

Unit 9 Healthy friendships and relationships

About the unit

This unit encourages pupils to reflect on a variety of relationships and how they are defined. Pupils analyse media images of young people and their relationships, and discuss a range of values and beliefs related to friendships, relationships and sex within relationships.

The unit can be delivered from year 7 on, depending on the maturity of pupils and needs of the school community. It builds on sex and relationship work pupils do in primary school and on unit 4 'Support networks'. The unit leads to unit 11 'Relationships: making healthy choices'.

The activities in this unit are designed to be flexible so that they can be adapted for the class, the whole school or individual pupils. It is important to establish clear ground rules for these activities (see the *Teacher's handbook* for more details).

This unit supports the Every Child Matters aims 'stay safe' and 'be healthy'.

Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 3 non-statutory framework for PSHE:

Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

1b respect the differences between people as they develop their own sense of identity

Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle

2b learn how to keep healthy and what influences health, including the media

Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

3e learn about the changing nature of, and pressure on, relationships with friends and family

3h recognise that goodwill is essential to positive and constructive relationships

3i negotiate within relationships, recognising that actions have consequences, and when and how to make compromises

Expectations

Expectations should be adapted according to the needs, age, key stage and maturity of the pupils. By the end of this unit most pupils should be able to:

- define some features of friendships and other types of relationships and identify what they might look for in a relationship
- explain how they can help a relationship to thrive and develop
- identify ways in which the media portrays young people and their relationships, and recognise some of the pressures an individual may feel to conform to these images
- explain their own views and opinions and those of others towards aspects of friendships and relationships, including reasons for delaying a sexual relationship
- demonstrate ways to negotiate within relationships and ways of making decisions that reduce harm to themselves and the relationship.

Teaching activities

1 What do we mean by 'good relationships'?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Pupils should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to define what a relationship is ■ to identify desirable qualities in a healthy relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask the pupils to list as many people as they can think of with whom they have a relationship in the broadest sense. This can be done individually or as a class. ■ Ask the pupils to group each person under headings of their choice, eg <i>Family, Friends, Day-to-day acquaintances</i>. ■ Get the pupils to work in groups to identify three features of having a relationship with someone. Use group feedback to draw up a shared definition of 'relationship'. ■ Ask the pupils to write down the three most important features they would look for in a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner on three sticky notes. Use one colour of sticky notes for boys and one for girls. ■ Place the notes one by one on a large sheet of paper or white board, making sure they are anonymous. Invite the pupils to suggest subdivisions, eg <i>physical appearance, emotions, personality, cultural background</i>, and place the sticky notes into these categories. Discuss the distribution of features, eg <i>are there more notes under a physical features heading?</i> ■ Some pupils might include 'good sex' in the list. This could be used as an opportunity to discuss delaying a sexual relationship (see activities later in the unit). ■ Examine with the pupils any possible differences between boys' and girls' perceptions and attitudes. Ask the pupils to give reasons for why boys and girls may look for different things in relationships. <i>Can they think what impact these differences might have when people are forming a relationship? Why is it important for two people starting a relationship to talk about their feelings and how they might behave towards each other? Are there ways of talking and behaving towards each other that can make a relationship more or less successful? What are they?</i> 	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ define some features of friendships and other types of relationships ■ identify what helps relationships thrive and develop ■ identify what they might look for in a relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be sensitive to the range of circumstances regarding relationships that may exist in the class, for example pupils who are in local authority care, those whose parents have recently separated, those who may have suffered a parental bereavement. Remind pupils that they can choose which relationships to include in their list. <p>Using ICT: the class list of features could be recorded on an interactive whiteboard so that pupils can reorder the ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Throughout this unit there is an opportunity to investigate the impact on relationships of chat rooms and electronic communications. Learning to form and manage relationships that don't involve physical contact requires new skills, such as recognising clues in online behaviour and language in order to stay safe.

