

NOT Made for TV

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:

By the end of 12th grade, students will be able to:

CHR.12.CC.1 - Describe the characteristics of unhealthy relationships that media, including sexually explicit media, may perpetuate (e.g., inequality between partners, lack of communication and consent, strict gender stereotypes)

TARGET GRADE: High School

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- NOT Made for TV Grade Sheet - enough copies so each student receives one
- Tape
- Dry Erase Marker

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Describe the characteristics of unhealthy relationships that media may perpetuate [Knowledge]
2. Analyze relationships in the media to determine if they are healthy vs. unhealthy [Skill]
3. Identify common unhealthy interactions often portrayed in sexually explicit media [Knowledge]

LESSON RATIONALE:

Everyone is constantly exposed to media which quite often doesn't provide realistic representation of healthy relationships and therefore directly impacts a person's perception around relationships and sexual encounters. Specifically, sexually explicit media commonly perpetuates unhealthy interactions between people that can shape a person's understanding of sex. This lesson aims to identify these unhealthy characteristics seen in media and provide a space to analyze these interactions and determine if they are healthy vs. unhealthy and therefore clearly separate what is made for tv and what is not desired in real life.

ADVANCED PREPARATION:

Prior to the lesson it is very important to ask the students to identify one relationship from their favorite TV show or movie. They should be prepared to bring the names of the people in the relationship to this class so they may share it with a partner and the class. Also, please print the NOT Made for TV grade sheet so that each student has one copy.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1:

Say something like, **"Raise your hand if you have ever been watching TV or a movie and realized that the couple or relationship in the media was toxic and that they shouldn't be together. There are many traits that make a relationship toxic, for example, one person controlling how the other person dresses can be a toxic trait in a relationship."** The majority of the class should raise their hand. Say, **"The media is full of images and examples of relationships that are unhealthy and sometimes even unsafe. We might see relationships where there is a lack of**

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communication, where there is lying, where partners don't seek affirmative consent, or the power imbalance is so off it is uncomfortable. These are the examples of relationships that we see on our phone, tablets, TV's, and movie screens and when we see it enough we can become desensitized so it doesn't even set off our internal alarm that the relationship is unhealthy. Today we are going to take a look at what the media shows us about some of our favorite relationships and determine what is in fact healthy vs. unhealthy when it comes to the media." (5 minutes)

STEP 2:

Say, "I asked each of you to identify a couple from your favorite TV show, movie, or book and bring the names of the people in that relationship to class today. Now you are going to be the media relationship critic and grade the health of this relationship. Take about 7 minutes to complete your grade sheet independently." Distribute the grade sheets and remind the students to write the name of the couple at the top of the page and the name of the media they are featured in. As the students are working, write the words Healthy and Unhealthy on opposite sides of the board. After students have completed their grade sheet, invite them to find a partner with whom they haven't worked this semester. Say, "Now I would like you to present your media relationship to your partners. Share who you selected and your initial grade on the health of the relationship. Once each partner has shared, pick one of the relationships to work on together. Discuss with your partner and agree whether the relationship is healthy or unhealthy. Feel free to debate, discuss, and analyze but try to aim for agreement on the health of the relationship. You will have about 7 minutes to complete this activity." After the students have completed the activity, ask students to tape their grade sheet on the board under either Healthy or Unhealthy. (20 minutes)

STEP 3:

Starting with the unhealthy relationships, ask for volunteers to share their media relationship and what characteristics of the relationship made each group realize the relationship was unhealthy. As students share the characteristics, take notes on the board of the unhealthy characteristics. Then repeat the process with the healthy relationships. After all groups have finished, say, "Look at these characteristics written on the board. What stands out about the unhealthy characteristics?" Sample characteristics could include: lying, unequal decision-making power, lack of respect, no consent, one person controls the other person, etc. "What stands out about the healthy characteristics?" Sample characteristics could include: healthy conflict resolution, mutual respect and support, communication, trust, honesty, etc. "Would anyone like to move their media relationship after thinking about these characteristics?" (15 minutes)

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STEP 4:

Say, “**Now take a moment to reflect on what kind of media might cause the most harm because there are far more examples of unhealthy relationships than healthy relationships. Which form of media do you think perpetuates unhealthy relationships more than any other form of media?**” The answer is sexually explicit media or porn and if the students do not determine the answer feel free to share after they attempt to answer the question. Say, “**Why is it especially harmful for sexually explicit media to show unhealthy relationships and sexual encounters?** You are looking for an answer that connects how unhealthy sexual encounters in sexually explicit media could impact a person’s understanding of what those encounters should look like. Say, “**Sexually explicit media rarely shows partners asking for consent, or considering the needs of the other people, or even mutual respect. The issue with this is if watching sexually explicit media is a person’s only understanding of sex it could negatively impact what a person thinks it should be like. So, what now? How could we change this and reduce the risk?** Push students to advocate for more sex education, increased communication with partners, mutual respect of partners, etc. (8 minutes)

STEP 5:

Say, “**Media is everywhere and we are always going to get examples of both healthy and unhealthy relationships in the books we read, the songs we hear, and the TV and movies we watch. What we can control is our ability to recognize what is healthy and what is unhealthy so we have a realistic understanding of what is TV and what is real life. Thanks for your hard work.**” (2 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Objectives 1 and 2 were completed in Steps 2 and 3. Objective 3 was completed in Step 4.

HOMEWORK:

Rewrite a scene from your favorite unhealthy media relationship in a way that portrays a healthier relationship.

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Name of People in Relationship:	
TV show, Movie, or Book that features the relationship:	
Relationship Features	Rate 1- 4 1 – Very unhealthy 4 – Very healthy
Do the people in the relationship have equal decision-making ability?	
Do the people in the relationship show respect to each other?	
Do the people in the relationship communicate effectively?	
Do the people in the relationship ask for affirmative consent in sexual situations?	
Do the people in the relationship believe in any gender stereotypes?	
Circle if the relationship is: HEALTHY or UNHEALTHY	