Making Relationships Work for Young Adults and Young Parents

BY MARLINE PEARSON

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Is It a Healthy Relationship?

How Healthy is This Relationship?

Does it feel:

Conditional or Unconditional

About Sex/Money/Looks

Controlling or Equal and Supportive

Attractive on Many Levels

Does it feel Conditional?

C I worry about not being good enough. I don't feel free to be the real me.

C I feel I need to act, talk, or look a certain way or have money to get his or her love.

C I'm afraid that my partner might leave if I don't do everything he or she wants me to do.

Or, unconditional?

C My partner admires and appreciates the real me. I don't have to pretend to be perfect.

C I can rely on my partner to be faithful.

C My partner shows that he or she really wants to be with me.

Does it feel Controlling?

C She puts me down and shows little interest in my opinions or feelings.

C My partner makes me feel stupid. I walk on eggshells.

C My partner is super jealous or checks up on me 24/7. I feel scared.

Or, equal and supportive?

C I can share my feelings and opinions and my partner seems to care about them.

C My partner supports me in my goals. We encourage each other to be better people.

C We're friends. I feel respected by my partner.

Safety Note: If you put an "X" on the controlling end, or are afraid in your relationship, talk to someone you trust. Check out www.loveisrespect.org, or call the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

Does it feel like it is mostly about sex or material things?

C My son is that without the sex there would not be much interest.

C I know deep down inside that I am in this relationship because of the money or material things my partner gives me.

C Because I am with him or her, I look more attractive to other people and that's part of why I'm in it.

Or, like the attractions and interests are on many levels?

C I know it is more than my looks, body, or money that my partner likes about me.

C We talk about lots of stuff and have similar interests and values. We genuinely like each other's personality and have fun together.

C We just want to do nice things for each other. It does not feel like one person is doing all the giving or all the work.

Describe three behaviors you would like to see in a relationship and which would place it on the happy, healthy and safe side.

(For example: Listen to me, show your care about what I say, be faithful to me)
Is It a Healthy Relationship?

Overview

This lesson offers guidance on how to tell if a relationship is healthy. Utilizing a clear three-question framework that defines six types of relationships, participants will create sculptures to analyze what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like in the real world. The goal is for participants to develop a deeper understanding of the differences and be able to develop communication skills for discussing healthy and unhealthy relationships. A self-assessment exercise helps participants examine their own relationships.

The importance of fun in keeping healthy relationships alive and well will also be explored. Youth will be encouraged to generate a list of fun activities to do with friends or partners.

Most young people will experience relationships that don’t work. Issues surrounding breaking up are addressed in the final section. Issues include: to know when it’s time, how to begin, and moving forward with life after a breakup. Special attention will be given to young parents because their issues are more complicated.

Goals

- To analyze the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- To demonstrate using a three-question guide in assessing a relationship
- To develop a list of fun activities to keep a relationship strong
- To analyze the issues around breaking up
- To offer additional tips to young parents who break up

Lesson at a Glance

6.1 How Can You Tell? (35 minutes)
Activities: Relationship Sculptures; Words that Tell; Assessing My Relationship

6.2 Having Fun—It's Important! (5-10 minutes)
Activity: Fun Brainstorm

6.3 Breaking Up (20 minutes)
Activities: Is It Time? Better and Worse Ways; Tips for Parents

6.4 Trusted Adult Connection (2 minutes)

Materials Checklist

Resources:
6b. Healthy or Unhealthy? flashcards (Locate colored cards in back of manual. Cut cards. Duplicate master on CD)
6c. Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships handout (duplicate, one per person)
6d. Lots of Fun (duplicate, one per person)
6e. Breakup Tips handout (optional)
6f. Surviving a Breakup handout (optional)

Materials:
- CD: PowerPoint Presentation and Duplicate Masters
- How Healthy Is this Relationship? poster (Locate in pocket of manual)
- Sculpting materials
  - Playdough – six containers or more if tiny ones
  - Pipe cleaners
  - Popsicle/ craft sticks
Lesson 6 105

— Miniature marshmallows or sugar spice drop candy
— Toothpicks
• Flipchart/board
• Music

