



Title: Communication with a partner: Getting along and dealing with conflict

Level: SENIOR

Code: S.6.2

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

In terms of Curriculum for Excellence this level is concerned with extending or deepening what is described at Fourth Level.

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
<p>I understand and can demonstrate the qualities and skills required to sustain different types of relationships. HWB 4-44b</p> <p>I am aware of the need to respect personal space and boundaries and can recognise and respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal communication. HWB 4-45b</p> <p>I am developing skills for making decisions about my relationships and sexual behaviour. I am able to apply these to situations that may be challenging or difficult. HWB 4-46c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the importance of shared values and goals in sustaining a loving and sexual relationships, for example, mutual respect, agreement on sex. • Demonstrates the skills needed to manage challenging situations within relationships, including sexual relationships, for example, compromise, empathy, decisiveness.

Learning Intentions

- Young people understand the importance of good communication, compromise and negotiation in a relationship.
- Young people know that there can be disagreements in relationships, but that conflict requires resolution.
- Young people understand how to de-escalate conflict, giving examples of strategies to do so.

Success Criteria

- Young people can describe what behaviours and attitudes will help and nurture a relationship.
- Young people develop skills to de-escalate conflict, giving examples of strategies to do so.

Resources to support this activity

- Slides/PowerPoint
- About relationships/recording prop
- Conflict Scenarios/on cards

Activity

1. Start the session with a re-cap/remembering the focus of the last session was on the importance of communication in our relationships - the class/group looked at different kinds of communication – verbal, non-verbal, written and visual communication. Did they notice their use of different kinds of communication with others? Did anyone experience or show empathy?
2. **About relationships.** Explain that as the young people are thinking about relationships a task for pairs/3s to start. Share the recording prop to identify things that will help and nurture a relationship/things that will spoil or ruin a relationship – the first item is named as communication/lack of communication, with space to identify 4 other things.

<p>Things that will help and nurture a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • • • • 	<p>Things that will spoil or ruin a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication • • • •
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Get some feedback and then share the pre-prepared slide, find differences and similarities with the young people’s lists. Explore where they have put most emphasis.

<p>Things that will help and nurture a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Freedom • Trust • Equality • Respect 	<p>Things that will spoil or ruin a relationship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication • Insecurity • Lack of trust • Jealousy • Assumptions
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3. Acknowledge that there are times in any relationship when people don’t get on. If it becomes **conflict** then this is a bit more serious. Recognise that conflict can happen when some of the things that have been spoken about come into play in a relationship – things like lack of trust, jealousy etc. Share the slide, read and check understanding:

What is conflict? Conflict is when two or more people want different things. We tend to think of conflict as more than just a disagreement. It’s normal to have times when you don’t get on with a partner. Conflict is a situation in which one or both parties feel some kind of threat. Conflict can make people feel emotions very strongly. It can leave people feeling stressed, upset or angry. It makes it hard to see the other person’s point of view.

4. Explain that conflict can lead to 2 things – people remain unhappy or stressed or spilt up, or they try to resolve what the conflict is about. Share the slide:

Conflict **resolution** is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

5. **Conflict scenarios.** Ask young people to work in 3's. There are 4 conflict scenarios to be shared, ask the young people to discuss a scenario and the questions posed. After some time swap scenarios around until each small group has discussed at least 3 of the 4. See Appendix 1 for facilitator's copy.
6. Bring the group/class back together, have young people read out the 4 scenarios. Having discussed at least 3 each ask for some feedback and discuss what the young people suggest the protagonists do. Keep in mind as young people feedback: *What are they suggesting that will de-escalate the conflict and lead to a better outcome? Will any escalate and cause further problems?* (NOTE: the Joe and Archie scenario needs to involve discussion of consent and can draw on other work the young people have done on this issue).
7. **Dealing with conflict.** Ask young people to summarise what will help de-escalate conflict in a relationship. Then share the slides, as you do so check out if young people feel such a strategy is good advice for them:

10 tips to deal with conflict in a relationship

1. Be direct, say what's bothering you.
2. Talk about how you feel without blaming your partner.
3. Never say *never* or *always*: as in "You never speak to me about..." Or "You're always on your phone..."
4. Deal with one thing – focus on one issue rather than lots of things.
5. Really listen – pay attention and don't interrupt.
6. Don't automatically object to your partners complaints – try not to get defensive from the start.
7. Try to understand where they are coming from.
8. Respect the other person's perspective – don't put them down or be sarcastic.
9. Don't be negative about everything.
10. Take time out, take a breath, go calm down.

Adapted from Psychology Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/close-encounters/201704/10-tips-solving-relationship-conflicts>

Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content

S.6.1 Communication with a partner: The importance of communication

Practitioner Notes

Appendix 1: Conflict scenarios

Sophie and Mark have been going out with each other for nearly a year, they got together the night of Sophie's 16th birthday. They are both kind of busy just now, there's lots of work to do for school, both of them have jobs at the weekend because they are saving for a summer holiday. It feels like they don't see enough of each other, that they don't speak face to face as much as they used to. Sophie posted a photo from a party at the weekend, her ex was in the background. Mark hasn't been responding to any of Sophie's messages since and he was off school today. They meet at Starbucks at 6 as they had planned to last time they spoke on the phone. It doesn't take long before the conversation gets heated.

- What's your advice to Mark?
- What's your advice to Sophie?

Fiona and Emma got together recently, it's not been easy to find the time to meet up and spend time together because Fiona's parents don't approve that she is seeing a girl. Fiona is really into Emma and tells her this. Emma hasn't really responded to this, she hasn't said how she feels. They meet at a party at the weekend, they both know a lot of people there, they have a few drinks. Fiona says they need to talk, Emma doesn't want to. Fiona is getting upset, she tells Emma she's always avoiding talking. Emma is embarrassed, she tells Fiona to chill. Emma's getting louder and people are noticing.

- What's your advice to Emma?
- What's your advice to Fiona?

Paul and Isla get on really well. There's just this one thing that they can't agree on – each other's friends. Paul thinks Isla's friends are out to undermine their relationship, that they don't like him. Isla thinks Paul's friends just want him to be out with them, having a drink and being with other girls. It all kicks off when Isla messages Paul that she can't make it tonight because a friend has split up with her boyfriend and needs to see Isla. Paul gets back to say if that's the case he can't make it to her sister's party on Friday, the boys need him to join them for a night out. Several messages later it's getting more agitated....

- What's your advice to Isla?
- What's your advice to Paul?

Joe and Archie have been dating for a few months. Friends and family are all pretty cool with them being gay. They have been spending time alone, but they haven't had sex. Whenever they are alone Joe is kind of pushing for sex to happen. Archie keeps just avoiding it. It's a Saturday night, at Joe's house and everyone else is out. They are on the couch and kissing, Joe is getting really into it, Archie just gets up and moves away. Joe is really annoyed and starts shouting at Archie, telling him to relax and just do it. Archie is upset, shouting back.

- What's your advice to Archie?
- What's your advice to Joe?