

# What Is Love Anyway?

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*  
Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

**ID.5.CC.1** – Students will be able to define sexual orientation as romantic attraction to an individual of the same gender or of a different gender.

## TARGET GRADE:

Grade 6 – Optional Lesson 1

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *3Rs Teacher's Guide* (pages 24)
- Projector and screen
- Computer with PowerPoint
- PowerPoint: "Sexual Orientation"
- White board and markers
- Index cards (one per student)

## ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Read through the *3Rs Teacher's Guide* on teaching about gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation (pages 23-24).

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

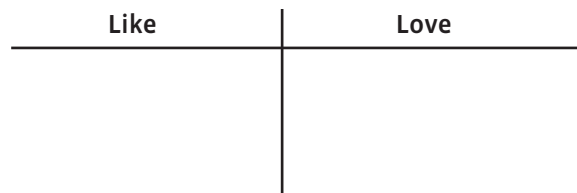
1. Describe the difference between "liking" and "loving."  
[Knowledge]
2. Define "sexual orientation" and its most common categories.  
[Knowledge]

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Start the session by asking students to take out a piece of paper and divide it in half by drawing a vertical line down the center.

**Note to the Teacher:** Students can also feel free to use their tablet or laptop if permitted.

Draw a similar line on the board. Then ask them to draw a horizontal line near the top, creating a "T". Do the same to demonstrate what you would like them to do. Then ask the students to write the word "like" on the top of the left side of the division, and the word "love" at the top of the right side. Do the same. When done, it should look like this:



(2 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Tell the students you are going to give them 60 seconds to come up with a list of 5 (or more) things they LIKE. Tell them these cannot be people, they have to be things – objects, activities, places, etc. Have them write what they like on the left side of their sheet or screen. Tell them to keep writing until you call time – but that they need to have a minimum of 5. Let them know they will have the option of sharing examples of these but will not be required to.

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Stop them at 60 seconds. Next, ask them to come up with a list of 5 (or more) things they LOVE. Again, be sure to emphasize that these cannot be people, they have to be things – objects, activities, place, etc. Call time at 60 seconds. Say, **“I am now going to ask for some volunteers to share something they said they like. Please remember that we always agree to respect our classmates, even if we disagree with something they may say. So if someone says they like something and you don’t like it, please do not judge or make fun of their choice.”** Ask for some responses and write those on the board on the left side of the line. After the “like” side is filled, ask for examples of things they said they love and write those on the right side.

Once the table has been filled on the board, ask the students what they notice about the lists. Sample responses might include, “Some people put things on the ‘like’ side while other people put those same things on the ‘love’ side;” “They’re very similar;” “They’re very different,” etc. Ask students:

**“What was it like to do this?”**

**“Was it easier to think of things you like or things you love? Why?”**

After students have shared some of their impressions of the experience of doing the activity, ask how they decided which things went on which list. Record key points from this feedback on the board, which may include references to the frequency with which they do something (the more they do it, the more they may like or love it); the duration relating to it (it could be something they’ve done every day after school or place they they’ve visited for several years); emotional connection to it (a gift from or something that used to belong to a relative or friend), something they’re good at (playing a video game or a sport), etc. (12 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Explain that you will now be talking about people. Write an identical “T” with “like” and “love” written at the top of each side and ask the students, **“Who are some of the people in our lives we might like, and who are some of the people we would say we love?”** (Note – expect students to say some people can be liked as well as loved; if that is the case, write the person on both sides. Also, some students may see a person listed in one column and ask, “What if you don’t like or love them?” – such as a sibling. Acknowledge that this is a list of who we might have these feelings for and that some people may like or love a brother or sister. Finally, be sure to tell them that this must be people they know PERSONALLY – it should not include celebrities).

The figure might end up looking something like this, although the people and their placement may change:

Like		Love	
- A new student	- A new friend	- A friend you’ve had since you were very young	- A sibling
- A cousin	- A teacher	- A cousin	- A parent
- A mail carrier	- A friend’s parent		- A grandparent
- A coach	- Youth group leader		
- The custodian in your building or school	- Religious leader		
	- Camp counselor		

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Ask the students, **“So, what’s the difference? How do you know whether you like someone and when you love them?”** Have a discussion about this emphasizing, if it is not said, **“you just know.”** Explain that our feelings are not something we decide to feel – we just like or dislike someone or something. Say, **“While we may end up liking someone we didn’t like before – or liking an activity we hated at first – we can’t sit down and say, ‘I’m going to make myself like or love this activity or person.’”** (12 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Say, **“As we get older, our feelings start to change. We may experience a type of romantic love that we don’t have when we’re younger. It’s really hard to explain, because just like the liking and loving we just talked about, it’s something you just know when you feel it.”** Explain that when people are older they may end up in romantic relationships with each other that are different from friendships. People might have boyfriends, girlfriends, partners – or, when they’re older, they may choose to live together or get married. Sometimes, these adults will have children, and sometimes they won’t.

