

RELATIONSHIP

Lesson 6

Workbook Assignment

Dating and Emotions
Breaking Up

Overview

This lesson gives students an opportunity to assess the quality of a dating relationship. Students will examine positive and negative elements in relationship. The lesson concludes with identifying problem areas in and ending unhealthy relationships.

Objectives

- ◆ Students will assess a personal dating relationship.
 - ◆ Students will identify positive and negative elements in relationships.
 - ◆ Students will identify signs of an unhealthy relationship.
 - ◆ Students will discuss steps for ending a relationship.
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Vocabulary

trust	jealousy
understanding	dishonesty
confidence	manipulation

Key Concepts

- Meaningful dating relationships involve an emotional investment from both partners.
 - Partners in the relationship must share common goals and benefit mutually from the relationship.
 - Positive elements enhance and strengthen a relationship, negative elements are destructive and weaken a relationship.
 - Differences in goals or interests, emotional involvement, sexual behaviors or desires, or role expectations may be factors in deciding to end a relationship.
 - Changes in communication, the number of unresolved conflicts, a decrease in the amount of time spent together and the presence of physical or emotional abuse are indications that the relationship is in trouble.
 - Positive steps can be taken to recover from a broken relationship: *value self, focus thoughts, get new patterns, stay involved, give it time.*
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A successful dating relationship, which often begins as friendship, is based on two people having the maturity to invest something of themselves into the relationship. The resulting emotional bond must produce mutual benefits for the relationship to remain vital and healthy. The elements of friendship serve as a foundation, but the relationship will be additionally strengthened if both partners share common factors, such as: goals, interests, an equal involvement in the relationship, similar needs or desires, and role expectations.

When both partners experience positive benefits from being together as a couple, there is incentive to invest emotionally in each other and the relationship. While there is always risk involved in becoming emotionally vulnerable, the shared connection will ultimately provide stability and security to the relationship.

Not all relationships prove to be healthy ones. Some individuals stay together even though the connections between them are weak and destructive. They share little in common and participate in behaviors that tear down rather than build up the relationship. Having an opportunity to assess the quality of a dating relationship will allow the students to determine whether their current relationship is a healthy one or not. Relationships that contain the Negative Elements of Relationship: *low self esteem, jealousy, lack of trust, criticism, dishonesty, manipulation, over-control by one partner, lack of respect for self or partner and different values*, will likely be unsuccessful.

Four common signs that a relationship is in trouble are: changes in the amount or type of communication between the partners, changes in the amount of time the partners spend together, changes in the number of unresolved conflicts between the partners, and the presence of physical or emotional abuse of one of the partners. When any or all of these signs are present, it would be best to end the relationship.

Connections: Relationship and Marriage 23

Ending a relationship produces a number of uncomfortable emotions. Difficult decisions which produce high levels of stress must be made and care must be given to safeguard the feelings of the partners. For individuals on either side of the broken relationship, there will be a transition period of adjustment afterward. The change may be particularly unpleasant if the relationship has been ongoing for some time, or if one partner was more emotionally committed than the other.

When a relationship ends, both partners will go through a period of loss. Old patterns of behavior or familiar surroundings may produce feelings of disappointment or painful memories. Students should be informed that this is a necessary but temporary stage of adjustment. New relationships will develop in time even though the prospect of meeting new people may not be particularly attractive at this point. Following the steps to recovery from a broken relationship: *value self, focus thoughts, establish new patterns, stay involved in life, and give it time*, should ease the period of adjustment.

BREAKING UP...

This experience can be emotionally painful and often results in a period of discomfort and adjustment for both partners. However, the feelings are temporary and will pass. Breaking up is not necessarily a negative experience. For some individuals the decision to end a relationship may have positive results. Most people who have gone through this situation discover that an even better relationship develops at a later time with another person.

WHEN IT ISN'T WORKING OUT

1. If you are the one choosing to end a relationship, what are some common feelings that you may struggle with before doing it? _____ , _____ , _____ .
2. If you are the one with whom someone has broken up, what feelings are associated with the experience? _____ , _____ , _____
3. Were your expectations about the other person or the relationship realistic?

