

# Figuring Out Friendships

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.*

## **NSES ALIGNMENT:**

By the end of 5th grade, students will be able to:

**HR.5.CC.1** – Describe the characteristics of healthy relationships (e.g., family, friends, peers).

**HR.5.INF.1** – Compare positive and negative ways friends and peers can influence relationships.

**HR.5.AI.1** – Identify parents and other trusted adults they can talk to about relationships.

**TARGET GRADE:** Grade 4  
Lesson 2

**TIME:** 40 Minutes

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- “Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Quiz” – one per student
- “Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Quiz – Answer Key” – one for teacher
- Handout: “Trusted Adults” – one per student
- Homework: “Circles of Trust” – one per student
- Newsprint/Board and markers/ chalk
- Worksheet: “Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships” – one per student

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

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

1. Describe at least 3 healthy and 3 unhealthy characteristics of relationships. [Knowledge]
2. Compare at least 2 positive and 2 negative ways friends and peers can influence relationships. [Knowledge]
3. Identify at least two trusted adults they would talk to about a relationship. [Knowledge]

## **PROCEDURE:**

**STEP 1:** Tell students that today you are going to talk about healthy and unhealthy aspects of relationships and who they can talk to about them. Ask students, “What do you think of when I say the word ‘relationship?’” If students respond that it means dating or romance, ask “Does a relationship always have to mean two people dating?” (No). “What are some different kinds of relationships that people can have?” (Possible answers include: friendship, romantic, relationship between family members or between a child and an adult such as a parent, teacher, coach, doctor, etc.). Tell students that for this class you want to focus on relationships that children or teens might have with each other, whether friendships or dating relationships. (3 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Hand out the “Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Quiz” to students and ask students to pair up with someone and complete it together. Then have the pairs discuss those that they might not agree on. (10 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Bring students back together as a large group. Go over the quiz by asking for volunteers to give the correct answer and to explain their reasons for their answers. If there are disagreements or misunderstandings, provide explanations for correct answers included in the answer key. Then say, “Now that we know some traits of healthy and unhealthy relationships, let’s think about ways the friends and peers can influence a relationship in positive and negative ways. Hand out the worksheet, “Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships.” Allow students five minutes to fill these out. Then, reconvene the class and ask students to share some examples from their sheets.

**Note to the Teacher:** *The individual worksheets are intended for assessment purposes. After filling these out, students can add ideas to them as the lesson progresses and they continue to learn. After the lesson, have students hand these in.*

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Say, "What are some examples of things that friends might do or say that can help a friendship in a positive way? That keep it healthy?"

**Note to the Teacher:** *Some possible responses are: They keep your secret; they help you learn a new game; they don't get upset with you if you cannot do things that they can do; they include you in games and other activities; they stay with you when they are sad; they listen to your ideas even if they are different from their own; they take turns in games or deciding what to do; they are honest with you; they care about your feelings, etc.*

Then say, "What are some examples of things that friends and peers might do or say that can influence a relationship in a negative way? That make it unhealthy?"

**Note to the Teacher:** *Some possible responses are: They ignore your feelings if you are sad or upset; They jump in front of you in line; They take things from you without asking; They don't invite you to play when a group is together; They hurt your feelings and do not apologize; They tease you even though you ask them not to; They stand by while you are being bullied and do not do anything or tell anyone; They talk about you behind your back; They lie to you; They pressure you to do things you do not want to do, etc.). (20 minutes)*

**STEP 4:** Tell students, "It can sometimes be hard to know if you are in a healthy or unhealthy relationship. It can be confusing. As we just talked about, even people in healthy, good relationships argue and disagree. Also, they can hurt each other's feelings without meaning to. What can you do if you are having a problem or trouble with a relationship?" Ask for student responses. These may include: Tell the other person how you feel; end the relationship; talk with someone about it. After collecting some responses, tell students you want to focus on talking with someone about it.