Say, **“Some people may want to have these types of relationships starting in middle school, and some aren’t interested until high school or later.”** Ask, **“What makes these types of relationships different from friendship or your relationships with your family members?”** Probe for: “You do different things together,” “you feel like being with that person all the time,” “you like doing nice things for them and think of what they might want to do before what you might want to do,” “you hold hands/kiss,” “when you get older, you might want to have sex with that person,” etc.

Say, **“As people get older, feelings of romantic love are different from what people feel for friends or family members.”** Start the PowerPoint and show the first slide as you say the following:

- Slide 1 – **“Sometimes, people will feel this way about people who are a different gender than they are. This is called being ‘heterosexual.’ You may also hear the word ‘straight.’”**
- Slides 2-3 – **“Sometimes, people will have these feelings for people who are the same gender as they are. This is called being ‘gay.’ Some gay women will call themselves ‘lesbians.’ And sometimes people might have romantic feelings for people of all genders. This is called being ‘bisexual.’ Our understanding of which gender or genders we feel love and attraction for is called our ‘sexual orientation.’”**
- Slide 4 – **“Even though the phrase ‘sexual orientation’ has the word ‘sexual’ in it, in many cases, people have strong feelings of love before feelings of sexual attraction or before acting on those feelings. You don’t need to have done anything sexual with someone to know your sexual orientation.”**
- **“As you start going through puberty, your hormones – those natural chemicals in your body – will start going up and down. This means you may feel really intense emotions from time to time – both positive and negative. This may also be when you start to feel more intense love.”**
- **“During puberty, it’s common to have feelings for people of your same gender and for people of a different gender. Sometimes, that’s part of understanding your sexual orientation. Sometimes, it’s not, and you’ll have feelings that come and go. So you may not know what your orientation is until you’re older – and that’s okay.”** (9 minutes)

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**STEP 5:** Explain that while love seems like a pretty straightforward term (for example, we say “I love you” all the time; we talk about how we love a TV show, a shirt, etc.), love is a complicated topic and you only just touched on it. Distribute the index cards and ask students to anonymously write any questions they may have about sexual orientation. (5 minutes)

**Note to the Teacher:** *These index cards should be collected and either answered in the next class as you would with an anonymous question box, put into a handout and shared at the next class session or put into a handout and shared with parents so they have some guidance as to what their kids know and want to know about this topic.*

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

The classroom activities and discussion will allow the teacher to assess if all Learning Objectives have been met. In addition, the anonymous questions will, in the aggregate, give an overall impression of students’ knowledge and understanding about sexual orientation.



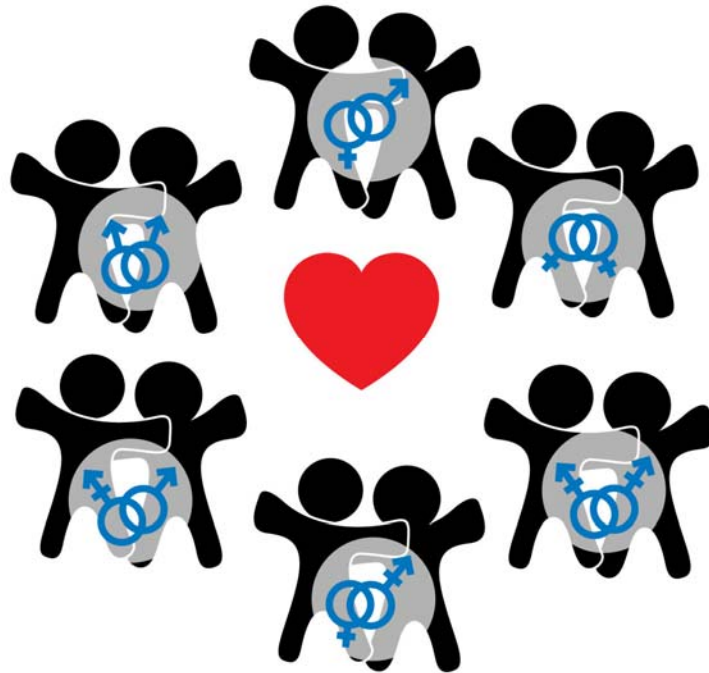
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# Being Clear With Your Friends

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*  
Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

**HR.5.IC.1** – Demonstrate positive ways to communicate differences of opinion while maintaining relationships.

**PS.5.IC.2** – Demonstrate refusal skills (clear “no” statement, walk away, repeat refusal).

## TARGET GRADE:

Grade 6 – Optional Lesson 2

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- “Conflict Situations 1-6” worksheet (one situation per pair of students)
- White board and markers

## ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Write the instructions on the board for the role play activity:

- Review the situation and decide what to do.
- Decide who will play the roles.
- Decide as a group how the person can be assertive and stand up to their friend.
- Plan a very short role-play about two minutes long.