Workbook Application:
• Is It a Healthy Relationship? (pgs 20-21)

Preparation

✓ Read through the lesson to be familiar with the three-question guide utilized for gauging the health of relationships.
✓ Preview the Lesson Six PowerPoint Presentation—especially to see the pictures and descriptions of sculptures constructed by past groups.
✓ Gather sculpting materials. (Materials are reusable)
✓ Locate colored Healthy or Unhealthy flashcards (Resource 6b) colored activity cards in back of manual. Cut.
✓ Review the workbook application Is It a Healthy Relationship? (pgs 20-21)
✓ Duplicate Lots of Fun Handout (Resource 6d). One for each per participant.
✓ Duplicate Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships (Resource 6c), Breakup Tips (Resource 6e), Surviving a Breakup (Resource 6f), and Tips for Parents (Resource 6g). Decide which you will distribute.
✓ Display the How Healthy Is this Relationship? poster.

Lesson 6 106

SECTION 6.1
How Can You Tell?

(PP 1) This section offers participants a clear three-question framework to utilize in determining whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy. A fun sculpting activity based on those three questions will help participants explore more deeply what a healthy relationship is and what it is not. The sculpting activity and a brief “words that tell” activity continue to build language skills for discussing healthy relationships. Finally, participants use a self-assessment exercise to analyze their own relationships.

Begin this Section with these points:
✓ Today we’re going to explore the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships a little deeper.
✓ Sometimes the differences may not be clear. If you haven’t seen many good models of healthy relationships it would be hard to know if one is healthy or unhealthy.
✓ So, how can one tell if the relationship is healthy and worth staying in?

Announce that you are going to share three essential questions that can be asked to determine if a relationship is healthy.
✓ There are three questions you can ask to determine if a relationship is healthy. The three questions are simple but important, and have to be answered honestly. If you do, you will know if the relationship is healthy or not. These questions can apply to romantic relationships and friendships.

Direct attention to the How Healthy Is this Relationship? poster. Alternatively use the PowerPoint slides or write the following on a flipchart/board: (PP 2)
**Lesson 6**

**How Does It Feel? Three Questions To Ask**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNHEALTHY</th>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditional?  OR</td>
<td>Unconditional?  OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling? OR</td>
<td>Equal, respectful, and supportive?  OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly sexual/material? OR</td>
<td>Attraction on many levels? OR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity: Relationship Sculptures**

Announce they will now do a fun activity to explore six different types of relationships. The six types of relationships are Conditional; Unconditional; Controlling or Disrespectful; Respectful, Equal and Supportive; Mostly about Sex or Material Things and Selfish; and Attraction on Many Levels and Giving.

Divide participants into six groups and distribute one card (Six Types of Relationships, Resource 6a) to each group. Each card describes one of the relationship types listed on the slide/board.

Have sculpting supplies in a central area for the group to use. If you have a very small group, three groups can do two sculptures each—one for each of the contrasting answers. Give directions:

- Each group has a card that describes one of the six types of relationships. Three are healthy and three unhealthy. Have one person read the card aloud and then discuss:
  - Have you ever seen a relationship like this? What behaviors do you see?
  - What is it like to be around this couple?
  - If you were in that type of relationship how would it feel?

- After a short discussion get materials (play dough, pipe cleaners, craft sticks, toothpicks, and spice drops, and make a sculpture that represents that relationship.

- Have fun. This isn’t about great art or making things look real. Use your imagination. Think about symbols and images. Let me give you examples of what some past groups have done.

- For the **Controlling/Disrespectful** relationship, one group sculpted a dog out of play dough, and then made a collar and leash out of pipe cleaners connected to a remote control (also out of play dough) held by a large pipe cleaner stick figure.

- For the **Equal and Supportive** relationship, one group made a bridge. Two pipe cleaner people were on it. The different colored planks in the bridge represented the unique things each one brought to the relationship. They were used to construct a safe structure for them to walk together. It symbolized a healthy mix of individualism and togetherness, and support for each other.

**Note:** Or, show examples from the PowerPoint slides. (PP 4-5)

More examples are at the end of the slideshow.

