Introduction

Wherever young people are at in ‘being with someone’, there is no question that they are learning about themselves and relationships NOW. Australian research has found young people want opportunities to discuss the emotional and practical aspects of relationships - what to expect and how to cope, and not simply the biological and reproductive information.

You will see that we have included scenarios of young people in same-sex relationships. Some teachers express concern about this for fear of managing any negative commentary and its impact on same-sex attracted young people in the room. If so, you may wish to do Topic 3 - Sexual diversity first in order to provide a constructive and safer framework for the following activities.

Activities

1. Perfect Match
2. Relationship Graph

Time

50 minutes

Handouts

H1: Relationship Graph
H2: Relationship Check-up Scenarios
H3: How to Help a Friend

Background Material

B1: Transcript of The Good Ship Relationship
ACTIVITY 1: PERFECT MATCH

Time: 15 minutes

Overview: This activity asks ‘What are our expectations of romantic relationships and how do these shape the relationships we have, or hope to have?’ Young people often identify the desire or the pressure to have a boyfriend or girlfriend without having the opportunity to consider the pros and cons of relationships. Identifying the range of ways we can have our needs met, as well as maintaining support networks of family and friends are important to protect against abusive relationships and when break-ups occur.

Key Messages

• There is a lot of pressure to be in a relationship but it is not compulsory or necessary for personal happiness at different stages of one’s life.

• One common belief about love is that we can get everything we need from one person. Hoping to get EVERYTHING from one person is not the best starting point for taking care of yourself, or your relationship.

• Maintaining the relationships you have is important - you’ve got someone to turn to if and when the relationship ends, it gives you and your partner breathing space, and it makes you less vulnerable to putting up with an unhappy relationship, even an abusive one.

Preparation and Materials

• Paper and pen

Method

1. Today’s session is about love, romance and relationships. We are going to reflect on the helpful and the less helpful ideas, the ideas that are worth keeping, and the ones you might want to reject.

2. Divide the students into small groups (3-4 people who feel comfortable with each other). They have 5 minutes to write down as many things as they can that people want or hope for from a romantic relationship. ‘What do people hope to get from having a boyfriend or girlfriend, a romantic relationship?’

3. Allow enough time for 10 ideas from each group, before they report back.
Record the answers across the board. Once you have a large list, take a moment to reflect both on the variety of responses, as well as those that were mentioned most often. Some examples of typical student answers include: to get hugs, acceptance, to fit in, sex, to have fun, love, for the experience, someone to hang out with, to be close to someone, to have someone to confide in.

4. Take a photo of the board, or have students take their own photo so they can refer to the list later for a homework exercise.

5. Ask for volunteers to come and circle a ‘reason’ that can be sought and had outside of a romantic relationship. That is, can you get hugs, acceptance, love etc from sources other than a romantic relationship? Usually, there are very few that can only be enjoyed from a romantic relationship.

6. DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

• Do you think people often expect to get everything from one relationship?

• Is there a pressure to be in a romantic relationship?

• There is a lot to be enjoyed and gained from intimate and trusting relationships but when we expect everything from one relationship there are some disadvantages. What are the disadvantages? (Answers include extremely painful to be rejected, getting everything from one person is risky...)

• Are there other places/relationships/sources to meet these needs and wants? (Answers might include: oneself, family, friends, teachers, sporting teams, pursuing passions. Record answers in a shape to suggest a safety net.)
**ACTIVITY 2: RELATIONSHIP CHECK-UP**

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Overview:** This activity explores what a healthy relationship looks like by looking at a series of scenarios and examining them with the aid of the ‘Relationships Graph’ and a video “The Good Ship Relationship”. It helps students reflect on what they think is important in a romantic relationship, whether a relationship needs some improvement, or whether it might be time to end a relationship. Even those students who are not in a romantic relationship can apply the graph to a friendship (with some changes).

**Key Messages**

- Feeling safe, respected and equal are fundamental elements of relationships and can lift a person up.

- One basic expectation is that a relationship is good for you. Sounds obvious, but once in a relationship it can get pretty confusing to know what’s good for you (which is part of taking care of yourself), and what you can improve on. Some relationships end – and should.

**Preparation and Materials**

- Video: The Good Ship ‘Relationship’ (4 mins)
- Transcript of video
- Copies of H1: Relationship Graph, 1 per student
- Copies of H2: Relationship Check-up Scenario, 1 per group
- Copies of H3: How to Help a Friend, 1 per student
- Identify who is available in the school if a student needs to talk to someone.
- What are local services outside the school if a student has concerns about their relationship?