**Note to the Teacher:** *If students don't come up with this idea on their own, suggest it to them and then begin the follow-up discussion below. (2 minutes)*

**STEP 5:** Tell students that there are many different people they can talk with if they are having a problem in a friendship or other relationship. Sometimes people talk with other friends or classmates, but sometimes it can be really helpful to talk with a trusted adult. Pass out the "Trusted Adult" handout. Read and review it with students, then ask students to think of a few adults in their life who they have gone to with a question or a problem or who they can imagine going to with a problem in the future. Divide the board/newsprint into three categories: Family, adult neighbors and friends, and Adult helpers in the school or community. Ask students, "What types of people could possibly be trusted adults in your life? As students brainstorm suggestions, record their answers under the appropriate columns.

**Note to the Teacher:** *Possible answers may include: Under "Family" – parents or guardians, grandparents, older siblings or cousins aunts and uncles; under "Adult neighbors and friends" – family friends, next door neighbor, parent of a friend; under "Adult helpers in the school or community" – teachers, principals, school nurses, police officers, doctors, clergy. Tell students to remember that the most important thing is always to go to an adult who makes them feel safe and comfortable; someone who is trustworthy. If a person they trust does something to make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, there are always other trusted adults they can go to. (8 minutes)*

**STEP 6:** Pass out the "Circles of Trust" homework worksheet. Tell students that the purpose of this homework activity is to show that they are surrounded by adults who care about them

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and who can help them to solve a problem that may be too big to solve on their own. Tell students that the center circle is labeled "Me." Say, "Around you, you have your family, and each family is unique. For homework, write the names of the people in your family you can talk with or go to if you are having a problem in a friendship or relationship, or some other problem. In the next circle is "Adult Neighbors and Friends." In this circle, write the names of the trusted adults that would fall into this category who you could go to about a friendship or relationship problem, or some other problem. The outside circle is labeled "Adult Helpers in the School and Community." These are the people who surround you when you are away from home. Write the names of people in school and the community who you could ask to discuss a relationship issue or some other problem. On the bottom of the handout, have students fill out the following statement:

"If I wanted to talk with someone about a friendship or other relationship problem I was having, the two people from my circles of trust I would most likely go to first are:"

Encourage students to share their homework with a trusted family member. (2 minutes)

***Note to the Teacher:** Encourage students to fill out the "Circles of Trust" worksheet in consultation with a family member but tell them that this is not a requirement. It is possible that a student does not have a trusted adult in their home or family. In such a case, the student should feel empowered to fill out the worksheet on their own.*

### **RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:**

Learning objective one will be measured through student responses to the Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Quiz.

Learning objective two will be assessed through the worksheet: "Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships" that students complete in Step 3.

Learning objective three will be measured through student completion of the Circles of Trust Homework assignment.

### **HOMEWORK:**

"Circles of Trust" worksheet as described above.

## **TRUSTED ADULTS**

**Who is a trusted adult?** A trusted adult is someone you can talk with about anything; someone you feel happy being around; someone who is a good listener; or someone who has helped you before.

**What kinds of things can you tell a trusted adult about?** Anything you want to; things that make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused; a problem you are having including a problem in a friendship or other relationship that is a problem. A trusted adult will try to help you no matter what the problem is.