Let them know they will have ten minutes to work. Play music while they work. Call a five-minute and then a one-minute warning to keep them on track.

**Processing the activity:**

When finished, the entire group should get up from their seats and travel from sculpture to sculpture. Ask each group to first identify the kind of relationship they have (i.e. Conditional or Unconditional; Controlling or Supportive and Equal; or Mostly Material/Sexual or Attraction on Many Levels) and to read the description on their card aloud to everyone gathered around their sculpture (or the instructor can read the card).

Then, they interpret their sculpture and describe how its features represent that kind of relationship.

Use the descriptions of their sculptures as a springboard for discussion. Take a photograph of each sculpture for later use and/or display. Below are some points to aid your discussion.

- Controlling relationships can evolve into abusive ones. Everyone should be on the lookout for danger signs or “red flags” if a relationship feels at all controlling or disrespectful.

- It is not okay for a boyfriend or girlfriend to make you feel bad, call you names, put you down, or disrespect you. A healthy relationship means the other person makes you feel good about who you are.
Post the photos of their sculptures with a copy of the descriptive card underneath. This can serve as an important reminder and honor their work and creativity.

**Activity: Words that Tell**

The goal of this brief activity is to continue to build vocabulary for talking about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Shuffle the colored flashcards Healthy or Unhealthy? (Resource 6b) found in the back of the manual. (PP 6)

- I’m holding a stack of cards with a word on each one.
- As I say the word and hold up the card, I’d like you to shout out if you think it goes in the healthy or unhealthy relationship pile.

**Activity: Assessing Relationships**

Ask participants to locate Is It a Healthy Relationship? (workbook pages 20-21). Introduce:

- In this exercise you will have the opportunity to assess your relationship.
- For those not in a relationship, you can either assess a past relationship or a relationship of someone you know well.
- Either way, it will offer you insights and help you think more about the behaviors that represent a healthy relationship.

(PP 7) Instruct participants to read the introduction and then to notice the three continuums from red (unhealthy) to green (healthy). After reading each set of questions, they are to mark an “x” on each scale to indicate where the relationship falls (or fell) in the category. After they finish the assessment, instruct them to describe three behaviors that are personally important and which place a relationship firmly in the healthy green zone.

**SECTION 6.2**

**Having Fun—Its Important!**

In this very brief section, participants will learn that having fun and continuing to have fun is actually pretty important to successful and healthy relationships. Participants will brainstorm and share ideas for fun. (PP 8)

Introduce the idea of why fun is so important to healthy relationships:

- Having fun, believe it or not, is very important to a satisfying long-term relationship. Doing enjoyable things together helps two people feel connected to each other.
- When couples have happy experiences to create a positive bond, it is easier to cope with irritations, stress, and to tackle the problems of everyday life.

Explain what often happens to fun in long-term relationships or marriages:

- So, what happens to fun in a long-term relationship, marriage or committed union? Most couples start with fun as part of the relationship. As life gets busy, couples often let time for fun slip away.
- It can be tough to find free time with work, school, responsibilities, and children.
- And, when there is free time, it is easy to slide into watching a lot of TV shows, playing games on the computer, or Facebooking. A decision could be made to spend some of that precious time having fun with a partner, friends, family, or child.
- There is nothing against TV or computer games, or even Facebook, but it can be awfully easy to make them the major thing we do.
- Did you know research shows people are happiest when they are out doing things, spending time with others or working on some hobby or interest?
Those couples that make the effort to do fun things together, no matter how busy life gets, are rewarded. Over time, the couples that keep fun alive have more satisfying relationships.

Research on happiness and fun also tells us it is important to do different things from time to time. A great idea is to try out new activities for keeping fun alive.

**Activity: Fun Brainstorm**

(PP 9) Divide into groups of three or four and announce there will be a three-minute competition. Each group is to brainstorm a list of ideas of fun things to do with a partner or friend according to two criteria: cost and time. Some ideas should be free, some should cost just a little, and others can cost more. Some fun ideas should take less than a half hour, an evening, all afternoon, the whole day or longer. Tell them to mix it up and strive for variety, fun, and creativity. But they all must come up with some fun ideas that are free.

