

Is It Abuse If...?

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

PS.12.CC.1 – Compare and contrast situations and behaviors that may constitute bullying, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, incest, rape and dating violence.

PS.12.IC.2 – Identify ways in which they could respond when someone else is being bullied or harassed.

HR.12.IC.1 – Demonstrate effective strategies to avoid or end an unhealthy relationship.

TARGET GRADE: High School
– Lesson 10

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Projector and screen
- Computer with Internet connection and audio equipment
- White board and markers
- Butcher paper (5 sheets)
- Five markers
- Masking tape
- “Is It Abuse If...?” worksheet (one per student)
- “Is It Abuse If...?” Answer Key
- **Homework:** “Am I a Good Partner? Quiz” and “Healthy Relationship Quiz” (one each per student)

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Log into YouTube with your district ID and password.
- Preview the following video and have it ready to play: “Teen Dating Violence PSA”
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wss6CvUve68

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe at least two characteristics of five different types of relationship abuse. [Knowledge]
2. Explain what, in their own opinion, does and does not constitute relationship abuse. [Knowledge, Affect]
3. Name one online and one hotline resource teens can use to get help if they or someone they know is in an abusive relationship. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar —using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him,” using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Say, “There are a lot of myths out there about sexuality and relationships, particularly as it relates to teens. One myth is that relationship abuse doesn't happen in teen relationships. That's what we're going to talk about today. Actually, statistics show that relationship abuse of all kinds is just as prevalent in teen relationships as it is in adult relationships.

Often, people can't always tell whether their relationship is abusive or whether they're just going through a rough time with a partner. We're going to try to figure that out today, along with what to do when you realize you're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Our goal is to be able to recognize and

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foster healthy relationships based on mutual respect and affection that can lead to a committed relationship, such as marriage.”

Before starting the activity, remind students that you are a mandated reporter in the state of California and that if you hear a comment that might suggest that they are or have been a victim of abuse that you are required to report it to the school police so that they may conduct an investigation.

Say, **“There are a number of different categories of relationship abuse: Physical, Emotional, Psychological, Sexual, and Financial.”** As you name these, write these five categories of abuse on the board. **“Physical abuse is exactly what it sounds like—hurting someone physically in some way. Emotional abuse is making someone feel bad about themselves, such as taking away their sense of self or self-esteem, or harassing someone so that they feel bad about themselves. Psychological abuse is using threats or intimidation to frighten someone or make them feel like they’re losing touch with reality. Sexual abuse is similar to physical abuse, although the abuse is sexual in nature. Finally, financial abuse is when the finances in a relationship—or a person’s potential to earn or have money—are controlled by one person. Let’s explore what each of these mean.”** (5 minutes)

STEP 2: Separate the class into five groups and assign each group one type of abuse. Give each group a blank sheet of butcher paper and a marker. Say, “Given the definitions I just shared, please work in your groups to come up with some specific behaviors that would come under your category. For example, in the physical abuse category would be ‘hitting.’ Each group will come up with their own unique lists, but there may be some overlap from time to time.” Answer any questions and tell the class they have about five minutes in which to complete their brainstorm. (8 minutes)

STEP 3: Stop the groups after about 5 minutes. Ask each group to present what is on their sheet. Do this by asking one group to contribute one or two of their answers, then go to the next group and ask them to do the same. Continue around the room until all ideas are shared. Sample responses should include:

PHYSICAL

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Slapping
- Punching
- Pinching
- Restraining
- Choking
- Blocking their way

EMOTIONAL

- Criticizing the person’s appearance or intelligence
- Telling the person that no one else would ever want to be with them
- Flirting with other people in front of the person
- Using what they know makes the other person feel vulnerable to make them feel worse
- Sharing sexy photos of the other person without their consent [it is illegal for anyone to share naked or sexual photos of people under the age of 18]

