

# GRADE 8 | LESSON 2

## MAINTAINING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

# LESSON OVERVIEW

## LESSON 2: MAINTAINING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- In this lesson, students practice employing an assertive style to help scenario characters communicate their boundaries clearly to their partners and then analyze how romance and power relationships can make assertive communication more challenging.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## CORE CONCEPTS

- Analyze the similarities and differences between friendships and romantic relationships. (NSES HR.8.CC.3)

## ANALYZING INFLUENCES

- Analyze the impact of technology and social media on friendships and relationships (NSES HR.8.INF.2)

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries and show respect for the boundaries of others. (NSES HR.8.IC.2)
- Demonstrate effective skills to negotiate agreements about the use of technology in relationships. (NSES HR.8.IC.3)

# ADVANCE PREPARATION

## MATERIALS

- Per student or Class Set copies of *Relationships Exist on a Spectrum* (from Lesson 1)
- Per student copies of *Communication Styles Quiz*
- Per student or Class Set copies of “Communication Styles Anchor”
  - This document will serve as a reference in later lessons.
- Per group copies of *Assertive Communication Scenarios*
- (optional) Class Set copies of *The Science of Love Infographic*
- Student notebooks or scrap paper 3-2-1 Reflection

## ACTIONS

- Ensure pedagogical familiarity and comfort with lesson plan
- Consider taking *Communication Styles Quiz* yourself
- Plan where students will write the 3-2-1 Reflection
- Ensure functioning of audiovisual setup
- Test video playback
- Questions? Contact Michele Rusnak or a district STEM Coach.

WARM UP

## INSTRUCTIONS:WARM UP

Reference: *Relationship Spectrum* handout

Prompt: Which behavior required for healthy relationships do you think is the most challenging and why?

Method: Think – Pair – Share

# WHICH CHARACTERISTIC OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST CHALLENGING AND WHY?

Respect

Communication

Trust

Equality

Independence

Honesty

## RELATIONSHIPS EXIST ON A SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive to somewhere in between. Below, we outline behaviors that occur in healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.

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# COMMUNICATION STYLES



## OVERVIEW: COMMUNICATION STYLES

- Introduce *Communication Styles* quiz and allow students 5 minutes to complete it and tally points.
- Facilitate a short discussion to help students understand that...
  - people have different natural communications tendencies
  - people may use different styles in different situations
  - an assertive communication style best supports healthy relationships.
- (If time allows) Show video *How to Talk to Girls, Boys and Everyone In Between*. This video reinforces the communication styles in an engaging way.
- Distribute “Communication Styles Anchor” and highlight the “Three Steps” as one way to facilitate assertive communication.

## Instructions

Communication is key in a healthy relationship. People have different natural communication tendencies.

Use this “quiz” to explore your communication tendencies.

There are no wrong answers.

## Worksheet: Communication Style Quiz

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1. Your partner asks if s/he can copy your math homework since s/he was really busy this week. You don't feel comfortable with this and want your partner to do the work on his/her own. You:

- A. Show the assignment to your partner anyway and hope he/she does most of the work on his/her own.
- B. Tell your partner absolutely not.
- C. Explain to your partner that though you want him/her to do well on the homework, you wouldn't feel comfortable giving him/her your work.

2. You and your partner decide to go to the movies; s/he says s/he'll pay you back. It's been a month and your partner still hasn't paid you back. What do you do?

- A. It's not worth mentioning, you're sure s/he'll pay for something in the future.
- B. Casually remind him/her about the money the next time you two are together and ask him/her to get it to you when he/she can.
- C. Text your partner immediately, saying that he/she owes you and should bring it to you right away. There's no excuse for this.

3. Your friend constantly wants to text and video chat until late at night on weeknights. You have a lot of studying and extra-curricular work to do and really need to go to bed early. How do you deal with this?

- A. Tell your friend that he/she has to stop texting you at night.
- B. Tell your friend your parents took your phone/laptop.
- C. Call your friend and talk about it, saying that you really love talking, but that you really want to focus on school and you need your sleep.

4. You've been assigned a group project in your English class. Your group members divided up the work evenly, but one member has not done her part and is constantly coming up with excuses as to why she hasn't gotten the work done. How do you handle the situation?

- A. Tell her that you feel that her lack of effort is not fair to the rest of the group.
- B. Tell the teacher what is happening. Threaten that you won't give her credit for the project if she doesn't finish everything by the deadline.

## DISCUSSION: COMMUNICATION STYLES QUIZ (TEACHER)

What challenges might arise when you engage in passive communication?

- Sample answers: bottle up anger, never get what they want, issues remain unresolved, feel resentful, helpless or out-of-control

What challenges might arise when you engage in aggressive communication?

- Sample answers: might seem mean, not considerate of others, bossy, disliked, controlling, over powering

There might be situations when a passive or aggressive communication style might be needed. Can you think of any?

- Situations in which your safety or the safety of others is at risk.

## DISCUSSION: COMMUNICATION STYLES QUIZ

What challenges might arise when you engage in passive communication?