(PP 10) When time is up pass out Lots of Fun (Resource 6d). As groups report their ideas for fun, instruct participants to jot down the ones they like (and their own) on the sheet. Suggest they tape the list on their refrigerator to remind them of a variety of things to do for fun. Add ideas as they think of them. In family, friends, and romantic relationships, individuals can keep their own list and take turns suggesting ideas. Note: This activity can be assigned to do out of session if time is limited.

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**SECTION 6.3 Breaking Up**

This section looks at many of the issues surrounding breaking up: how to decide, why it happens, better and worse ways to end it, and moving forward after a breakup. Special tips are offered for young parents. (PP 11)

Introduce the topic:

- There is a quote that says, “People are in your life for REASON, a SEASON or a LIFETIME.” Not every friendship or romantic relationship is meant to last.
- This program has given you the opportunity to learn more about yourself, recognize what you want and expect, and how to behave in a way that gives you a voice and a choice.
- Just like there are healthy and unhealthy ways to start a relationship, there are healthy and unhealthy ways to end one.
- How do you know when it’s time, how will you end it, and how will you move on?
- Take a look at this slide to review all the information and skills you’ve learned so far to help you decide if a relationship is worth it or should end. (PP 12)

**Activity: Break Up or Stay Together?**

Introduce with points below and then quickly run through voting on the situations.

- It’s rare for anyone to escape having their heart broken or being a heartbreaker. Most people find themselves on one or both sides and often more than once.
Sometimes it’s hard to know if you should break up or stay together.

Let’s look at a few situations. Give your opinion by giving a thumbs-up or thumbs-down vote on whether they should stay together or break up.

Situations to read aloud: (PP 13-14)

1. Your partner lies to you repeatedly. If caught in the lie, there’s an apology. It happens again and again.
2. He only treats you nicely in private. In the house it’s, “I love you, baby,” but in public he ignores you, or talks cruelly to you. At the mall, he has a habit of pointing out hot women and asks why you can’t look like that.
3. Your partner is nice, but truthfully someone else has caught your eye. (*See commentary below.)
4. Your feelings have changed. You just don’t feel the same about him or her as you did the first few weeks.
5. The two of you are fighting more and more and are unable to really talk things out. Your partner refuses to work on communication skills. Also, your partner puts you down. Arguments feel scary sometimes.
6. Your partner’s feelings are stronger than yours. She or he is pushing for a level of commitment you don’t feel or want.
7. You feel smothered by the relationship, and your partner tries to keep you from doing important things. You would like to better yourself by going to school or attending a parenting skills workshop.
8. You want your partner to stop drinking so much or using/dealing drugs, but he or she refuses.

*Commentary on situation three:

It could be you’ve gotten to know each other better, the love chemicals have settled, and you’ve discovered you two are not a good match. Moving on may be wise.

On the other hand, if you are in a healthy marriage or committed relationship, think twice. Even in the best marriages and long-term relationships people can find someone else attractive from time to time. It is natural and normal.

Acting on a periodic attraction is entirely something else. If you love someone and are committed, don’t put yourself in compromising situations that might take you down the path of cheating (e.g. seeing them alone, pouring out your heart or listening to them pour their heart out to you).

Going to deeper levels of emotional intimacy when you feel some chemistry will definitely put you on the path to cheating. And, when children are involved, it’s not just betraying your partner, but cheating on your child.

Remember, most affairs do not start with the first kiss. They start with emotional intimacy—sharing what’s in your heart. Work on greater intimacy with your partner and if you are having difficulties, pour your heart out to a wise person who does not have sexual chemistry with you.

Discussion: Common Reasons for Breakups

Point out that one of the most common reasons for young people breaking up is that one or both persons’ feelings change: (PP 15)

After the love chemicals settle down a bit, it becomes clear what you see in each other. You may decide you really don’t fit as a couple. You may have vastly different priorities or interests. It’s not either one’s fault. Your personalities just don’t work together.
Or, after the chemistry settles a bit, you may discover problem behaviors. You may detect issues or problems that make it difficult to have a relationship. One or both of you may need to devote some time to your own development.

