

Discussion Guide

Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?

Overview

After a brief class discussion about romantic relationships, students read and discuss the pamphlet *Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?* in small groups. They personalize the information and analyze the content of the pamphlet in their groups. Then they view the related video, *A Wake-up Call*, which reinforces the pamphlet's health messages, and discuss the characters' actions and motivations related to dating violence.

Time: 45–60 minutes

Before you teach this activity:

- **Review both the pamphlet and the video** to be sure they are appropriate for your students. Obtain parent/guardian consent if required by your school.
- **Set groundrules about self-disclosure**, if these are not already in place. For example, you might ask students not to name or identify friends in troubled relationships, and to treat any personal disclosures shared in class as confidential.
- **If you are working with young people in a setting other than a school**, see the *Adapting the Activity* section at the end of this guide.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify common features of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
2. Identify common signs of abusive relationships.
3. Personalize the risk of relationship abuse in their lives and the lives of their friends.
4. Identify steps they can take to get help for themselves or support friends who are involved in abusive relationships.
5. Identify resources they can turn to for help with abusive relationships.

Materials & Preparation

Prepare

- **Determine** how students will view the video, based on your classroom resources.
 - Option A: Students watch the video online during class, either as a full group using a single monitor, multiple linked monitors or a digital projector, or in small groups using multiple computer stations.
 - Option B: Students watch the video as a homework assignment, either on a home computer or in the school's computer lab.
- **Have** butcher paper and markers, a whiteboard, or another way to record students' ideas.
- **Write** the name of the character each group is to watch at the top of the **Video: A Wake-up Call** activity sheets (Activity Sheet 2A) before handing them out (if students will watch the video in class). Assign each character to at least 1 group: Thomas (abusive boyfriend), Rebecca (abused girlfriend), Charlie (supportive male friend) or Jennifer (supportive female friend).

Copy:

- Activity Sheet 1A: **Relationship Check: Personal Reflections**, 1 for each student.
- Activity Sheet 1B: **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?**, 1 for each small group.

If students will watch the video in class:

- Activity Sheet 2A: **Video: A Wake-up Call**, 1 for each small group.

If students will watch the video as homework:

- Activity Sheet 2B: **Homework Video: A Wake-up Call**, 1 for each student.

Links to Other Learning

This lesson on healthy and unhealthy relationships could be related to lessons on:

- Sexual health
- Violence
- Communication
- Assertiveness and refusal skills
- Supporting friends
- Seeking help and local resources
- Building relationships
- Gender roles
- Bystander issues

Teaching Steps for Pamphlet

Explain activity

Today we're going to talk about teens and relationships. You'll find out more about what makes a relationship healthy, as well as some common signs of trouble. You'll have a chance to think about your own relationships or those of friends. When we're finished, you'll understand steps you or a friend can take to get help for a troubled relationship.

Discuss romantic relationships

Ask students:

- Why are people in romantic relationships?
- What are some things people get from romantic relationships?
- What are some problems that can come up in relationships?

Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas.

Write the main points of the discussion on butcher paper or a whiteboard. Prompt students about abuse if they don't mention it. For example, ask if there are ways people can be harmed in relationships, and have students describe what those ways might be.

Small groups read and discuss pamphlet

*Break students into small groups. Distribute a pamphlet and the **Relationship Check: Personal Reflections** activity sheet to each student. Distribute the **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?** activity sheet to each group. (Note: Groups can be up to 5 students each. Ideally, you will have at least 4 groups.)*

Take turns reading the pamphlet aloud in your group. The first part of this pamphlet is a quiz. If you're in a relationship, think about the answer that fits for you. If you're not, you can think about the relationship of a friend or sibling.

As you read each question, choose one answer to discuss in your group. It doesn't have to be the answer that fits the relationship you're thinking of. Just pick an answer you'd like to discuss. Talk about what that answer could look like in a relationship. For example, Answer A for Question 1 says, "We love to spend time together," so you could



Pamphlet

describe some things a couple might enjoy doing together.

When you finish reading the pamphlet in your group, take a few minutes to complete Activity Sheet 1A: **Relationship Check: Personal Reflections**, on your own. This activity sheet is private. You won't share your answers with your group.

Then complete Activity Sheet 1B: **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?** as a group.

If your group finishes before the other groups, you can go back to the quiz questions and give additional examples for other answers.

Allow students to read and discuss the pamphlet and complete the individual and group activity sheets.

Note: Have students put their names on the Personal Reflections activity sheet if you intend to collect it to use for assessment.

Review and summarize

Ask students:

- What did you think of the pamphlet? What's something you learned from the pamphlet that you didn't know before?
- What are the most important things for teens like you to know about unhealthy relationships?

Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas.

