

## UNIT 3

# HOW DO I RECOGNISE AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

**Note:** You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy, as approved by the Board of Governors.

### LEARNING INTENTIONS

Pupils are learning about:

- understand that not all romantic or sexual relationships are perfect all of the time;
- recognise healthy and unhealthy behaviours within a romantic or sexual relationship;
- explore the feelings and emotions that can result from a negative or unhealthy relationship;
- be aware of the risks and consequences of an unhealthy relationship; and
- understand the legal implications of the choices they make in relationships.

#### SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

- Working with Others
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Communication
- Self-Management.

#### LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Offers choice
- Supportive environment
- Ongoing reflection
- Active and enquiry-based learning.

#### ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

- Personal responsibility
- Concern for others
- Respect
- Integrity
- Moral courage.

### Resources

- Resources A–D
- Post-it notes
- Graffiti board
- [FPA – Love, Sex, Relationships](#)
- [IDAS – Healthy Relationships Checklist](#)
- [B4uDecide – Relationships and Sexuality Education: Resource Materials for Teachers](#)
- [Thinkuknow – Sex, the law and you](#)
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)

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### HOW DO I RECOGNISE AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?



#### Activity 1

##### The ideal relationship

- Explain to the pupils that most of us have an image of **the ideal relationship**.
- Chair a class discussion on what an ideal relationship looks like.
- Steer the discussion towards age-appropriate comments and make sure that all pupils feel included. For example, you could ask pupils to use gender-neutral language.
- Explain to the pupils that:
  - no relationship is always perfect and this is normal;
  - a relationship that makes you feel afraid or isolated or harms you physically, sexually, emotionally or mentally is not normal; and
  - no one has the right to make you feel unhappy, uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Give each pupil a copy of Resource A.
- Ask the pupils to complete Resource A to identify what a less than ideal relationship looks like.
- Alternatively, ask the pupils to identify characteristics of an unhealthy relationship on Post-it notes and display them on a graffiti board.
- You might find the FPA [Love, Sex, Relationships booklet](#), available at [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk), useful for this activity. (Please review this resource in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy.)
- Discuss with the class the characteristics they have identified and why they are consistent with an unhealthy relationship.



#### Activity 2

##### Healthy to unhealthy continuum

- Ask the pupils to read the IDAS [Healthy Relationships Checklist](#), available at [www.idas.org.uk](http://www.idas.org.uk), and consider the behaviours for either a real or an imaginary relationship. (The IDAS website also features posters that you can download and display in classrooms or communal areas.)
- Divide the pupils into pairs or small groups and give each group a copy of Resource B.
- Then ask the groups to use the IDAS checklist to complete Resource B by suggesting actions and/or behaviours on a continuum of healthy to unhealthy relationships.
- Display these around the classroom to share ideas on healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Discuss with the class the most common themes and issues they have highlighted.

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### HOW DO I RECOGNISE AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?



#### Activity 3

#### Staying in an unhealthy relationship

- Explain to the pupils that it's important to understand what abuse and risk look like in relationships.
- When exploring these issues with your class, make sure to use appropriate language. However, do not shy away from words such as 'abuse' and 'harmful' to help pupils understand the risks they may be taking or exposed to.
- Explain to the pupils that staying in an unhealthy or abusive relationship can have serious consequences for young people and the people who care for them.
- At this point, it might be useful to introduce the B4uDecide [Relationships and Sexuality Education: Resource Materials for Teachers](#), available at [www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie).
- Lesson 15 explores and reflects on the realities of teenage pregnancy. Lesson 16 raises awareness of common sexually transmitted infections as potential risks and consequences of sexual activity.
- Hand out copies of Resource C and ask the pupils to complete it individually or in groups and report back to the class or display the speech bubbles on a graffiti board.
- Then ask the pupils to complete Resource D, giving them the opportunity for some important self-reflection.
- Examples might include:
  - Physical health: medical problems, increased chance of sexually transmitted infections, high blood pressure, weight gain, obesity, chance of pregnancy;
  - Emotional wellbeing: stress, anxiety, unhappiness, depression, lack of confidence, guilt, helplessness, loneliness, nervousness, feeling frightened; and
  - Future: lack of self-worth, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, scared of forming new relationships, lack of trust, impact of underage or unwanted pregnancy.
- As a class, compare the pupils' responses and discuss some of the issues highlighted.
- Then ask the pupils to suggest sources of information and help for people in unhealthy or abusive relationships.

