



Title: Communication with a partner
Part 1: The importance of communication

Level: SENIOR

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
I understand and can demonstrate the qualities and skills required to sustain different types of relationships. HWB 4-44b 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 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	<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 recognise the different ways people communicate with each other in the context of personal relationships.
- Young people understand empathy is a characteristic of a healthy 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.
- Young people understand the importance of positive behaviours whilst communicating using social media.

Success Criteria

- I can reflect on my own communication skills.
- I consider how I respond to cues from a partner that may be verbal or non-verbal.
- I talk about empathy as a characteristic of a healthy relationship.
- I can describe what behaviours and attitudes will help and nurture a relationship.
- I am developing skills to de-escalate conflict, and I can give examples of strategies to do so.

Resources to support this activity

- PowerPoint slides
- The saying goes.... Prop/cards for discussion
- The importance of empathy <https://youtu.be/UzPMMSKfKZQ> (3 minutes 30)

Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.

Activity

1. Introduce the activity along these lines: The session is about relationships, in particular about how people communicate in a relationship. Acknowledge that there is no expectation that young people are in a relationship, or that they even want to be, but that this is an area that's important in life.
2. Explain that before we even talk about romantic or close relationships, here's a question: **How do we human beings communicate with each other?** After some discussion (pairs or small groups or as one) share the slide. Read together and then ask the young people – *If you were to pick where your communication strengths lie what would you say? Where do you think you are not so strong as a communicator?* Encourage young people to reflect on skills and strengths, where helpful stress what you know/see are a young person's strengths.

There are four main types of communication:

1. **Written communication** includes messaging, email, letters, magazines, books and anything else that is typed or handwritten words.
 2. **Verbal communication** includes speaking, music, sounds and language.
 3. **Nonverbal communication** is body language and gestures including eye contact, sign language, sculpture, movement, dancing, facial expressions, body posture, touching and physical contact.
 4. **Visual communication** involves a visual display, such as pictures, illustrations, charts, graphs, television and films.
3. **Thinking about non-verbal communication.** As an example of communication, explain that you would like the young people to focus on non-verbal communication.
 - Ask the young people to pair up, one of each pair will have 30 seconds to tell the other something they did last night/last weekend that they really enjoyed. The second person is to show *no interest whatsoever*, ask them to consider how they will stand/sit or present themselves, what their facial expression will be like, what they will do with their hands.
 - Do the task, then review – how did people show they were not engaging in the conversation?
 - Reverse the roles, have the second person talk, but this time ask the other to show clear engagement and interest (but still not talking).
 - Review - How did that feel? What did they do non-verbally? How was engagement and non-engagement expressed? Share the slides and discuss as you go – what was used?

Non-verbal communication includes:

- Facial expressions
- Posture
- Eye contact
- Leaning forward
- Nodding
- Open body posture
- Hand gestures
- Appropriate vocal encouragers (uh-uh, oh, no, ok, yeah)

How to say I'm not listening (with non-verbal communication)

- Folded arms in front of a person may mean they're feeling defensive or closed off.
- Lack of eye contact may mean they're not really interested in what you're saying, are ashamed of something, or find it difficult to talk about something.
- Someone who's turned away from you when talking to you may mean disinterest or being closed off.

4. **Why is communication important in a relationship?** Ask the question and have some discussion.
5. **Communication and social media.** Share the slide: Then ask the young people to discuss, the focus being on whether social media/technology help or hinder communication between people in a relationship. After some small group conversation feedback into a full class discussion.

Relationships are harder now because conversations become texting, arguments become phone calls and feelings become status updates. What do you think?

6. **And the saying goes....** This is a small group discussion, introduce the short selection of wise sayings (on the prop), proverbs if you like, and ask the young people to have a conversation, they can organise the sayings into three piles - TRUE/FALSE/DEPENDS (and of course agree or disagree about which). Then, have some feedback and discussion.

The saying goes...

- A. The best person to talk to about the problems in your relationship is the person you are in the relationship with.
 - B. Leave the past in the past (this includes ex's).
 - C. Love without conversation is impossible.
 - D. A lot of problems would disappear if we talked *to* each other instead of *about* each other.
 - E. Communication in a relationship is the number one thing... otherwise you are just two people spending time in the same place.
7. **The importance of empathy.** To end introduce the idea of empathy – ask the young people to think of it as a central part of relationships where people understand each other. The animation explains why it's important to interpersonal relationships. Watch and ask for any feedback/views from the group: *The importance of empathy* <https://youtu.be/UzPMMSKfKZQ> (3 minutes 30)
 8. End with asking young people to pay attention to how others communicate with them in the coming days/week – what verbal or non-verbal communication are they using? Do they show and experience empathy?

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

Getting along and dealing with conflict

Practitioner Notes