

Newsletter



THIS ISSUE

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Dear Friends,

What is a “healthy relationship”? How do we teach the children in our lives the skills with which to have positive, healthy relationships with peers and to deal with dating situations? One suggestion is not to wait until they are dating to have the conversation. “The good news is that kids today mature earlier, are more independent and have access to the greatest quantity and quality of information ever available. The bad news is kids today mature earlier, are more independent and have access to the greatest quantity and quality of information ever available” (A Parent’s Handbook).

In this edition of our newsletter we will provide some tips on how to talk to pre-teens about relationships. It is our desire that this information along with the love, support and guidance of parents and other important adults in their lives, that pre-teens can grow up to experience loving, rewarding relationships.

A note to parents/guardians with boys: Relationship violence is often perceived as a “girls” issue, and many parents understand the importance of talking with their daughters about learning how to stay safe. Violence prevention experts tell us that it is critical that we talk with our sons about healthy relationships just as we talk with our daughters.

Sincerely,
Amy Peterson
Victim Assistance Coordinator

The Relationship Quiz (To take with your child)

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|--|------|-------|
| 1. Communication is being able to read each other’s mind. | True | False |
| 2. You have the right to say “NO” and not feel guilty. | True | False |
| 3. True love means you think only about the other person. | True | False |
| 4. Jealousy is a sign of love. | True | False |
| 5. A healthy relationship is based mainly on strong physical attraction. | True | False |
| 6. Giving in to your partner is a good way to resolve conflicts. | True | False |
| 7. Someone who really cares for you shows you respect and consideration. | True | False |
| 8. The right time to start dating is when you start high school. | True | False |

(quiz taken from Peel Public Health Website)

Answers to Relationship Quiz:

1. **False:** No one can read another person's mind. Assuming you know what your partner is thinking can be dangerous and lead to misinterpretations. Communication includes active listening and being able to recognize and express feelings. Effective communication helps to set the stage for a healthy relationship.
2. **True:** No one needs to feel guilty when they say "No". Healthy self-esteem, believing in yourself and your reasons for saying "No" will decrease or prevent feelings of guilt. Practicing assertive communication can help to say "No" when necessary.
3. **False:** You should be able to continue with other parts of your life when you are in a relationship. Love allows you to continue to grow as an independent and creative person, enjoying relationships and other important parts of your life, including your family, school, work and other friends.
4. **False:** Feelings of jealousy often result from insecurity and low self-esteem, and may lead to possessiveness in a relationship. A sense of trust is often missing in a relationship if jealousy is present. A need to always know what a partner is doing demonstrates a lack of respect and trust.
5. **False:** Physical attraction is only a small part of a good relationship. Other positive qualities including honesty, trust, respect, communication, a sense of humor, freedom and patience must be present for a healthy relationship.
6. **False:** It is very important to openly discuss problems, so fair solutions agreeable to both partners can be created. This involves active listening and being able to express negative thoughts in a constructive way using assertive communication.
7. **True:** A relationship based on respect and consideration will outlast a relationship based on power and control.
8. **False:** There is no right age or time to start dating. When making decisions such as this, it is important that your choices feel comfortable and right to you.

Steps to Take:

Evaluate your own attitudes and values about your relationships. Relationships can be complicated, loving, painful rewarding, healthy, unhealthy, etc. Different people have different beliefs and values about what makes a "good" relationship. Assessing your own behavior is the first step before engaging in a discussion with your child. Children learn by observing those around them, especially their parents.

Some questions to ask yourself.

- What kind of role model am I?
- How do I expect men and women to act?
- How should people behave when they disagree?
- How should decisions be made in relationship?

Basic Rights in a Relationship

- The right to emotional support.
- The right to be heard by the other and to be responded to with courtesy.
- The right to have your feelings and experiences acknowledged as real.
- The right to feel safe at all times.
- The right to express your own ideas and say "No" to something you don't like.
- The right to live free from emotional and physical threat.

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