

# Lesson #5: Healthy Relationships

## (Dating and friendships)

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**OPENING – Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a leadership program for preventing violence.**

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### Check in with students:

Remind students who you are. Ask how things are going since your last visit. Have they been bystanders to any situations where fighting occurred or was about to occur like the discussion from last time? Have they had a chance to show bystander leadership when faced with a potential or actual fight?

Remember our MVP goals?

### MVP Goals

- Raise Awareness [on the prevalence of violence](#).
- Challenge Thinking – [because most of this violence is accepted in society](#).
- Open Dialogue – [have the opportunity to voice your opinion on these matters and get you talking about this issue](#).
- Inspire Leadership – [or inspire you to take a stand against this violence](#).
- Emphasize our role as a bystander – [stopping violence is up to each of us](#).

The working definitions for this lesson focus on dating violence.

### Working Definitions

**\*Relationship Violence**—Violence that some partners inflict on each other in abusive relationships, including these four types of abuse: verbal, emotional/psychological, physical, and sexual.

Talk over these 4 types of abuse with students by asking for a few examples of each type:

**Verbal**—name calling, yelling

**Emotional**—giving the silent treatment when angry, keeping partner away from family or friends, lying

**Physical**—hitting, pinching, pushing

**Sexual**—rape or coercing the partner

**\*Dating Violence is a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses, physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner.**

**\*Dating Relationship means a romantic or intimate social relationship between two individuals.**

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### CLOSING

1. Do you feel like you have a role as a bystander to help reduce dating violence and promote healthy relationships? How so?
  2. What are some risks for an active bystander? Can you think of a solution to this risk where you could still be a leader?
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Make sure you wind up the session by reviewing the important concepts-

- Students need to look for the healthy characteristics in their dating and friend relationships.
- Being a good friend and partner means being assertive—speaking up for yourself and listening to your friend or partner.
- Being a good leader means treating others in healthy ways and speaking up when you see others not doing so.

## Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

Tell audience that, “In order to understand relationships, it is important to be able to identify characteristics of healthy relationships and unhealthy relationships.” Make a T-bar on the board with Healthy on one side and Unhealthy on the other. Ask for both characteristics of a friendship and of a dating relationship. Ask for student input in creating a list:

Healthy	Unhealthy
Examples:	
Supportive	name calling—fat, ugly, stupid
Good communication	controlling
Trust	hates your friends & family
Honesty	cheating
Friendly	needy—dependent
Loyal	lying
Accepting	rude
Compatibility	disrespectful
Respectful	jealous
Equality	neglect
Affection	verbal abuse
Understanding	nothing in common
Space	physical abuse
Kindness	
Jealousy	
Physical attraction	

**Many of the items on the Unhealthy list are examples of verbal and emotional violence. How can verbal and emotional violence be just as damaging or even more damaging than physical violence?**

**Transition: Now that we’ve taken a look at some things we would want or not want in a friendship or a dating relationship, we are going to talk about a couple scenarios where a person might be upset with a partner or friend and how they could respond in a healthy way.**

### Scenarios: Two options

**Option 1:** Read the first scenario and follow the instructions. Then define Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Responses to anger to the whole class. Have students discuss these different responses to anger.

**Option 2:** Before you read the scenario, ask for 6 female volunteers from the class to help you teach it. Then have at least one presenter take the volunteers out to the hall. Quickly share the scenario with your volunteers, pair them up and tell them they will act out the 3 different responses to anger. Assign a response to each pair and teach them the definitions.

For **Fake Out**, you would tell the girl who is playing the hurt friend that she sees her friend the next day and asks this question: “Hey, you told me that you were grounded and couldn’t do anything, but then I saw you at the movie with those other girls. What is going on?”

The other friend needs to respond some way—maybe with “Oh, my mom changed her mind and told me I could go, and it was just too late to call you” or “I already had plans with my other friend” or “Oh, I forgot you wanted to do something” or something like that, where she doesn’t apologize but gives an excuse. Then the hurt friend must respond passively, aggressively or assertively, as they were assigned.

