

Qualities of a Healthy Relationship Brainstorm

Recommended Age: 14+

Goals

- To identify characteristics of a healthy relationship.
- To encourage youth to expect a healthy relationship as a means to avoiding abuse.

Have Ready

- Write 'Qualities of a Healthy Relationship' on a flipchart paper.
- Large post-it notes (or squares of scrap paper), markers, and tape.

Instructions

- Hand out a marker and paper or post-it notes to everyone.
- Ask, **"What are we looking for in a healthy relationship?"**
- Get the youth to brainstorm the things that they would want in a healthy relationship and ask everyone to write one quality on their paper and post it on the flipchart.
- This activity may work well as a whole group brainstorm or go-around where each person gets to add a quality to the list. With a quiet, smaller group, this activity can be done as a drawing activity. Ask youth to draw or write out their version of a healthy relationship, or write a letter to their future or current partner (everyone needs a paper and pencil). Invite any of the youth to share what they have created and explain their drawing to the rest of the group.

Sample Flipchart

What Are Qualities of a Healthy Relationship?

- **Respect** - Partner has the right to make their own decisions. Treating each other well, even in disagreements. Supportive partners honour our relationships with ourselves.

- **Like/love/care** - Genuinely liking, loving, or caring for each other.
- **Acceptance** - Being able to be yourself/ Accepting your partner for who they are.
- **Communication** - Use open, honest, and assertive communication.
- **Affection** - Flirting, holding hands, making out, sex (definition is mutual).
- **Using consent** - Happens all the time in healthy relationships.
- **Listening** - To try and understand each other.
- **Time together and time apart** - Creating a balance.
- **Equality** - Each having equal say in the relationship.
- **Freedom** - To have own friends, interests, goals, and supports.
- **Boundaries** - What we do and don't want around sexual activities, time, privacy, and space.
- Healthy conflict.
- Doing activities that are fun together.
- Helping each other feel safe.
- Trust - Develops throughout the relationship.
- Sense of humour.
- Support, etc.

Debrief

- Look how many qualities can be part of a healthy relationship!
- Acknowledge that we may not be seeing these things in all of the relationships we see in the media or in our lives, but we can still plan to expect these things from a partner.
- If we haven't learned how to have a healthy relationship from our family or friends, then we can try and find people or couples who can teach us these qualities. Look for people who can teach you how to be a good partner, find positive role models.
- Let youth know that they don't have to be dating or thinking about dating to think about healthy relationships. A great time to make this list is before deciding to date.
- **To build a healthy relationship and receive the qualities on our lists, we must be willing to offer them to our partner as well. One of the best ways to have a healthy relationship is to**

know what one looks like for you and to expect one. So, some unofficial homework is to think about and write down what you want out of a relationship. It might help to look for people whose relationships are healthy and try to learn from them.

- Healthy relationships take work and practice. Mention that we are all responsible for our actions and for the way we treat others.
- At Teen Talk, we ask youth, **“Is this a wish list, or a checklist?”** Checklist. We can all expect these things of our partners and from ourselves.
- Ask youth, **“Who deserves a relationship like this?”** (Everyone.) If we decide to date, we all have the right and the responsibility to develop healthy relationships.
- **Expecting a healthy relationship is the best thing anyone can do to prevent being in an abusive relationship.**
- Remind youth that you can be just as happy and fulfilled whether you are single or in a relationship.

Additional Activities

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- Fun and Single Relay Race