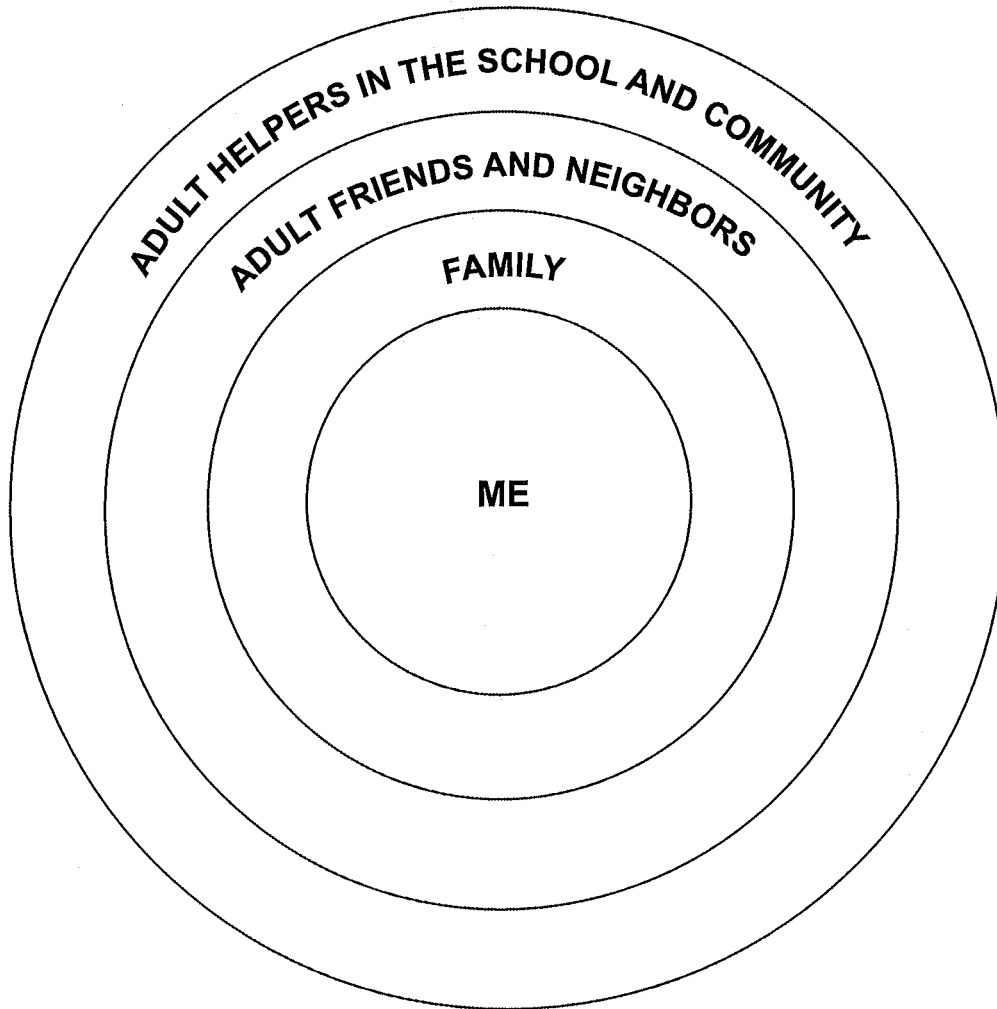
**What would a trusted adult do if you told them that something bad or dangerous had happened to you or you were worried that something might happen to you?** A trusted adult would try to help you solve the problem, be understanding, get help, and work hard to keep you safer.

**Do I only need one trusted adult in my life?** Some people have one person who they talk with about any issue or problem they are facing. Some people have different trusted adults they talk to depending on what they want to talk about. It is good to be able to identify who you would talk to in different situations.

**Circles of Trust**  
*Homework*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: In each circle surrounding "Me," write the names of the trusted adults who you could go to about a friendship or relationship problem, or some other problem.



