

UNIT 4

MANAGING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Note: You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at 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:

- acknowledge the importance of being ready to be part of a romantic or sexual relationship;
- develop strategies to say no to experiences that they don't feel ready for;
- set healthy boundaries;
- recognise that peer pressure can positively or negatively influence attitudes towards relationships and sexuality;
- respect values as important factors in the decision-making process;
- create a safety plan for leaving an unhealthy relationship; and
- identify sources of advice and support.

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
- Art and creative materials
- Access to ICT
- Flip chart sheets
- Coloured markers
- [B4uDecide – Relationships and Sexuality Education: Resource Materials for Teachers](#)
- [Thinkuknow – Ready for sex?](#)
- [Childline – Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships](#)
- [Childline – A Safety Plan for Young People Experiencing Relationship Abuse](#)
- [Childline – My Safety Plan](#)
- [Thinkuknow – Q & A](#)
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)

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Activity 1 Am I ready?

- Tell the pupils that every young person should honestly answer the question '**Am I ready for this type of relationship?**'
- Explain to the class that everyone develops at a different rate.
- Our family circumstances, values and religious beliefs also shape how we feel about a physical relationship. Unfortunately, not everyone makes the decision that's right for them at this important time.
- Lead a class discussion on why some people say yes to a romantic or sexual relationship when they are not ready.
- Then ask the pupils to complete a World Café exercise with different age-appropriate questions on each table. For example:
 - Should you kiss someone if you don't really want to?
 - Your friend has been asked out by someone older than them. What advice would you give them?
 - Should you have sex if you're not completely sure that you're ready?
 - If your boyfriend or girlfriend doesn't believe in using condoms, should you have sex with them?
 - Your personal, cultural and/or religious values mean that you don't feel a physical relationship is the right decision for you. How could you share your feelings?
- Divide the pupils into groups of four or five and ask them to move from table to table and capture their responses on a flip chart sheet on the table.
- At the end of the exercise, the groups should return to their original tables and share their insights through a class discussion that includes questions such as:
 - Did everyone agree on answers to the questions or were there differences of opinion?
 - How important is making the right decision in these instances?
 - If you make the wrong decision, what might the consequences be?
 - Do you think peer pressure might be applied in any of the given situations?
 - What strategies could you use to make sure that you stay safe in a romantic or sexual relationship?

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Teaching Notes

- You might find the resources below useful for exploring this topic further with your class.
 - The B4uDecide [Relationships and Sexuality Education: Resource Materials for Teachers](#), available at www.sphe.ie, feature lessons on relationships.
 - Lesson 6 explores how friends can positively or negatively influence young people's attitudes towards relationships and sexuality.
 - Lesson 7 explores young people's values in relationships and how our values guide our decision making, attitudes and behaviours.
 - Lesson 8 explores making healthy decisions in relationships and includes a decision-making checklist.
 - Lesson 13 encourages pupils to identify the different types of pressure that young people can experience and reflect on how these can affect romantic relationships.
 - Lesson 14 aims to help pupils develop the skills and confidence to say no assertively to requests they are uncomfortable with.
 - The Thinkuknow page [Ready for sex?](#), available at www.thinkuknow.co.uk, looks at peer pressure and readiness for sexual activity in relationships. It also features warning signs that show a person is under pressure and facts about sexual activity and young people.
 - The Childline page [Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships](#), available at www.childline.org.uk, includes a list of physical reactions to being pressured. If any of your pupils need further information or support, you should direct them to the Childline website.
- The following two activities focus on strategies for dealing with an unhealthy relationship.
- To introduce these activities, explain to the pupils that for a relationship to be healthy, it's important to set healthy boundaries and to consider each person's rights and responsibilities.
- Lesson 11 of the B4uDecide [Relationships and Sexuality Education: Resource Materials for Teachers](#), available at www.sphe.ie, might be useful for exploring this topic further. It looks at rights and responsibilities in relationships and poses relationship dilemmas that encourage pupils to consider if it is more appropriate to compromise or say no when their rights are being undermined.