Note: If you are showing the video in class at this time, follow the Teaching Steps in section A below. The video can be found at www.etr.org/pub/wakeupcall. If your students will be viewing the video outside of class using the URL link on the pamphlet, follow the Teaching Steps in section B below.

Activity Sheet 1A

Relationship Check: Personal Reflections

Directions: After you read the pamphlet in your group, answer these questions on your own. Your answers are private. You will not be asked to share them.

1. Are you in a relationship now, or have you been in the past?
 Yes No
If Yes, answer the rest of the questions about a current or past relationship.
If No, answer the rest of the questions about a relationship of a friend, sibling, or even a character you're seen in a movie or on TV.
2. How did you do? Was your relationship:
 Mostly As
 Mostly Bs
 Mostly Cs
 A mix of all three
3. Based on your answers, how healthy do you think your relationship is?

4. Name a friend, an adult, and a professional (such as a teacher, doctor or counselor) whom you could talk to if you had questions or concerns about your relationship.
Friend: _____
Adult: _____
Professional: _____
5. If you were in a troubled relationship, what is the most important thing you could tell yourself?

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Relationship Check Activity Sheets 1

Activity Sheet 1A

Activity Sheet 1B

Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?

Name: _____

Directions: After you've read the pamphlet, answer the questions as a group.

1. Name 3 things commonly found in healthy relationships.

2. Name 3 things commonly found in unhealthy relationships.

3. What are 3 signs that someone in a relationship should seek help?

4. List 3 steps someone in an unhealthy relationship could take to get help.

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Relationship Check Activity Sheets 2

Activity Sheet 1B

A. Teaching Steps for In-Class Video

Explain activity

Now you're going to watch a video that dramatizes some of the things described in the pamphlet. The script was written by a teen. It's based on a true story.

Some parts of this video are emotional. If you have any feelings or questions after watching it that you'd like to discuss privately, please let me know.

Assign characters to watch

Distribute the A Wake-up Call activity sheet to each group. (Note: Write the name of the assigned character at the top of the activity sheet for each group. If you have more than 4 groups, you can assign some characters to more than one group.)

There are 4 characters in this story. I want you to watch the entire video. But each group will focus on one character in particular. The character your group will focus on is written at the top of your group's activity sheet.

As you watch the video, pay attention to:

- What your assigned character is feeling during these events.
- What that character does that either contributes to the violence or helps reduce it.
- What you think is going to happen to this character after the story ends. What do you think the next day, week or month be like for him or her?

Now let's watch the video.

Show video

Have students watch the video.

Activity Sheet 2A

Name: _____

Character: _____

Video: A Wake-up Call

Directions: After watching the video, answer the questions as a group about your assigned character.

1. What is this character feeling during these events?

2. What does this character do that either contributes to the violence or helps reduce it?

3. What do you think is going to happen to this character after the story ends? What will the next day be like? The next week? The next month?

4. Imagine this character is in a similar situation again in the future. Will he or she act differently? Why or why not? In what ways?

5. If you were friends with Thomas, what would you say to him?

6. If you were friends with Rebecca, what would you say to her?

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Relationship Check Activity Sheets 3

Activity Sheet 2A

Discuss video in general

Ask students:

- What did you think of the story? Was it realistic?
- How serious was the violence in this relationship?
- Could something like this happen to people you know?

Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas.

Small groups analyze characters

Allow time for small groups to work together to complete the activity sheet. Then lead a full-class discussion. As time allows, have groups report on their assigned character for each of these questions:

- What were some of the things the characters in this story were feeling?
- What steps did the characters take that either contributed to the violence or helped reduce it?
- What's going to happen to these characters now? What will the next day, week and month be like for them?
- Will these events change what the characters do in the future? Why or why not? In what ways?
- What would you say to the characters Thomas and Rebecca if they were friends of yours?

(Go to Closure section.)

B. Teaching Steps for Video as Homework

Explain assignment

For homework, you're going to watch a 3-minute video that dramatizes some of the things described in the pamphlet. The script was written by a teen. It's based on a true story.

Some parts of this video are emotional. If you have any feelings or questions after watching it that you'd like to discuss privately, please let me know.

The URL for the video is listed on the back page of the pamphlet. If you need any help finding a computer to watch the video on, let me know before you leave class today.

Distribute the activity sheets and describe the assignment.

I want you to watch the video twice. The first time, notice what you're thinking and feeling as you watch it.

The second time, choose one of the characters to focus on. As you watch the video, pay attention to:

- What the character is feeling during these events.
- What the character does that either contributes to the violence or helps reduce it.
- What you think is going to happen to this character after the story ends. What do you think the next day, week or month be like for him or her?

When you've finished watching the video for the second time, complete your activity sheet. Bring it back to class on **[due date]**, so we can discuss it.

