

Healthy Vs. Unhealthy Relationships Activity

Objective: Students will analyze the components of healthy and unhealthy relationships and identify ways to maintain healthy relationships.

Common Core Tie-In:

- Introduction to Social Health: Course Standard #8
- Family Studies: Course Standard #8
- Lifespan Development: Course Standards #12 c/d
- Lifetime Wellness (9-12): Course Standard #6.1
- Health Education (6-8): Course Standards #8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 12.1, 12.2

Supplies Needed:

- Red paper, cut into strips (3 strips per student)
- Green paper, cut into strips (1 strip per student)
- 2 clear Ziploc bags (quart size or larger)

Directions:

Hand each student 3 strips of red paper and one strip of green. Ask them to brainstorm the qualities of unhealthy relationships. You can offer suggestions if they are stuck. Make sure the following are included: no trust, lying, cheating, unfair fighting, bad communication/no communication, abuse (physical, verbal, sexual), obsessive, controlling, isolation, etc. Students should write down one quality of an unhealthy relationship on each piece of red paper and fold it in half.

Then, have them brainstorm qualities of healthy relationships. Write them on the board to help if they are stuck and to help with spelling. Make sure the following are included: trust, honesty, faithfulness, good communication, no pressure, have their own lives, not controlling, love, etc. Have them write one healthy quality on a green piece of paper and fold it in half.

Gather them in a large, clear Ziploc bag. Shake the bag up in front of the students to show you are not piling all the reds together. There will be more reds than greens by a great deal. Tell them this bag represents all the people they could end up with in a relationship. Have one of them volunteer to try to pick a “healthy relationship” (green piece of paper) out of the bag. Before you let them reach into the bag, make them close their eyes. Have them reach in and grab a piece. They are likely to grab a red piece, but if they get a green, tell them they were lucky and get them to try to do it again with their eyes closed.

When they pull out a red, have them read the unhealthy quality written on there and ask if that is a quality they’d want in a relationship. (No!) Ask the class to suggest a way to make it easier for the volunteer to ensure they will pull a “healthy relationship” green piece of paper out of the

bag. They may suggest that the volunteer open their eyes. Explain that this represents the way that some people have their eyes closed when they are infatuated with someone. They are so into the new relationship that they ignore any warning signs or bad parts of the relationship even if other people see it. If they open their eyes, and keep them open, they are more likely to find a healthy partner. Another suggestion they might make is taking the “unhealthy relationship” red pieces out. Ask them how we could remove unhealthy relationships from our lives? (By hanging out with good people, getting to know people before you date them, having high expectations, etc.)