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Activity 2 Ending an unhealthy relationship

- Ask the pupils to think about what they can do if they find themselves in an unhealthy relationship or if they are unsure or uncomfortable with the relationship.
- Explain that ending a romantic relationship can be very difficult, especially if the other partner is being controlling or abusive.
- Divide the pupils into groups and ask them to discuss tips that they would give to a friend who wants to end an unhealthy relationship and is looking for advice and support.
- What would they say to their friend? This could include:
 - plan what you want to say;
 - do it in person (unless you don't feel safe);
 - pick a neutral and safe place with other people around;
 - keep calm and don't get emotional;
 - don't get into a blame scenario;
 - treat the other person with respect;
 - get support from your family and friends;
 - make a clean break; and
 - don't blame yourself.
- Ask the groups for feedback and lead a class discussion on how pupils can deal with this type of situation.
- The Childline page [Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships](https://www.childline.org.uk/healthy-and-unhealthy-relationships), available at www.childline.org.uk, might be useful for this activity as it features tips for ending a bad relationship.

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Activity 3 Staying safe

- Explain to the pupils that having a safety plan if you are in an unhealthy relationship can help keep you safe.
- Ask the pupils to:
 - work in groups to decide what they think should be in a safety plan; and
 - design a safety plan for an imagined friend who is in an unhealthy relationship and is feeling scared and worried.
- Give each group a flip chart sheet and coloured markers to capture their ideas. Pupils will then use these ideas to create their own personal safety plans.
- Tell the pupils to use the Five Ws (who, what, where, why and when) to help with this activity.
- The safety plan needs to:
 - consider their daily routine, inside and outside of school;
 - outline how they can avoid unsafe situations and places, as well as where or who they can go to for support; and
 - consider how they behave online and use their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- The Childline resources A Safety Plan for Young People Experiencing Relationship Abuse and My Safety Plan, available at www.childline.org.uk feature information and a template that might be useful for this activity.
- Ask the groups to share their safety plans with the rest of the class.
- They can then update their plans as appropriate with any important details that the other groups included.
- Give the pupils a copy of Resource A and ask them to create their own personal safety plans.

Teaching Notes

- The [Q & A](#) section of the Thinkuknow website, available at www.thinkuknow.co.uk, features information for young people on sex, relationships and the internet.
- It also includes advice for dealing with relationship problems and signposts to support organisations.
- You could use some of the issues covered in the Thinkuknow answers as the basis for a class discussion.

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Activity 4 Sources of information and support

- As a final exercise, ask the pupils to use art and creative materials to create a display for the classroom that includes sources of information and support for young people about romantic or sexual relationships.
- They could also use ICT to create a leaflet.
- With the principal's permission, pupils could hand out the leaflet to other pupils in the school or in the Area Learning Community, which could provide a valuable Shared Education opportunity.



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.

HEALTHY, POSITIVE SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIPS

KEY STAGE 4

RELATIONSHIPS + SEXUALITY EDUCATION

RESOURCE A: SAFETY PLAN

Complete this personal safety plan. You can add more questions or comments if you wish.

Who can help me? (Give contact details.)	
Trusted adult	
Family members	
Friends	
What actions do I need to take to stay safe ...	
inside school?	
outside school?	
online?	
Where do I feel safe?	
Where will I keep my safety plan?	
Why should I ...	
have a safety code word for my family and friends?	
ensure my online profile is as private as it can be?	
never answer unknown telephone calls or texts?	
save any abusive or threatening comments, posts or texts I might receive and show them to a trusted adult?	
protect my devices with a password or passcode?	

HEALTHY, POSITIVE SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIPS KEY STAGE 4

RELATIONSHIPS
+ SEXUALITY
EDUCATION

RESOURCE A: SAFETY PLAN

Complete this personal safety plan. You can add more questions or comments if you wish.

When I am feeling unsafe, I will ...	
talk to ...	
telephone ...	
go to (place) ...	
make sure that ...	