**Method**

1. Tell the students that we are going to explore what a healthy relationship looks like. Show the video: The Good Ship ‘Relationship’. Tell the students to look out for ‘What makes a healthy relationship’. The video
reiterates the main ideas from the *Love, Sex and Relationships Ethical Framework* as well as other components of positive relationships.

2. Ask: Can you remember some of the key elements of a healthy relationship identified in the video?

3. Handout *H1: Relationship Graph*, one for each student. The graph includes the elements of healthy relationships listed in the video as well as some other important ingredients. Explain that the graph is to help think about the components of a relationship, identify what’s important to them in a relationship, and is useful as a check-up for existing relationships.

4. Take the time to read through the categories to make sure everyone understands their meaning.

   • Divide the students into groups of 4 or 5. Give each group a copy of *H2: Relationship Check-up Scenario*, 1 per group. They must plot the relationships described, giving each a couple a score from 0-9 for each relationship component. The bigger the shape in the middle the more likely the relationship is a healthy one.

   • Ask the students to read out their scenario, display the plotted graph and how they scored them on the *Relationship Graph*. 
5. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are the signs of a healthy relationship?

- Can some relationships get better by working on them or is it just that they are not the right people for each other?

- Why might someone stay in a relationship that has important elements missing?

6. Imagine someone completed this graph and determined that their relationship was scoring low in ‘good times’. What are their options? What do they do next? Options include: talking about it; organising something fun to do; breaking up.

7. There is a difference between a relationship-that’s-not-quite-working, and an abusive relationship. Today we are focusing on the first kind to help you build on your own relationship skills, but also to help you recognise the second kind. What are the signs of an abusive relationship?

   (When the relationship is more than just ‘not great’, but when they make us feel unsafe – emotionally and physically, hurt us, are controlling, not let you do anything by yourself, force or pressure us to do things we don’t want, feel bad about ourselves and make us feel trapped. These are abusive relationships. Abuse that is violent or involves sex is a crime.)

8. Where could a person go to for help, if they or their friend were in an abusive relationship? Distribute H3: How to Help a Friend.

The Relationship Graph and accompanying lesson ideas have been reproduced (and slightly adapted) with the kind permission of Justin Hancock – creator of the website BishUK for young people aged over 14, and http://bishtraining.com
HOW IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WORKING?

HONESTY?
Can you be honest with each other? About how you feel about each other and other stuff.

COMMUNICATION?
How do we manage disagreements? Can we disagree in an ok kind of way? Do you both feel you are listened to? Do you just shout, get angry, nag or criticise or can you talk, reason and share your thoughts calmly too?

SUPPORT?
Do you support each other? Do you lift each other up? Or put each other down? Are you there for each other if you need some support? Are you good to each other? Do you try to make each other feel happy?

GOOD TIMES?
Do you have good times together? Do you go out, do nice things for each other? Do you both want romance? If so do you get and give this?

GOOD SEXY TIMES?
Are you doing the sexy stuff that you want? Do you both get good sexual pleasure from each other? Do you feel you can talk to each other about making the sexy stuff feel good (within your limits of what you want to do)?

PHWOAR!?
This is an old fashioned word used like people like me to say ‘they’re hot.’ How much do you fancy your partner?

SAFE?
Do you both feel safe from physical or emotional harm from each other? Do you try to look after each other?

LIMITS RESPECTED?
Is there pressure to go beyond each others’ relationships limits? (To go beyond sexual limits, or limits around how committed you want to be, or the future of the relationship.)

INDEPENDENCE?
Are you both able to do your own thing too? To have your own mates/family time, your own career plan, own hobbies, have time on your own, you can make your own decisions about you and your health.

FEEL THE SAME?
Are you on the same page about the relationship? Do you agree on what the relationship is? Friends, friends who have sex, casual relationship, dating, going out, boy or girlfriend, partners?

FAIR?
Is the relationship fair? Does the same person always get their way? Do you both share the good and bad? Do you stick to the same rules in your relationship or is one rule different for one person and different for another?
Scenario 1 — Hannah, Andrew and Megan

Hannah’s best friend, Megan, has been going out with Andrew. Hannah thinks Megan is obsessed about Andrew. While Hannah and Megan were hanging out watching movies together, Megan kept looking at her phone. Megan knew Andrew was hanging out with his friends and she was upset Andrew hadn’t texted her once all night and it was already 9:00 pm. Megan wanted to text Andrew and ask why he hadn’t texted her.

In your opinion, how does Megan and Andrew’s relationship score on the graph?