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PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Threatening to hurt the other person
- Threatening to hurt people they know or care about (or pets)
- Texting nonstop and expecting the other person to text back by a certain time
- Threatening to hurt yourself if the other person doesn't do what you want
- Spreading rumors about the person

SEXUAL

- Rape
- Physically forcing the other person to do anything sexual they don't want to do
- Coercing, intimidating, or pressuring the other person to do something sexual that they don't want to do
- Making the other person watch porn
- Sharing sexy photos of the other person without their consent
- Refusing to practice safer sex

FINANCIAL

- Controlling the money in the relationship
- Stealing from the other person
- Telling the other person they need to spend time with you instead of going to work
- Keeping the other person from going to or finishing school, which limits their ability to earn money

As you go through the lists, ask other groups if they have anything they would add. Ask students what they notice about the lists. Say, **“It can be relatively easy to come up with a list of behaviors—especially when we’re not in the relationship in the moment. But sometimes abusive situations aren’t so clear.**

For instance, other types of relationship abuse can include sexual harassment and sex trafficking. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature such as unwanted sexual notes or texts. If the recipient tells someone to stop this type of harassment even once, and it continues, then it is defined as sexual harassment and is illegal. Ask students if they can offer some examples of sexual harassment.

Sex trafficking occurs when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to control another person for the purpose of engaging in sex acts against his/her will in exchange for money or other goods. The obvious form of sex trafficking is when someone is forced to be a ‘sex slave’ and is sold repeatedly for sex. Not so obvious—but more common—is when the person who trafficks is the victim’s romantic partner. The victim might have sex with other people to please their partner, because they are in fear of being injured by their partner, or is seeking a lifestyle that the partner promises them. In any form that it takes, sex trafficking is a crime and is illegal.” (14 minutes)

STEP 4: Ask students to return to their original seats. Distribute the *“Is It Abuse If...?”* worksheet. Tell students to read each statement and decide whether they think what is

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described is abusive, and indicate their decision by circling the response on the sheet. Tell them they have about 5 minutes in which to do this.

Once everyone has finished, divide the class into groups of four. Instruct students to go through each situation on the “*Is It Abuse If...?*” worksheet and discuss their answers. Tell them they can change their answers if they wish. Allow for about 10 minutes for their small group discussions. Refer to the “*Is It Abuse If...?*” Answer Key if needed to clarify answers.

Start processing the activity by asking, “**What was it like to do that? What was** [fill in students’ responses] **about it?**” Ask whether they found any of the statements particularly easy to discuss or agree on and why. Then ask them to talk about some that were more challenging to discuss and/or agree upon. Point out that the gender(s) of the partners were not revealed in the examples. Ask the students, “**What did you picture in these relationships? Who was an abuser? Who was being abused? Would your responses have changed based on whether the characters were one gender or another?**” (17 minutes).

STEP 5: Show the “*Teen Dating Violence PSA*” (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wss6CvUve68), stopping it at 1:55 so the students can write down the hotline number on the screen, which is the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline (866-331-9474).

Say, “**What are some examples from the video that people said to their abusive partner?**” After hearing student responses, ask what else a young person can do if they find themselves in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Probe for: they can ask for help from parent(s)/caregiver(s), teachers, coaches, friend’s parent/caregiver, etc.

Say, “**Sometimes, people don’t feel they can talk with someone face-to-face. They may feel ashamed of having been in an abusive relationship. Depending on the gender or genders of the people involved in the relationship, the person being abused may be even less likely to disclose that they’d been abused and to seek help. So an anonymous website or hotline can encourage people to be more honest and get the help they need. The one you see on the screen is one example of a hotline that can help. You can also use the www.loveisrespect.org website to help in situations of relationship abuse, sexual harassment, or sex trafficking.**” Write the phone number (866-331-9474) and these website addresses on the board.