Pre-print on the board or newsprint the following terms and definitions:

**AGGRESSIVE** communication: trying to get what you want by bullying the other person into it.

**PASSIVE** communication: being unclear in expressing your needs or afraid to express them.

**ASSERTIVE** communication: clearly saying what you want or mean without being hurtful to the other person.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Successfully demonstrate assertive communication when expressing a difference of opinion with another person. [Skill]
2. Successfully demonstrate at least one appropriate refusal skill when facing peer pressure. [Skill]

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Tell students that relationships aren’t always easy, whether they are relationships with family members, friends, classmates, or even romantic relationships. One of the things that happens, even in the best relationships, is that people have different opinions, likes and dislikes, and ideas about how to spend their time. Tell students that when conflict happens, it is very important to be able to communicate honestly. Ask, “**What can sometimes make communication difficult even with someone you really like?**”

Some possible responses might include:

- “I don’t want to upset them.”
- “I’m too embarrassed to talk about it.”
- “We don’t talk like that.”

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- “I don’t want them stop being my friend.”
- “It’s too much work – I just want to have a friend I don’t have to stress about.”
- “It’s none of their business”

Say, **“While these are certainly all reasons that make it difficult to communicate in a relationship, no relationship can last without good communication of some kind. And HOW we express ourselves is just as important as WHAT we are trying to communicate. We are going to look at three ways that people communicate with each other: aggressively, passively, or assertively.”** Reveal the pre-printed definitions and review. Tell students:

**“Being AGGRESSIVE is when someone tries to get what they want by bullying the other person into it.**

**Being PASSIVE is when a person is unclear in expressing their needs or afraid to. Sometimes this means that they won’t speak up about what they want, but just go along with what the other person wants.**

**Being ASSERTIVE is when a person says what they want or mean without being hurtful to the other person. They express their needs or opinions clearly while being respectful of the other person.”**

Ask, **“What if someone asked you to go see a particular movie that you really didn’t want to see. How might you respond if you were passive?”**

Possible responses might include:

- “I’d probably go anyway”
- “I’d say, ‘Well, I’ve already seen it – but that’s ok, I’ll see it again if you really want to see it’”

Ask, **“What can be problematic about this kind of response?”**

Possible responses might include:

- “Because you’d end up seeing a movie you didn’t want to see”
- “Your friend might feel guilty for making you go”
- “You might go but be really annoyed with your friend.”

Ask, **“How would you respond to the same question using aggressive communication?”**

Possible responses might include:

- “I’ll go to the movies, but we’re going to see THIS movie, not that one”
- “Oh, I hate that movie. It’s so stupid”
- “Man, you have really bad taste in movies.”

Ask, **“What can be problematic about this kind of response?”**

Possible responses might include:

- “Because it becomes all about what I want.”
- “Because that’s rude, and can make the other person feel bad”



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- “Because your friend might get mad and you might lose them as a friend.”

Ask, “How would you respond to the same question using assertive communication?”

Possible responses might include:

- “I’d love to go to a movie, but not that one. Let’s see something we both want to see. What else is playing?”
- “I don’t really want to see that movie but I want to hang out with you. Can we do something else?”
- “I think I’m going to skip that movie because I heard it was really scary, but you go and we can hang out later together.”

Ask, “What makes this an effective way of responding?”

Possible responses might include:

- “Because both people’s needs count.”
- “Because the person says what they mean, but don’t offend the other person.”
- “Because they can find a compromise that they would both like.”

**Note to the Teacher:** *It is possible that some students will insist that aggressive communication is the best especially if they really want to get their way. If this happens, try to facilitate a discussion about this. Some questions you can ask include: “If you can get what you want without hurting the other person, might it make more sense to do it that way? Why or why not?” “Would it be worth losing a friend to get your way?” “Would you stay friends with someone who answered you that way all the time to get what they wanted?”*

Summarize this discussion by making the following points:

- Being in a relationship does not mean that a person has to give up who they are and their own needs.
- In a healthy relationship, both people should be able to express themselves openly, and be able to listen to, appreciate, and accept the other person’s needs.
- Compromise is a part of every relationship. This means that you give in sometimes, and the other person gives in at other times. But if one person is giving in more often than the other, it is an unequal, unhealthy relationship.
- It is important to stick to what you believe in and the decisions you make, even if they’re different from what people around you are saying.
- No one should do anything in a relationship that they do not feel right about doing.

(10 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Explain to students that while most people in relationships respect one another when one of them doesn’t want to do something and take each other’s feelings into account, sometimes, people just don’t take “no” for an answer. Say, “**In these cases, it is really important to be able to stick to your beliefs and your decisions. But it can be hard, especially if the other person is putting pressure on you. So, let’s discuss some good refusal skills for those situations.**” Explain that there are three good strategies they can use:

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- Say “no” clearly and firmly.
- Keep repeating your refusal until the person stops asking (tell the person that they are pressuring you and they should stop).
- If all else fails, simply walk away and refuse to discuss the issue further.