Teaching activities

1 What do we mean by 'good relationships'? (continued)

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Pupils should learn:		Pupils:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1776 371 2163 735">■ Be aware that some pupils may come from faith or cultural backgrounds where having a girlfriend/ boyfriend that they are not going to marry is forbidden or discouraged. These pupils may want to discuss features they would look for in a friendship or in a future husband or wife.<li data-bbox="1776 762 2163 1192">■ Be aware that some pupils may have difficulty in understanding some aspects of forming relationships, for example pupils with language and communication difficulties or those with social and emotional difficulties. Teachers should plan how to approach the activities with these pupils to help them progress.

Teaching activities

2 The media and young people

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Pupils should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to analyse how people of their age are portrayed in the media ■ about the impact that the media's representation of young people may have on their own feelings, self-image and lifestyle choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Divide the class into small groups and distribute a variety of stimuli, <i>eg magazines, newspapers, website addresses, television advertisements, short clips of television programmes</i>. Ask the pupils to identify ways that teenagers are presented by the media. Areas for investigation could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ perceived interests and concerns ■ what is most important in their lives ■ physical appearance ■ perceived attitudes towards friendships and relationships ■ perceived attitudes towards sex. <p>Ask each group to produce a collage combining images and text to show how they think the media represents young people and their relationships. Explore the ideas in the collages with the groups and ask them whether the media accurately reflects the pupils' own beliefs and experiences. Other questions to discuss could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do the young people portrayed have 'perfect' bodies or looks? ■ What might be the effects of showing such 'perfection' in terms of self-esteem, relationships, etc? ■ Is there a variety of people of different sexes and different ethnic/cultural groups? ■ Are people with physical disabilities portrayed? ■ Are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) relationships portrayed? ■ Does the portrayal of sex affect people's beliefs about its value and about the importance of being 'ready' for a sexual relationship? 	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ analyse media products and summarise their findings ■ discuss the possible pressures on individuals to conform to media images in relation to lifestyle choices and physical appearance and development ■ explain their own views and opinions and the views of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is important not to be overcritical of the publications as they may be enjoyed and valued by pupils. ■ The Schools Health Education Unit produces data on what young people worry about, what they spend money on and how they use leisure time (see 'Resources'). Some primary care trusts carry out local research. ■ Instead of producing collages, pupils could write a report or produce a presentation comparing the media's portrayal of young people's relationships with their own reality. ■ Link with English: En2 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d.

Teaching activities

3 Decision making – what’s right for me?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Pupils should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ways to help friendships/relationships develop ■ ways to negotiate within friendships/relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask the pupils, in small groups, to identify three situations where relationships or friendships might go wrong. List the situations on the board and ask if pupils can think of ways of preventing each from happening, or resolving them if they have happened. ■ Discuss these situations and, if necessary, introduce the idea that sometimes a person is asked to do something they are not sure about, <i>eg go off with a friend after school without informing anyone at home, let a friend copy homework.</i> ■ Share the ‘four Cs’ (see ‘Points to note’) or an alternative model for problem solving when faced with making a decision that affects a relationship with another person. ■ Give the pupils one or more scenarios and ask them to work in small groups to discuss how these situations could be resolved. They could apply the four Cs. Below are three example scenarios. Teachers could use scenarios of their own or soap-opera scenarios. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sam and Alisa have been mates for ages and always walk to and from school together. Suraya has recently moved in next door to Alisa, and Alisa and Suraya agree to walk to school together. Sam is upset not to have been asked if it was okay for Suraya to join them and is feeling left out. ■ Alex and Sacha are good friends. On the way home from school they are talking about who they fancy on TV. Alex suddenly says ‘I fancy you’ and kisses Sacha. ■ Amy and Ali have been going out with each other for a few months. They are invited to a party where it sounds as if people might stay over. There will be older brothers and sisters around but no parents. Amy is worried that if they agree to stay over they might have to share a bed and Ali might want to have sex. 	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrate ways of negotiating within friendships/relationships ■ identify ways of making decisions within friendships/relationships to reduce harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ‘four Cs’ model is one way of helping pupils to consider their options and is found in a variety of teaching resources. A problem can be addressed through four stages. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get clear what the issue or problem is. 2. Consider options for solving it. 3. Think about the consequences of each option. 4. Choose the best option. ■ The names in the second scenario have been chosen so that no assumptions need to be made about sex. If appropriate, this could provide an opportunity to discuss issues of sexuality that may be involved. Teachers can substitute names to better reflect their school community.