## UNIT 3

### WHAT MAKES A RELATIONSHIP ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL?



#### Activity 4 Sexual choices

- It's important that pupils have accurate and age-appropriate information about the legal implications of the sexual choices they make.
- The Thinkuknow page [Sex, the law and you](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk), available at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk), includes pupil-friendly information on what the law says about sex and young people.
- As with all resources, you should review these before use to check that they are in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy.
- Ask the pupils to use these sources of information to create their own information posters on one of the following:
  - sex and the law in Northern Ireland;
  - the legal implications of the sexual choices that young people make; or
  - advice for people in unhealthy relationships.
- Display these information posters around the classroom or school.



#### Activity 5 Review of learning intentions


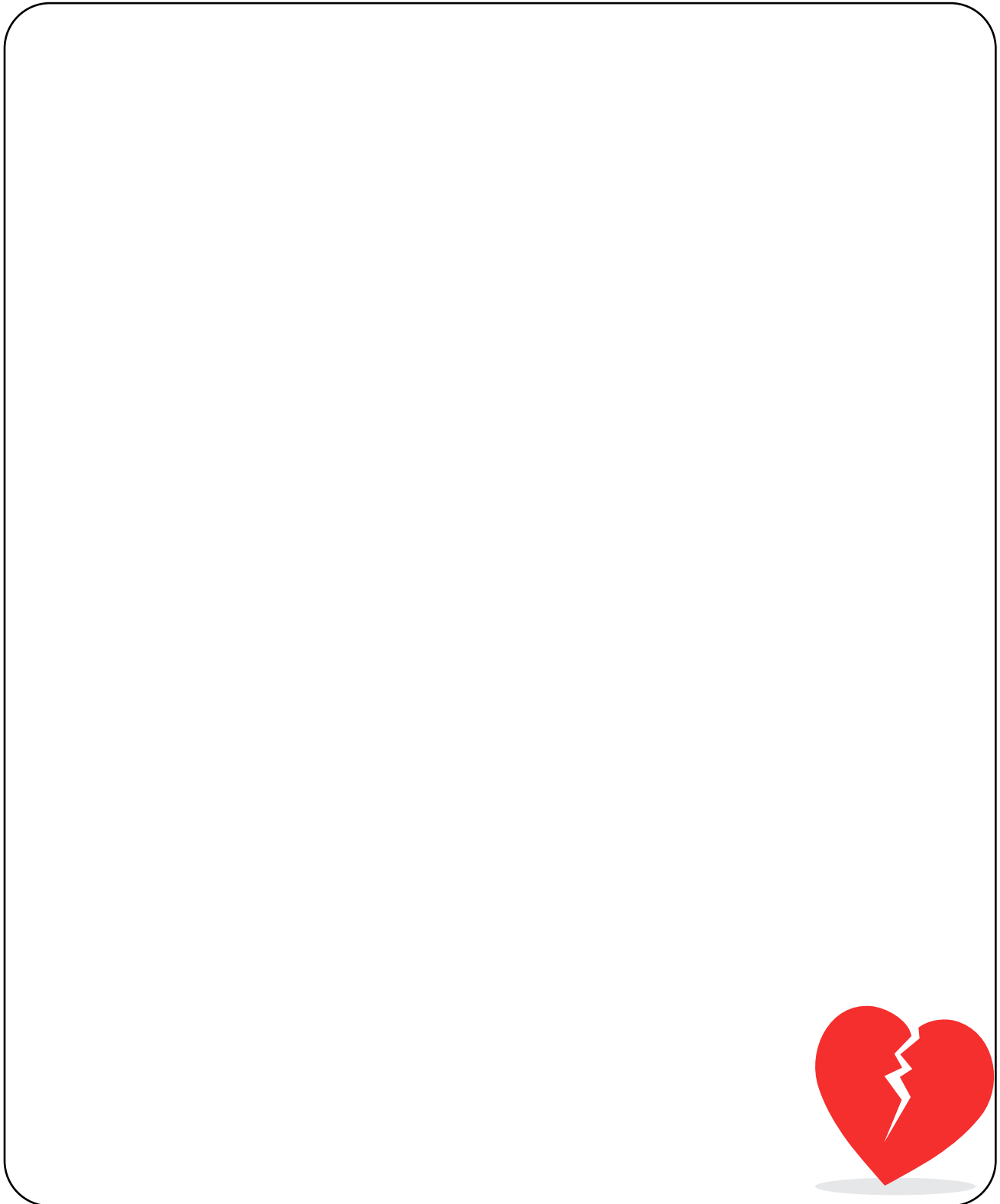
It's important that pupils have opportunities to reflect on their learning. You can choose from a range of methods detailed in our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource, such as:

- Dartboard Evaluation
- Graffiti Board
- Fist-to-Five
- KWL (Know – Want to Know – Learned) Grid
- Post-It Collection
- Think, Pair and Share.