(5 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Tell students that you will now practice using assertive communication in responding to potential conflict situations. Explain that in this activity they will role play carrying out a decision they make and communicating it clearly and assertively. Divide students into pairs. Show the class the pre-written instructions so everyone can see:

- Review the situation and decide what to do.
- Decide who will play the roles.
- Decide as a group how the person can be assertive and stand up to their friend.
- Plan a very short role-play about two minutes long.

Hand out one of the scenarios from the “*Conflict Situations*” to each pair.

**Note to the Teacher:** *Feel free to add specific scenarios that may related to something that has actually happened in your class or that you feel is appropriate for your students. Choose the ones that will have the most relevance and meaning for your class. You can also give the same scenario to more than one pair and see how different pairs decide to demonstrate assertive communication.* (8 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Give groups about 5 minutes to plan. Then have each Pair present its role-play. After each role play, discuss the following questions:

- Was the student assertive?
- What technique(s) did they use? (Said “No” clearly; Kept repeating refusal; Walked away)
- Do you think they were effective? Why or why not?

Finish by telling students that standing up for what they believe in or what they want without being mean or hurting their friend’s feelings is not easy to do but is a very important skill to have. It is important to practice assertive communication whenever they can so they can get good at it. (17 minutes)

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

The role plays are designed to assess Learning Objectives 1 and 2. Through role play, students should be able to demonstrate assertive communication and appropriate refusal skills.

### HOMEWORK:

None.

# BEING CLEAR WITH YOUR FRIENDS

## Worksheet

### CONFLICT SITUATION - 1

Monique's parents expect her to come home directly from school each day. But today, Jamila wants Monique to come to her house for a little "get together" after school. Some of the other kids are coming over and Jamila's mother won't be home. Monique doesn't want to go because she knows her parents will be really angry if she goes and she isn't sure it is safe without any adults there. Jamila doesn't want to take "no" for an answer because Monique is her best friend.

How can Monique use assertive communication skills to tell Perry how she feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Monique using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Jamila might respond and what else Monique can do.*

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### CONFLICT SITUATION - 2

Santi asked Jared if he could borrow his bike to go to soccer practice. This is a brand new bike Jared just got for his birthday, and he really doesn't want to lend it to Santi. Santi promises to take good care of it and says he would lend his bike to Jared if he asked because they are friends so Jared should do the same thing.

How can Jared use assertive communication skills to tell Santi how he feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Jared using assertive communication to express his views. Think about some ways that Santi might respond and what else Jared can do.*

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### CONFLICT SITUATION - 3

It was a hot day and Ben and Maya had played hard. They both want to get cold drinks from the corner store but don't have enough money. Ben suggests they walk to his house since his Mom always leaves her purse around and they could take some money from there.

How can Maya use assertive communication skills to tell Ben how she feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Maya using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Ben might respond and what else Maya can do.*

### **CONFLICT SITUATION - 4**

It was a hot day and Ben and Maya had played hard. They both want to get cold drinks from the corner store but don't have enough money. Ben suggests they walk to his house since his Mom always leaves her purse around and they could take some money from there.

How can Maya use assertive communication skills to tell Ben how she feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Maya using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Ben might respond and what else Maya can do.*

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### **CONFLICT SITUATION - 5**

Michael invited Tracey to come over to his house after school. As they were walking to Michael's house they see a younger kid they know from school. The younger kid is by himself riding his skateboard. Michael wants to mess with this kid, just to play around, but Tracey is uncomfortable with that idea.

How can Tracey use assertive communication skills to tell Michael how she feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Tracey using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Michael might respond and what else Tracey can do.*

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### **CONFLICT SITUATION - 6**

Noor's friend Taylor found her mother's cigarettes on the kitchen table. Taylor took them and said she always wanted to try one just to see what it was like. Taylor asked Noor if she would please try one with her so they could compare notes. Noor is a little bit curious but really doesn't want to try it. She is afraid she will become addicted and really can't stand the smell. What should Noor do?

How can Noor use assertive communication skills to tell Taylor how she feels?

*Write down some ideas for a role play that will demonstrate Noor using assertive communication to express her views. Think about some ways that Taylor might respond and what else Noor can do.*

# Communicating about a Sensitive Topic

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

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

**PR.8.IC.1** – Demonstrate the use of effective communication skills to support one's decision to abstain from sexual behaviors.

## TARGET GRADE:

Grade 6 – Optional Lesson 3

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Three sheets of butcher paper and markers
- Masking tape
- “Be Assertive!” worksheet (one per pair of students)
- “Be Assertive!” Answer Key
- **Homework:** “Be Assertive!” (one per student)

## ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Prepare three sheets of butcher paper by writing the following terms and their definitions on them with markers:
  - **Passive** – when a person doesn't stand up for themselves or say what they want in a situation
  - **Aggressive** – when someone says what they want in a way that doesn't respect or even threatens the other person
  - **Assertive** – when one person communicates about their wants and needs respectfully, considering the other person's wants and needs
- Tape the prepared butcher on the walls or white board of the classroom.

