**Healthy Reality - lesson 3**

**The Scoop…**

Healthy relationships and attitudes

**Getting Real**

Unhealthy relationships, especially dating relationships, can have long-term negative effects. Healthy relationships are built upon a basis of a positive sense of self, smart decision-making, and respect for others.

**Lesson Goals**

* Discussion of the following points:
  + Review of the importance of respect for yourself
  + Review of the importance of respect for others
  + Respect for the opposite gender
  + Handling peer pressure
  + Proper use of social media, including sexting
  + Abstinence as the best possible option

**The Lesson**

* (Note: Items bulleted with the dot are instructions and generalized points we want you to bring up, and can be put into your own words. Items indicated with the arrow are specific questions or comments we need you to make.)
* Make sure to emphasize the points and quotes in red.
* Tell the students this is the last lesson in the series. The purpose of this one is to summarize the first two lessons and talk to them today about healthy relationships, whether it be now or well into the future. Our hope is that they are able to take pressure about relationships off themselves now and decide what their future relationships should and shouldn’t involve.
* Remind them that the first lesson was on self-image and self-respect, and how that provides a strong basis for our attitudes and decision-making. Ask some of the students to share one of the key points they took away from that lesson, and why they feel it is important. (Just get a few responses. Don’t spend a lot of time on this.) Recap some of the primary points from that lesson. It said:
  + Respect yourself
  + Embrace your individuality
  + Look at the positives, not the negatives
  + Don’t compare yourself to others
  + Alcohol and other drugs can negatively affect you in many ways
* Tell them that the second lesson progressed to the next obvious stage - respect for others, and how healthy attitudes can help deal with peer pressure. It said:
  + Junior high years are full of pressures, and drama sometimes, as people try to find their own identities
  + At this stage, your brain tends to reward interactions with your peers rather than consider the possible consequences, which can lead to some problems! It’s important to think things through.
  + Negative peer pressure can have mental and physical consequences.
  + Surround yourself with people who support you and don’t lead you down a negative path.
  + We talked about bullying, and how respect for yourself needs to also lead to respect for others.
  + Respect others for who they are, just as you respect yourself for who YOU are. We are all different for a reason. Everyone has their own story, and you can’t possibly know everything going on in their lives. Be understanding and inclusive of others.
  + We talked about social media, and how it should be used in a positive manner, not a negative one.
* Ask the students if there was anything in particular they took away from that lesson or think was especially important. (One or two responses to this question are enough.)
* With all of this in mind, we want to spend some time today discussing relationships, and what healthy and unhealthy relationships might look like.
* Respect for self and respect for others are factors that belong in every healthy relationship.
* Kidshealth.org ([http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html#](http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html)) has some practical advice for healthy teen relationships. It lists the following components of a healthy relationship:
  + Mutual respect (Does your bf or gf accept your likes and dislikes, your opinions and boundaries?)
  + Trust (Is there jealousy involved? Is your social media being monitored?)
  + Honesty (Can you take your bf or gf at their word?)
  + Support (Is your significant other with you in good times and bad and take a sincere interest in your life?)
  + Fairness & equality (Does one person call all the shots, or are the opinions of both valued and treated equally?)
  + Separate identities (Are you both allowed to develop as individuals, have other friendships and evolve as human beings?)
  + Good communication (Are you honest and open with each other or keep things bottled up inside?)
* Are there any comments on this list? Anything you want to add?
* Are there any other factors of a healthy relationship you can think of?
* What factors can make a relationship unhealthy? (Basically, the opposite of any of the factors above, but try to get the students to name some others to get them thinking about it and have the following list if anything is missed):
  + Verbal insults
  + Physical abuse
  + Treating you like a “toy” or status symbol, rather than an individual deserving of respect
  + Trying to force you to go further sexually than you would like
  + Sexting, or asking for intimate photos (which can be a felony and is a form of dating violence)
* Optional: If you feel the situation is right and the class is receptive, ask the following questions to bring up the subject of gender stereotypes:
  + Are there certain things that guys tend to do to stereotype girls or establish their masculinity? (Do they tend to put girls down or think males are dominant? Why do they do that?) (Note: Don’t criticize the guys for it, just make sure it’s pointed out if it’s a local factor!)
  + Are there things that girls do to stereotype guys or use guys as a status symbol? Why do they do that?
* Ask the students if any relationship is really worth it if any of the negative factors we talked about are present. Obviously, the answer is no. Tell them that if they are ever in a relationship in which any of these factors are involved, to get out of the relationship. Now. And don’t be afraid to talk to someone about it.
* Ask the students to raise their hand if they know of someone, teen or adult, who has been in an unhealthy relationship. (Most will probably raise their hand.)
* Knowing the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships can impact your long-term physical and mental health and well-being.
* It is important to realize that their worth as a human being is not going to be defined by whether or not they have a boyfriend or girlfriend, especially at this stage in their life. It is more important that they develop their own identity and grow as a person than it is to be in a relationship. Be patient! Time is on your side! There are more important things in life!
* In the book, “Can I Kiss You?” the author points out that no one has the legal authority to touch anyone else sexually without their permission. Doing so without consent is sexual assault.
* Portland Lifeguard defines the term “sexual integrity” this way: **Sexual Integrity** is a personal, positive and proactive lifestyle that empowers the recipient to make well informed decisions in sexual matters now and in the future.
* Do you think sexual integrity is an important consideration for teens? Why or why not?
* What are some of the negative consequences of teen sexual activity? (Have the students come up with some answers and write them on the board if you can. Here is a list of some of the more and less obvious answers):
  + Pregnancy (being a mother OR a father)
    - Impact on future education / goals
    - Financial ability to support a child
  + Physical risks
    - STD’s (rates are highest among teens and young adults)
  + Reputation (especially in the age of social media)
  + Mental risks
    - Sexually active teens are more likely to be suicidal (Most teen relationships don’t last, and think of the mental consequences of having a break up after the intimacy of having sex with a partner)
* In closing, here are some points to keep in mind:
  + According to the North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the majority of teens has never had sex, so it’s okay not to. Don’t feel pressured to do so.
  + Waiting to have sex is a viable option and the only sure way to avoid the potential negative outcomes.
  + If you have made a mistake in the past, it’s not too late to start over.
  + You aren’t defined by the relationships you may or may not be in during middle school or high school. Grow as an individual, keep your eyes on your goals, and let life run its course. Relationships will be there when the time is right, and under the right circumstances.
* If time allows, have the students get into small groups for just a few minutes and have them compile a list of 5 or 6 guidelines for healthy relationships they think their classmates should follow. After they have their lists, ask them to share it with the class.