

Lesson:
Relationship Violence- Take a Stand
(adapted from multiple sources)

Length of lesson:
45 Minutes

Materials:

- “Take a stand” statements
- “YES” and “NO” signs

Discussion Summary:

Relationships are connections between parents and children, friends, and people who choose to be romantic with each other. Relationship violence occurs when power, control, and abuse are at the center of a relationship. Violent relationships are characterized by emotional/verbal abuse, sexual coercion, financial/economic abuse, sexism, blaming or shaming, isolation and extreme jealousy, and intimidation and threats. Relationship violence prevention is particularly important for girls ages 8 to 12 because they may already be having romantic relationships and because they will be having them as they enter their teen years. Teaching girls about healthy relationships, characterized by equality, trust and support, non-threatening behavior, sexual safety, financial/economic independence, negotiation and fairness, honesty and accountability, and continuing connections with others, empowers them to make choices that keep them safe and happy.

Discussion Questions:

- **What is relationship violence?**
- **What are the causes and effects of relationship violence?**
- **How can relationship violence be avoided?**
- **How can relationship violence be ended?**
- **What is a healthy relationship?**

1. Set up the sign that says “YES” on one side of the room and the sign that says “NO” on the other.

2. Explain that in this exercise, participants must “take a stand” or choose an opinion about statements you read. In each case, they must choose “yes” or “no,” there is no “in between” or “it depends.”

3. Read a statement and pause as participants move to the “yes” or “no” side. After they are in place, call on a few participants from each side to defend their stance. Remind participants not to pass judgment but to allow them to explain their thinking. Participants can move to the other side if they decide to.

4. The following is a list of sample “Take a Stand!” statements.

- It is ok for a boy to hit a girl.
- It is ok for a girl to hit a boy.
- It is ok for a girl to hit a girl.
- It is ok for a boy to hit a boy.
- Sometimes a girl deserves to be hit.
- It is ok to be jealous.

- It is ok to start rumors because you are jealous.
- It is ok for someone to make you do something you don't want to do.
- If someone you are dating "accidentally" slaps you during an argument, you should forgive them—no one is perfect.
- If you love someone, it is ok to say "no."
- If someone loves you, it is ok for them to ask you to do something that makes you uncomfortable.

5. Direct participants to return to their seats and ask if there are any questions about any of the issues that came up during the game.

6. Lead a discussion about healthy relationships. Ask participants to brainstorm elements of a healthy relationship. Remind them this includes relationships with parents, friends, and romantic partners. Prompt them by asking: How would you like to feel in a relationship? (Examples: excited, safe, happy, equal, smart, beautiful, not afraid) What kind of boundaries will you set to protect yourself in a relationship? (Examples: I will not tolerate being called names, I will not tolerate physical abuse, I will not tolerate feeling afraid, I will only stay in the relationship if I feel happy and safe, I will differentiate between cute behavior and obsessive/jealous behavior, I will talk to a teacher or a counselor if I feel afraid in my relationship)

7. Remind participants you are someone they can talk to if they ever have a problem in a relationship. As the facilitator, if someone comes to talk to you, remember to thank them for trusting you, to ask questions, to validate their feelings, to remind them it is not their fault, and remind them there is help.