It’s smart to take your time before getting too involved. It is even more important if you already have a child. It is hard on children to drag them in and out of your relationships.

Remember the 3-6-9 Rule!

Brainstorm: Better and Worse Ways

Once you decide to break up, make a plan. There are better and worse ways to break up. Conduct a quick brainstorm. Ask the group to quickly identify some really bad ways to break up. Don’t spend too much time. Just get some examples. Add the following if needed: (PP 16)

- Get a friend to tell him or her
- Do it through a text message
- Change your Facebook status before telling the partner
- Sabotage his/her Facebook
- Wait for a fight and give them the blame
- Do things to make him or her break up with you
- Ignore him or her in the hope that they’ll get the message
- Be seen with another person, or worse, get involved with his or her best friend
- Say, “We can still see each other, but let’s just be friends.”

How many have heard this to cover up the truth, “I’m just not that into you”? It can give someone false hope. Is this fair? If one person still desires a relationship, “just being friends” can be torture.

Discussion: Breakup Tips

Pass out the handout Breakup Tips (Resource 6e) or use PowerPoint and briefly review: (PP 17)

1. Talk to a trusted and wise person: Discuss the reasons the relationship does not work. If they encourage drama, chasing after him or her in a desperate way, or won’t keep your conversation private, they are not wise or a person to trust. Tell friends and family when you’re ending it.

2. Pick a time and place: Pick a private place. Do not break up in front of his or her friends. The person may become emotional. They may cry, be angry, or want to talk. Give him or her the respect privacy provides. Don’t tell the person right before a big event such as their birthday, a game, performance, or the start of the school or workday. A good time is a Saturday or Friday after school or work. This timing will give you both time to start getting over it and to talk to supportive people. Be sure to tell the person yourself.

   Caution: If you think the person may become violent, break up in a safe place. There should be helpful people nearby and present. Seek support and advice from the local domestic violence group to develop a safety plan.

3. Make a clean break: Don’t put it off. Spell it out clearly. Be honest and direct, but not cruel. Say: “I want to break up. This relationship is over.” Or, “I do not have the same feelings anymore.” Do not string someone along.

4. Have a method to avoid cruelty: Include in your conversation what you like and appreciate about the other person. But don’t give false hope or mixed messages about your decision.
After a breakup, it is important to have a reality check. Most people will have heartbreaks. Very few people avoid experiencing a breakup at some point either as a teenager or later in life.

Point out that it is natural to feel strongly:
- Go ahead and cry. Crying is a great way to release your strong emotions.
- It’s normal to feel miserable when someone has dumped you.
- Pick a good shoulder on which to cry. Find a person you can trust; a wise person who has some perspective to offer you. A wise person will not encourage you to “chase after your ex” or engage in the revenge game.

Briefly review Surviving a Breakup handout (Resource 6f). (PP 18)

1. Don’t blame yourself. There are many reasons why relationships end. Make a list of your positive qualities. Ultimately you want a partner who admires you, recognizes your qualities, is as crazy about you as you are of him or her, and accepts you as you are. Also, make a list of what you want in a partner. What can you learn from this relationship? Review some of your workbook applications and do some writing on what you learned.

2. Face reality—it’s over. Don’t be obsessed with winning this person back. You can’t force a relationship. It sacrifices your dignity to beg for a relationship, to act desperate, or to try to chase after the person.

3. Stay away from the revenge game. Forget about getting even or spreading rumors. It’s immature and makes you a small person.

4. Get perspective. Most people go through a number of romances before finding and committing to the right person. With each relationship you can grow wiser and more insightful about yourself, what you are looking for, and how a relationship should be.

5. Don’t jump quickly into another relationship. Some people hop into another relationship right away to make their ex-partner jealous or to make themselves feel better. This only leads to more problems and is not good if you have a child. Give yourself time. Identify what you want to work on and do for yourself.

6. Get out and do things. After you’ve given yourself time to cry, get busy. Don’t wallow in self-pity. Shoot baskets or kick a ball, or go walking, biking, or fishing. Take up a hobby or make something. Get outside. Sunshine and the outdoors can be healing. Getting active will make you feel better and put you in a position to meet new people. Call friends and make plans.