Teaching activities

3 Decision making – what’s right for me? (continued)

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Pupils should learn:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ For each scenario, ask the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What might the different people be feeling?■ What might they be thinking?■ What could they do to resolve the situation so that the friendship or relationship isn't damaged?■ Discuss the options the pupils have presented for resolving each situation. Discuss whether the four Cs method is a realistic approach to making decisions, and if not, why not. <i>Are there any other strategies they could suggest when dealing with difficult situations in friendships and relationships?</i> This could include all types of situations, <i>eg initiating a conversation with a responsible adult or parent as well as with those from their peer group.</i>	Pupils:	

Teaching activities

4 Is everybody doing it?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Pupils should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to consider reasons for and against having or delaying a sexual relationship ways of minimising risk and dealing with pressure in relationships 	<p>Ask the class to list reasons why two people might decide to have or to delay having sex. (These should include reasons within or outside marriage or a committed relationship.) Write each reason on a large sheet of paper. The following are example statements, but teachers and pupils could add statements of their own.</p> <p>Possible reasons for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It shows that you really care about someone. Everybody else is doing it. If you don't, you'll get dumped for someone else who will. It's fun and exciting. <p>Possible reasons against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't feel ready. There's a risk of getting pregnant or getting a sexually transmitted infection. You believe/your faith teaches that you shouldn't have sex before you are married. You might be able to enjoy and take responsibility for sex more when you're older. <p>Place the pieces of paper around the room and ask the pupils to stand next to one. Groups standing by the same statement should discuss it and whether it is a strong reason for having or delaying sex, writing any comments or observations on the sheet of paper. Call 'time' after a few minutes and ask the pupils to find another statement. When all statements have gained a reasonable number of comments, ask the pupils to remain where they are standing and report back the comments and ideas written on their paper.</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify different reasons for having or delaying a sexual relationship understand that closeness in relationships can be achieved without having sex identify ways to respond to unwanted pressures in relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sexual relationship is defined in this unit as one in which a couple are engaging in sexual activity that is likely to include having sex. Throughout the unit, emphasise that there is no assumption that pupils are having or considering having a sexual relationship, and that they have the choice to wait until they are ready. Equally, there is no assumption that they will not want to have a sexual relationship. However, these activities can help them to make healthier and more informed choices. Be sensitive to and allow discussion of the beliefs and values of pupils whose religion or culture forbids or discourages sexual relationships outside marriage. Make sure that beliefs about moral issues in relation to having or delaying a sexual relationship are included in discussion.

Teaching activities

4 Is everybody doing it? (continued)

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Pupils should learn:		Pupils:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Discuss the benefits of delaying a sexual relationship and how people know when it is the right time for them to have sex. Ask the pupils what difficulties might be involved in making a choice. Emphasise that individuals should make choices that are right for them and shouldn't feel pressured into doing something they don't want to. Dispel myths, <i>eg everybody is doing it</i>.■ Discuss other ways of showing someone that you care about them without having sex, <i>eg verbal intimacy, taking part in shared interests, kissing</i>.■ Discuss different ways of resisting pressure to do things that you feel uncomfortable with in a relationship, <i>eg saying no assertively, suggesting other things to do, explaining that you don't want to</i>.■ Construct a problem page for a teenage magazine with letters and answers that show a range of relationship issues that young people experience.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Remind pupils that the age of consent in England and Wales is 16 for both heterosexual and homosexual sex, and that sex before that age is illegal.■ Be aware that some pupils may have difficulty in understanding some aspects of forming relationships, for example pupils with language and communication difficulties or those with social and emotional difficulties. Teachers should plan how to approach the activities sensitively with these pupils to help them progress.■ Teachers should remain neutral when asking pupils to explore their own views and values on sexual relationships.■ Findings indicate that the majority of young women who had early sexual experience later regretted it (see 'Sexual behaviour' article in 'Resources').