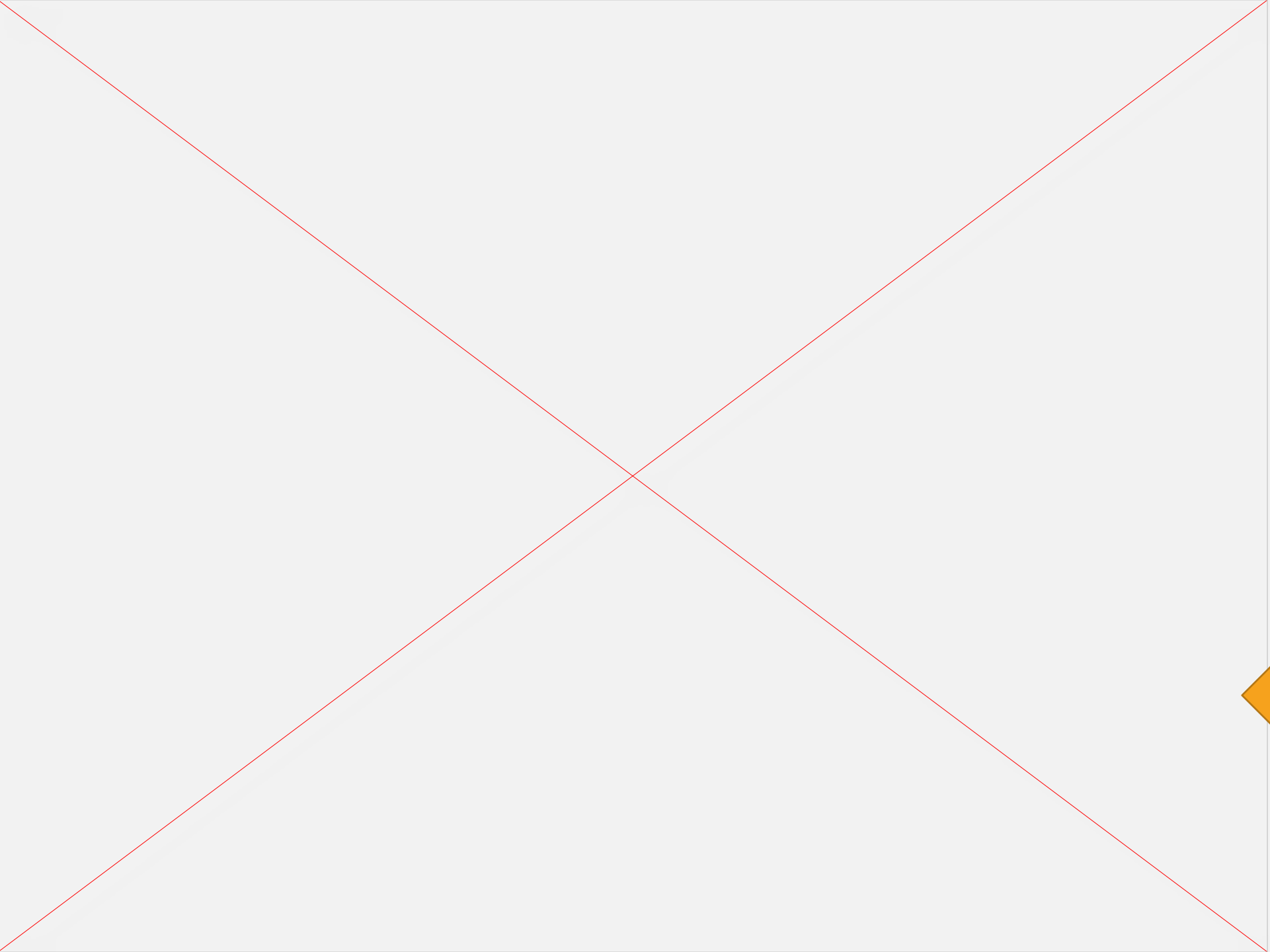
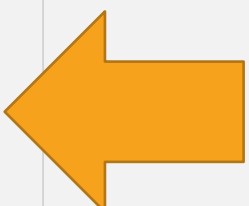
What challenges might arise when you engage in aggressive communication?

There might be situations when a passive or aggressive communication style might be needed. Can you think of any?

HOW TO  
TALK TO GIRLS,  
BOYS AND  
EVERYONE  
IN BETWEEN



# COMMUNICATION STYLES ANCHOR



# COMMUNICATING ASSERTIVELY

## OVERVIEW: ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS

- In groups of 2-3, students will analyze scenarios from “Assertive Communication Scenarios” and then share their responses with the whole class.



## TEACHER DECISIONS

Group sizes of 2 – 3 students are recommended. Will you allow students to self-select their groups or will you assign them in advance?

There are 3 scenarios. Will you allow groups to choose a scenario or will you control how many and/or which groups do each scenario?

How will you communicate these expectations to students?

What is a reasonable amount of time for students to complete a scenario? What strategies will be effective in keeping students working efficiently?

When it is time, how will you select which groups will share out?

Will you ensure that each scenario is shared at least once?

Will you solicit constructive feedback from the “audience” after each presentation?

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

To increase student/group success, you might consider:

- Assigning groups ahead of time
- Giving students specific roles in their groups
- Assigning each group a scenario instead of allowing students/groups to choose

If time allows, have each group present their scenario and responses to another group and solicit feedback to improve their answers before the whole-group share-out. This approach can also be used as a way to have all groups present their work *instead of* having only a few groups present during a whole-class share-out. The latter approach is only recommended if you have verified that most groups have strong responses and you will be able to circulate during presentation to provide small bits of feedback.

## ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS KEY

For your reference, sample responses are included in the Handouts folder

### Homework Assignment:

Facilitator: Your homework assignment is to practice negotiating boundaries in an assertive way. There are three scenarios. Please respond to each of them. Remember to be assertive. State the issue, the feeling and what you need. Focus on solutions, not punishment.

*Note to facilitator: Sample answers for the scenarios.*

**Scenario 1:** Ash and Sam have been dating for a few months. Ash is home sick, and Sam comes over to check on Ash. Sam posts an unflattering video of Ash sleeping and snoring. Ash feels embarrassed and angry at Sam for posting it.

1. What boundary was compromised?
  - a. *Sample Answer: privacy*
2. What could Ash say to Sam to communicate the issue and set the boundary for the future?
  - a. *Sample answers: "I value my privacy and am not comfortable that that video is online. Please take it down and ask me before you post pictures of me." "It made me feel angry when I saw that video of me online. It is unflattering and I don't want that kind of thing shared. Please take it down and ask me before you post things like that."*

**Scenario 2:** Jo and Morgan have been dating for a few months, and Jo leaves for summer break to be a camp counselor at a sleepaway camp. Jo is busy with work, helping campers and making friends with other counselors, and feels irritated with Morgan, who calls every morning and every night and texts throughout the day. One day, Jo leaves the phone behind for a field trip and has over thirty texts from Morgan that night. Jo feels that Morgan has good intentions, but finds the communication excessive.

1. What boundary/boundaries were comprised?
  - a. *Sample answer: individuality, personal space*
2. What could Jo say to Morgan?
  - a. *Sample answers: "It's important to me to focus on my work and spend time with people at camp who I only see once a year. I feel uncomfortable and pressured when you text and call me so much. Could we just check in once a day?" "You've been texting and calling me a lot, and I need more space. I feel like you want to be talking constantly, but I want to be able to pay attention to other parts of my life. Please wait for me to call you next time."*
3. Morgan really wants to talk to Jo more than they are currently talking. What could Morgan say to communicate that need assertively?
  - a. *Sample answer: "I don't want to make you uncomfortable or pressure you, and I know you're busy, but I would really like to talk more. I miss you when you're away. Can we set definite times to talk throughout the week?"*

**Scenario 3:** Taylor and Jordan have been best friends for years and started dating in tenth grade. As soon as they decided to be a couple, Taylor started being very physical – Taylor is

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# ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS

- Assertive communication and negotiating boundaries takes practice!
- In small groups, you will study a scenario and come up with ideas for how the participants can use assertive communication to establish their own boundaries and show respect for their partner's boundaries.
- Use your resources!

