

1: What's the need?

Having healthy relationships is linked with our overall wellbeing! They can help us feel more connected, supported, and bring us a lot of joy. However, when we are in unhealthy relationships they can take a toll of our health and wellness by affecting our stress levels, emotional and mental wellness, and can potentially put our safety at risk if the relationship turns violent. It is likely that some of your residents may not have had comprehensive program in their prior schooling, so navigating and identifying healthy relationships may be new to them. This packet exists to help you easily create a program around healthy relationships and consent.

- 10.6% of student reported experiencing an emotionally abusive intimate relationship in the last year (ACHA-NCHA II 2019, n=529).
- 3.2% of student reported experiencing a sexually abusive intimate relationship in the last year (ACHA-NCHA II 2019, n=529)
- 1 in 4 women experience sexual assault
- 1 in 16 men experience sexual assault
- 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ students of all genders experience sexual assault

2: Helpful messages when talking about healthy relationships and consent:

- Sexual assault and relationship violence are very serious subjects, but that does not mean things have to be “heavy” the whole time. Address that consent is mandatory, how to help a friend who might be in an unsafe situation/relationship, and reporting resources, but focus the majority of your program on communication between partners, identifying a healthy relationship, and how to get consent
- Getting consent does not have to be scary or awkward. It is essentially practicing good communication with a partner by checking in, respecting boundaries, and having the ability to speak up if something's not okay.
- Remember that not everyone is dating or having sex. It can be helpful to set the tone like this: “I can recognize that not everyone in this room may be dating or having sex and may not be thinking about doing so for a long time, but this is helpful information to have at any point in your life or even to share with a friend”. With healthy relationships, a lot of this info can be applied to non-amorous relationships too, such as good communication with a roommate or friend.
- Try using inclusive terms to make your content relevant to all individuals. Example: using “partner/partners” in place of “boyfriend/girlfriend”.

3: The Basics:

6 Components of a Healthy Relationship:

1. **Trust:** What is an example of what this looks like in a healthy relationship? When people do what they say they are going to do or are honest. Reliance on, integrity, dependability, confidence, earned independence.
2. **Independence:** What is an example of what this might look like in a healthy relationship? Freedom from control, having your own activities, having clear boundaries.
3. **Honesty:** What do you think honesty would look like in a healthy relationship? Honorable in principles, intentions, and actions. Upright, Fair, reliable person. Telling the truth, even if it may not be something your partner wants to hear.

4. **Fairness:** How could fairness play out in a healthy relationship? Equity/compromise, Willingness to give of oneself. Taking turns picking the movie, taking turns paying for dinner.
5. **Communication:** What is an example of what communicating looks like in a healthy relationship? Not defensive, openness to share, letting your partner know how you feel, using good listening skills, using “I” statements rather than “You” statements. Avoiding “You always” and “you never”
6. **Respect:** Lastly, what would respect look like in a healthy relationship? Respecting your partner’s opinions, treating them with kindness, loving them for who they are without trying to change them, using respectful language, avoiding name-calling.

Consent:

Consent is defined as *“informed and freely given words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity”*

This has to be the case for all parties involved – meaning you & the other participant or participants

- *It is active and enthusiastic:* The presence of a verbal, enthusiastic “YES,” not the absence of a “No.” Ask because only a verbal **YES MEANS YES!**
- *It is a mutual Choice:* Both/all participants must feel free to say “yes.” If you are not willing to take “no” for an answer you do not have consent.
- *It is continuous:* Consent to one act (i.e. kissing) does not imply consent to another (i.e. oral sex). Consent is a continuous conversation and can be taken away at any time.
 - *Think about consent as a good thing...something that makes sex more awesome if you want it! It’s just not respectful not to respect your partner’s boundaries or to not communicate...going back to essential components of healthy relationships*
 - *The boundary piece means you must respect the answer, even if it’s not what you wanted to hear.*

Possible questions to ask are:

- Do you want to have sex?
- Do you like it when I _____?
- Is this okay?
- Does this feel good? Do you want to keep going?
- Do you want to stop?
- Are you comfortable with.....?
- Do you want to stop?