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun “they” instead of “her” or “him,” using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to “someone with a vulva” vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Define three types of communication: passive, assertive, and aggressive. [Knowledge]
2. Demonstrate an understanding of assertive communication as the most effective way of telling someone they do not want to do something sexual with them. [Knowledge, Skill]
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate assertively about one's own decision to wait to engage in any shared sexual behaviors. [Knowledge, Skill]

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Ask the students, “**Have you ever had a misunderstanding with a friend or family member about something you or the other**

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**person said?”** If they respond yes, ask for some examples. Point out, as appropriate, when the examples given are examples where communication was the issue, not what was said. If there aren't any examples that reinforce that point, say, **“You've given some good examples. One thing we're going to talk about today is how it's not always what we say to people, but how we say it that makes a difference in a situation.”** (3 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Point to the first newsprint sheet of paper with the word “Passive” and the definition. Ask one of the students to read it aloud to the class. Say, **“Let's have an example. Say someone asked you to go to a movie you really don't want to see. If you were passive, how might you respond?”** Let a few students try, listening for passive responses. If they do not quite get it, provide the following examples:

**“Well, I kind of don't want to see that movie, but if you want to we can.”**

**“Um, maybe? I've kind of seen it, but I guess I could see it again.”**

Point out the passive aspects of the responses. Emphasize that, in the end, what the passive person wants is not being equally considered along with the other person.

Point to the second sheet of paper with the word “Aggressive” and the definition. Ask a different student to read it aloud. Say, **“Let's use the same example – someone asks you to go to a movie you really don't want to see. How do you tell them you don't want to see it in an aggressive manner?”** After students have given a few responses, feel free to supplement with these examples:

**“Um, NO – we're not going to see that movie, we're going to see THIS one.”**

**“You really want to see THAT movie? What are you, like 5 years old?”**

Point out the aggressive aspects of the responses. Emphasize that, while an aggressive response may get that person what they want, they've hurt the other person unnecessarily. Explain that when someone responds aggressively to us, it can make us feel bad about ourselves – or, depending on how aggressive the person is being, even a bit scared. That's not a very respectful way to treat other people.

Point to the third sheet of paper with the word “Assertive” and the definition. Ask a different student to read it aloud. Say, **“Let's use the same example – someone asks you to go to a movie you really don't want to see. How do you tell them you don't want to see it in an assertive manner?”** After students have given a few responses, feel free to supplement with these examples:

**“I'm not really interested in that movie – are there any others you've been wanting to see? What about this one?”**

**“I'm not up for a movie – what else do you feel like doing?”**

Point out the assertive aspects of the responses. Emphasize that it's okay to disagree with someone or to propose something different from what they want – but how you do it is important. (7 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Ask the students whether they have ever heard the word “abstinence” before. Ask

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them what they have heard, or what they understand it to mean. Tell them that “abstinence” refers to deciding not to do something for a period of time. Explain that people can choose to abstain from all sorts of things throughout their lives. For example, when people go on a diet, they may abstain from eating sugar for a period of time. Then, they might start eating it again in small amounts. That lets them enjoy dessert without experiencing the negative consequences that can come from eating too much of them.

Tell the students that for this next activity you are going to focus on abstinence from sexual behaviors. That means waiting to have vaginal, oral, or anal sex.

Say, **“In my other example, I talked about choosing to abstain from sugar to minimize the negative ways it can affect the body. Can anyone think of reasons why someone might choose to abstain from the sexual behaviors I just mentioned?”** Probe for:

- They don’t want to get pregnant or get someone pregnant.
- They don’t want to get an STI or HIV.
- They don’t feel like they’re old enough/ready.

**Note to the Teacher:** *Some students may say “because it’s wrong” or “because it’s a sin.” Although these are valid reasons for some students, it is important to avoid shaming those who do have sex. Simply adding the word “some” – “some people have been taught that it’s a sin, although not everyone is religious or belongs to the same religion” – can ensure that the student is heard while minimizing the judgment placed on those who may end up having a different experience.*

After you have heard the reasons given, say, **“These are all good reasons. Remember the example I gave about sugar? Some people who choose to abstain from eating sugar do it so that when they do start eating it again they are being careful about their health overall. That’s because foods with sugar taste really good – and as long as we eat them in moderation and balance them with other healthy foods, eating sweet food, for some people, is a part of enjoying their lives.**

**Same thing here with sex. People who choose to abstain from sex usually end up having sex at some point in their lives. That’s because sex between two people—when both people are ready physically and emotionally, have said they wanted to do it, and are ready to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy and/or disease—can feel good and bring a couple closer. But just like with other things in our lives that help us feel good, we need to think about how and when to do them.**