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# ROMANCES VS. FRIENDSHIPS

## ROMANCES VS. FRIENDSHIPS (TEACHER)

All of the Scenarios featured *dating* or *romantic* relationships.

As compared to friendships, do you think assertive behavior in romantic relationships is...

Easier?

More Difficult?

Solicit a show of hands from students. Then, invite students to share reasons why assertive communication in romantic relationships might be easier and reasons why it might be more difficult. Accept all responses.

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## OVERVIEW:THE SCIENCE OF LOVE INFOGRAPHIC

- Students will examine an infographic called “The Science of Love” that shows the physiological changes associated with romantic love.
- Teacher will use questioning to help students makes sense of the graphic.

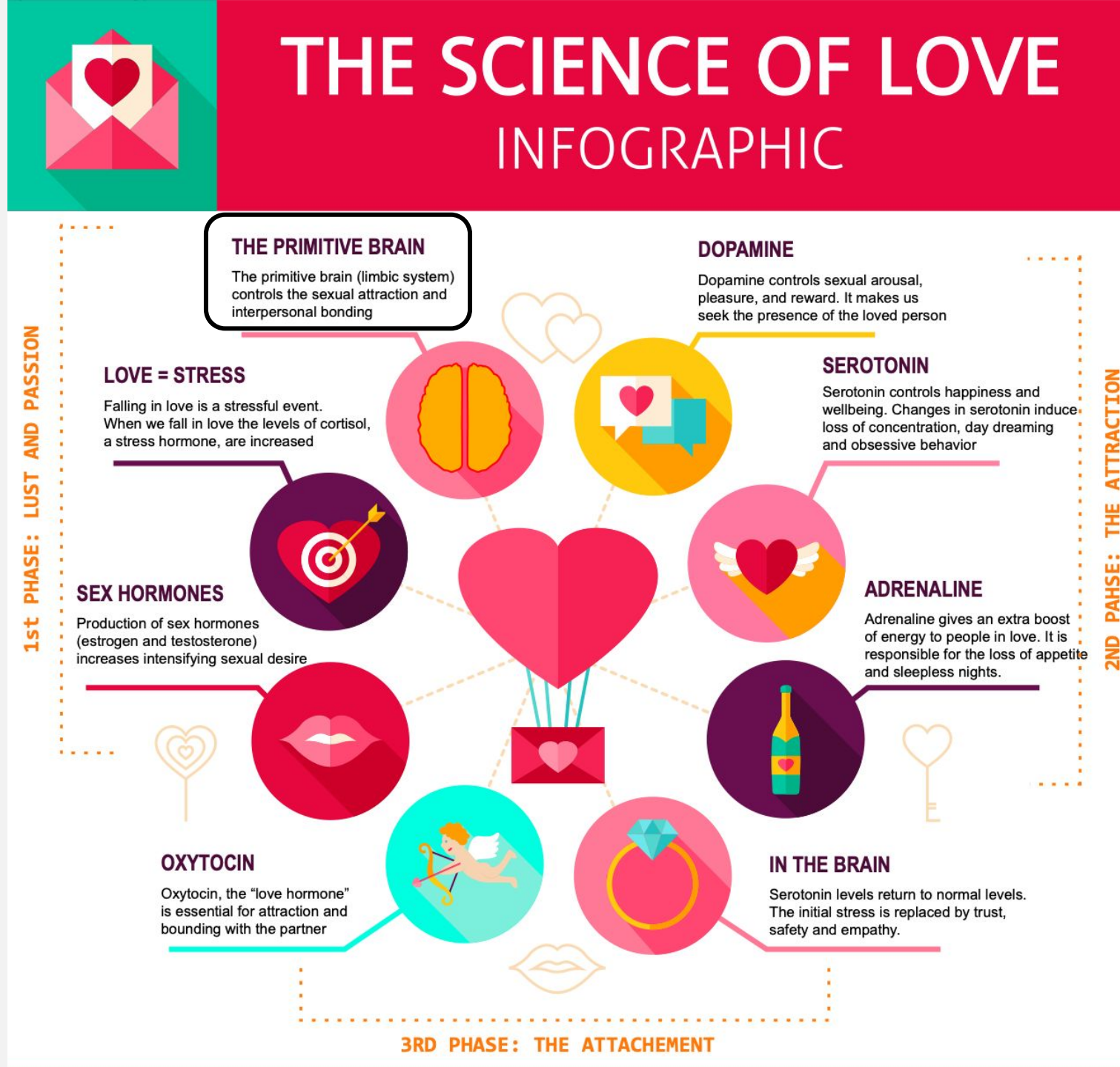


## RECOMMENDED QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE

1. Let students know that they are to keep their answers silent until you ask.
2. Read question aloud. Ask students to keep their answers silent.
3. Allow 10 – 15 seconds of thinking time.
4. If applicable, show the “hint” and give ~5 seconds additional thinking time.
5. Solicit a response from one student .(Your choice: random selection or volunteer)
6. Ask for a show of hands for anyone who had the same answer.
7. (Optional) Solicit a response from another student and again ask for a show of hands.
8. Show and narrate the answer.
9. Solicit a show of hands for students who got it “right.”
10. Repeat.

Q:Where do you think the process of“love” starts?

Hint:There are three “phases” of falling in love. It’s something in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase.