Does the length of time you have gone out with a person make breaking up more difficult? _____

4. How could breaking up be handled in a way that showed genuine concern for the feelings of both partners? Tell how you would want someone to treat you in this situation. _____

GETTING A PLAN

1. Why is it often so difficult to make the decision to end the relationship? _____

2. Once the decision is made, why is it important to carry it out as soon as possible? _____

3. What are the advantages of choosing a time and place to end the relationship rather than letting things "just happen"? _____

4. Why is it important for the end of the relationship to be truly final? _____

DATING AND EMOTIONS

When two people are exclusively dating they have chosen to be known as a couple and have stopped seeing others for a period of time. The dating relationship may be casual or serious depending on a variety of factors; for instance, how well the partners meet each other's needs or how deeply the partners care for each other. Both partners must begin to emotionally invest in each other for the relationship to deepen and become meaningful. This emotional tie can provide strength in the relationship, but may also result in unwanted or unexpected emotional pain. Many young people are in exclusive relationships but not all of the relationships provide an emotional climate that is mutually satisfying.

Being in touch with one's own emotions is an important aspect of relationship, but we must also be aware of and sensitive to the emotions and needs of the other person. Healthy relationships demonstrate this kind of emotional sharing between the partners.

The following exercise is designed to help you assess whether a significant relationship in your life is emotionally healthy, or if there are issues in the relationship that are causing problems.

RATE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Instructions: Choose any relationship in your life that is important to you. It may be a dating relationship, friendship or family relationship. Read the following statements and place a **yes** or **no** in front of the number. When you have determined your results, complete the remaining questions at the end of the exercise.

- _____ 1. Does your partner share similar interests with you?
- _____ 2. Is the relationship growing stronger and moving forward?
- _____ 3. Does your partner trust your decisions and behavior when you are apart?
- _____ 4. Does your partner treat his/her family members well?
- _____ 5. When you talk to friends or someone new, your partner is not threatened.
- _____ 6. Does your partner show respect for your feelings and ideas?
- _____ 7. Can your partner handle disappointment or frustration without demonstrating physical aggressiveness or violence?
- _____ 8. Does your partner keep his/her word?
- _____ 9. Is your identity secure without your partner?
- _____ 10. Are you accepting of your partner's habits and behaviors?

- _____ 11. Your partner does not manipulate you to do things you don't want to do.
- _____ 12. Are you allowed to spend time with other friends away from your partner?
- _____ 13. Do you feel safe and comfortable with your partner?
- _____ 14. Are you able to spend extended amounts of time together without conflict?
- _____ 15. Is your partner concerned about your happiness in the relationship?
- _____ 16. Do you and your partner share the responsibility for making decisions within or about the relationship?
- _____ 17. Do both of you communicate openly about your feelings toward each other?
- _____ 18. Is spending time together a priority?
- _____ 19. After spending time together, do you feel happy and content inside?
- _____ 20. Do you have confidence in who you are as a person?

Yes No

Count the number of *yes* and *no* answers separately and fill in the boxes.

- * If you scored significantly higher in the *no* category, your relationship may not be a healthy one. Consider carefully why you are with this person. Resolving problem areas will take a great deal of time and effort. If the problems are too numerous, you may choose to end the relationship.
- * If the scores in both the *yes* and *no* categories were relatively the same, there are areas of strength to build on in the relationship. The partners should concentrate on the positive areas and not allow their differences to become more important. When problems and conflict control the relationship, the relationship is in trouble.
- * If your *yes* score is significantly higher, you have the basis for a healthy relationship. There are a large number of positive areas evident in the relationship and initial differences are few. However, even in the best of relationships problems can develop from time to time. Partners who share a solid relationship know that these times are temporary and they work together to resolve the issue.

QUESTIONS :

1. How would you rate your relationship? healthy unhealthy
2. What are the positive and negative aspects of your relationship?
positive negative
3. What would you change in order to improve your relationship?