7. Remember, things get better with time.

Special Word for Parents

Point out that most couples go through difficult times now and then:
- When a relationship is healthy and safe, parents and children benefit when parents stay together. It is worth the work to get through the tough times.
- On the other hand, sometimes a person knows the relationship he or she is in has no future, yet the relationship drags on and on. This is a type of sliding.
- On again, off again relationships are really hard on children. They are also associated with more domestic violence and unplanned pregnancies.
- If you know the relationship has no future, it may be best to make a clear decision about ending it. Children do better with one stable parent than with unstable and/or dangerous parental relationships.

Pass out Tips for Parents (Resource 6g) or use PowerPoint slide: (PP 19)
The Basics:
• Don’t drag it out. Be clear. End it for good.
• Don’t keep calling your ex “just to make sure he/she is okay.”
• Do you need to take precautions? Change locks? Get help leaving safely?
• Tell friends and family. Ask them for support.
• Find something nice (and positive) to do for yourself if you are feeling down.

Realize your breakup can be hard on your child.
• Most children want a relationship with both parents.
• Allow your child to talk about feelings of sadness and loss—even if you hate your ex.
• Permit your ex to stay in touch with your child. Don’t interfere with his/her relationship with their child.
• Regular contact is important for your child as long as his/her presence isn’t dangerous.
• Do not badmouth your ex in front of your child—even if you think he/she deserves it. It just hurts and makes a child feel bad.
• Don’t think just anyone can substitute for the other parent, not even a stepparent.

Don’t hop quickly into a new relationship.
• Focus on being the best parent you can be.
• Complete school; seek employment.
• Learn communication skills to help all your relationships, and especially with your ex in co-parenting.*
• Take a break from relationships—give yourself time.
• Next time, don’t slide, but decide. Use the relationship smarts you learn in this program!
• It takes time (often a long time) for a relationship to develop with a stepparent.
• Extended family and mentors can help children if you are parenting solo.

*Note: Lessons 11 and 12 teach essential communication skills for healthy relationships.

Activity: Breakup Songs

(PP 20) Ask volunteers to bring in a good breakup song. Ask them to be prepared to explain the song. They should be able to tell the group why the breakup happened and how well or badly the breakup is handled.

If you can, play a few lines from one or more songs in a subsequent session. Ask the group to pick out the lyric lines they feel are most revealing. Participants will have no problem finding music, but here are some examples:

Carrie Underwood: Before He Cheats; Usher: Burn; Fort Minor: Where’d You Go; Avril Lavigne: Don’t Tell Me; Chris Brown: Say Goodbye; Linkin Park: In the End; Madonna: Hung Up; Taylor Swift: Should Have Said No; Nickelback: Should Have Listened.

SECTION 6.4
Trusted Adult Connection

Have participants choose one. Note: See Connection Activities Checklist (Resource 1c) at end of Lesson One for these and all the TAC assignments.

1. Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships handout (Resource 6c). Have participants ask their TAC person to read the three contrasting questions on the handout and determine if the questions make good sense for analyzing healthy or unhealthy relationships. Ask if they have other ideas of how to judge a healthy relationship.

2. Choose one of the breakup handouts (Resources 6e, 6f, and/or 6g). Have them ask their TAC person to remember back when they were younger. Which tips would have been helpful?
Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

IS IT CONDITIONAL?
You worry about not being “good enough.” Your partner makes you feel little. You feel like you have to have a lot of money, or be or look a certain way, in order to keep his or her attention or love. You worry a lot about being dumped. You can’t be the real you. You have to wear a “mask.” There is little trust or security.

UNCONDITIONAL?
You both feel appreciated for who you really are. You don’t have to pretend or play games. You do not have to be perfect. You can tell each other about behaviors in each other that you don’t like. You support each other in making changes that you each decide to work on. You each show you genuinely care about the other.

CONTROLLING or DISRESPECTFUL?
One partner needs to be the “boss.” He or she ridicules the words and actions of the other and shows little interest in his or her feelings. The controlled person worries about upsetting his or her partner and often avoids saying or doing things. The controller does not support his or her partner, and in fact often tries to hold him or her back. One partner thinks he or she is entitled to express his or her anger in any way he or she chooses.