Who cannot give consent (5 instances someone cannot give consent)

- Drunk / under the influence of drugs – “Too drunk to drive a car, too drunk to give consent (Laci green, 2015).”
- Under the age of 18
- Vulnerable/disabled in a way that makes it hard for them to understand what they are agreeing to
- Coercion, pressuring, or force: Doesn’t always mean physical force, but repeatedly pressuring partner to engage in sexual activity even after they say no, until they “give in” OR making partner feel guilty for “leading them on” or because they paid for dinner, you’ve been dating a long time, you’re in love, etc.
- Unconscious or asleep

Alcohol and consent:

- Alcohol makes it hard to pick up on other people’s cues
- Alcohol can also make people more likely to act on aggressive impulses, making taking “no” for an answer more difficult

- Perpetrators of sexual violence often take advantage of people who have been drinking alcohol
- Most college sexual assaults involve alcohol so, while it is never the victim's fault, there are opportunities to improve safety and to take care of one another, like at parties and bars
- Alcohol consumption is never an excuse to commit sexual assault!!! Make sure your friends know this and make sure consent is clear! NAU does not tolerate sexual assault."

Key Takeaways:

- *"Think about consent as a good thing...something that makes sex more awesome if you want it! It's not respectful not to respect your partner's boundaries or to not communicate...going back to essential components of healthy relationships*
- *Remember: respect the answer, even if it's not what you wanted to hear."*

Resources for support:

- On Campus
 - Confidential Support
 - Victim Witness Services at NAU – 928.523.2225
 - NAU Counseling Services – 928.523.2261
 - Reporting Options
 - NAU Police Department
 - Emergency- 928.523.3000 or 911
 - Non-Emergency- 928.523.3611
 - Title IX Coordinator - 928.523.3312
 - Office of Student Life – 928.523.5181
- Off Campus
 - Northern AZ Care & Services After Sexual Assault (NACASA)
 - 24-hour line: 928.527.1900
 - Northland Family Help Center – 928.527.1900
 - Flagstaff Medical Center – 928.779.3366

4. Putting it Into Practice:

- Utilize printable worksheets from Love is Respect: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AIAGP-Quiz-final.pdf>. Have individuals do these by themselves then have a discussion around healthy relationships.
- Create a bulletin board on the components of a healthy relationship, conflict resolution tips, and important components of consent. Consider using this [FRIES graphic](#) from PP for a consent board.
- Relationships & the media: Have a discussion around current/past relationships in the media. Print out pictures of celebrity/tv show star faces (Think Jim & Pam, Taylor Swift & a past partner, Ross & Rachel) to pass around to groups have groups decide if the relationships seem healthy or unhealthy and why. Also, discuss how the media (tv, movies, songs) portray college, relationships, sex, etc. – is this realistic? Problematic? Include information on healthy relationships and have residents sign the [Relationship Bill of Rights](#).
- Take your floor to a Health Promotion event during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October), Stalking Awareness Month (January), or Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April).
- Have Health Promotion peer educators facilitate a Creepy or Cute program in your hall. Submit a request online through Health Promotion's website
- Host Brene Brown's Netflix special in your lounge area. This special that discusses courage, relationships, overcoming fear, conflict, and healthy communication. Include snacks and have a discussion after the showing.
- Wall of Love: Print copies of the "Love is..." speech bubble template from this [toolkit](#). Use different colors of paper for visual interest. Have students cut out the speech bubbles and write down what love (amorous or non-amorous) means to them. Tape the bubbles on a board or in a designated space in a hallway. Students can get creative with how their speech bubbles are displayed!

5: Reliable Sources:

- Love is Respect: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/>
- One Love Foundation: <https://www.joinonelove.org/signs-healthy-relationship/>
- Health Promotion: <https://nau.edu/campus-health-services/relationship-violence/>
- RAINN: <https://www.rainn.org/safety-students>