

Lesson Plan: Healthy Relationships

Overview:

Intro: 10 mins

Aim: To make the young people feel comfortable sharing and to establish the space for discussion.

Opinion Continuum - Emotions, Masculinities and Healthy relationship: 30 minutes.

- **Aims:** To enable the students to reflect on what emotions they share and why they hide other emotions. To understand the difference between a healthy and unhealthy relationship. Create a space for discussion on how gender norms may impact this.

Wrap-up: 10 minutes.

- Check in on students, sign post pastoral and external support. Pupils complete feedback forms and check out.

Learning Outcomes:

Be able to identify characteristics of healthy relationships and examine how gender stereotypes influence them.

Adapting to different cohorts

Beyond Equality works primarily with groups of young men and boys and this session has been designed for a Key Stage 4 group of boys/young men. However, it is readily adaptable to other class groups.

- **key stage:** This session can be used for different key stages using the same basic opinion statements. Giving space to hear the thoughts of the young people will help you tailor the discussion to their level and keep it relevant to their lived experiences. The follow up conversations can then link directly to other PSHE being offered to the young people at their stage.

- **gender:** This session will also be suitable for mixed gender groups or groups of women/non-binary students. For mixed groups, duplicate the first question for different genders. You will also need to be careful to make sure that there is space for compassion towards the multiple gender experiences in the room.

- **recognising intersectionality and cultural diversity:** your students will have a range of backgrounds and experiences, and there may be different and multiple stereotypes/gender norms present in your class. Be curious and allow space for this difference and how it impacts on the conversation, and acknowledge that some young people will feel like it's much harder to go outside social norms than other students.

This session hasn't been designed to discuss experiences of discrimination or marginalisation, but these may come up in the conversations. As a minimum, you should be ready to hear these concerns, validate the experiences, name that there are multiple different versions of gender norms, talk about how other aspects of our

identity can impact how we see and experience the world, and including experiences of marginalization or discrimination.

Lesson Plan

| Time | Activity | Instructions | Equipment |
|---------|--|--|-----------|
| 10 mins | Welcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrange the room so there is a circle of chairs in the middle and all students are facing each other. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the topic: Today we'll be discussing what makes healthy and unhealthy relationships. <p><u>Group Agreement</u></p> <p>“Since we are talking about healthy relationships, what are some ground rules we can establish to create a safe space for every one?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Get some basics down about active listening, respectful participation etc. ○ Get a version of “what’s said in the room stays in the room” - then make sure that you say: “there is one exception to this, which is that if I hear anything that concerns me about your safety, I will tell the adults who need to know so that they can help you” This is basic safeguarding and very important for the students.. | None |
| 25 mins | Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Opinion Continuum | <p>Learning Outcomes:</p> <p>To identify the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.</p> <p>This is not just about romantic relationships, but understanding relationships with ourselves and others around us.</p> <p>Start a discussion on the statement, being sure to challenge their ideas on not showing emotion, dealing with difficult emotions, etc. To add some positivity - it's always good to list alternative ways that we can deal with difficult emotions rather than bottling them up.</p> | |

Activity Description

We use the Opinion Continuum to raise and discuss some of the **social norms** that relate to masculinities. We have selected questions that focus on the pressures of **expectations, emotional expression** and **mental well being**, particularly related to the socialisation of men and boy regarding not being perceived as weak and vulnerable.

We set the room up with enough space for the students to move freely in a large space. Typically this means moving all chairs and tables to the edges of the room.

Designate one side of the room as the 'agree' side and the other side as the 'disagree' side. Explain that it is a spectrum between those positions and students can position themselves at any point between the two sides to indicated differing levels of agreement.

Read out a statement. Ask the students to move to where feels right for them. Explain this isn't about giving the right or wrong answer, but to start a conversation, and that they will have a chance to move later if they want to.

Once students have moved, ask people in different parts of the room why they chose to stand where they are.

Statement: It is weak for a man to cry [duplicate with other gendered statements if in mixed gender group]

Example discussion questions: What are the gender norms about men crying? How do stereotypes about men being strong and powerful play into this statement? Are there any times it is okay to cry? What is a good reason to cry? What are you feeling when you cry? What emotions do you identify with crying? What does crying imply? If it is seen as weak for men to cry, how are they showing emotions in a healthy way?

Statement: I would be embarrassed to cry in school

Discussion: What would be seen as an embarrassing reason to cry? What is embarrassing about crying? (is it linked to weakness or vulnerability? Or is it about feeling frustrated because you can't solve the problem? How

| | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| | | <p>would people in school react? What happens when we cry? Do many people get involved? Would you feel like it won't help the problem?</p> <p>Statement: I would be happy for my friend to share a personal problem that they were going through with me.</p> <p>Discussion: What do we say when our friends are struggling? How do we support them? Would we expect the same thing from our friends? How do we look after the important relationships in our lives?</p> <p>Statement: I would share a personal problem that I am going through with my friends.</p> <p>Discussion: Why might it be easier to listen to our friends and be there for them than it might be for us to open up? Why might we feel like a burden to others for sharing our problems? How can we get better at asking for help?</p> <p>Finish the discussions by asking if any of the stereotypes of 'being a man' impact on the answers to these questions. The point here is to recognise that these norms might be felt very strongly by some students, but that they might be having a really negative impact - preventing people sharing, connecting and seeking help.</p> <p>More generally, you can point out the ways in which social norms and stigma can make it difficult to form emotionally connected relationships.</p> <p>Older age groups might be able to reflect on the type of relationships that are common among boys/men (sports, activities, banter, drinking, and sometimes supportive emotional connections) and those that are common among other genders.</p> <p>Discuss how this can then impact on the type of relationships that can be built.</p> | |
| 10 Mins | Wrap up / Check out Activity & Feedback | <p>Before you wrap up - you could mention that although some of these conversations can be heavy, draining or awkward, we feel they're important topics to talk about that will benefit their lives and the people around them in the long run. Go round the room again and wrap up by asking the students to say one of the following to check</p> | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <p>out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One thing from this workshop/lesson you will take away; that's made you think the most. • One thing you want to start doing differently or that's made a positive impact. <p>We suggest that schools prepare a survey to check students' understanding of healthy/unhealthy relationships and that they call identify a trusted adult.</p> | |
|--|--|---|--|

Signposting (to be updated by Schools if relevant)

Disrespect NoBody - Relationship Abuse, Consent, Porn, Sexting (nudes) - <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/>

AMAZE - <https://amaze.org/>

Stonewall - LGBTQ - <https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/>

Mermaids - Info on gender identity - <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/young-people/>

CALM - mental health & suicide prevention - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

MIND - mental health & suicide prevention - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Childline - a bit of everything - <https://www.childline.org.uk/> (0800 1111)

B-Eat - eating disorders - <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

Tell Mama - reporting anti-Muslim violence - <https://tellmamauk.org/>

Survivors UK - male and non-binary survivors of sexual abuse
<https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

Show Racism The Red Card - anti-racism support -
<https://www.theredcard.org/home>

Sexwise - Provides clear and engaging information about sexual health.

AMAZE - Age-appropriate sex education videos.

Fumble - Provides digital content created by and for young people.