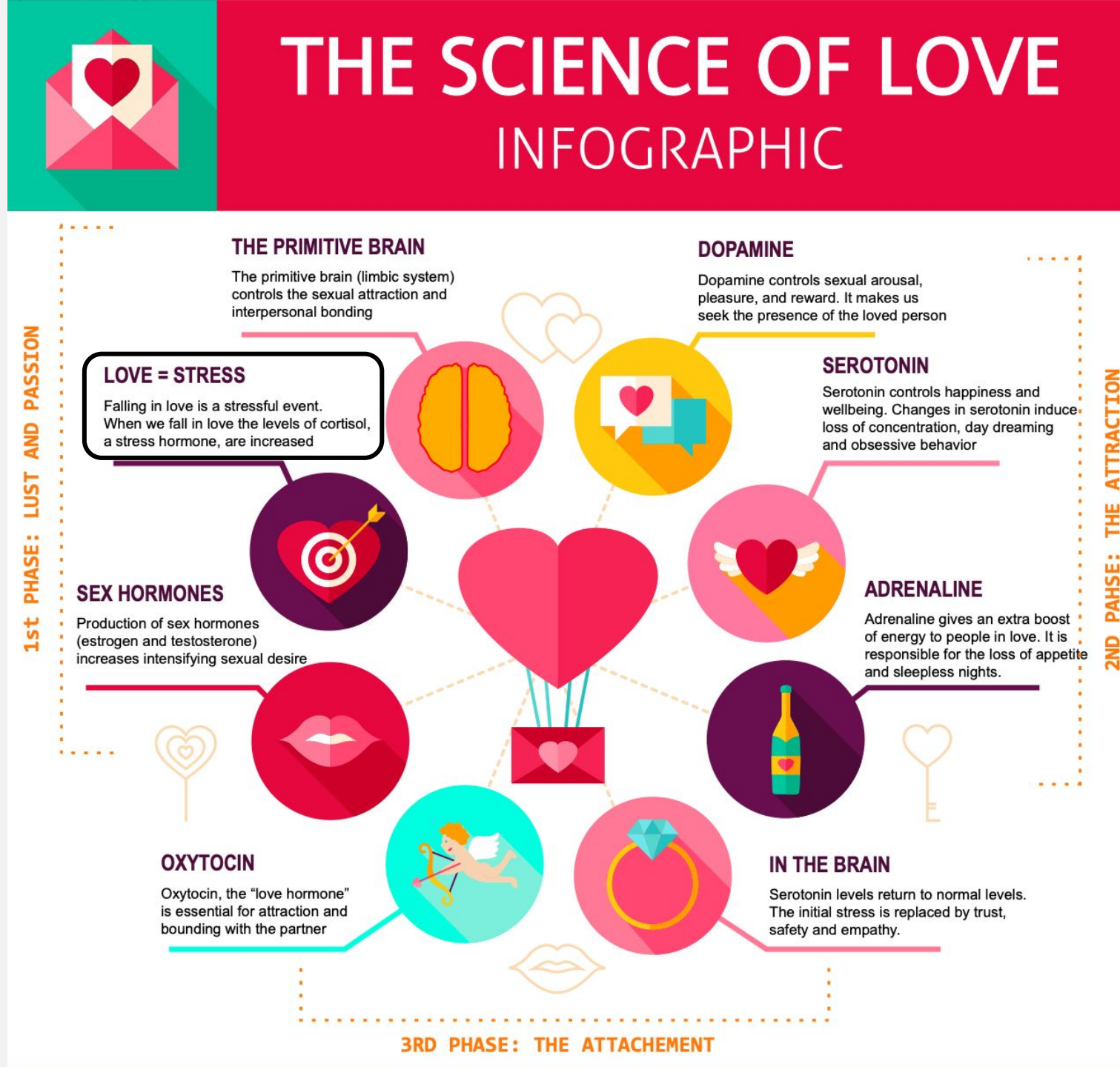


A:All our emotions are produced by **the brain**.

When love hits, first we feel a strong attraction towards the other person. This is triggered by the activation of the limbic nervous system (the primitive brain) and the release of sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone).

This initial stage of love is mostly **unconscious**.

Q: What might make falling in love a stressful event?

