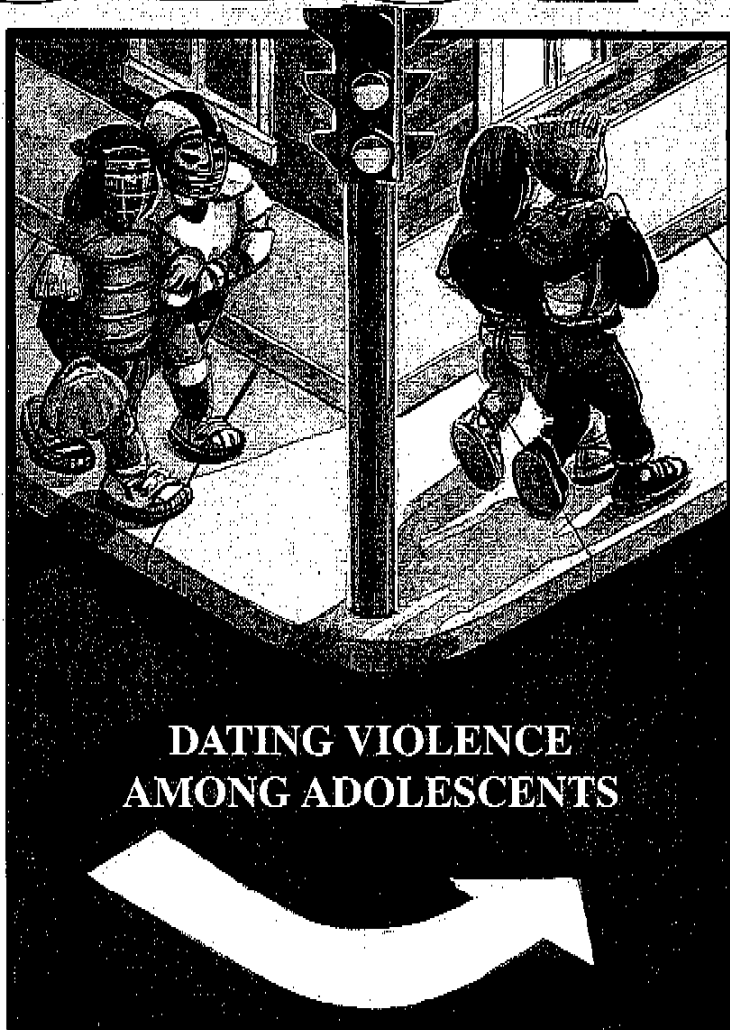


STOP!



**DATING VIOLENCE
AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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Québec 

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INTRODUCTION

The STOP! program is intended to prevent dating violence among adolescents and is intended mainly for Secondary III and IV students.

The program has a double message:

- Controlling one's partner at the cost of his or her personal development is incompatible with love.
- In an egalitarian loving relationship, both partners have the same rights and freedom to act and think.

The program is therefore designed to promote attitudes and behaviours that prevent recourse to violence.

The first section of the STOP! program is intended to shape adolescents' attitudes and behaviours in their dating relationships. It includes activities to be carried out in the classroom.

The second section is a workshop designed to make school staff aware of the violence problem and to inform them about the program. The workshop is divided into two parts. The first part is intended to make participants aware of this type of violence and to familiarize them with the program.

Given the number of adolescents involved in violent relationships (20 percent according to a study conducted by Mercer in 1988), a second part has been added to the workshop. It deals with support for victims and aggressors. For more information on the student services and resources in your region, contact a youth centre, women's group, shelter or CLSC.

Classroom Activities

This document contains the first section of the STOP! program, which includes classroom and complementary activities. Classroom activities consist of two 60- to 75-minute periods. The Personal and Social Education program, as well as the Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction program, the Protestant Moral and Religious Education program and the Moral

Education program lend themselves well to STOP! themes. The themes may also be dealt with in other courses.

It is essential that the messages conveyed be reinforced so that attitudes and behaviours begin to change. Schools are encouraged to commit to the project, and all school personnel to participate in the workshop.

Information on the Classroom Activities Section

The first section of the STOP! program has so far been offered in ten public and private schools in the Quebec City region and has reached more than 1900 adolescents in Secondary III and IV. Results show that almost all the adolescents (more than 90 percent) appreciated the program and would recommend it to their peers.

The Concept of Violence as Defined in the STOP! Program

The program deals only with violence experienced by adolescents in their dating relationships with other adolescents. Although violence can and does exist in homosexual relationships, because of the limited amount of time available for the program the focus is on violence within heterosexual couples. The examples, therefore, do not reflect other types of relationships.

It cannot be denied that many forms of violence exist in relationships between adolescents of all ages. For this reason, preventive measures should be adopted as soon as adolescents begin dating.