Activity Sheet 2B

Name: _____

**Homework Video:
A Wake-up Call**

Directions: Go to the video *A Wake-up Call*, at www.etr.org/ab/wakeupcall. Watch the video 2 times.

- The first time, notice what you're thinking and feeling as you watch the video. Then answer the first question.
- The second time, choose one of the characters to focus on as you watch the video. Then answer the rest of the questions.

Bring your completed activity sheet back to class on _____ (due date)

1. What were some of your thoughts and feelings as you watched the video?
(For example, did it seem realistic? How did you react to each of the characters? Did it remind you of anything that happened to you or to one of your friends?)

2. Which character did you focus on the second time you watched the video?
 Thomas (abusive boyfriend)
 Rebecca (abused girlfriend)
 Charlie (supportive friend)
 Jennifer (supportive friend)

3. What is this character feeling during these events?

4. What does this character do that either contributes to the violence or helps reduce it?

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Relationship Check Activity Sheets

Activity Sheet 2B

Debrief homework

After students have completed their homework, guide a discussion. Allow students to refer to their activity sheets during the discussion.

Ask students:

- What are some things that stand out for you when you think about the video?
- What did you think of the story? Was it realistic?
- How serious was the violence in this relationship?
- Could something like this happen to people you know?

As time allows, allow students to report on their chosen characters for each of these questions:

- What were some of the things the characters in this story were feeling?
- What steps did the characters take that either contributed to the violence or helped reduce it?

- What's going to happen to these characters now? What will the next day, week and month be like for them?
- Will these events change what the characters do in the future? Why or why not? In what ways?
- What would you say to the characters Thomas and Rebecca if they were friends of yours?

Closure

End the lesson

Ask students:

- How does what you learned from the video compare with what you learned from the pamphlet?
- How can a quiz like the one in the pamphlet help people think about their own relationships?
- What are the most important things for teens like you to remember about relationships and responding to violence?

Reinforce these points:

- *Relationship violence is fairly common among young people.*
- *It's important to take steps to stop violence early on.*
- *There are resources for everyone—someone who's being abused, someone who has trouble controlling his or her temper, and someone who has friends who are facing these situations.*
- *If you are in an unhealthy relationship and can't talk to your parents or a teacher, talk to a counselor or health care provider, or call one of the hotlines listed in the pamphlet. They will know how you can get help.*

Assess student work

Collect students' activity sheets and evaluate their work.

Assessment Evidence

Objective 1: Students identified common features of healthy and unhealthy relationships by:

- Listing 3 features commonly found in healthy relationships and 3 features commonly found in unhealthy relationships on the **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?** activity sheet.
- Participating in class and small-group discussions.

Objective 2: Students identified common signs of abusive relationships by:

- Listing 3 signs that indicate someone in a relationship should seek help on the **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?** activity sheet.

Objective 3: Students personalized the risk of relationship abuse in their lives and the lives of their friends by:

- Completing the **Relationship Check: Personal Reflections** activity sheet.
- Participating in class and small-group discussions.

Objective 4: Students identified steps they can take to get help for themselves or support friends who are involved in abusive relationships by:

- Listing 3 steps someone in an unhealthy relationship could take to get help on the **Relationship Check: Healthy or Un?** activity sheet.

Objective 5: Students identified resources they can turn to for help with abusive relationships by:

- Completing Question 4 on the **Relationship Check: Personal Reflections** activity sheet.

Adapting the Activity

If you are presenting this activity in a community-based setting, some simple adaptations can enrich the learning and make it more relevant to the young people you serve. Here are some ideas:

- **Take more time, if you can.** You may have more time than schools to develop discussions, and more freedom in the matters you discuss. Explore participants' ideas, perspectives, responses and solutions in greater depth.

- **Link the material to the mission or focus of your organization.** For example:
 - In a religious or spiritual setting, talk about the ways supporting healthy relationships and stopping partner violence relate to spiritual perspectives.
 - In a young men’s or young women’s organization, spend more time addressing gender-specific issues, both in terms of risks and solutions.
 - In an organization that focuses on a particular cultural community, ask participants to describe the specific issues they observe and experience and discuss how these are similar to or different from those presented in the pamphlet and video.
 - In a setting that supports youth with specific risks, such as substance abuse, mental health issues or learning challenges, ask participants to describe how these risk factors affect the dynamics in both healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- **Expand the learning by involving parents.** After teaching this activity, have participants develop a program for their parents/guardians using the pamphlet, video, and discussions between youth and adults. They could come up with a list of questions for parents, offer presentations about what they have learned, or work with parents to come up with a set of guidelines for preventing relationship violence.
- **Have youth develop their own scripts.** Have participants write their own scripts that address healthy and unhealthy relationships. They might focus on related issues that can contribute to violence, such as pressure about sex, substance use, or seeing violence in the media. They can act out their scripts as skits, or make their own videos.