• Give them a score from 0-9 for each element.
• Which elements could they work on?

Scenario 2 — Justine and Maddie

Justine really likes Maddie. At first Justine thought it was cool that Maddie wanted to spend lots of time with her. She is always waiting at her locker every morning and when she gets out of class. Lately she started showing up at her soccer practice and waits for practice to end so they can walk home together. Maddie always lets her choose the movies that they go to and she’ll watch her play online games for hours. What should Justine do?

In your opinion, how does Justine and Maddie’s relationship score on the graph?

• Give them a score from 0-9 for each element.
• Which elements could they work on?
• Should they break up?
• Could using the ethics framework help to figure out what’s best?
Scenario 3 – Jacob and Dean

Jacob and Dean have been hanging out together lately, after school and some times on weekends. One day, while they were alone together, Dean put his head on Jacob’s shoulder. Then he put his arm around him and there was a lot of body contact. A week later when Jacob was flirt texting with him, Dean told him that he couldn’t “reciprocate” his feelings! Dean ignored Jacob for the next week. Then he started texting him again with flirty texts. Jacob doesn’t know what to do.

In your opinion, how does Jacob and Dean’s relationship score on the graph?

• Give them a score from 0-9 for each element.
• Which elements could they work on?
• Should they break up?
• Could using the ethics framework help to figure out what’s best?
Scenario 4 - Ana and Chris

Ana is totally in love with Chris. Chris is Ana’s first boyfriend and her first sexual partner. She feels like she doesn’t need anyone else in her life at all. He cares about her and gives her everything that she wants. He gives her clothes, presents, buys all her drinks when they go out. He’s got his own place so basically she lives there now. She feels totally safe and cared for. She fancies him loads and likes having sex with him – she feels like she’d do anything for him. He’s been so lovely to her.

Ana’s friends are really worried about her. She refuses to see them any more and they think this is because Chris won’t let her. She’s not looking very well and they think that this guy is basically just using her. They feel like they can’t say anything because Ana will accuse them of just being jealous or not wanting her to be happy.

Ana is not Chris’s first ‘girlfriend’. In fact she’s not the only person that he is having sex with, but she doesn’t need to know about that. He thinks that she’s pretty and she’ll basically do whatever he wants in bed. She never talks to her mum and she doesn’t see her friends any more – he told her not to and she’ll do anything he says now. He can go off and do his own thing and he knows that she’ll be there for him when he gets back. He’s happy, she’s happy with it: what’s the problem?

In your opinion, how does Ana and Chris’ relationship score on the graph?

• Give them a score from 0-9 for each element.
• Which elements could they work on?
• Should they break up?
• Could using the ethics framework help to figure out what’s best?
H3: HOW TO HELP A FRIEND.

It can be pretty full-on when someone tells you they’ve experienced an abusive relationship. You’ll probably have feelings of your own to deal with, and might not think there’s much you can do to help. The good news is that your friend trusts you enough to talk about their experience, and there are heaps of things you can do to support them.

Here are some of the most important ones:

**Listen**
Hear what they say and try not to interrupt. Let them talk at their own pace. Show them you are listening by making eye contact and nodding. Don’t worry if they stop talking for a while – silences are OK.

**Believe**
Try not to overdo the questions, as this can make it seem like you doubt their story. It’s important that your friend sees you’re on their side and that you support them.

**Validate**
Tell your friend that what they’re feeling is right. Let them know you think their feelings are real and normal, by repeating the feeling word they’ve used (e.g. ‘it’s OK that you feel scared’). Acknowledge that you have feelings about it too, but try to keep the focus on your friend.

**Shh**
It’s important that your friend trusts you and feels like they’re in control of the story. If you think someone else needs to know (e.g. a teacher or another trusted adult), tell your friend first. You can think together about who can be trusted, but don’t tell them until your friend is OK with it.

**No blame**
In our society, it’s common for victims to be blamed for their experience of violence. Try to avoid questions such as ‘Why did you go there?’ and ‘Why did you go out with him?’ because they might make your friend think they’re responsible for what happened.
Ask
If you feel a bit helpless, ask your friend what sort of help they'd like from you. They're not expecting you to solve the problem, and you've already done heaps just by listening. Asking will also help your friend think about what to do next.

Get help
Talk with your friend about what would help stop the violence (if it is still happening), or what they feel they want. Encourage your friend to tell a trusted adult who can do something about it, such as a relative, a teacher or a school counsellor.

