

# Unhealthy Relationships - Plan For Safety

*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:

**CHR.10.DM.1** - Evaluate a variety of characteristics of romantic and/or sexual relationships and determine which ones are personally most important

**CHR.10.GS.1** - Develop a plan to get out of an unsafe or unhealthy relationship

**TARGET GRADE:** High School

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computer/laptop
- **PowerPoint Presentation**
- Projector
- Screen
- Plan for Safety Templates - one per student
- Plan for Safety Station Cards - one set
- Index Cards - one per student

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Identify their top three important relationship characteristics [Knowledge]
2. Explain the difference between a healthy vs. an unhealthy relationship [Knowledge]
3. Develop a plan to get out of an unsafe or unhealthy relationship [Knowledge]

## LESSON RATIONALE:

The ability to determine what characteristics in a relationship are most important can help a person to determine their personal boundaries around what they are looking for from a partner. It is important to be able to identify and communicate these needs as well as be able to delineate between what is a relationship a person wants vs. a relationship that might be wanted yet is unsafe or unhealthy. The ability to determine that a relationship is unhealthy is important, but it is even more important to be able to create a plan to leave an unsafe relationship.

## ADVANCED PREPARATION:

Prior to the lesson, set up the PowerPoint presentation, projector, and screen. Copy the Plan for Safety template so you have one per student and one set of the plan for safety station cards. Notify the school counselor, social worker, or mental health service provider that you will be discussing the topic of unsafe/unhealthy relationships. Invite these providers to either join the class or make themselves available for students who might want to talk after the class.

## PROCEDURE:

### STEP 1:

**“Today we are going to talk about a difficult topic, unhealthy or unsafe relationships. This topic might be particularly challenging to hear about or discuss which is normal. If at any point you feel like you need to excuse yourself to talk with the school counselor please let me know. I also want to take the time to remind everyone of our group agreements regarding respecting others and keeping information private. Just to remind all of you, I am here as a trusted adult and I am a mandatory reporter so**

## Unhealthy Relationships - Plan For Safety

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if you share that you are being harmed or might harm others I must report this to the appropriate adults. If I were to make a report it is not to get you or anyone in trouble but to make sure that you are safe. Does anyone have any questions before we begin?"

*(3 minutes)*

### STEP 2:

"Today we are going to play a game that is like Pictionary but instead of me drawing the pictures for you we are going to look at images and see if you can guess what relationship characteristic the picture is trying to portray." Turn on the PowerPoint slide deck to begin the game and walk through the slides. Be careful to not advance each slide until the correct answer has been given as the answer will appear at the top of each slide with each click. Distribute the index cards to the students as you begin the next part of Step 2.

*Note to the Teacher: If your class enjoys competition, you can separate the class into large groups and have them compete to guess the correct relationship characteristics. A prize of an extra bonus point or homework pass could be used as an incentive.*

After the game, say, "Okay so we just looked at six common relationship characteristics. Some of these may be important to you and some of them may not be as important. Now I am going to ask you to reflect and pick which of the characteristics would be your top three most important and why. You can only select three and you will have about three minutes to make your choices. Write your choices and reason why on your index card. Once you have selected your top three, you will find an elbow partner and share why you picked the top three characteristics that you selected."

*(15 minutes)*

### STEP 3:

After the students have had time to share and process with partners, ask for a couple of volunteers to share with the full class. Then say, "Each person can have different characteristics that they find important for romantic relationships. This can also change as we grow and have new experiences. Now I want you to turn your index card over and write the opposite of your top three characteristics. For example, if honesty is important to you, write lying. I will give you about a minute to complete this." After a minute, say, "Looking at these negative relationship characteristics, what would you think about a relationship where those characteristics were normal? This would most likely be an unhealthy relationship or possibly an unsafe relationship. So, what should a person do if they find themselves in a relationship that is unsafe or unhealthy?" Responses might include break up, leave them, get out. "Yes, the hope is a person is able to leave an unsafe or unhealthy relationship because everyone deserves respect. It is better to be alone or not in a relationship than remain in one where safety is not promised. The major issue with this is that it is not always easy to leave an unhealthy

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relationship so, in order to increase the chances of getting out, it is important to have a plan for safety in place.”

*(5 minutes)*

### STEP 4:

“Before we begin the next activity I want everyone to know that I don’t assume you have been in an unhealthy relationship and I hope that you never experience an unsafe relationship. The next activity just allows for each of you to think through who can support you, where you can go if by some chance you find yourself in an unhealthy relationship in the future. You are going to create a plan to safely leave an unhealthy relationship. Around the classroom, you will find stations. Each station will have instructions or ideas that should be included in the plan you are creating. You have about 15 minutes so make sure you visit each station to create a complete plan. What kind of questions do you have?”

Distribute the Plan for Safety handout to each student and circulate the classroom as the students complete the exercise. Once the students have visited each station and completed their plans, ask for a few volunteers to share their plans with the class.

*(25 minutes)*

### STEP 5:

“All of these plans are really great and are a wonderful resource for a person who wants to leave an unsafe or unhealthy relationship. Something to consider though is if the partner in that unhealthy relationship were to find the plan it could warn them that the person was leaving which could make the risk even higher for harm, so this resource should be protected and only seen by the people who need it to get to safety. Thank you for your hard work and remember if you would like to talk with me or the counselor we are here whenever you need us.”

*(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 Steps 4 and 5.

### HOMEWORK:

Create and share a code word with a trusted adult to use if you ever need help planning to leave an unhealthy relationship.

# Plan for Safety Template

## LOVED ONES

*Trusted adults and friends*

- 
- 
- 

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

*Local organizations and national hotlines that can offer help*

- 
- 
- 

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- 
- 
- 

## SAFE PLACES

- 
- 
- 

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- 
- 
- 

## SCHOOL SAFETY

- 
- 
- 

## WHERE COULD THEY END THE RELATIONSHIP SAFELY?

- 
- 
-

## STATION A: LOVED ONES

Who are the trusted adults or friends who could support you as you leave the unhealthy relationship? How could you let them know you need help without your partner knowing?

## STATION B: COMMUNITY SUPPORT

What local organizations or national hotlines could you call to find resources to help you leave the unhealthy relationship?

## STATION C: SOCIAL MEDIA

What changes would you need to make on social media?  
For example: changing passwords, blocking people, etc.

## STATION D: SAFE PLACES

Where are places you can go if you are feeling unsafe?  
These places should have a lot of people, be well lit, not  
allow for you to be alone with anyone, and hopefully have  
security present.

## STATION E: IMPORTANT NUMBERS

What are the phone numbers of important support people in your life should you not have access to your cell phone?

## STATION F: SCHOOL SAFETY

If you and your partner attend the same school how could you get to class safely?

## STATION G: SAFELY ENDED

Where could you end the relationship safely?