

Choose Your Words Carefully

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility

Lesson 3

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

A K-12 Curriculum fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education. Target: Grade 8 Lesson 3 Time: 50 minutes

EDUCATION STANDARDS: NSES ALIGNMENT: By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to:

1. **HR.8.IC.** – Demonstrate communication skills that foster healthy relationships.
2. **HR.8.IC.3** – Demonstrate effective skills to negotiate agreements about the use of technology in relationships.

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

1. Identify at least two characteristics of healthy communication in a relationship. [Knowledge]
2. Apply their understanding of healthy communication to a scenario between two people who are discussing technology use within a relationship. [Knowledge, Skill]

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Large strips of newsprint statements, prepared as indicated
2. Masking tape
3. “Choose Your Words” activity statements, prepared as indicated
4. Envelopes for “Choose Your Words” activity statements, prepared as indicated (there should be one envelope per every two students)
5. Homework: “iRelationship” – one per student
6. Teacher’s Guide for Homework – one copy

7. Whiteboard and markers
8. Exit Tickets - one per student

VERIFICATION

Steps to check for student understanding

1. Teachers will assess understanding through the in-class activity as designed to achieve both learning objectives, while the homework assignment will reinforce the learning to ensure the objectives are met.
2. Student understanding will also be achieved through use of exit ticket tasks.

ACTIVITY

STEP 1: Ask, (on slideshow) “Has anyone ever had to talk with someone about something really important – but you weren’t sure how to do it?” Acknowledge the raised hands and ask, “What specifically can make it challenging to talk with someone about something important to you?” **Probe for:**

- *You don’t want to hurt their feelings*
- *You’re not sure whether you should talk with them about it*
- *You’re embarrassed about it*
- *You don’t want to make them mad*
- *You just don’t want to deal and hope that ignoring it will make it go away*
- *You like them as more than a friend and you’re worried if you talk about something serious they won’t want to hang out with you anymore*

Say, “Whether it’s a friendship or a relationship, it’s important to be able to talk about things that come up. If a friend always teases you and you really hate when he does that – but you never tell him that you hate it – it’s not his fault if he keeps doing it and makes you mad, it’s yours because you didn’t say anything about it!

The big question, of course, is how do you talk with someone about something that’s important to you?”
(6 minutes)

STEP 2: On the board write, “**Partner A**” at head level, followed by “**Partner B**” about five feet to the right of it. As you’re writing, say, “Let me give you an example. Let’s say I was Partner A, and the scenario was that my significant other wanted me to stay after school and watch their basketball game.”

Between the two headers, write “Basketball Game.” Now, I want to be supportive, but I already told my best friend I’d hang out with them. So how do I bring this up?”

Post the newsprint strip that reads, “Hey, can I talk with you about something?” Say, “This is always a good place to start. Giving the other person a heads up that you need to talk will get their attention and let them know that it’s important they listen.” Under the Partner B sign, **post** the flipchart strip that reads, “Sure, what’s up?”

Say, “If you’re Partner B, you want to respond to let the other person know that not only is it okay for them to talk, but that you’re also going to pay attention to them – not anyone else, not your phone, not a video game – but them. Make sense?”

Under Partner A, post “I can’t go to your game, I’m so sorry.” Ask the students what they think of this as a way of breaking the news to the other person. Ask, “What might be some ways Partner B might respond?”

Once you’ve gotten some reactions, **take down, “I can’t go to your game, sorry”** and ask, “How do you think Partner B would respond if you said this instead?” and **post the large flipchart strip that reads, “I’m not going to your game. Let’s talk later.”** Have a few students respond. Ask, “What’s different between the two?” **Probe** for the fact that the last statement doesn’t explain why and sounds like Partner A is mad or like something’s wrong.

(on slideshow) Say, “Clearly, I have some choices as to how I can bring this up – but regardless of what I choose, it’s going to have an impact on how the other person responds. I won’t necessarily know what that impact is until my significant other responds – but I can think before I speak and choose my words carefully. Which is what you are about to do.” (12 minutes)

STEP 3: Divide the class into pairs. Then put two pairs together to form a group of four. (activity on slideshow) Say, “In each group of four are two pairs. Each pair will represent one person in a relationship, partner A or partner B. This couple needs to talk about an important part of any relationship: how they’re going to deal with technology in their communication with each other and with others about their relationship.”

