

Communication Practice Cards

Recommended Age: 14+

Goals

- To practice assertive communication.
- To reiterate that communication is a practiced skill.

Have Ready

- Discussion cards.

Instructions

- Define three types of communication. **Passive:** Doesn't state their needs or feelings. Gives into others' wants. **Aggressive:** Talks over others. Does not listen or respect the needs of others. Can be intimidating or threatening. **Assertive:** Expresses their own needs, but also listens to the needs of others. Seeks compromises.
- Hand out cards and ask youth to come up with an assertive response to the situation. Explain their thoughts/feelings using 'I' statements and respect responses. Invite youth to act out their card if they'd like, but make this optional.
- After a few minutes, bring the classroom back together. Ask each group to read their card and share their thoughts. Ask the rest of the classroom if they agree or have anything to add.
- Key talking points are below. Build your debrief around what youth share.

Debrief

A friend has texted to say that they are interested in you. You don't share the same feelings. Text them back an answer and explain how you feel.

- There are barriers to having conversations through text. What do they include?
- Is it possible to share how you feel without treating another person badly using the assertive style of communication discussed today?

- Assertive communication means owning your feelings and knowing that you do not have to apologize for them. Respect is being honest about how you feel towards another person.

You and your partner have been dating for a while now. You are thinking about having sex, but want to talk about condoms. Talk with your partner about how you feel.

- Where can someone get information about sexual health, condoms/sex dams, birth control, etc.?
- How could you feel more comfortable with the topic?

Your friend wants you to come to a house party. Normally you'd go, but you've been missing school a lot lately from being out too late and are starting to fall behind. You are realizing you need to cut back on partying. Have a conversation with your friend about this.

- Setting boundaries with people in our life lets them know what your current needs are.
- It can be fun to hang out with friends, but we also need to find a balance between friends and other commitments.
- If partying includes drugs or alcohol, it's also important to give our body breaks, and learn about other ways to stay safer, including knowing your limit, drinking water, and having safe ways home.

You made out with someone you met at a party this past weekend. You want to ask them to go on a date. Message them to see if they'd like to hang out.

- It isn't always easy to talk about being attracted to someone. Talking to a friend or writing out what we want to say first can help.
- When planning a date with someone we don't know very well, it's a good idea to meet somewhere public or with other friends until we feel safe with them.

Lately, your partner has been hinting about sex. Yesterday, they told you that they want to have sex with you. You don't feel ready to have sex. Talk to them about how you are feeling.

- Having a conversation about boundaries (what is/isn't okay) is really important within a relationship.
- It can be difficult to talk about abstinence when there is a lot of pressure to have sex.
- It is important to decide what is right for you and know that your choice deserves to be respected.
- It is our responsibility to deal with our feelings should we feel rejected. We don't have the right to get angry at or try to coerce or make someone feel bad if they are not into us.

You are in a new relationship and your partner has texted asking you to send some sexy pictures. You are comfortable with this, but want to set some boundaries first. Have a conversation about this.

- Negotiating sexual boundaries in a non-face-to-face situation.
- Asking a partner for acceptance, respect, and boundaries can make us feel vulnerable and takes practice.
- If someone wants to send a sexy picture, they need to have consent from the other person. It's not okay to send a sexy picture to someone unless they have given their consent and want to receive it.
- Do not forward or show sexy pictures you have received to other people. This is not consent. It is disrespectful and forwarding them is against the law. Take steps to protect the pictures, and if you don't feel able to do so, delete them.
- If a pic is shared without consent, it is the responsibility and fault of the person who shared it, never the person who sent it. Victim blaming is not okay.
- We are not here to tell you what to do, and we think it is important to talk about the risks. If someone has sent out a sexy picture and people are gossiping about it or the person is being harassed, this can be really hard. Where could this person get help? (A parent, teacher, guidance counsellor, teen clinic, Sexual Assault Crisis Line (204-786-8631), needhelpnow.ca, phone lines, or even the cops if people keep harassing or pressuring you.)
- Also, with Snapchat the photo is not necessarily gone, as someone can screenshot it.
- Reflect on the risk, but the choice is ours if we decide to send sexy pics or not.

- FYI: The Supreme Court of Canada has laid out exceptions to underage intimate image creation. The law will, generally, not get involved in situations where:
 - Age of consent law is followed
 - Each person consents to the sexual activity being depicted and is aware that the image is being created
 - The image stays private between each person.ⁱ

You and your partner have been dating for a while now and they want to know the code to unlock your phone. You don't feel comfortable with this. Have a conversation with your partner about why you aren't comfortable with this.

The importance of privacy and boundaries:

- Not sharing your code/password isn't so much about trust as it is about safety and respect.
- Dating doesn't mean 'sharing everything', it means understanding and creating boundaries to build a strong relationship.
- In healthy relationships, if people are sharing codes or electronics, respect is in place and nobody's privacy is being invaded.
- If someone is trying to force or pressure you to share your password, that could be a sign of abuse. If you've experienced this, it was not your fault. We'd suggest talking with a trusted adult about this experience, such as a family member, teacher you trust, school counsellor, or a phone line like the Kids Help Phone.

You're interested in someone you met online. They've asked to meet in person. You're thinking about saying yes, but are worried about the risks. What do you tell them?

- Important to not share personal information online such as full name, phone number, address.
- We never truly know who is on the other end, so it can be good to video chat with the person first before meeting them.
- If meeting in person, it is safer to meet in a public place, have someone there, or let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.
- You can also plan a check-in time with someone, where you phone/text them to let them know things are okay.

- Know what tracking and location services you have on your phone, the privacy settings, and how they work to protect yourself.
- It is abusive behaviour if someone does not respect your boundaries.

**Your partner asks you to make out and hints they'd like to do more.
You're into making out, but don't feel ready to take things any further.
Have a conversation with them about this.**

- We have a right and responsibility to discuss our expectations before and during any kind of sexual activity.
- It is the partner's responsibility to respect our boundaries. If they try to pressure you after you've said no, this is not okay. Pressuring someone to change their no into a yes is called sexual coercion and is a form of sexual violence. If you've ever experienced this, it was not your fault. Talking with someone you trust can be helpful.
- The Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Line is another resource that people can call if they need to talk. You can also call the line if you're feeling upset or unsure about an experience. It is open 24/7 and free to call from anywhere in Manitoba. Their phone number is 1.888.292.7565 or 204.786.8631.

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ⁱ Slane, A. (2013). Sexting and the law in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 22(3), 117–122.