



**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
<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"> <li>Explains the importance of shared values and goals in sustaining a loving and sexual relationships, for example, mutual respect, agreement on sex.</li> <li>Demonstrates the skills needed to manage challenging situations within relationships, including sexual relationships, for example, compromise, empathy, decisiveness.</li> </ul>

The learning intentions and success criteria are met with delivery of both parts of this topic.

**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**