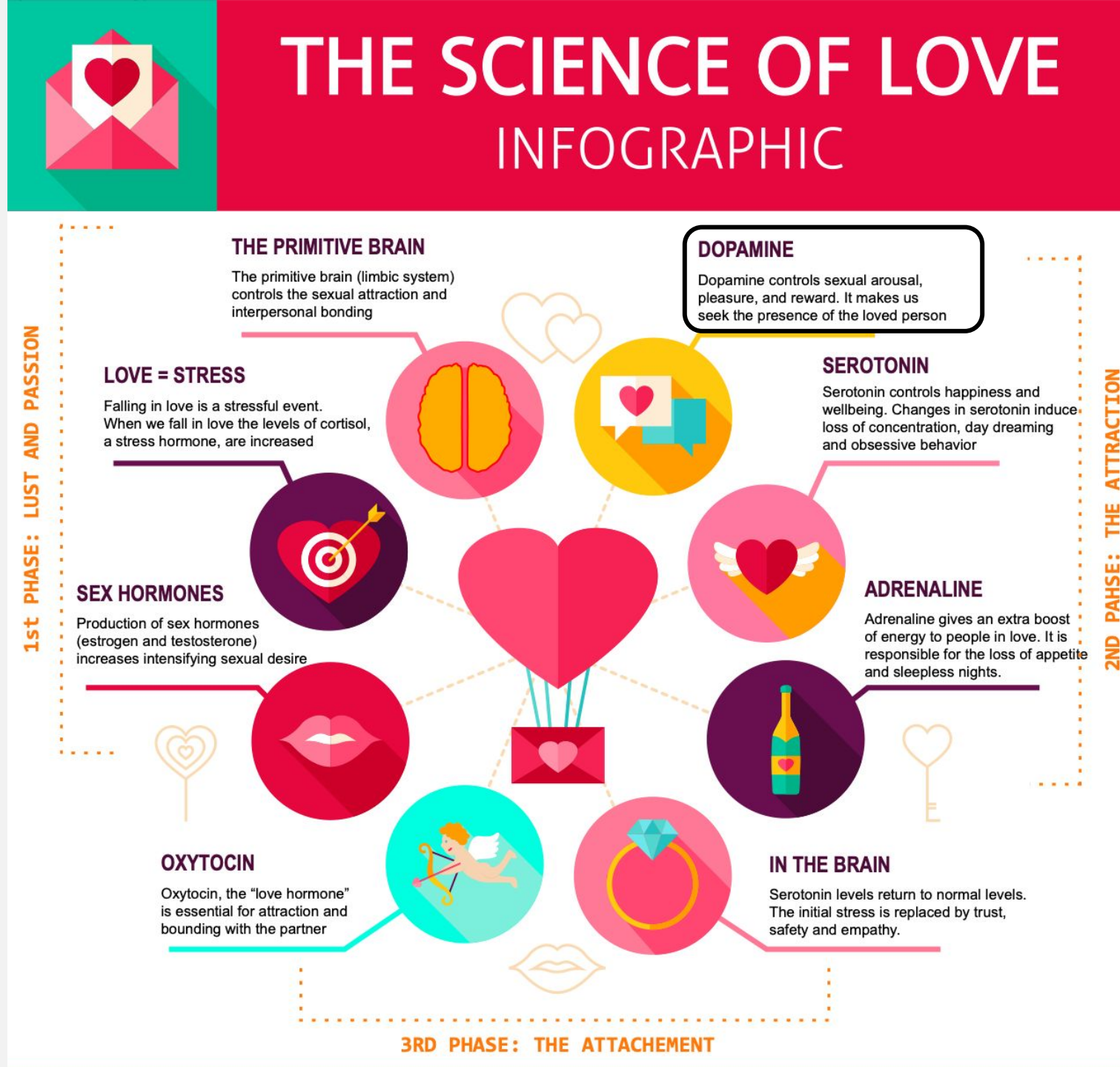


A: Scientists have discovered that in the early days of love, the levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, are increased. This is in part due to **the struggles** associated with the initiation of a relationship.



Q: Have you ever heard the phrase, “Love is like a drug?” Which component of this graphic is also involved in drug addiction?

Hint: It is part of the brain’s “reward system.”



A: **Dopamine** regulates many of our most primal emotions such as fear, aggression, sexual arousal, pleasure, and reward while interpreting sensory input and helping to form memories (along with many other functions). It is this system that is activated by the use of mind-altering drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, alcohol, benzodiazepines, and marijuana.

## ROMANCES VS. FRIENDSHIPS

As compared to friendships, do you think assertive behavior in romantic relationships is...

Easier?

More Difficult?

The  
“Primitive”  
Brain

**Hormones**

“like a drug”

Reward System

Stress

## WORKING THROUGH THE STRESS AND HORMONES

- Students will reflect on how healthy relationship behaviors can help them work through the stress and hormones of romance.
- Students will watch the video “First Kiss and Showing Affection” from Amaze.org to look for evidence of healthy relationship behaviors and strategies for dealing with the stress and hormones of romance.

# WHICH HEALTHY BEHAVIORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR WORKING THROUGH THE STRESS AND HORMONES OF ROMANCE? (TEACHER)

Solicit student responses. Ask students to provide some explanation for the behavior(s) they chose. Accept and validate all reasonable responses.

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Healthy Relationship Educators Toolkit

4

Communication

Equality

Honesty

pect

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# WHICH HEALTHY BEHAVIORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR WORKING THROUGH THE STRESS AND HORMONES OF ROMANCE?

Respect

Communication

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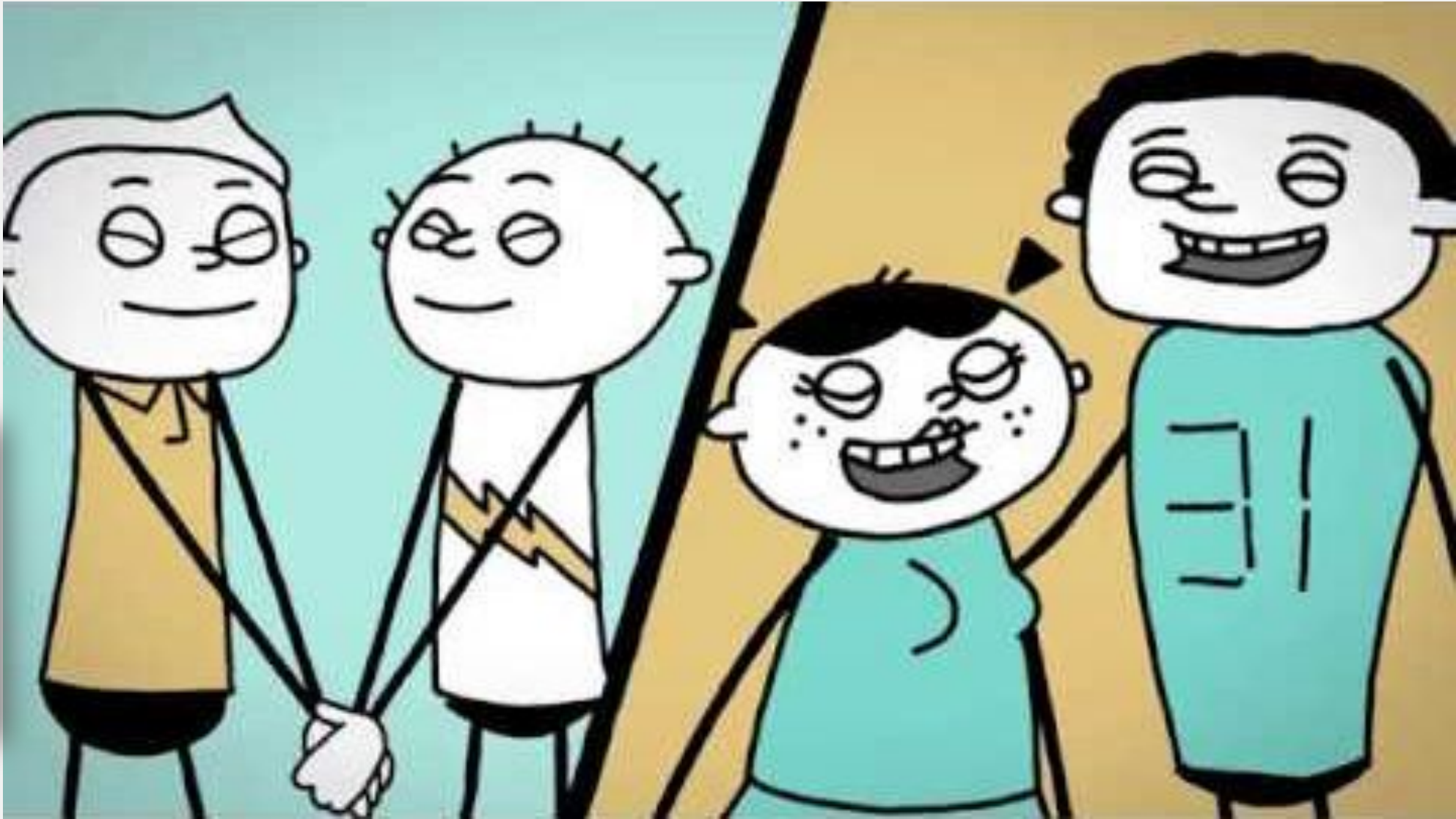
As you watch the video, take note of the behaviors you see that support **healthy** relationships.