**For the purposes of this next activity, I’m going to ask you to imagine that you are in a future relationship with someone who wants to have some kind of sex with you. You know you are not ready to have sex, but you really like this person and would like them to be your girlfriend or boyfriend. We’re going to practice how you can tell them that you want to wait without hurting their feelings or feeling bad about your decision.”** (10 minutes)

**STEP 4:** Break the students into pairs. Ask them to pretend someone is asking them to have some kind of sex, and they don’t want to. On the “Be Assertive” worksheet are some sample ways of saying “no” to someone who wants to have sex when you don’t. Tell them to read through each and talk about whether that response is passive, aggressive, or assertive. Once they’ve decided, they should circle the answer on the worksheet.

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Then, if the statement is NOT assertive, they should work together to re-write the response to make it assertive. Tell them they will have about 10 minutes in which to do this.

Distribute the worksheets. As students work, walk around and listen to their discussions to be sure they understand the activity. (13 minutes)

**STEP 5:** After about 10 minutes, ask students to stop. Go through each of the answers, asking different students to share their responses. Use the “*Be Assertive!*” Answer Key as a reference to provide assertive responses if students are stuck. (15 minutes)

**STEP 6:** When there are 5 minutes left in the class, stop and tell them about the homework assignment. Explain that they are to go home and “teach” a parent/caregiver the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive communication. Then their parent/caregiver will answer a few questions on the homework sheet, which the students should bring back to their next class session. Collect the completed “*Be Assertive!*” worksheets and distribute the “*Be Assertive!*” homework sheets. (2 minutes)

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

The worksheet activity will ascertain whether students understand what passive, assertive and aggressive communication are and the differences between them, which achieves Learning Objectives 1 and 2. The homework will further reinforce and provide assessment of understanding based on how well they communicate the lessons to their parent/caregiver.

### HOMEWORK:

Students are to go home and “teach” a parent/caregiver what they learned. The parent/caregiver is to complete the “*Be Assertive!*” homework sheet provided, which the student is to bring with them to the next class.



# BE ASSERTIVE!

## Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions:

- Pretend that someone is pushing you to have sex with them, and you want to wait. The following statements are possible responses to that pressure.
- Circle whether each statement is PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE. If it's not assertive, write a response that is.

### 1. I don't want to have sex with you, grow up!

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Listen, having sex means taking risks – and I'm not willing to risk my health and my future like this.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. If all you can think about is sex, there's something wrong with you.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. I'm not ready to have sex right now. But I really like it when we kiss a lot.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. I guess we could hang out at your place – I mean, I'm really uncomfortable about your parent(s) not being there, but if you really want to, I'll come with you.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from an activity in Goldfarb, E. and Schroeder, E. (2004), Making SMART Choices about Sex: A Curriculum for Young People. Rochester, NY: Metrix Marketing*

## BE ASSERTIVE!

### Answer Key

#### 1. I don't want to have sex with you, grow up!

PASSIVE, **AGGRESSIVE**, or ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: I don't want to have sex, but I really like you. Let's talk about what else we can do together that doesn't include sex.

#### 2. Listen, having sex means taking risks - and I'm not willing to risk my health and my future like this.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, **ASSERTIVE?**

#### 3. If all you can think about is sex, there's something wrong with you.

PASSIVE, **AGGRESSIVE**, ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: I'm curious about sex, too - but I feel like you talk about it a LOT and it makes me feel like there's something wrong with me.

#### 4. I'm not ready to have sex right now. But I really like it when we kiss a lot.

PASSIVE, AGGRESSIVE, **ASSERTIVE?**

#### 5. I guess we could hang out at your place - I mean, I'm really uncomfortable about your parent(s) not being there, but if you really want to, I'll come with you.

**PASSIVE**, AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE?

ASSERTIVE: I love hanging out with you, but I'm not comfortable doing that when no one else is home. Want to come to my place instead?

*Adapted from an activity in Goldfarb, E. and Schroeder, E. (2004), Making SMART Choices about Sex: A Curriculum for Young People. Rochester, NY: Metrix Marketing*

***Be Assertive!***  
**Homework (6-OPT3)**

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

**Dear Parent/Caregiver,**

Today, your child learned the differences between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication. Your child is going to teach this to you. Once you have learned this, please answer the following questions:

**1. According to your child, what is the difference between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication?**

**2. Of the three, which is the one that shows the most respect for both people involved?**

PASSIVE                  AGGRESSIVE                  ASSERTIVE

**3. Of the three, which one often ends up hurting the other person or making them feel bad?**

PASSIVE                  AGGRESSIVE                  ASSERTIVE

**4. Of the three, which one doesn't help you communicate what you want or need clearly?**

PASSIVE                  AGGRESSIVE                  ASSERTIVE

Thank you for your time!