In Unit 4, pupils explore what a young person and the people who care for them can do about an unhealthy relationship.

RESOURCE A:  
**UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Write down all the characteristics you can think of that are typical of unhealthy relationships.



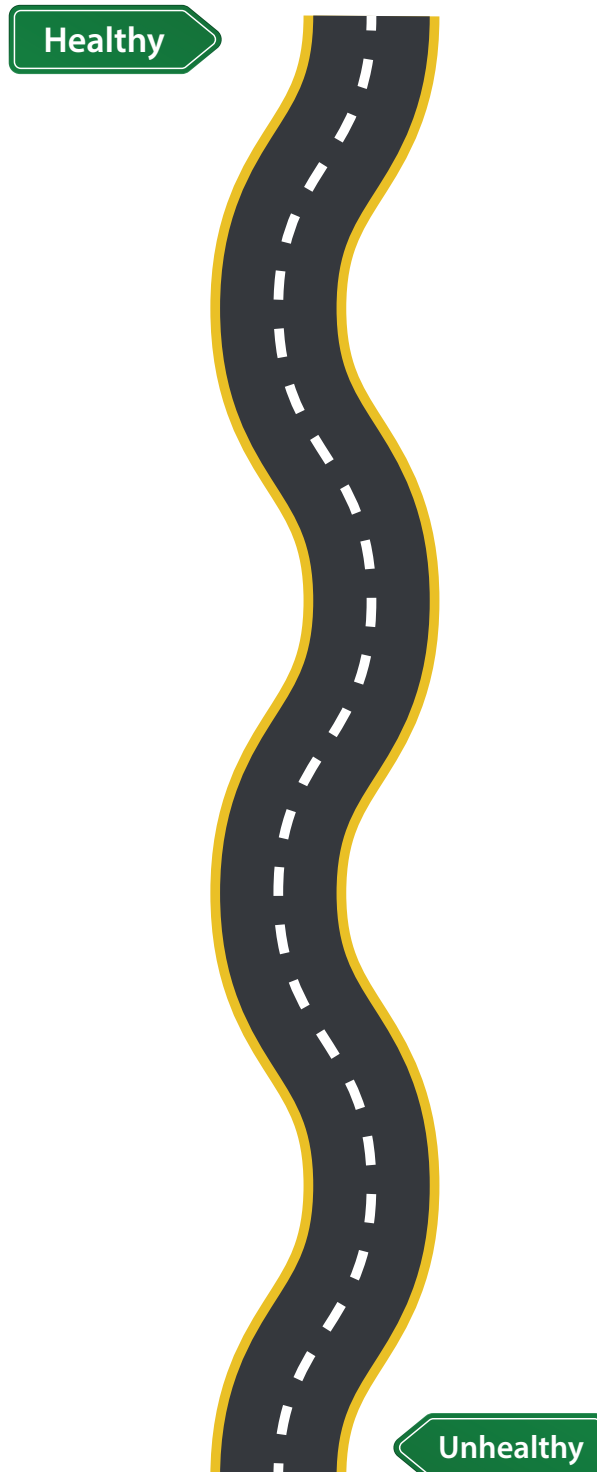
# HEALTHY, POSITIVE SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIPS

KEY STAGE 3/4

RELATIONSHIPS  
+ SEXUALITY  
EDUCATION

## RESOURCE B: RELATIONSHIP CONTINUUM

Along the road below, give examples of relationship behaviours ranging from healthy to unhealthy.



**RESOURCE C:  
CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP**

Use the speech bubbles below to identify the consequences for a young person and those who care for them during an unhealthy relationship. Think about the young person's physical health, their emotional wellbeing, their friends, family and future.

The central illustration shows three young people: a girl with a red cap and black top, a girl with long black hair in a white top, and a boy with a yellow cap and white top. They are surrounded by four large, empty speech bubbles: a pink one at the top left, an orange one at the top right, a green one at the bottom left, and a red one at the bottom right. Each bubble is connected to the central group by a line, suggesting they are for the young people to write their responses.

### RESOURCE D: IMPLICATIONS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Complete the tables below to explore the implications of an unhealthy or abusive relationship for a young person and those who care for them.

Physical Health	
Examples	Young Person
	Friends/Family

Emotional Wellbeing	
Examples	Young Person
	Friends/Family



### RESOURCE D: IMPLICATIONS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Complete the tables below to explore the implications of an unhealthy or abusive relationship for a young person and those who care for them.

Future	
Examples	Young Person
	Friends/Family