Tell students, “**In California, anyone of any age may consent to their own care and treatment for sexual assault confidentially, meaning without notifying parents if you do not wish to. Please see the “*California Minor Consent Laws*” card that I gave to you during the last lesson for more details.**” Answer any questions, and let students know that you and the school counselor are available to talk if they have any questions that they would prefer to ask one-on-one. Pass out the “*Am I a Good Partner? Quiz*” and “*Healthy Relationship Quiz*” and tell students to honestly answer these questions and assess how healthy they treat or have been treated by romantic partners. Tell them that these quizzes are for their personal reflection and you will not collect them. (6 minutes)

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RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Defining and categorizing the types of relationship abuse will accomplish Learning Objective 1. The “*Is It Abuse If...?*” worksheet will accomplish Learning Objective 2. The teacher sharing the hotline information at the end will accomplish Learning Objective 3.

HOMEWORK:

“*Am I a Good Partner? Quiz*” and “*Healthy Relationship Quiz*” to be completed on their own.

Note: *The activity, “Is It Abuse If...?” was created by Elizabeth Schroeder, EdD, MSW, and then subsequently published in the American Journal of Sexuality Education in 2005. This is an adaptation of that activity.*

Is It Abuse If...?

Name _____ Date _____

1. A couple are arguing and when one partner begins to freak out, the other gives them a light slap to calm them down?

YES

NO

Comments:

2. A person walks their partner to school every morning, meets them for lunch every day, and picks them up at the end of each afternoon?

YES

NO

Comments:

3. Every time a same-sex couple argues, one of the partners threatens to “out” the other to their family?

YES

NO

Comments:

4. An 18-year-old has sex with a 14-year-old?

YES

NO

Comments:

5. A couple starts play-fighting and they wrestle around on the floor, resulting in bruises on one of their arms?

YES

NO

Comments:

6. One partner says they want to have sex, their partner says they’re not ready, but after talking about it, gives in and has sex anyway, even though they really don’t want to?

YES

NO

Comments:

7. Someone expects to be able to check their partner’s cell phone/texts anytime they wish?

YES

NO

Comments:

8. One partner pressures their partner to have sex with another person in exchange for money?

YES

NO

Comments:

9. One partner teases and jokes with the other about sexuality-related things while they’re at school, even though the partner has asked them to stop?

YES

NO

Comments:

Is It Abuse If...?

Answer Key

1. A couple are arguing and when one partner begins to freak out, the other gives them a light slap to calm them down?

YES

NO

Comments: It's never okay to hit someone else, especially when you're in a relationship with them.

2. A person walks their partner to school every morning, meets them for lunch every day, and picks them up at the end of each afternoon?

YES

COULD BE EITHER

NO

Comments: If these actions are wanted and appreciated by the person being walked to/from and met at school, then this is not abuse. If these actions are not wanted by that person, they need to clearly state that – and the partner needs to respect their wishes. If the partner doesn't respect their wishes and keeps doing it, that would be considered Psychological abuse.

3. Every time a same-sex couple argues, one of the partners threatens to “out” the other to their family?

YES

NO

Comments: This is an example of intimidation and Psychological abuse and using threats in a relationship is never okay.

4. An 18-year-old has sex with a 14-year-old?

YES

NO

Comments: In California, a person under the age of 18 is not legally able to consent to sex and if someone under 18 has sex, it is a crime called unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor. If the younger person is not more than three years younger than the older partner, and both partners gave affirmative consent to the sex, then technically it is not considered crime. Given the two people are four years apart in this situation, and assuming there is no force, intimidation or coercion, this would be considered statutory rape or sex with a minor and the older partner could be charged with a crime.

5. A couple starts play-fighting and they wrestle around on the floor, resulting in bruises on one of their arms?

YES

COULD BE EITHER

NO

Comments: Perhaps the play-fighting was mutually consensual and enjoyed by both partners and the bruising was truly an accident. But if one of the partners was not enjoying the wrestling, told the other person to stop, and/or was intimidated or physically hurt, then this is an example of Physical abuse.