Parent/Caregiver signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# More Than Friends: Understanding Romantic Relationships

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

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

Students will be able to:

**HR.8.CC.3** – Analyze the similarities and differences between friendships and romantic relationships.

## TARGET GRADE:

Grade 6 - Optional Lesson 4

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- White board and markers
- "Case Study: Aaron and Sophie" worksheets (one per group of 3 students)
- "Case Study: Olivia and Dylan" worksheets (one per group of 3 students)
- **Homework:** "Relationships on TV" (one per student)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Describe at least two characteristics of a friendship and two characteristics of a romantic relationship. [Knowledge]
2. Identify at least two similarities and two differences between friendships and romantic relationships. [Knowledge]

## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him," using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom and should make adjustments accordingly.

## PROCEDURE:

**STEP 1:** Tell students that you are going to be talking about different kinds of relationships. Divide the class into groups of 3, and as they are getting into their trios, walk around and distribute one copy of the "Case Study: Aaron and Sophie" to each trio. (3 minutes)

**STEP 2:** Ask for a volunteer to read the story aloud to the class. Tell them that they will have about 10 minutes to answer the questions on the worksheet as a group. Ask them to decide who in their group will be the recorder and have that person put all three group member names on the top of the sheet. (12 minutes)

**STEP 3:** When students seem to be close to finishing, distribute the "Case Study: Olivia and Dylan." Ask for a different student to read that story aloud. Ask the students to have their recorder write the group names on the top of the sheet and then discuss and respond to the question. They will have 10 additional minutes. (12 minutes)

**STEP 4:** After 10 minutes have passed (or the students have finished working), say, "Let's start with Aaron and Sophie. What kind of relationship would you say this is?" Students will likely say, "friends" or "friendship" or "best friends;" write "friendship" on the board. Ask,

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**“How do you know this is a friendship?”** Probe for the actual characteristics. For example, someone might say, “Because they’re really close.” Ask, **“How do you know they are close? What about what you read here shows they are close?”** Ask the students to read their responses from their worksheets. Facilitate the discussion for these possible responses, proposing them if they are not mentioned:

- Talk about a lot of things
- Spend a lot of time together
- Are honest, even when it’s hard to be
- Fight but make up
- Stick up for each other
- Support each other by going to each others’ events
- Feel jealous

Once the list is created, go through each characteristic and ask the students which they consider to be positives and which negatives. Put + signs and – signs next to the various characteristics accordingly. If there is disagreement, put both a plus and a minus sign, and talk about how/why each could be positive or negative. Discuss when something that seems to be a positive can turn into a negative, such as spending too much time together or being honest in ways that end up being hurtful. (6 minutes)

**STEP 5:** Next, say, **“Now let’s look at Olivia and Dylan. What kind of relationship would you say this is?”** Students will likely say “a relationship” or “boyfriend/ girlfriend.” Write the words, “Romantic Relationship” on the board. Ask the students to share the characteristics from their worksheet that describe this romantic relationship and write them beneath the words “Romantic Relationship.” Facilitate the discussion for these possible responses, proposing them if they are not mentioned:

- Have their friends talk for them rather than speaking directly
- Spend a lot of time together
- Get jealous
- Feel they have the right to do/know certain things (e.g., checking the other person’s phone)
- Make assumptions about what the other person is feeling
- Kiss and do other sexual things
- Find creative ways of getting noticed

Once the list is created, again go through each characteristic and ask students which they consider to be positives and negatives. Put + signs and – signs next to the various characteristics accordingly. If there is disagreement, put both a plus and a minus sign, and talk about how/why each could be positive or negative. Discuss when something that seems to be a positive can turn into a negative, such as spending too much time together or checking up on the other person nonstop. (6 minutes)

**STEP 6:** Ask the students to look at the two lists and tell you what they notice about them. Depending on what is generated, they may notice similarities or differences. For the characteristics on both the positive and the negative lists that are similar, circle them in the same-color marker. Once they have this visual, ask the following questions:

- **What do you think are the main differences between a friendship and romantic**

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- relationship?
- How do you know when you're in a friendship or romantic relationship? Does something sexual have to happen? Or can you have a boyfriend or girlfriend without doing any of that?
- Do you think it's easier having a friend or a boyfriend/girlfriend? Why? If there are these [indicate the list on the board] similarities, how is being in one kind of relationship different from the other? (8 minutes)

**STEP 7:** Say, "People tend to think of friendship and romantic relationships as really different – but as you just saw, there are some similarities, too. The question for everyone to think about is, would you expect a romantic partner to behave in ways – aside from sexually – that a friend wouldn't, or vice versa? Are there things you've learned from being in a friendship – such as being able to talk about what's going on – that you can use in your relationships?"