Helplines and Websites
The links below may provide additional information about the laws around sexual abuse and harassment and advice about where to go for help:

For someone to talk to or more information about coping with life, love, relationships, breaking up OR abusive relationships: http://lovegoodbadugly.com is a great website for young women to check up on their relationship health as well learn more about abusive relationships and where to get help.

**Sex, Love and Other Stuff** - Respectful relationships for young men
*Sex, Love and Other Stuff* is a booklet developed for young men, with young men, that talks about sex, relationships, power and respect. It can be downloaded here: http://www.dvrcv.org.au/sites/default/files/SexLoveAndOtherStuff-DVRCV.pdf

**The Line**
Discussion and advice on handling relationship issues, and what’s crossing the line when it comes to abusive behaviours. Call the 24 hour national relationship helpline Ph. 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to talk to an experienced counsellor. http://www.theline.gov.au/

Look up: **Centre Against Sexual Assault** in your state or area. They have different web addresses in different areas. You can phone them, get support and advice if you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted, or get great online advice.

**Kids Help Line**
Private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. Free call 1800 551 800 and www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/
Reach Out
Information and stories on a range of issues including sex, relationships, safety and violence, and sexuality. www.reachout.com

Life Line
Confidential telephone counselling. Ph. 131 114 (cost of a local call)

Police or Ambulance
Ph. 000 in an emergency for police or ambulance

For legal information:
www.lawstuff.org.au/vic_law/topics/

Whether you’re a salty old dog of the sea who’s been out on the oceans a thousand times, or this is the first time you’ve ever set sail, Any sailor on the good ship ‘Relationship’ [Singing]: wey hay and up she rises is always learning, learning, learning because the sea never rests.

A sailor needs to be able to trust the other sailors on board and when it comes to navigating the high seas of the heart trust is a kind of caring [Singing]: I’ll try to do right by me yo ho and I’ll try and do right by me yo ho and I’ll try to do right by you yo ho and I’ll try to do right by you yo ho yo ho ho and a bottle of rum. Don’t mention alcohol.

Relationships can be scary. They can be fun. They can be a thrill. Hang on we’re on a rollercoaster, we were on a ship. Shut up. Just like a rollercoaster, It can be a long ride, or a short ride, don’t make no difference.

When you are a classical ballet dancer, trust means good support. You want to feel your dance partner is going to raise you up, up, up, and not drop you down, down, down. Are we still talking about relationships? Oh brother.
I’m a girl.
I’m a boy.
I think you might be a girl.
Doesn’t matter,
We’re sweet on each other.
We’re headed for romance
Darling!
Maybe we’re doing nice romantic things for each other -
aww flowers.
We’re having a good time together -
look we’re smiling
we talk and talk
ha ha ha ha ha funny
we come up with silly pet names
hi possum
hi pumpkin
I think you’re yummy
you ate my face
we’re hanging alone
or in a crowd
where did all these people come from?
Sometimes..
We’re sitting on a book?
Different pages its about being on different pages -
Not smiling.
Not happy.
Jokes not funny.
Names not funny.
I hate you possum.
Bastard.
Even good relationships include some conflict,
you have to work out ways to deal with it

Say I want to do one thing..
And I hate what you want to do. I want to do something else.
And I think its lame.
We disagree.
Can we disagree with each other in an ok kind of way?
Can we communicate about it?
Its not about trying to win win win all the time.
Its about me saying what’s bugging me and me listening to...
Me say what’s bugging me.

Does the same person always get their way?
Its gotta be fair
There’s got to be an equal-ish amount of give and take

VOX POPS - ‘I wish it was like the old days...’

What’s it about?
Basically
RESPECT
R.E.S.P.E.C.T
We can all say it
But what does it look like?
Aretha Franklin?
No. Respect means you have an equal say in a relationship
Respect means I have regard for what I want, but I care about what you want as well.
Its kind of what we hope for in all human relationships and when its not there - it hurts.
Part of taking care of yourself and taking care of the other person is being brave enough to recognise if your worlds are too far apart.

[Singing]: We’re just too far apart
You’re on another planet
You’re way over there
and I’m over here
We’re drifting apart.

Some people think it’s a terrible thing to break up. It can hurt like nothing else.
But it’s not a bad thing, in itself, to end something.
Sometimes its absolutely the right thing to do.
Doesn’t change the fact that...
[Singing]: Feels like I’m falling off the planet
If we’re just a bit nice about it..
We try to be clear -
Clear.
And be kind -
Kind.
We let someone down gently,
try to soften the landing,
What a lovely metaphor.

We don’t naturally know how to do this stuff,
but we can learn,
and with a bit of reflection..
look it’s a mirror!
Reflection,
we can learn more and more as we go.