>	
<p>Have you ever heard of the saying: laughter is the best medicine? We all like to laugh, and when we do laugh, it makes us feel good. In fact, laughing helps boost our immune system, makes us feel good, lessens pain, and decreases stress.</p> <p>You might laugh because someone told a funny joke, or you watched a humorous YouTube clip about cats and dogs. We like to be around people who make us laugh and who can lighten the load – where everything doesn't always have to be so serious.</p> <p>A healthy relationship will be made up of both serious and not so serious events and activities. It's important, however, to laugh with your friends – to see the funny side of things; to crack a joke; to smile and simply enjoy each other's company. Laughter helps people relax and can sometimes turn a stressful situation into one that feels less stressful.</p> <p>Laughter and using humor in a relationship might look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling jokes. • Simply hanging out – playing games, cards, computer games. • Telling funny stories. • Casual banter or joking. • Lots of smiles and head shaking. 	
<p>Just like trust in a relationship, feeling safe is also important. What do we mean by feeling safe in a relationship?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel relaxed with the other person. • You feel you can tell another person certain things. • The other person is reliable, trustworthy, honest, respects you. • The other person doesn't scare you or say nasty things to you or about you. • The other person doesn't threaten you. For example, "If you do that again, I will...!" • The other person doesn't bully you, pressure you to do things you don't want to do or physically hurt you. • If you do end up in an argument, you're both able to work things out. <p>Feeling safe in a relationship means that your relationship will continue to grow – whether it's with a good mate or with a partner. It also means if you don't always see eye to eye, you're able to work things out in a mature and respectful manner.</p>	
<p>Every person is unique, and we all feel, think, believe and do things in our own individual way. We each bring these</p>	

values and qualities to a relationship, which is also why we are attracted to some people and like to hang out with them and not others.

Our differences, however, can sometimes lead to conflict.

What is **conflict**?

- A serious disagreement, argument or problem that takes a while and some effort to fix.
- A fight, battle or struggle.

Conflict in a relationship is not necessarily a bad thing but where there's conflict there's usually a problem. It's the way we *handle* conflict that makes it helpful or unhelpful. It's all about choices, and every choice has a consequence.

Some unhelpful ways of dealing with **conflict in a relationship** might include:

- Yelling and screaming.
- Calling the other person names or swearing at them.
- Hitting or slapping the other person – or you yourself being hit or slapped.
- Running away.
- Interrupting the other person while they are talking.
- Rolling your eyes.
- Holding a grudge.
- Being argumentative or threatening.
- Not listening.
- Laughing at the person.

How would you feel if these things happened to you?

- Angry
- Upset
- Teary
- Hurt
- Afraid
- Frustrated
- Unsafe.

What are some **helpful ways** to deal with **conflict in a relationship**?

- Be open and direct in your communication. In other words, say what you mean in a respectful manner.
- Remain calm, even when things feel heated.
- Put yourself in the other person's place, and take note of what the other person is communicating – verbally, signing, their body language.
- Use I statements with behavior descriptions. I statements focus on how *you* feel without blaming the other person. *Behaviour descriptions* focus on a particular behavior the other person is doing, rather than the negative things about a person's character.

- For example, “I feel ignored when I’m trying to have a conversation with you and you’re constantly texting.”

I statement	Behaviour description
I feel ignored	you’re constantly texting

- Avoid using *always* and *never*. For example, “You’re never on time!” or “I’m always cleaning up after you!”
- Be ready to compromise (find the middle ground).
- Focus on the present.
- Be willing to forgive.
- Agree to disagree and move on.

Conflict in a relationship will happen, but it’s how you react to conflict and how you deal with it that is important. Taking positive steps in handling conflict will result in greater communication, trust, respect and closeness in your relationship.

- You could ask for other examples here and write them up in the table as seen in the left column.
- Examples could be a person’s own experience, or from what you’ve observed.
- Another activity could include writing down a number of I statements and behaviour descriptions, cutting each of these out and then reassembling them based on people’s experiences / responses.

Healthy relationships include **boundaries**. This means you have a line drawn around things that are important to you, such as your emotional, social and physical wellbeing. You may also draw lines around your finances, your work and even your sexuality and physical intimacy with someone.