**If I wanted to talk with someone about a friendship or other relationship problem I was having, the two people from my circles of trust I would most likely go to first are:**

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**Positive and Negative Influences on Relationships**  
*Worksheet*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Things that friends and peers might do or say that can influence a relationship in a positive or healthy way:

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Things that friends and peers might do or say that can influence a relationship in a negative or unhealthy way:

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## Healthy and Unhealthy Friendship Quiz

Quiz

### TRUE OR FALSE

Write 'true' if the description is of a healthy friendship and write 'false' if the description is of an unhealthy friendship.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Spend all of their time together.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Put pressure on each other to do something they may not want to do.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Only wear clothes that the other person likes or approves of.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Share personal information and trust each other.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Do what the other person wants so they won't get mad at them.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Don't get insulted or take it seriously when the other person teases them (like calling them names like stupid or lazy or swearing at them).
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Always think the same way and never argue.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Do what the other person wants to do even if they don't want to or don't think it's a good idea.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Stand up for each other when they are being teased or bullied.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Only hang out with each other and don't have any separate friends.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Say nice things to each other to their face but spread rumors behind their backs.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Tell an adult if they think the other person is doing something harmful or dangerous.

**True or False**  
**Answer Key**

**HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS – ANSWER KEY**

1. **FALSE.** People in healthy relationships usually have outside interests as well that don't include each other. For example, one person may play soccer while the other doesn't play soccer but takes an art class. They don't have to share everything the same.
2. **FALSE.** People in healthy relationships don't insist that the other person do what they want to do. Putting pressure on someone to do something is not a sign of respect or friendship.
3. **FALSE.** Even people who are very close have their own taste and style and their own sense of what is good to wear (or how to wear their hair, what sneakers to buy, etc). No one should have to rely on a friend to tell them how to look. Of course, it is perfectly fine to ask a friend or someone whose taste you trust, their opinion, but in the end each person gets to decide for themselves.
4. **TRUE.** People in healthy relationships often share personal concerns, stories, and experiences with each other that they wouldn't share with other people who may not be close friends or who they just don't know very well. They should be able to have the expectation that the other person will keep that personal information private and not tell anyone, unless they feel that keeping the secret can be harmful or dangerous to their friend, in which case they may tell a responsible adult.
5. **FALSE.** Healthy relationships are equal relationships, meaning both people get to have a say in what they do together. If one person gets angry because the other won't do what they want, that is not respectful and is not an equal relationship. It's okay to be annoyed with someone who doesn't want to do what you want to do, but that doesn't mean the other person has to give in if they feel strongly about it.
6. **FALSE.** People in healthy relationships should never call other people names, or tease one another with words that can be hurtful. Healthy joking around doesn't include insults, put downs or threats.
7. **FALSE.** Disagreements are fine and perfectly healthy. It would be more unhealthy if there were never any disagreements because that might suggest that one person is getting their way all the time and the other person is giving in all the time. People in healthy relationships discuss their viewpoints and feelings together to reach a solution.
8. **FALSE.** Just like it is not okay to pressure someone into doing something they don't want to do, it is not healthy to do what another person wants if you don't want to. It is okay to compromise sometimes but if something just sounds like a really bad (or dangerous, or wrong, or just not at all interesting) idea, you shouldn't do it.
9. **TRUE.** It can be really difficult for someone, even a good friend, to stick up for someone who is being teased or bullied because they are afraid that they may then be bullied, too. When friends stick up for each other, however, they are less likely to be bullied. If it is impossible to stick up for them because it doesn't feel safe, it is important to find an adult to tell who can intervene. Helping a friend when they are in trouble is very important to a healthy relationship.



## True or False

### Answer Key

10. **FALSE.** People in healthy relationships enjoy each other's company but can also have separate friends they might want to hang out with by themselves, without the other person. Good friends don't worry about that or get jealous of the other friends.

11. **FALSE.** Being a good friend means being a good friend when you are together or apart. Nobody likes people saying mean things about them or spreading rumors behind their back. People in healthy relationships always treat the other person with respect whether they are together or apart.

12. **TRUE.** While it is important to be able to keep certain things private that someone shares, it is NOT a sign of a healthy relationship to keep a secret when someone is doing something unsafe or is in a situation that might harm them. A good friend's first priority in such a situation would be the safety and well-being of the other person, even if the other person doesn't think so. Sometimes people don't recognize when they are in trouble. Having someone who cares enough about them to get them help is important.