6. One partner says they want to have sex, their partner says they're not ready, but after talking about it, gives in and has sex anyway, even though they really don't want to?

YES

COULD BE EITHER

NO

Comments: We don't know how partner one is talking with partner two — it could be that partner two simply changed their mind. Were threats used? Intimidation? It's not necessarily coercion, but if partner one gives any ultimatums — such as, 'Fine, then let's break up,' then it would be considered emotional abuse.

(Continued on back...)

Is It Abuse If...?

Answer Key

7. Someone expects to be able to check their partner's cell phone/texts anytime they wish?

YES

COULD BE EITHER

NO

Comments: Did the couple talk about their expectations around checking each others' phones? If they haven't, they need to. If a couple agrees they can both have each others' passwords, then it's consensual. If, however, one partner wants to maintain their privacy and the other insists on being able to check their phone, that's controlling behavior, and a warning sign for psychological abuse.

8. One partner pressures their partner to have sex with another person in exchange for money?

YES

NO

Comments: This is an example of Financial, Emotional and Sexual abuse. Sex trafficking is when a person is forced, compelled or coerced to engage in commercial sex acts, meaning having sex in exchange for money, and is illegal.

9. One partner teases and jokes with the other about sexuality-related things while they're at school, even though the partner has asked them to stop?

YES

NO

Comments: Since the partner has already asked the other person to stop and the behavior continues, this is an example of Emotional abuse and sexual harassment.

Am I a Good Partner? Quiz



Are you a good partner? Answer yes or no to the following questions to find out. Make sure to check the boxes to record your responses. At the end, you'll find out how to score your answers.

Do I

1. Forget to thank my partner when they do something nice for me? Yes No
2. Ignore my partner's calls if I don't feel like talking? Yes No
3. Get jealous when my partner makes a new friend? Yes No
4. Have trouble making time to listen to my partner when something is bothering them? Yes No
5. Discourage my partner from trying something new like joining a club? Yes No
6. Call, text or drive by my partner's house a lot? Yes No
7. Get upset when my partner wants to hang out with their friends or family? Yes No
8. Make fun of my partner or call them names? Yes No
9. Criticize my partner for their taste in music or clothing? Yes No
10. Make fun of my partner's appearance? Yes No
11. Accuse my partner of flirting or cheating even if I'm not sure that's what happened? Yes No
12. Take out my frustrations on my partner, like snapping at them or giving them attitude? Yes No
13. Throw things if I'm mad at my partner or do things like hit walls or drive dangerously? Yes No
14. Read my partner's texts or go through their personal things, like their wallet or purse? Yes No
15. Tell my partner they are the reason for my bad mood even if they aren't? Yes No
16. Try to make my partner feel guilty about things they have no control over? Yes No
17. Sometimes say things to my partner knowing that they are hurtful? Yes No
18. Make my partner feel bad about something nice they did for me that I didn't like, even though I know they tried their best? Yes No
19. Talk down to or embarrass my partner in front of others? Yes No
20. Have sex with my partner even if I think they don't want to go that far? Yes No

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 text "loveis" to 22522

 call 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options confidentially.
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

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Scoring – So Are You A Good Partner?

Give yourself one point for every “Yes” you answered to questions one through four and five points for all “Yes” answers to numbers 5-20. Don’t give yourself any points for any “No” answers.

Now that you’re finished and have your score, the next step is to find out what it means. Simply take your total score and see which of the categories below apply to you.

Score: 0 Points

If you got zero points, congratulations! You make a good Partner! It sounds like you’re very mindful of your actions and respectful of your partner’s feelings -- these are the building blocks of a healthy relationship. Keeping things on a good track takes work, so stay with it! As long as you and your partner continue like this, your relationship should grow in a healthy direction.

Score: 1-2 Points

If you scored one or two points, there may be a couple of things in your relationship that could use a little attention. Nobody is perfect, but it is important to be mindful of your actions and try to avoid hurting your partner. Remember, communication is key to building a healthy relationship!