EQUAL, RESPECTFUL, and SUPPORTIVE?
Both partners treat each other well. Neither dominates or consistently “gives in.” Both partners feel respected. Each partner feels his or her thoughts, feelings, and needs are important to the other. They know differences and disagreements are inevitable in relationships and do not put each other down when these occur. Both partners feel encouraged by the other to develop and better him/herself.

MOSTLY SEXUAL OR MATERIAL?
This relationship is based almost exclusively on sex. Or, it is about the material things a person can get out of this relationship. Or, the status one feels by being with him or her. Without this, there would not be much there. There is not a lot of fun or deeper getting-to-know each other.

ATTRACTION ON MANY LEVELS?
This couple has chemistry, but they also enjoy talking and getting to know each other. They have fun doing things together. They do things based on shared interests and are open to trying new activities that the other one values. They balance time together, apart, and with friends. This relationship is based on a lot more than looks, status, or material things.

Trusted Adult Wisdom:
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**Lots of Fun**

**Instructions:** Fill in each box with one fun idea. Be sure to mix it up—by cost, time and variety. Put this up on your refrigerator and as you do the activity in the box write down the date.

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**Breaking Up Tips**

1. **Talk to a trusted and wise person:** Discuss the reasons the relationship is not working. Make sure this person won’t tell everyone but will keep your conversation private; or encourage drama or chasing after him or her in a desperate way. Tell friends and family when you’re ending it.

2. **Pick a time and place:** Pick a private place. You don’t want to do it around his or her friends. The person may become emotional—perhaps cry, be angry, or want to talk. Give him or her the respect that privacy provides. Don’t tell the person right before a big event such as their birthday, a game or performance, or the start of the school or workday. And, be sure to tell the person yourself.

   **CAUTION:** If you think the person may become violent, break up in a safe place. There should be helpful people nearby or present with you. Seek support and advice from the local domestic violence group to develop a safe plan.

3. **Make a clean break:** Don’t put it off. Spell it out clearly. Be honest and direct, but not cruel. Say: “I want to break up. This relationship is over.” Or, “I do not have the same feelings anymore.” Do not string someone along.

4. **Have a method to avoid cruelty:** Include in your conversation what you like and appreciate about the other person. But don’t give false hope or mixed messages about your decision.
Surviving a Breakup

1. Don’t blame yourself. There are many reasons why relationships end. Make a list of your positive qualities. Ultimately you want a partner who admires you, recognizes your qualities, is as crazy about you as you are of him or her, and accepts you as you are. Also, make a list of what you want in a partner. What can you learn from this relationship? Do some writing on this after you have reviewed some of your workbook pages.

2. Face reality—it’s over. Don’t be obsessed with winning this person back. You can’t force a relationship. It sacrifices your dignity to beg for a relationship, to act desperate, or to try to chase after the person.

3. Stay away from the revenge game. Forget about getting even or spreading rumors. It’s immature and makes you a little person.

4. Get perspective. Most people go through a number of romances before finding and committing to the right person. With each relationship you can grow wiser and more insightful about yourself, what you are looking for, and how a relationship should be.

5. Don’t jump quickly into another relationship. Some people hop into another relationship right away to make their ex-partner jealous or to make themselves feel better. This only leads to more problems, and is not good if you have a child. Give yourself time. Identify what you want to work on and do for yourself.

6. Get out and do things. After you’ve given yourself some time to cry, get busy. Don’t wallow in self-pity. Shoot baskets or kick a ball, or go walking, biking, or fishing. Take up a hobby or build something. Get outside. Sunshine and the outdoors can be healing. Getting active will make you feel better and put you in a position to meet new people. Call friends, make plans.

7. Remember, things get better with time.

Tips for Parents

The Basics:
- Don’t drag it out. End it for good. Don’t do the “on again, off again.”
- Don’t keep calling your ex “just to make sure he/she is okay.”
- Take precautions if you need to. Change locks? Get help leaving safely?
- Tell friends and family. Ask them for support.
- Find something nice (and positive) to do for yourself.