Hold up an envelope and say, “One pair will receive an envelope that reads ‘Partner A’ and the other, ‘Partner B.’ Inside are strips of paper with individual statements. You are going to create a conversation between the partners using these statements. Here are the rules:

- a. You can only use each slip once.
- b. You are both interested in staying together – you want the relationship to work!

You will have five minutes for each pair to look through their statements to get a sense of what’s there. Then when I say, ‘Go,’ Partner A will start the dialogue with one of their statements. Partner B will then

have a minute in which to put down their response. Partner A shouldn't move forward until I say so."

*Answer any questions and **distribute** the envelopes to the pairs and ask each pair to look at them together and start planning how they will use them. (6 minutes)*

***STEP 4:** After a minute or two, say, "Okay – Partner A, let's get the conversation started. Put down your conversation starter. Partner B, don't respond yet." After a minute, check to make sure all the Partner As have gone, then say, "Okay, Partner B, put down your response. Partner A, read what Partner B put down on the desk. You have a minute to come up with your response. Partner B, please wait to respond until I tell you to."*

*Continue to facilitate this process, giving a minute for each "partner" to go, until each has put down five statements. Walk around the room and check their work, giving guidance as needed. As you **walk** around, tear off a long strip of masking tape (tape can be optional) and leave it for each group. (14 minutes)*

***STEP 5:** After the last turn, ask students to stop and reflect on their dialogue. As they are reading through, ask them to take the pieces of tape and tape the dialogue to the desk or table top. Then ask groups of four to carefully walk around the room and read the dialogues of the other groups before returning to their original ones. Ask them to sit together as a group of four for the remainder of class.*

Process the activity by asking the following questions: (group discussion slide)

- *What was it like to do that? What was [easy, hard, fun] about it?*
- *What did you think of the conversation you created overall? Did it work out well or did it seem like they still had things to talk about?*
- *Thinking about your conversation or any of the ones you observed – what did you notice worked **WELL** in the "couples" discussions? What did you notice did **NOT** work well?*
- *What does this tell you about what's most important when you're trying to have a conversation about something important? As students respond, write the phrase, "Take-home messages" on the board and record their answers beneath it. If it's not included by the students, be sure to share the following: (on slide show)*
- *However you communicate – whether verbally or via text – it's important to communicate. Otherwise it's all a guessing game!*
- *Technology is a big part of all relationships today. Talking up front about what you do and don't want, and what you do and don't expect around privacy and the other things we discussed in class is really important.*

Distribute and go over the homework assignment. (12 minutes)

HOMEWORK:

“iRelationship” video clip and worksheet – students are to watch this brief, online video, respond to questions in the worksheet provided and bring their sheets to the next class session.

Video Clip Link: <https://vimeo.com/22365117>

Choosing Your Words Carefully

Homework: iRelationship

Name:

Date:

Instructions: Watch the video, “iRelationship”, which you can find online at <https://vimeo.com/22365117> and then answer the following questions about it.

1. Things seemed to be off to a good start between James and Jessica. What changed and why?

2. What was the main thing James was confused about?

3. What was the main thing Jessica was confused about?

4. What was different about Jessica and Ryan’s encounter on the bus?

5. What could make James and Jessica’s situation better?

Teacher’s Guide

Homework: iRelationship

The following offers some possible responses to the open-ended questions connected to the homework video. Student responses that recognize something close to these points, or that bring up other valid points in the teacher's opinion, should be considered correct.

1. Things seemed to be off to a good start between James and Jessica. What changed and why?

James didn't respond to Jessica's final text that first night they were texting, which sent Jessica the message that he wasn't interested in hanging out with her.

2. What was the main thing James was confused about?

Whether Jessica wanted to hang out as friends or whether going out meant they were on a date.

3. What was the main thing Jessica was confused about?

Why James didn't respond after she suggested getting together during their first text chat; also, why James eventually seemed interested, and then took off when they were out together in the park.

4. What was different about Jessica and Ryan's encounter on the bus?

Ryan spoke directly to Jessica. He was clear that he wanted to hang out. Jessica also asked him directly whether it would be a date and he said, again clearly, that it would be.

5. What could make James and Jessica's situation better?

If they avoided guessing what the other wanted or was interested in and just asked – or said so clearly. James and Jessica both talked with other friends about what the friends thought might be going on, but

James and Jessica never spoke with each other.