Possible responses—**Passive:** “Oh, that’s okay. I was just wondering.” **Aggressive:** “You lied to me and blew me off! You are not a friend. You can just forget using me ever again. I can’t stand liars!” **Assertive:** “Why

did you lie to me? It really hurt my feelings and embarrassed me. That's not a good friend. I really think we need to talk about this. If you don't want to do something, you need to be honest about it.”

While the actors are preparing in the hall, the other presenter(s) will share the scenario and define Passive, Aggressive and Assertive responses. Then the actors will come back in and present their little scenes and the class will guess which response they are portraying. Mix up the order of the actors—maybe do Aggressive, then Assertive, then Passive.

## **Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Responses to Anger**

**Say this:** In the two scenarios we will share with you today you might feel some anger toward another person. There are different ways that you might respond to that person. Your job will be to consider these typical responses and decide which one would bring about the best result.

### **Responses to anger:**

**Passive:** People who respond passively do not express their feelings and do not tell the other person what he/she wants. They may say they don't care—but they truly do. They either give in to other's wants, withdraw or ignore conflict.

**Aggressive:** People who respond aggressively are only concerned about his/her wants. They really don't care about what the other person wants and may not even let the other person talk.

**Assertively:** People who respond assertively express their feelings and wants to the other person. They stand up for their rights, but also recognize that the other person has their own wants. They want a solution that accommodates both individuals. This approach often results in a Win-Win situation.

# FAKE OUT

You ask your friend to hang out and do something. She tells you she can't because she is grounded. Later you decide to go to a movie with your family. When you get there you see your friend in line at the concession stand with another girl you know. You are pretty sure she sees you, but she doesn't say hi and looks away. The girls go into a movie before you get into the theater.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

What is she doing here? I thought she was grounded! Did she lie to me? Did they plan this on purpose to leave me out? She knew I wanted to do something tonight! Is my friend picking her over me? I don't think that other girl likes me. . . . Has she been turning my friend against me?  
What should I do?

## OPTIONS

How would you feel? How would you respond? Does this kind of thing happen in friendships where someone is left out?

If you are doing Option 2, the acting option, you would define the 3 reactions to anger right now. Then the actors will come back in and do their parts and you can continue with the discussion below.

If you are doing Option 1, you would define the reactions to anger and have the class describe possible examples of each kind of response.

Passively:

Aggressively:

Assertively:

Which response would be the worst way to handle it? Which would be the best? Why? Being assertive is the healthiest option because it is a win-win situation. Both sides get to be heard. You may not get the result you want, but at least you will speak up for yourself.

# FAKE OUT

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What should I do?

## OPTIONS

How would you feel? How would you respond?

Describe what the different responses would look like:

Passively:

Aggressively:

Assertively:

Which response would be the worst way to handle it? Which would be the best? Why?

Being assertive is the healthiest option because it is a win-win situation. Both sides get to be heard. You may not get the result you want, but at least you will speak up for yourself.

# LUNCH DATE

For this one, you can do **Option 1** where you read the scenario and have students discuss the different reactions to anger.

**Option 2**—you can have 6 students act it out again—3 boys and 3 girls. The only problem with acting out both scenarios is that the class group will probably be waiting quite awhile for the actors to get ready since they have already learned the definitions and won't need to go through that again. It may be better to just do this one together in class. However, if you want to do the acting option, here are ideas:

Pair up the actors in boy/girl pairs. Assign a reaction (passive, aggressive, assertive) to each pair. Describe the scenario.

Have the boy approach the girl and ask something like this: "What is going on? I saw him look at me and take off?" The girl would say something like: "It's no big deal. We were just talking, and he had to go meet some other people."

The boy can respond with something like these ideas listed below.

