



Sexual Relationships Teaching Ideas

Learning Objective:

To understand what a sexual relationship is, why people might form them and what makes them healthy, unhealthy and abusive.

Success Criteria:

- To know what is meant by a sexual relationship.
- To identify the key differences between platonic, romantic and sexual relationships.
- To identify reasons why people might form sexual relationships and whether these might be healthy or unhealthy.
- To identify and understand healthy, unhealthy and abusive sexual relationships.

Resources

- Lesson PowerPoint
- Glossary
- Q&A
- Starter Questions
- Features of a Relationship Venn Diagram
- Reasons for Sexual Relationships Cards
- Healthy Sexual Relationships

Additional Resources Required:

scissors, paper, coloured pens

Context and Prior Knowledge:

This pack aims to provide continuity following the [Relationships: The Basics](#) lesson pack. Although this can be delivered as a stand-alone session, students would benefit from prior knowledge on the basics and fundamentals of relationships, what makes them healthy and unhealthy as well as how to maintain healthy relationships. This lesson does not cover sex in detail, so we would suggest using our other resources to teach about this. There are references to consent throughout the lesson, but sexual consent is explored in more depth in other lessons.

You could use this lesson pack by:

- completing it as a whole lesson (60-75 minutes), working through all of the activities.
- selecting one of the **Main Activities**, for example as a form time session (20-30 minutes).

We suggest teaching this topic at KS3, ensuring you've covered the following topics beforehand:

- [Relationships: The Basics](#)
- [Familial Relationships](#)
- [Platonic Relationships](#)
- [Romantic Relationships](#) (which includes problem solving related to romantic and sexual relationships)

Why?

Many of us will engage in sexual relationships during our lives, whether this is alongside other kinds of relationships or not. It is therefore important to understand why we might engage in sexual relationships, what this might mean for us and how we can maintain them healthily. Furthermore, being able to decide what we want from relationships (sexual or otherwise) and learning to communicate this can help us to define our overall values in life, improve self-esteem and maintain healthy relationships in future.

Framework Objectives:

Pupils should know:

- that there are different types of committed, stable relationships.
- why and in what contexts people choose to form sexual relationships, including healthy and unhealthy reasons for this, and the impact of sexual relationships on other aspects of wellbeing.
- that relationships don't always clearly fit into familial, platonic, romantic, or sexual (and can instead be a combination) and that part of navigating relationships is working out what you want from them and communicating this to the other person or people involved.
- how to: determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy: judge when a family, friend, intimate or other relationship is unsafe (and to recognise this in others' relationships); and how to seek help or advice, including reporting concerns about others, if needed.
- the differences between healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships in different settings, for example what is healthy in a familial relationship may not be healthy in platonic, romantic, or sexual relationships, and vice versa.
- that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively, e.g. physical, emotional, mental, sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

Glossary:

See separate resource [Glossary](#).

Learning Agreement and Question Box

The slide reminds students about the learning agreement that you have established as a class. You may wish to highlight some statements that particularly apply to this lesson, for example using correct terms, being sensitive towards other people's feelings, and speaking for yourself. The next slide reminds students about the question box as an option for asking questions which they may not wish to share with the class. **Question Cards** and a **Question Box Label** are included in the lesson pack if you wish to use these. The questions in the box could be answered at the end of the lesson or at the start of the next lesson.

Starter

Ask students to reflect on the following questions:

- What might 'sex' mean to different people?
- Why might people form sexual relationships?
- What makes a sexual relationship healthy?

You could ask students to write a personal response to these questions, using the **Sexual Relationships Starter Questions** worksheet provided, or ask them to share their thoughts with the class (if they feel comfortable). There are no set answers at this point. The activity aims to highlight what students already know about sex and sexual relationships, as well as getting them thinking about what the relevance of sexual relationships might be in their lives. This can be followed by talking through the slides, which detail some of the key definitions related to this topic to help students to differentiate between them.

Main Activities

Features of a Relationship

This activity gives students the chance to consider some of the similarities and differences between platonic, romantic and sexual relationships by sorting features into a Venn diagram. Students could do this in pairs or small groups using the **Features of a Relationship Venn Diagram** handout, cutting out the ten feature cards and considering where they might place each of them. Again, there are no set answers at this point and the activity aims to promote healthy discussion around differentiation in relationships. For features which might fit into different sections depending on specific details (e.g. having children, attraction, physical touch, kissing), you could ask students to place the card in the intersection and write the differences in each section. For example, students might place 'kissing' in the intersection between all three types of relationship, but write 'kissing on the lips' in romantic and sexual, and 'kissing on the cheek' in platonic. This activity is similar to the Venn diagram activity in our Platonic Relationships lesson, so it is a great way to

consolidate and build upon learning if you have completed that lesson with the class previously.

After students have completed the task, you may wish to go through their answers alongside the information on the following slides, which considers where each of the ten features might go and why. There is also a slide on some of the key differences between platonic, romantic and sexual relationships, as well as one on some general points about sexual relationships. The PowerPoint emphasises that there are plenty of other features of relationships in addition to the ones in this activity, something which is explored in our [Romantic Relationships](#) lesson in more detail. Our lessons on [Platonic Relationships](#) and [Romantic Relationships](#) also explore these specific kinds of relationships in more detail.

