



Me & You: Building Healthy Relationships

In This Issue

[What Will Students Learn?](#)

[Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors](#)

[Why Bullying and Dating Violence are Issues for Schools](#)

[What Can You Do as a Member of the School Staff?](#)

[QUIZercise](#)

[Ask the Expert Resources](#)

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www.MeAndYouHealthy.org

School Newsletter

Spring 2014

Welcome to *Me & You: Building Healthy Relationships*, a curriculum that your school's 6th grade students will receive this year. Students have relationships with family, peers, friends and future dating partners. The **goal** of this curriculum is to teach students about the importance of having healthy relationships and how to make good decisions.

What Will Students Learn?

Students will learn about the following topics:

- Healthy Friendships
- Making Good Decisions
- Managing Emotions
- Communication Skills
- Personal Rules and Responsibility
- Future Dating Relationships

Students will also learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Healthy Relationships	Unhealthy Relationships
Trust	Controlling
Caring	Jealous
Respect	Verbal Abuse
Freedom	Physical Abuse
Fun	Big Age Difference

Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors

One type of unhealthy behavior in a relationship is bullying. Bullying can occur in many different ways including teasing, name-calling, leaving someone out of something, spreading rumors, hitting, pushing, or taking someone's things.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that occurs through technology. Examples of cyberbullying are making fun of or threatening someone via social media.

Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Students who are bullied and/or bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

Students can be victims, perpetrators, or both.

Another type of unhealthy behavior is dating violence. Many students start dating in middle school and high school, so it's important to be aware of this issue. The three types of dating violence are: physical, emotional, and sexual. Dating violence, in any form, has serious consequences for both victims and perpetrators. Both girls and boys can be victims and perpetrators of dating violence. In fact, girls are often more likely to be perpetrators.

Physical violence is when someone causes harm or injury to another person's body or property

Emotional violence is when someone says or does something, in person or electronically, that hurts another person's feelings

Sexual violence is when someone forces unwanted sexual activity on another person

Why Bullying and Dating Violence are Issues for Schools

- Almost 1 in 3 students has been bullied
- Only 20 to 30% of students who are bullied tell adults about the bullying
- Over 7 out of 10 youth AND school staff say they have seen bullying in their schools
- 1 in 10 students has been a victim of physical dating violence and almost 1 in 5 has been a victim of emotional dating violence
- Short- and long-term consequences include academic difficulties, depression, and suicidal ideation and attempts

What Can You Do as a Member of the School Staff?

Recognize the warning signs that a student may be involved in these unhealthy behaviors.

Warning Signs for Bullying and/or Dating Violence

Unexplained injuries
Lost or destroyed items, such as clothing or books
Aggressive behavior
Acting out
Poor academic performance
Excessive absences
Lack of interest in school
Association with bullies
Social isolation
Constant monitoring by dating partner

Respond when you observe these behaviors in your school. Keep in mind that students who are involved in these behaviors may be both victims and perpetrators - remain neutral to get all the facts.

Here are some steps to follow:

- Intervene immediately
- Separate the students involved
- Make sure everyone is safe
- Get the facts
- Support the students involved

Refer students to appropriate resources. A student who is being bullied or bullying others or is in an unhealthy relationship may not want to talk about it, but you can still refer them to helpful resources such as a school counselor, hotline, or website.

QUIZercise

Take out a piece of paper and answer the following questions.

Imagine that a student in your school is in an unhealthy relationship.

- What three things could you say to encourage the student to get help?
- Who are three qualified people at your school to whom you could refer the student?
- What are three resources outside of your school to which you could refer the student?

Ask the Expert

Dr. Melissa Peskin



Q: What should I do if I see a student bullying another student?

Once you **recognize** a bullying incident, **respond** appropriately. Separate the students involved and talk to each of them to get the facts about what happened. Remember, some students who engage in bullying may have been bullied themselves. Tell the students that bullying is not appropriate and that in this school, all students are treated with respect. Ask the students if they are alright. Document and report the incident according to your school policy and provide a consequence for the bullying student, if appropriate. **Refer** the students to appropriate resources. Check in periodically to see how they are doing and watch for any future incidents.

Q: I think a student at my school is in an unhealthy relationship, but I don't know what to do.

The most important thing you can do is to talk to the student and find out what may be going on. A student may really want to talk to an adult but may not be sure how to go about it. It is important that the student feel supported and that he or she is referred to the appropriate resources.

Q: How can I prevent bullying and dating violence in my school?

The best way to prevent these behaviors is to create a school culture that treats all people with respect. These expectations should be clearly communicated to the students and school staff. It is also important to provide students with the skills they need to have healthy relationships, so including an effective healthy relationships curriculum in your school is important.

Resources

Stop Bullying (www.stopbullying.gov)
Stop Bullying - Kids Version (www.stopbullying.gov/kids)
A Thin Line (www.athinline.org)
Peaceful Playgrounds (www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/how-teachers-should-respond-to-bullying)
Break the Cycle (www.breakthecycle.org)
Love is Respect (www.loveisrespect.org)
National Teen Dating Violence hotline: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522
Teen Line crisis hotline for teens: 713-529-TEEN

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