Setting boundaries lets you and your friend or partner:

- Know what you like and dislike.
- Know what you’re comfortable with and what scares you.
- Allows you to be clear about your needs.
- Is specific and direct. For example, “Do not read my journal. I feel disrespected when you go through my things”.

If you have a partner, you can be clear about your love towards them and at the same time be clear about your boundaries. For example, “I need you to know that I love you, but I am not ok with you when you get angry with me. If you want to talk about where I was, that’s ok, but only if you don’t shout and scream at me.”

Use I statements, and use phrase such as “I feel”, “I would appreciate” or “I would like it if...”

- Examples could be drawn on the board / paper much like a brainstorm eg.

When discussing a serious issue with me

When we touch, I...

My room

When I’m with my friends

Unhealthy relationships do not make us feel good. They are not respectful and can cause us harm or make us feel bad. Signs of an unhealthy relationship are:

- You can’t be yourself around them.
- They won’t let you have other friends.
- You feel scared to say ‘no’.
- You feel sad all the time.
- They touch you when you say ‘no’.
- You feel nervous or anxious around them.
- You feel sick.
- They make you feel bad about yourself.

- They hit you.
- They yell at you.
- You feel frightened.

It can be hard to tell someone that you are in an unhealthy relationship, but we all deserve to have healthy relationships. You may be in a relationship and you feel that it is unhealthy and no matter what you do, you cannot seem to work things out. Your partner may be **abusive** towards you. They may hurt or injure you verbally, emotionally or even physically. You may feel that there is no trust, respect, honesty or you simply don't feel safe.

If you do feel this way, you can **get help and further information**. You might:

- Tell the person directly how you feel.
- Tell a safe person such as your manager or support staff at your work. If at work, your employee can provide you with a support hotline you can call that is completely anonymous – in other words, you don't need to give any personal details such as your name.
- Contact the Police (call 000)

There are also websites and phone numbers you can call for support, including:

- wwild.org.au | Ph: 07 3262 9877
WWILD supports people with intellectual or learning disabilities who have experienced sexual abuse or have been victims of crime.
- kidshelpline.com.au | Ph: 1800 55 1800
Kids helpline supports kids, teens, young adults, parents and carers, schools and teachers. For young adults, you can talk to them about physical health and identity, mental health, relationships and sex, life issues and family. Their website also has a lot of information and blogs about certain topics.
- beyondblue.org.au | Ph: 1300 22 4636
Beyond Blue provides information and support for anyone to help them achieve their best mental health.
- lifeline.org.au | Ph: 13 11 14
Lifeline provides support for all Australians who may be experiencing emotional distress.

One last thing about being in a healthy relationship is **self care** – that is, making time for you! Whilst it's nice to be in a relationship – hanging out with that person, talking, laughing, maybe sometimes crying, you need to take to do the things you like to do, and at times without your friend or partner.

What is it that you like to do? What hobbies do you have? Any interests? Do you play a sport, listen to music, take the dog for a walk? Maybe some retail therapy – clothes shopping, a trip to Bunnings?

<p>It's important that you live your life not totally dependent on another person. That is, you still do things for yourself and at times by yourself – you don't need a friend or partner every minute of every day.</p>	
<p>Workbook What can you recall (remember) about healthy relationships? What makes a healthy relationship? What does an unhealthy relationship look like?</p> <p>We're now going to look at a workbook that focuses on values and actions relating to healthy relationships. There are a number of questions in the workbook that I'd like you to try and answer. It's ok if you can't answer the question or don't think you can finish the workbook as we'll continue to work at a pace that suits you.</p> <p>Hand out workbook to participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After watching the video, hand out the workbook and encourage participants to answer the questions. • You can use the video to again provide an overview of healthy relationships. If need be, play the video in sections and discuss/work though any questions. • Support participants to write down / communicate their responses. This may mean a person tells you the answer and you write the answer for them in their workbook.
<p>Summary A healthy relationship is built upon trust, respect, equality, consent, honesty, equality and humor. It's about feeling safe in your relationship, setting boundaries and resolving conflict.</p> <p>It doesn't matter if it's a close work mate or your partner – you should never feel abused, whether it's verbal, emotional or physical abuse.</p> <p>Supports are available should you want or need to find out further information or need to talk with someone. This could be a manager at a day service or work place, or via the internet or phone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss this. Seek understanding and refer back to the outcomes to ensure participants have either fully understood / completed the workbook or are working towards understanding.