Score: 3-4 Points

If you scored three or four points, it’s possible that some of your actions may hurt your partner and relationship. While the behaviors may not be abusive, they can worsen over time if you don’t change.

Score: 5 Points or More

If you scored five or more points, some of your actions may be abusive. You may not realize it, but these behaviors are damaging. The first step to improving your relationship is becoming aware of your unhealthy actions and admitting they are wrong. It’s important to take responsibility for the problem and get help to end it. An unhealthy pattern is hard to change, so chat with a peer advocate at loveisrespect.org for more information on how to get help.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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Healthy Relationship Quiz



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Everyone deserves to be in a safe and healthy relationship. Do you know if your relationship is healthy? Answer yes or no to the following questions to find out. Make sure to check the boxes to record your responses. At the end, you'll find out how to score your answers.

The Person I'm With

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Is very supportive of things that I do. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Encourages me to try new things. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Likes to listen when I have something on my mind. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Understands that I have my own life too. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Is not liked very well by my friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. Says I'm too involved in different activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. Texts me or calls me all the time. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. Thinks I spend too much time trying to look nice. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 9. Gets extremely jealous or possessive. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 10. Accuses me of flirting or cheating. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11. Constantly checks up on me or makes me check in. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12. Controls what I wear or how I look. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 13. Tries to control what I do and who I see. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 14. Tries to keep me from seeing or talking to my family and friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 15. Has big mood swings, getting angry and yelling at me one minute but being sweet and apologetic the next. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 16. Makes me feel nervous or like I'm "walking on eggshells." | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 17. Puts me down, calls me names or criticizes me. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18. Makes me feel like I can't do anything right or blames me for problems. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 19. Makes me feel like no one else would want me. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 20. Threatens to hurt me, my friends or family. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 21. Threatens to hurt him or herself because of me. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 22. Threatens to destroy my things. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

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23. Grabs, pushes, shoves, chokes, punches, slaps, holds me down, throws things or hurts me in some way. Yes No
24. Breaks or throws things to intimidate me. Yes No
25. Yells, screams or humiliates me in front of other people. Yes No
26. Pressures or forces me into having sex or going farther than I want to. Yes No

Scoring

Give yourself one point for every no you answered to numbers 1-4, one point for every yes response to numbers 5-8 and five points for every yes to numbers 9 and above.

Now that you're finished and have your score, the next step is to find out what it means. Simply take your total score and see which of the categories below apply to you.

Score: 0 Points

You got a score of zero? Don't worry -- it's a good thing! It sounds like your relationship is on a pretty healthy track. Maintaining healthy relationships takes some work -- keep it up! Remember that while you may have a healthy relationship, it's possible that a friend of yours does not. If you know someone who is in an abusive relationship, find out how you can help them by visiting loveisrespect.org.

Score: 1-2 Points

If you scored one or two points, you might be noticing a couple of things in your relationship that are unhealthy, but it doesn't necessarily mean they are warning signs. It's still a good idea to keep an eye out and make sure there isn't an unhealthy pattern developing.

The best thing to do is to talk to your partner and let them know what you like and don't like. Encourage them to do the same. Remember, communication is always important when building a healthy relationship. It's also good to be informed so you can recognize the different types of abuse.

Score: 3-4 Points

If you scored three or four points, it sounds like you may be seeing some warning signs of an abusive relationship. Don't ignore these red flags. Something that starts small can grow much worse over time. No relationship is perfect -- it takes work! But in a healthy relationship you won't find abusive behaviors.

Score: 5 or More Points

If you scored five or points, you are definitely seeing warning signs and may be in an abusive relationship. Remember the most important thing is your safety -- consider making a safety plan.

You don't have to deal with this alone. We can help. Chat with a trained peer advocate to learn about your different options at loveisrespect.org.

For more information, visit www.loveisrespect.org

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