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Healthy Relationship Educators Toolkit: \_\_\_\_\_ 4



Sentence stem:  
*The character in  
the video  
showed*

Solicit student  
responses. Ask  
students to  
provide some  
explanation for  
the behavior(s)  
they chose.  
Accept and  
validate all  
reasonable  
responses.

WHICH HEALTHY BEHAVIORS DID YOU  
OBSERVE IN THE VIDEO?

Communication

Equality

Honesty

Independence

Trust

Respect

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<p><b>A healthy relationship</b> means that both you and your partner are:</p> <p><b>Communicating:</b> You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.</p> <p><b>Respectful:</b> You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital and sexual boundaries.</p> <p><b>Trusting:</b> You believe what your partner tells or says. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.</p> <p><b>Honest:</b> You are honest with each other, but can still keep some things private.</p> <p><b>Equal:</b> You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.</p> <p><b>Enjoying personal time:</b> You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.</p>	<p>You may be in an <b>unhealthy relationship</b> if one or both partners is:</p> <p><b>Not communicating:</b> When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.</p> <p><b>Disrespectful:</b> One or both partners is not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.</p> <p><b>Not trusting:</b> One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels entitled to invade their privacy.</p> <p><b>Dishonest:</b> One or both partners tells lies.</p> <p><b>Trying to take control:</b> One partner feels their wishes and choices are more important.</p> <p><b>Only spending time with your partner:</b> Your partner's company is the only one you socialize in.</p>	<p>Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner:</p> <p><b>Communicates</b> in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demeaning.</p> <p><b>Disrespects</b> the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.</p> <p><b>Physically hurts</b> or injures the other partner by hitting, slapping, choking, pushing or shoving.</p> <p><b>Blames</b> the other partner for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.</p> <p><b>Controls and isolates</b> the other partner by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.</p> <p><b>Pressures or forces</b> the other partner to do things they don't want to do, threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they resist or say no.</p>

Healthy Relationship Educators Toolkit: 4

(describe action).

# Communication

# Equality

# Honesty

# Independence

# RELATIONSHIPS EXIST ON A SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive to somewhere in between. Below, we outline behaviors that occur in healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.

HEALTHY	UNHEALTHY	ABUSIVE
<p>A <b>healthy relationship</b> means that both you and your partner are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Communicative:</b> You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.</li><li><b>Respectful:</b> You value each other as you, are, and you respect each other's mental, digital, and physical boundaries.</li><li><b>Trustful:</b> You believe what your partner tells you. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.</li><li><b>Honest:</b> You are honest with each other; out can kill some things private.</li><li><b>Equal:</b> You make decisions together and to do each other the same standards.</li><li><b>Enjoying personal time:</b> You can take enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.</li></ul>	<p>You may be in an <b>unhealthy relationship</b> if one or both partners is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Not communicative:</b> When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.</li><li><b>Disrespectful:</b> One or both partners is not or violates of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.</li><li><b>Not trusting:</b> One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels unable to make their opinion.</li><li><b>Dis honest:</b> One or both partners lies often.</li><li><b>Trying to take control:</b> One partner feels their opinion and choices are more important.</li><li><b>Only spending time with your partner:</b> Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.</li></ul>	<p><b>Abuse</b> is occurring in a relationship when one partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Communicates</b> in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demanding.</li><li><b>Disrespects</b> the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.</li><li><b>Physically hurts or injures</b> the other partner by hitting, tripping, choking, pushing, or shoving.</li><li><b>Blames</b> the other partner for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.</li><li><b>Control and isolates</b> the other partner by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.</li><li><b>Pressures or forces</b> the other partner to do things they don't want to do, threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they refuse or say no.</li></ul>

Healthy Relationship Educators Toolkit

4

REFLECTION

## 3-2-1 REFLECTION (TEACHER)

- Individually, students will complete a reflection on the lesson using a 3-2-1 format.
  - Three (3) facts I learned today...
  - Two (2) things I think are important to share with others...
  - One (1) question I still have...

## 3-2-1 REFLECTION

- Three (3) facts I learned today...
- Two (2) things I think are important to share with others...
- One (1) question I still have...

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# RELATIONSHIPS EXIST ON A SPECTRUM

All relationships exist on a spectrum, from healthy to abusive to somewhere in between. Below, we outline behaviors that occur in healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships.

## HEALTHY

A **healthy relationship** means that both you and your partner are:

**Communicating:** You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.

**Respectful:** You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital and sexual boundaries.

**Trusting:** You believe what your partner has to say. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.

**Honest:** You are honest with each other, but can still keep some things private.

**Equal:** You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.

**Enjoying personal time:** You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.

## UNHEALTHY

You may be in an **unhealthy relationship** if one or both partners is:

**Not communicating:** When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.

**Disrespectful:** One or both partners is not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.

**Not trusting:** One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels entitled to invade their privacy.

**Dishonest:** One or both partners tells lies.

**Trying to take control:** One partner feels their desires and choices are more important.

**Only spending time with your partner:** Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.

## ABUSIVE

**Abuse** is occurring in a relationship when one partner:

**Communicates** in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demeaning.

**Disrespects** the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.

**Physically hurts** or injures the other partner by hitting, slapping, choking, pushing or shoving.

**Blames** the other partner for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.

**Controls and isolates** the other partner by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.

**Pressures or forces** the other partner to do things they don't want to do; threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they resist or say no.

## Worksheet: Communication Style Quiz

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**1. Your partner asks if s/he can copy your math homework since s/he was really busy this week. You don't feel comfortable with this and want your partner to do the work on his/her own. You:**

- A. Show the assignment to your partner anyway and hope he/she does most of the work on his/her own.
- B. Tell your partner absolutely not.
- C. Explain to your partner that though you want him/her to do well on the homework, you wouldn't feel comfortable giving him/her your work.