Realize the breakup can be hard on your child
- Most children want a relationship with both parents.
- Allow your child to talk about feelings of sadness and loss—even if you hate your ex.
- Your child will need to process it many times as they enter different stages of life.
- Make it possible for your ex to stay in touch with your child. Don’t interfere with his/her relationship with their child.
- Regular contact is important for your child as long as his/her presence isn’t dangerous.
- DO NOT badmouth your ex in front of your child—even if you think he/she deserves it. It just hurts your child and makes them feel bad.
- Don’t think just any new partner can substitute for the other parent.

Don’t hop quickly into a new relationship
- Focus on being the best parent you can be.
- Complete school; seek employment.
- Learn communication skills to help all your relationships, and especially with your ex in co-parenting.
- Take a break from relationships—give yourself time.
- Next time don’t slide. Take your time and use the relationship smarts you gain in this program.
- Know it takes time (often a long time) for a relationship to develop with a stepparent.
- Extended family and mentors can help children if you are parenting solo.
ACTIVITY CARD 6A: Six Types of Relationships

**CONDITIONAL Relationship**
- In this relationship you feel you have to have money, or, be, act, talk and look a certain way in order to earn or keep your partner's attention.
- You feel like you have to do certain things or you'll be dumped.
- You worry a lot about not being "good enough." Your partner often makes you feel little.
- You are not free to be the real you. You wear a "mask."
- There's not much trust; you suspect your partner may cheat on you.

**CONTROLLING, DISRESPECTFUL Relationship**
- Your partner shows little to no interest in your feelings or what you have to say.
- Your partner needs to appear to be the "boss" especially in front of others. You have little say in what happens.
- You avoid saying or doing things that are important to you. You worry about upsetting your partner.
- Your partner seems overly jealous and keeps tabs on you 24/7.
- Your partner expresses frustration and anger in negative ways toward you. When he/she is mad, put-downs, name-calling, threats, and/or actual physical aggression are common.

**MOSTLY SEXUAL OR MATERIAL Relationship**
- This relationship is based almost exclusively on sex. Or it is about the material things a person gets out of the relationship.
- A lot of time together is spent sexually. There is not a lot of deeper, getting-to-know-each-other time or even going out and having fun.
- This couple is very focused on looks, clothes, hairstyle or money and material things.
- Deep down you worry or suspect without sexual involvement there would not be much there. Sometimes you feel the only time you are treated nicely is when you are about to get physical. Or, when you give your partner material things or money.
- You are not even sure you really like your partner.

**UNCONDITIONAL Relationship**
- You are comfortable being the real you. There's no pretending. There are no games going on.
- You do not have to be perfect. You can be who you really are and be appreciated, warts and all.
- You support each other's interests and personal growth.
- In small and large ways, you show you care about each other.
- Neither one worries about being dumped if they do something the other doesn't like. You can tell each other about behaviors you don't like.

**EQUAL, RESPECTFUL, SUPPORTIVE Relationship**
- Both partners treat each other well. Neither dominates or consistently "gives in." Both partners feel respected by the other.
- Each partner feels his or her thoughts, feelings, and needs are important to the other. Both show interest in the other.
- Neither puts the other one down when disagreements occur. They work together for solutions to issues or problems.
- Both partners feel encouraged to develop and better him/herself. Both feel free to grow and reach personal goals.
- Neither one feels held back from doing things that will help him or her succeed in school, work, and parenting.

**ATTRACTION ON MANY LEVELS Relationship**
- This couple has chemistry, but they also enjoy talking, getting to know each other, sharing feelings, values and goals.
- They usually laugh a lot and have fun doing things together.
- They spend time together, time apart, and time with friends. If they do not know each other's friends, they are excited to introduce them.
- They do things based on shared interests. And, they are open to learning about and trying new activities the other values. Learning about each other's interests is mutual and not one-sided.
- This relationship is based on a lot more than looks, status, or material things. You admire and enjoy each other's character and personality.
ACTIVITY CARD 6B: Healthy or Unhealthy

- SLOW
- TAKES
- PRETENDS
- SHARES
- SURFACE

- STAYS
- PRESSURES
- CARES
- FOREVER
- FAST