Explain the homework and distribute it to students, asking them to complete and return it next class. (3 minutes)

**Note to the Teacher:** *The Dylan and Olivia example is intentionally gender neutral. This can provide a good opportunity to discuss same-sex relationships. As time allows, you can tell the students you notice they assumed Dylan was a boy (if they did). Some students will notice the lack of pronouns and ask right away, "Are they two girls?" As part of the facilitation, you can ask, "How is being in a relationship different for two boys or two girls?" as well as, "What if Dylan was transgender? How might that affect the scenario?"*

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

Having the students put all the group members' names on both case studies and collecting them will fulfill Learning Objective 1. The large group discussion after the small group work will help teachers assess the achievement of Learning Objective 2. The homework assignment will help to address both.

### HOMework:

"Relationships on TV" homework sheet – instruct students that they are to watch a TV show that has both friendships and romantic relationships depicted and complete the assignment about what they see.

## Case Study: Aaron and Sophie

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please read the following story and respond, as a group, to the questions listed beneath it.

Aaron and Sophie have lived down the hall from each other in the same apartment building since they were little kids. They have played together, stuck up for each other, fought with each other, played house and doctor and Xbox and American Girl dolls. Their parents gave them keys to each others' apartments and they come and go from each place as if they had two places to live. If something bothers either of them – even if it's something the other one did – they talk about it right away. Sophie is probably the only person outside of his family who's seen Aaron cry, and Sophie has told Aaron more about her dreams for the future than she's told her own sister. They do homework together and go to each others' events at school (Aaron is in the jazz band and Sophie plays soccer). Now that they're in the 8th grade, they have started liking other people as more than friends, and both would like to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. They talk with each other about who they like or don't like, and about who they can't believe likes them. Sophie really likes someone who's in jazz band with Aaron and even though Aaron doesn't like Sophie as more than a friend, he feels a little jealous. When they hang out later in the day, Aaron tells her, even though it's really hard, about how he's feeling. Sophie tells him she's felt the same, and reminds him that he's her best friend and that nothing will change that. They end up going out for pizza, where they see some other friends and they all have a really nice time together.

**What kind of a relationship is this?**

**What five words would you use to describe their relationship, or how they are with each other?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking at those words, which would you say are POSITIVE, and which are NEGATIVE?**

Please put a "+" next to the ones you think are positive, and a "-" next to the ones you think are negative.

## Case Study: Olivia and Dylan

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please read the following story and respond, as a group, to the questions listed beneath it.

Olivia is a newer eighth grade student, having just moved to the area over the summer. The first day of school, she notices Dylan, and thinks Dylan is kind of cute. Dylan sees Olivia and thinks she's cute, too. Olivia has already met a few students so Dylan asks someone to ask those students what they know about Olivia – especially whether she likes anyone. Olivia hears that Dylan's been asking about her and decides to find excuses to walk past Dylan's locker. Dylan pretends not to see her, until one day, Olivia pretends to trip and drops her books. Dylan helps her pick them up, they start talking, and decide to hang out after school. This leads to hanging out a few more days that week, texting and FaceTime every night, and finally, one afternoon when they're watching a movie, a kiss. Officially a couple, they spend as much time on their own as they can, kissing and touching each other. Everything's going great, although Olivia feels like other students are now interested in Dylan since they became a couple. She doesn't say anything because she doesn't want to seem jealous (even though she is). Dylan doesn't get why Olivia seems mad about something. She even asked to borrow Dylan's phone "to look something up," but then went through Dylan's texts. Dylan didn't like that, but didn't say anything. Besides, Olivia kissed Dylan when she returned the phone and that always fixes things! One afternoon, Olivia says, "So... you want to?" Dylan doesn't know what she's talking about, but doesn't want to show it so just nods and keeps kissing her. When Olivia starts taking off her clothes, Dylan realizes what's about to happen – but isn't sure it should. "Should I say something? Shouldn't we talk about it more first?" – all these thoughts start going through Dylan's head. Dylan's phone rings, and it's Dylan's mom saying she needs Dylan to come home. Dylan kisses Olivia and says, "You're so beautiful, I'll text you later," and runs out.

**What kind of a relationship is this?**

**What five words would you use to describe their relationship, or how they are with each other?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking at those words, which would you say are POSITIVE, and which are NEGATIVE?**

Please put a "+" next to the ones you think are positive, and a "-" next to the ones you think are negative.



***Relationships on TV***  
**Homework (6-OPT4)**

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** For this assignment, you have to watch TV! Please watch a show you already know and like that has at least one friendship and one romantic relationship in it. Then complete the worksheet below.

Name of Show: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe one of the friendships depicted on the show. What characteristics that we discussed in class did you see shown? Were there any shown that we didn't mention in class? If so, list those below and then decide if you think those were positive or negative characteristics. What made them positive or negative?

2. Describe a romantic relationship you saw on the show. What characteristics that we discussed in class did you see shown? Were there any that we didn't mention in class? If so, do you think those were positive or negative characteristics? What made them positive or negative?

3. If you were to describe one lesson the people in the romantic relationship could learn from the ones in the friendship – or the other way around – what would it be?