**2. You and your partner decide to go to the movies; s/he says s/he'll pay you back. It's been a month and your partner still hasn't paid you back. What do you do?**

- A. It's not worth mentioning, you're sure s/he'll pay for something in the future.
- B. Casually remind him/her about the money the next time you two are together and ask him/her to get it to you when he/she can.
- C. Text your partner immediately, saying that he/she owes you and should bring it to you right away. There's no excuse for this.

**3. Your friend constantly wants to text and video chat until late at night on weeknights. You have a lot of studying and extra-curricular work to do and really need to go to bed early. How do you deal with this?**

- A. Tell your friend that he/she has to stop texting you at night.
- B. Tell your friend your parents took your phone/laptop.
- C. Call your friend and talk about it, saying that you really love talking, but that you really want to focus on school and you need your sleep.

**4. You've been assigned a group project in your English class. Your group members divided up the work evenly, but one member has not done her part and is constantly coming up with excuses as to why she hasn't gotten the work done. How do you handle the situation?**

- A. Tell her that you feel that her lack of effort is not fair to the rest of the group.
- B. Tell the teacher what is happening. Threaten that you won't give her credit for the project if she doesn't finish everything by the deadline.

C. Divide up the work she's been neglecting amongst your other group members. Why waste time confronting her?

**5. It's a Friday night and your partner wants you to stay in with him/her. A friend of yours is hosting a birthday party, and you were hoping to go out and celebrate. You:**

A. Just stay in – you don't want to argue with him/her about it, and you would feel bad leaving your partner alone.

B. Tell your partner not to be so boring and threaten that you might meet someone else if s/he doesn't come with you to the party.

C. Remind your partner about the party and tell him/her that you still plan to go by yourself, but that if s/he would rather stay in you understand.

**6. You would like to go to the football game, but you need a ride. Your parents can't take you and your partner has a car, but he/she isn't into going to games. You:**

A. Inform your partner that s/he needs to take you to the game.

B. Ask your partner what s/he is up to on that day. Maybe she'll offer to give you a ride. It seems like a pretty big favor and you don't want to ask too much.

C. Tell your partner that you would really appreciate it if he/she would take you to the game and ask if that is possible.

**7. At a restaurant, your waiter brings you the wrong meal. You:**

A. Just eat the meal he brought. There is no point in causing a scene.

B. Give your waiter a piece of your mind and tell him to bring out your correct order immediately.

C. Politely let your waiter know that this is not what you ordered.

**8. When meeting with a teacher about a test you didn't do so well on, and he cuts you off mid- sentence and keeps talking over you. You:**

A. Tell him off for interrupting you. How can he help you when he isn't listening?

B. Let it go. He's the expert, anyway.

C. Finish asking your question if he doesn't answer it after he's finished talking. If it keeps happening, say something like "please let me finish my thought."

**9. You are ready to get more serious with your partner and would like to make it "official." How do you make this clear?**

A. Hint that your friend just changed her relationship status on Facebook. Maybe he/she is thinking about it, too.

B. Ask your partner if being an official couple is something he/she is ready for and be honest about how you are feeling.

C. Give your partner an ultimatum. You've been in a relationship for a long time and if s/he doesn't want to take this step, it's over.

**10. Your partner has been acting distant since winter break. You're worried about him/her and want to know what is going on. You:**

A. Tell your partner you are worried about him/her and explain the changed behaviors you have been seeing.

B. Decide to confront him/her about it by saying "why have you been so weird lately?"

C. Ask broad questions about his/her family, break, and friends, hoping he/she will make it clear if anything is upsetting him/her.

**Points key:** 1: A=1, B=3, C=2 2: A=1, B=2, C=3 3: A=3, B=1, C=2 4: A=2, B=3, C=1 5: A=1, B=3, C=2 6: A=3, B=1, C=2 7: A=1, B=3, C=2 8: A=3, B=1, C=2 9: A=1, B=2, C=3 10: A=2, B=3, C=1

**If you scored:**

**10-16 points- You're a passive communicator!** You tend to be timid when it comes to confronting others and you often hold things back in order to avoid conflict. In friendships and romantic relationships, you care deeply about the feelings and emotions of others, and you worry about how confrontation will affect these relationships.

**17-23 points- You're an assertive communicator!** You think about the feelings of your friends and romantic partners and balance your emotions with a desire to solve problems. You seek to be constructive and solve problems.

**24-30 points- You're an aggressive communicator!** You want to get things done and express what you need. You let others know exactly what you're thinking and assume they'll do the same.

Adapted from:



# Passive



Can look like...

- Giving in and saying “yes” when you really don’t want to
- Not asking for what you want
- Acting in a particular way in order to be liked

Can make you feel...

- Taken advantage of
- Hurt
- Angry
- Less confident

Can make others dislike you, lowering your self-esteem.



# Aggressive

Can look like:

- Trying to get your own way by putting someone else down
- Leaving little room for others to talk or disagree
- Scowling facial features, large hand/body gestures
- Invading someone’s personal space

# Communication Styles

Learning how to effectively communicate with others is an important skill. It can help you understand others, avoid problems and resolve conflicts.

Can look like...

- Giving people an honest “no” to things you don’t want
- Refusing to use other people
- Refusing to let others use you
- Asking straight-up for what you want without putting anyone else down

## Three Steps to Communicating Assertively

**Step 1: I feel ....** in this situation/ when you do this.

Tell the person how you’re feeling at the moment. Try to be honest and accurately describe your feelings about the situation.

**Step 2: I want or need ....**

Say what you want or need from the person. You may want the person to do something or simply listen to you. Be specific

**Step 3: I will ...**

Tell the person what you are prepared to do to get your needs met or resolve the problem.

# Assertive



When you respect others’ needs as well as your own, it is easier to maintain healthy relationships.

## Homework Assignment: Assertive Communication – 3 Scenarios

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**Scenario 1:** Ash and Sam have been dating for a few months. Ash is home sick, and Sam comes over to check on Ash. Sam posts an unflattering video of Ash sleeping and snoring. Ash feels embarrassed and angry at Sam for posting it.

3. What boundary was compromised?

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4. What could Ash say to Sam to communicate the issue and set the boundary for the future?

