



**Title: Communication with a partner**  
**Part 2: Getting along and dealing with conflict**

**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
- Recording prop: About relationships
- 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. Since then (slide as a reminder of the task set) did they notice their use of different kinds of communication with others? Did anyone experience or show empathy?
2. **About relationships.** A task for pairs/3s to start. Share the recording prop (and slide), young people are asked to identify things that will *help and nurture* a relationship and 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.  
After some time, 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.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Things that will help and nurture a relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication</li><li>• Freedom</li><li>• Trust</li><li>• Equality</li><li>• Respect</li></ul> | Things that will spoil or ruin a relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of communication</li><li>• Insecurity</li><li>• Lack of trust</li><li>• Jealousy</li><li>• Assumptions</li></ul> |
|--|--|

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, check understanding and discuss any questions that arise:

**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 in relationships.** Ask young people to work in 3s. There are 4 conflict scenarios to be shared (see prop), 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.

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 (questions on slide): *What suggestions will de-escalate the conflict and lead to a better outcome? What suggestions will 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.** Having explored ideas share the next set of 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 partner's 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>

8. End with the slide - reminding young people that if anything that has been discussed has made them feel that they need to talk or get some support they can use ChildLine counsellors. It would be helpful for the teacher/educator to insert some information about local confidential services.

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

The importance of communication

**Practitioner Notes**