**Passive:** "Okay. Let's just eat lunch."

**Aggressive:** "I think you are lying! Are you cheating on me? You are, aren't you? Don't even bother lying to me!"

**Assertive:** "It didn't look like nothing. It looked like you two were talking about me, and he took off to avoid me. Please be honest. Is there something going on with you two? We need to talk about this."

While the actors are preparing in the hall, the other presenter(s) would share the scenario and begin discussing it with the class. Then the actors would come back and present, while the class again guesses what they are trying to portray.

# LUNCH DATE

You and your girlfriend always sit together at lunch. You enter the lunchroom and see a guy sitting with her at your usual table. They are laughing and talking. They see you, and he quickly gets up and leaves.

## TRAIN OF THOUGHT

Why was he there? Does she like him? Is he moving in on my girlfriend?

She knows that I'm meeting her for lunch. Why would she let him sit there? Are they starting up something? Am I the only one who doesn't know what's going on? Is she cheating on me?

What should I do?

## OPTIONS

What would you do? Again, either have 3 male/female pairs act out the confrontation or have students help describe what the confrontation would look like passively, aggressively and assertively.

Discuss good examples of assertive responses and why the assertive response is the best way to handle your anger in a situation like this one.

Concluding thoughts:

Discuss how friends and dating partners can be part of healthy or unhealthy relationships.

Discuss the importance of knowing what you want in a healthy relationship and how being assertive with a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend will keep it healthy.

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What should I do?

## OPTIONS

How would you feel? How would you respond?

Describe what the different responses would look like:

Passively:

Aggressively:

Assertively:

Which response would be the worst way to handle it? Which would be the best? Why?

# Agree/Disagree/Unsure Statements

- Read the first statement. (Choose a statement from the list. You can use one or more statements, depending on time. Just do them one at a time.)
  - Ask the students to move to the part of the room you designated based upon whether they agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about what the statement said.
  - Ask the students why they agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about the statement.
  - Allow students time to discuss, making sure to call on students from each group.
  - Facilitate discussion with follow up questions.
  - After discussion, give students the opportunity to change their minds and move to a different area. If any students do move, ask them to explain why they did.
1. Rachel is walking out of school when she notices her friend Larry fighting with his girlfriend. When Rachel sees Larry hit his girlfriend, she considers intervening, but decides that it's none of her business. Rachel's decision to do nothing was a good one.
  2. Yelling at your boyfriend or girlfriend every once in awhile is not necessarily abuse.
  3. It's acceptable for a male to be with more than one person when in a relationship.
  4. It's acceptable for a female to be with more than one person when in a relationship.
  5. John sternly tells his girlfriend, Julie, that she is not allowed to go to the movies with her friends. John is abusing Julie.
  6. It's not a big deal if a friend blows you off when you have plans, as long as it only happens once in awhile.
  7. If your friend is mean to their siblings, it's okay for you to be mean to them, too.
  8. It's okay to call your friend a hurtful name if it is said in a joking manner.
  9. It's okay to lie to your friend's parents to keep your friend from getting in trouble.
  10. A friend should tell your secrets, if it's for your own good.
  11. It's better to lie to your friend about something hurtful someone else says about them.
  12. It's okay to talk behind your friend's back if they are annoying you.
  13. You should tell your friend if they dress badly or have bad hair or something. It's your obligation as a friend.
  14. It's okay to tell your best friend anything, even it's a secret you're not supposed to tell. It's your best friend, so it's okay.
  15. When your best friend tells you who you can or cannot hang out with, that's okay because best friends do that.

16. If your friend has a crush on someone, it's not okay for you to go out with that person. A good friend would never date someone that their friend likes!
17. Karen always loans stuff to her good friend, Sarah, who either doesn't bring it back at all, ruins it or keeps it too long. Karen has decided not to loan Sarah stuff anymore. Sarah is angry, and she has a right to be.
18. It's okay for a friend to always look through your texts and to constantly want to know where you are.