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**Scenario 2:** Jo and Morgan have been dating for a few months, and Jo leaves for summer break to be a camp counselor at a sleepaway camp. Jo is busy with work, helping campers and making friends with other counselors, and feels irritated with Morgan, who calls every morning and every night and texts throughout the day. One day, Jo leaves the phone behind for a field trip and has over thirty texts from Morgan that night. Jo feels that Morgan has good intentions, but finds the communication excessive.

4. What boundary/boundaries were comprised?

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5. What could Jo say to Morgan?

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6. Morgan really wants to talk to Jo more than they are currently talking. What could Morgan say to communicate that need assertively?

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**Scenario 3:** Taylor and Jordan have been best friends for years and start dating in tenth grade. As soon as they decided to be a couple, Taylor started being very physical – Taylor is always initiating public displays of affection, touching and kissing Jordan. Whenever they're alone

together, Taylor starts putting the moves on. Jordan feels surprised and uncomfortable with all the physical attention.

4. What boundary is being violated?

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5. How can Jordan communicate assertively about what s/he is feeling? What can Jordan say to start the conversation?

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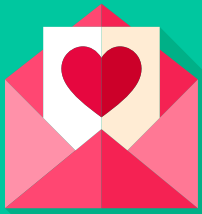
6. Taylor does want the relationship to be more physical. What could Taylor say that's assertive, but not aggressive?

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# THE SCIENCE OF LOVE

## INFOGRAPHIC

1st PHASE: LUST AND PASSION

### THE PRIMITIVE BRAIN

The primitive brain (limbic system) controls the sexual attraction and interpersonal bonding

### DOPAMINE

Dopamine controls sexual arousal, pleasure, and reward. It makes us seek the presence of the loved person

### SEROTONIN

Serotonin controls happiness and wellbeing. Changes in serotonin induce loss of concentration, day dreaming and obsessive behavior

### ADRENALINE

Adrenaline gives an extra boost of energy to people in love. It is responsible for the loss of appetite and sleepless nights.

### IN THE BRAIN

Serotonin levels return to normal levels. The initial stress is replaced by trust, safety and empathy.

### OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin, the "love hormone" is essential for attraction and bonding with the partner

### SEX HORMONES

Production of sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone) increases intensifying sexual desire

### LOVE = STRESS

Falling in love is a stressful event. When we fall in love the levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, are increased

### 3RD PHASE: THE ATTACHEMENT

2ND PHASE: THE ATTRACTION

READ THE FULL STORY: <http://bit.ly/science-love>

Infographic by [www.sciencebriefss.com](http://www.sciencebriefss.com) - daily science news in brief.  
Less to read more to learn!



## Homework Assignment:

Facilitator: Your homework assignment is to practice negotiating boundaries in an assertive way. There are three scenarios. Please respond to each of them. Remember to be assertive. State the issue, the feeling and what you need. Focus on solutions, not punishment.

*Note to facilitator: Sample answers for the scenarios.*

**Scenario 1:** Ash and Sam have been dating for a few months. Ash is home sick, and Sam comes over to check on Ash. Sam posts an unflattering video of Ash sleeping and snoring. Ash feels embarrassed and angry at Sam for posting it.

1. What boundary was compromised?
  - a. *Sample Answer: privacy*
2. What could Ash say to Sam to communicate the issue and set the boundary for the future?
  - a. *Sample answers: "I value my privacy and am not comfortable that that video is online. Please take it down and ask me before you post pictures of me." "It made me feel angry when I saw that video of me online. It is unflattering and I don't want that kind of thing shared. Please take it down and ask me before you post things like that."*

**Scenario 2:** Jo and Morgan have been dating for a few months, and Jo leaves for summer break to be a camp counselor at a sleepaway camp. Jo is busy with work, helping campers and making friends with other counselors, and feels irritated with Morgan, who calls every morning and every night and texts throughout the day. One day, Jo leaves the phone behind for a field trip and has over thirty texts from Morgan that night. Jo feels that Morgan has good intentions, but finds the communication excessive.

1. What boundary/boundaries were comprised?
  - a. *Sample answer: individuality, personal space*
2. What could Jo say to Morgan?
  - a. *Sample answers: "It's important to me to focus on my work and spend time with people at camp who I only see once a year. I feel uncomfortable and pressured when you text and call me so much. Could we just check in once a day?" "You've been texting and calling me a lot, and I need more space. I feel like you want to be talking constantly, but I want to be able to pay attention to other parts of my life. Please wait for me to call you next time."*
3. Morgan really wants to talk to Jo more than they are currently talking. What could Morgan say to communicate that need assertively?
  - a. *Sample answer: "I don't want to make you uncomfortable or pressure you, and I know you're busy, but I would really like to talk more. I miss you when you're away. Can we set definite times to talk throughout the week?"*

**Scenario 3:** Taylor and Jordan have been best friends for years and started dating in tenth grade. As soon as they decided to be a couple, Taylor started being very physical – Taylor is

always initiating public displays of affection, touching and kissing Jordan. Whenever they're alone together, Taylor starts putting the moves on. Jordan feels surprised and uncomfortable with all the physical attention.

1. What boundary is being violated?
  - a. *Sample answer: Physical space, personal safety*
2. How can Jordan communicate assertively about what s/he is feeling? What can Jordan say to start the conversation?
  - a. *Sample answer: "Since we started dating, things have gotten really physical. I'm not comfortable with how fast things seem to be moving. I think we might be on different pages about what dating means. I'd like to talk like we used to instead of immediately being physical, and I'm not comfortable with all the PDA. Do you think you can take it down a notch?"*
3. Taylor does want the relationship to be more physical. What could Taylor say that's assertive, but not aggressive?
  - a. *Sample answer: "I care about you and don't want you to be uncomfortable, and I am so sorry that you felt pressured. I do want our relationship to be more physical than when we were just friends. Can we talk in more detail about what you're comfortable and uncomfortable with? How do you want me to approach you when I do want to be more physical?"*

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- Giving in and saying “yes” when you really don’t want to
- Not asking for what you want
- Acting in a particular way in order to be liked

Can make you feel...

- Taken advantage of
- Hurt
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- Less confident

Can make others dislike you, lowering your self-esteem.

Information modified from Amaze.org video *How to Talk to Girls, Boys and Everyone In Between* and SAFE Austin High School Advisory Lessons.



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Tell the person what you are prepared to do to get your needs met or resolve the problem.

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