



LEARNING ABOUT CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

SECONDARY RESOURCES



A screen shot from Ryerson's new video *Consent Comes First*, teaching students healthy sexual relationships.
Photo source: Youtube.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- There are approximately two million young Canadians enrolled at Canadian universities and colleges. ([Statistics Canada](#))
- A CBC News investigation found more than 700 reported cases of sexual assault at 87 Canadian universities and colleges between 2009 and 2013. However, experts believe the real number of assaults is much higher, because many cases are never reported to police or school authorities. ([CBC](#))
- In 2014, the University of Ottawa conducted a survey of 1,088 of its students. Seventy-eight per cent of female students and 49 per cent of male students said they had experienced some form of “face-to-face” sexual harassment or assault, such as sexually suggestive comments or unwanted touching. ([University of Ottawa](#))
- Fifteen per cent of Ottawa students said that if a woman gets raped when she has put herself in a risky situation, it is at least partly her own fault; 24 per cent said “rape isn’t as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think”; and 39 per cent thought it was acceptable to make sexual comments to a woman because “it tells her she is attractive.” ([University of Ottawa](#))
- A poll in early 2015 found that 30 per cent of Canadian women surveyed had experienced sexual assault, but only 18 per cent had reported it to police. ([Global News](#))
- A 2015 survey by the Canadian Women’s Foundation found that, while 96 per cent of Canadians believe that sexual activity should not happen without consent, 67 per cent don’t understand what is meant by consent. One in five Canadians, ages 18 to 34, believe that if a woman sends an explicit photo by email or social media, she is consenting to sexual activity. ([Canadian Women’s Foundation](#))

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

Core Skill Sets:



These icons identify the most relevant core skills students will develop using this resource. Learn more about the WE.ora Learning Framework at www.weday.com/weschools.

KEY TERMS

Consent—To give permission for something to happen.

Harassment—Unwanted verbal comments or physical behaviour that insults, intimidates or otherwise hurts another person.

Rape culture—Attitudes, jokes, comments, policies or other practices that appear to approve of, or diminish the seriousness of sexual assault.

THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS

- Themes: Education, Local Issues, Values and Ethics
- Course Connections: Canadian and World Studies, English, Health and Physical Education, Social Sciences and the Humanities

MATERIALS

- Front board
- Student journals or note paper
- Writing utensils

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in writing, orally or visually.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express and defend a position on an issue.

MAP IT

Have students locate the different regions mentioned in the article to gain an understanding of the expanse and involvement of this issue.

- British Columbia, Canada
- Halifax, Canada
- Ontario, Canada
- United States

DISCUSS

1. In your opinion, where should conversations about healthy vs. unhealthy relationships happen? When should they begin?
2. Why is it important that post-secondary institutions bring attention to positive relationship skills on their campuses? What sort of initiatives do you think can be incorporated into campuses?
3. Why might it be difficult to identify the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships? How does the media and technology affect relationships?
4. Have you heard of the term “rape culture” before? What do you think it means? Why does it exist?
5. Do you think there is pressure to date? If so, where does it come from?

DIVE DEEPER

To begin, have students define the term “relationships”.

Explain to students that we form relationships as soon as we are born with parents, siblings and family. As we get older we begin to form relationships with people from our neighbourhood, school, work, etc. Ask students to list the benefits of having relationships (e.g., companionship)

Next, have students define the term “dating relationship.”

Share with students that dating usually means that two people are spending time together in a close relationship. These relationships can be complex, and usually develop over time and may consist of friendship and/or romantic love.

Organize the class into groups of two to three students and provide each group with a sheet of chart paper. Tell students that in their groups they will think about their personal criteria for healthy dating relationships and examine the qualities that can lead to unhealthy dating relationships. Have each group create a t-chart as shown below and brainstorm characteristics/signs for each column.

Healthy Relationships	Unhealthy Relationships
• Happiness • No fear of each other • Good communication	• No respect • Feel like you can't be yourself

Ask students:

- Is it important to recognize the difference between a healthy and unhealthy relationship? Explain.
- Why do some people stay in unhealthy relationships? What advice would you give them?
- What are some ways people can maintain and enhance healthy positive relationships?

In their groups tell students to brainstorm ways in which they can stay safe when dating. Then, instruct students to prepare a poster for a teenage audience that promotes tips and advice for safe dating. Provide students with the checklist below before getting started.

Safe Dating Poster:

- Your poster must address each of the following questions:
 - What is safe dating?
 - What can you do to ensure you are safe when out with a date?
 - What are signs of a healthy/unhealthy dating relationship?
 - Are there any agencies or community support networks that teens can use if they experience problems when dating?
- Design a poster that will appeal to an adolescent audience

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Photo source: Youtube.