

CAN YOU READ THE SIGNALS?

- ✓ 1. To help learners understand differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- ✓ 2. For learners to identify where everyday actions fit on continuum of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

25 minutes

Blackboard and chalk, or markers and paper.

- ★ **Face Cards** (provided)
- ★ **Teacher Prompt: Scenarios** (provided)
- ★ **Teacher's Answer Key** (provided)

PROCEDURE

PRIOR TO CLASS

- 1 Ensure that you are familiar with some local resources for abusive relationships.
- 2 Print or copy the set of 'Face Cards' so that each learner has a set of three cards: a smiley face, a sad face and a worried face. (You could simply have learners draw a set of faces on a piece of paper, if easier).
- 3 Draw three vertical columns on the board and label them with a smiley face, a worried face and a sad face. You will use these to total up how many learners vote for each kind of face in response to the scenarios later on.

IN CLASS

- 4 Begin the exercise by explaining to the class that this exercise looks at healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours. Explain that you will read out scenarios of healthy behaviour, worrisome behaviour and unhealthy behaviour.
- 5 Hand out a strip of three cards (happy/worried/sad) to each learner.
- 6 Read out each scenario from the list and ask the class to 'vote' for whether they think the behaviour in question is healthy (happy face), worrisome (worried face) or unhealthy (sad face), by holding up the relevant card.
- 7 As you go through the scenarios, note down on the board in the relevant columns how many learners voted for each type of behaviour. The correct answers are provided in the Answer Key. After you have noted down the votes, encourage discussion on:
 - a. How the learners decided on a category for each scenario.
 - b. Differences between learners' votes on a single scenario.
 - c. What criteria they applied in making their decision.
- 8 Now explain to learners which were the correct answers and ensure that they understand why some behaviours are worrisome, or unhealthy.
- 9 This activity introduces the idea that what is considered healthy, worrisome or unhealthy behaviour may depend on the situation or context. For example, if both partners like texting or phoning many times in a day, and do so to share news or touch base with one another, then it is probably not something to be concerned about. On the other hand, if one partner is texting or calling all day long to check up on where the other partner is, who they are with, and what they are doing, it is problematic.

In reflecting on situation-specific behaviours, you could ask learners to consider the following questions:

- a. Did all learners agree on the factors that made a situation healthy, worrisome, or unhealthy?
- b. Why are some behaviours dependent on the particular situation?
- c. How does one know how to behave in these situations?
- d. What should be done if one doesn't know whether behaviour is healthy, unhealthy or worrisome?

- 10 Wrap up the discussion by asking learners what they would do in cases of worrisome or unhealthy behaviours.
- 11 Share the local resources that you collected prior to class.

TEACHER TIPS



General

It is important to keep the activity moving fast to prevent the learners' attention from wandering. Encouraging good, vigorous discussion is also key to the success of this exercise, and participation from various learners should be reinforced. While it is important to allow the space for diverse opinions and suggestions on how to categorise the behaviours in the scenarios, it is also critical to provide learners with the correct answers.

Remember that in every class and every school there are likely to be **perpetrators** and **victims** of domestic violence. It is important for teachers to be mindful of this fact and to make sure that the discussion doesn't single out individuals or vilify people.



Making the Link with Gender and Violence

This exercise helps learners reflect on and discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships. It also allows the opportunity for personal reflection about worrisome behaviours which they may have enacted or were victim to. Learners who are in abusive relationships may not realise that they, too, are victims of domestic or dating violence, and may not know what they can do to protect themselves. Learners who are perpetrators of dating violence (or are at risk of becoming perpetrators) may also not have identified that their own behaviour may be abusive. This exercise is a non-confrontational way of raising these issues.



Assessment Ideas

Ask learners to design a poster that tells their peers how to identify unhealthy relationships. It should make clear that certain attitudes and behaviours are abusive, and should suggest what teens can do to change these behaviours.

FACE CARDS

PRINT. THEN CUT OUT ONE STRIP (SAD/HAPPY/WORRIED FACE) FOR EACH LEARNER.



SCENARIOS

Read the following scenarios. Ask learners to vote on whether they are healthy, worrisome or unhealthy behaviours.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Your partner embarrasses you when you are with other people. | Your partner is very competitive. |
| You are good at working out compromises. | Your partner is critical of you. |
| You feel like you can talk about your problems with your partner. | Your partner makes plans and then breaks them. |
| Your partner makes fun of you in front of other people. | You have more good times together than bad. |
| You can disagree with each other without getting into a fight. | You always have fun together. |
| Your partner is annoying at times. | You each have your own friends. |
| Your partner always shows off. | You disagree with each other from time to time. |
| Your partner calls you on the phone or texts you often. | You feel like you can make decisions by yourself. |
| Your partner tries to make you more like they are. | Your partner feels jealous if you spend time or talk to other people. |
| You share your feelings with one another. | You trust each other. |
| You feel good about yourself when you are with the other person. | You have unequal power in your relationship. |
| You have freedom within the relationship. | Your partner makes you feel like you are a pain or a nuisance. |
| You share your feelings, your partner doesn't. | You feel unsafe when you are with your partner. |

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Read the following scenarios. Ask the learners to vote on whether they are healthy, worrisome or unhealthy behaviours.

| | |
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| You both support each other. | Your partner doesn't trust you. |
| Your partner stays with you all the time when you go out with other friends. | Your partner tells you what to do all the time. |
| You feel like you can talk to each other about things that are important. | Your partner criticises your friends or family. |
| You don't trust your partner. | Your partner does not make time for you. |
| You feel like you can give honest opinions and advice. | Your partner makes you feel bad about yourself. |
| Your partner criticises how you look, dress or behave. | Your partner tries to control and manipulate you. |
| Your partner discourages you from being close to anyone else. | You feel like your partner is a pain or a nuisance. |

ANSWER KEY

| | | |
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|  Your partner embarrasses you when you are with other people. | Your partner is very competitive. |  |
|  You are good at working out compromises. | Your partner is critical of you. |  |
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|  Your partner always shows off. | You disagree with each other from time to time. |  |
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