Reasons for Sexual Relationships

This activity provides students with a number of different reasons why people might choose to engage in sexual relationships, the idea being that they identify whether these reasons could be healthy, unhealthy or both (depending on the context). You could split students into groups and give each group a few of the **Reasons for Sexual Relationships Cards** to discuss between them, encouraging them to justify their answers. You may wish to ask students to consider the following questions:

- What if this is the only reason? What if it is one of a few different reasons?
- Is everyone involved in agreement? Has the decision been reached without any pressure?
- Have the people involved considered whether they are ready? Have they discussed how this might look in practice?

The PowerPoint slide includes some important points which we suggest discussing with the class after students have completed the activity. Following this, there are two further slides that detail things to think about when deciding whether to start a sexual relationship, including an example scenario from a person called Aria. If any of your students have this name, you may wish to change the name on the slide to avoid embarrassment. Following this is a slide on the age of consent.

This could be an opportunity for students to get creative; they could represent this through a series of drawings with captions and speech bubbles, by creating a story in the style of a comic strip, or even by simply mind mapping different phrases which people might find useful when communicating around that particular feature.

Students may wish to think about the following questions to help them with this activity (which are included in the PowerPoint):

- What are some specific examples of how this feature might look in a relationship?
- Can you think of any scenarios where this feature might be particularly important? How might they play out in a healthy relationship?
- Are there any particular phrases which could be used to communicate this feature within a relationship?

The teacher notes for this activity also include some suggestions for how students could interpret each feature. These suggestions are not included in the PowerPoint but may be something that you wish to refer to as prompts if students are struggling.

Unhealthy and Abusive Sexual Relationships

The slides following the task emphasise some of the key differences between healthy, unhealthy and abusive behaviour within relationships, as well as a summary of the potential impact that sexual relationships can have on us. It is important to note to students that abuse can happen in any kind of relationship and might be physical, emotional or sexual. Behaviours that are healthy, unhealthy and abusive in relationships all exist on a spectrum, meaning that lines can often be blurred. Generally speaking, unhealthy sexual relationships involve **one or more partner(s) exhibiting behaviours which are not healthy or founded in mutual respect**, whereas abusive sexual relationships involve **one or more partner(s) treating the other(s) with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly (but not always)**. All relationships are different, and sometimes what is healthy for one relationship might be unhealthy for another, or what is unhealthy for one might be abusive for another, and vice versa.

While there are many different behaviours which could be unhealthy or abusive depending on details and context, it is vital that you emphasise what abuse within sexual relationships might look like:

- **Mistreatment** – treating someone with cruelty or violence.
- **Gaslighting** – manipulating someone into doubting their own sanity.
- **Using violence or force.**
- **Coercive control** – an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten.
- **Sexual assault** – any specific sexual act which a person does not consent to or which they are forced into. It is a criminal offence.
- **Denying their abusive actions are abusive.**
- **Danger** – not feeling safe within the relationship.

Always be clear that these lists are not exhaustive and ensure that students know and understand what they can do and who they can talk to if they are feeling worried about themselves or someone else. The [Relationships: The Basics](#) lesson explores features that are healthy, unhealthy or abusive in relationships in more detail.

Following this, there are a few slides with advice around ending sexual relationships, which emphasise the importance of being honest and respectful. This lesson does not include any information or advice around cheating, which is covered instead in our [Romantic Relationships](#) lesson, but there is mention in the slides (and it should be emphasised to students) that cheating can occur within relationships that are romantic and/or sexual.

Plenary

The plenary revisits the questions that students answered during the starter activity. You may wish to structure this activity in the same way as the starter to provide continuity. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on what they have discussed during the lesson and whether this has broadened and deepened their understanding.

Questions and Signposting

See the [Sexual Relationships Q&A](#) for possible questions and suggested answers related to this topic.

There is a blank slide for you to signpost where students can find further help or information. For this topic, we would recommend including:

- Organisations that offer support around abuse (although in-depth teaching around abuse is covered in other lessons, it is important to sign-post students at the earliest opportunity). Some suggestions are [NSPCC](#), [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) and [Women's Aid](#).
- Organisations that offer support specifically around sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual abuse and rape. Some suggestions are [Rape Crisis England and Wales](#) and the [NHS tool for finding local rape and sexual assault referral centres](#).
- We would also strongly recommend including specific phone numbers for local and national helplines in case students are worried that a sexual or other relationship is becoming unhealthy or abusive.
- Reliable sources of information for finding out more about sexual relationships, e.g. [Brook UK](#).
- Details of local sexual health clinics, including opening hours.

Disclaimer

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. This resource contains potentially sensitive and/or upsetting topics that may emotionally impact on students you use it with due to their experiences in their past. It is your responsibility to consider whether it is appropriate to use this resource with your students. If you do use this resource, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate support is available for anyone affected. This resource also contains links to external websites. Please be aware that the inclusion of any link in this resource should not be taken as an endorsement of any kind by Twinkl of the linked website or any association with its operators. You should also be aware that we have no control over the availability of the linked pages. If the link is not working, please let us know by contacting TwinklCares and we will try to fix it although we can assume no responsibility if this is the case. We are not responsible for the content of external sites.