Links with other subjects

English

En2 Reading

- 5a how meaning is conveyed in texts that include print, images and sometimes sounds
- 5b how choice of form, layout and presentation contribute to effect
- 5c how the nature and purpose of media products influence content and meaning
- 5d how audiences and readers choose and respond to media

RE non-statutory framework

Learning about religion

- 1e discuss and evaluate how religious beliefs and teachings inform responses to ethical issues

Learning from religion

- 2c express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world-views on human relationships
- 2e express their own beliefs and ideas, using a variety of forms of expression.

Science

Sc2 Life processes and living things

- 2f about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence

Resources

- Centre for HIV and Sexual Health – provides training, resources and publications on sexual health education
- *Faith, values and sex and relationships education* by Simon Blake and Zarine Katak (National Children’s Bureau, 2002) – offers strategies for developing sex and relationship education policy within a multifaith society. It contains a comprehensive list of faith-related websites
- L8r – an educational project that consists of an interactive website and video episodes featuring six teenage characters. Themes covered include teenage pregnancy, parenthood and sexual health
- Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) – encourages friendship and support among lesbian and gay Christians. LGCM has a number of support groups for each of the Christian denominations
- *muslimyouth.net* – culturally sensitive guidance and support for young Muslims. The site does not promote any religious or political ideology
- National Healthy Schools Programme – helps schools develop a whole-school approach to promoting health and well-being. This makes sure that what is taught in the classroom is reflected and supported by the school ethos and environment. For more details see the *Wired for health* website
- Naz Project London – provides sexual health, HIV prevention and support services to South Asian, Middle Eastern, North African, Horn of African and Latin American communities, including counselling within the context of faith
- *PSHE in practice: resource pack for secondary schools* (DfES, 2004) – a resource book and DVD to support PSHE teaching in schools
- Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) – offers evaluation and monitoring services to those concerned with the health and social development of young people. It also provides data on what young people worry about, what they spend money on and how they use leisure time (see the ‘Publications’ section of their website)
- *Sex and relationship education guidance* (DfES, 2000) – guidance for schools, teachers and governors that explains the legal requirements of sex and relationship education and suggests how to deal with sensitive issues
- *Sex and relationships education in schools* (Ofsted, 2002) – a survey of sex and relationship education and a guide to good practice. Appendix 1 contains learning outcomes for sex and relationship education at each key stage

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- Sex Education Forum – provides a range of publications and factsheets that promote good practice. It contains links to organisations such as Brook and the Family Planning Association (FPA), which provide their own resources for schools
 - ‘Sexual behaviour in Britain: early heterosexual experience’ by Kaye Wellings *et al* (*The Lancet*, vol 358, December 2001) – research article reporting on sexual behaviour and attitudes among young people in Britain
 - *The Site* – provides factsheets and articles on issues that young people face, including sex and relationships and health and well-being
 - Spotlight series: *Sex, alcohol and other drugs: exploring the links in young people’s lives* by Simon Blake and Jeanie Lynch (National Children’s Bureau, 2004) – addresses issues of sex, alcohol and drugs together, rather than in isolation, and provides suggestions for developing policy
 - *Teachernet* – contains case studies of sex and relationship education practice across a range of schools, and includes information on provision of sex and relationship education to pupils with special educational needs
 - Teenage Pregnancy Unit website – this website provides information about the government’s Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and guidance from the Teenage Pregnancy Unit. It lists guidance and publications on sex and relationship education, as well as websites and organisations for teenagers and parents
 - *Wired for health* – this website contains information for teachers and healthy schools coordinators on health issues. It includes four separate websites for pupils of different ages

The website addresses of these resources are on the PSHE pages of the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk/pshe/).

Care should be taken when encouraging children and young people to access websites.