The STOP! program defines violence as *any behaviour that hinders the personal development of another individual, compromising his or her physical, psychological or sexual well-being.*

Thus:

1. According to the STOP! program, violence is an unacceptable behaviour.
2. By definition, violence is not limited to physical abuse, but includes all other forms of violence, which may, sooner or later, lead to physical abuse.
3. The main cause of violence is social inequality between the sexes. Abusers express this inequality by controlling their partners and considering only their own ends, to the detriment of the other person. Some even go so far as to show contempt for their partners. Emphasis must be placed on the role that learning (e.g. a history of family abuse) and reinforcement (peer pressure) play in this violent behaviour.
4. *Abusers are responsible for their own behaviour.*
5. Victims, especially of sexual abuse, are usually girls. As for physical abuse, the damage inflicted on girls is usually more serious than that inflicted on boys.
6. The preceding statement in no way implies that girls are incapable of violent behaviour. Often, their violence will be in the form of self-defence. However, studies show that reciprocal violence, and even violence initiated by girls, does exist. Such violence among adolescent girls usually disappears in time, since it is not reinforced by society.

What Does the Program Cover?

The STOP! program addresses two main themes: control and rights. The first step is to make students aware of dating violence among adolescents. Time should be set aside for the adolescents to become aware that this type of violence exists.

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to encourage adolescents to think about the problem. It may be distributed before the program and once again after the two main themes have been addressed. In this way, changes will be evident to both the teacher and the students.

Note to Teachers

According to Entraide-jeunesse workshop leaders, who have implemented the program several times in different schools, the best way to put students at ease and to promote discussion is to give examples from your own experience. These may be events you, yourself, your family or your acquaintances have experienced. Each of us has, at some point in our lives, experienced certain forms of violence ranging from control to actual physical abuse. It is always a good idea to give examples from your own experience; the students will feel more comfortable.

It is extremely important to restrict discussions to dating violence among adolescents. You should avoid getting into family or conjugal violence, which some adolescents may be experiencing. The STOP! program is a preventive measure and is in no way designed as a form of therapy. Anyone approached by adolescents experiencing these forms of violence may, of course, try to assist them by directing them toward resource persons or organizations specialized in this type of intervention.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



FIRST PERIOD: CONTROL

- Objectives:**
- To distinguish between self-control or control of one's environment and the abusive control of others.
 - To identify various forms of control in dating relationships.
 - To associate abusive control with violence.
 - To understand the seriousness of dating violence.

- Materials:**
- Props for the sketch



Introduction to the First Period

The following questions may serve to broach the topic with the students:

- Do you think violence exists among adolescent couples?
- Do you think that it is an important enough topic for us to be here talking to you?
- Do you think young people are as violent as adults, or less so?

As a basis for comparison, give the following statistics: one out of five female adolescents and one out of eight adult women are victims of violence in their relationships.

- Are you surprised?

It is because violence is so widespread that the STOP! program was developed, essentially as a preventive measure.

Here, a "dating relationship" refers to several types of relationships, including couples who are going steady and couples that are formed for a given party or a one-nighter.

Do you think you are not affected by this problem? All of us will be involved in at least one relationship in our lifetimes and we may have friends confiding in us who are experiencing problems in their relationships. So the subject concerns everyone.

Often, this sort of violence is associated with punching or slapping, but other attitudes and behaviours appear long before a couple gets to that point.

Today we will be talking about positive and negative control. What do you think these terms mean? What is control? Can you give any examples of positive control? of negative control?

Possible Reactions:

"Negative control is when you can't control yourself."

"Positive control is self-control."

Being a leader, wanting to have authority over others, wanting to make decisions, to influence people, and so on, can give rise to positive actions, but when the desire for control leads a person to want to decide everything for someone else, to want to possess or dominate another person, it becomes dangerous.

You have just given examples of negative and positive control. Now, let's look at some real situations.

ACTIVITY: SKETCH

Materials

- A mini-skirt (a paper one will do) for the girl, a cap for the boy and a bouquet of flowers for Scene 4.

Instructions for the Students

- Everyone can participate in the following activity.
- This sketch is a learning activity and not a play.
- First, we are going to act out a scene that you will watch without interrupting.
- The script involves a couple. You may decide that the behavior of one or both of the characters is unsatisfactory, but you must wait until the sketch is finished before sharing your reactions.
- The props give an exaggerated view of the characters, but they help us relate to them.
- Then the sketch is replayed exactly as before. The second time, however, you may initiate changes to any character or situation simply by saying "stop."
- The first student to express a desire to change something will replace one of the characters, using that person's prop, and will change the scene to his or her liking. Another student may then replace the first, and so on.
- Instead of replacing a character, you may want to speak to the actors about desirable changes to Eric and Claudine's behaviour.
- Once the scene has been played out, we will have a class discussion about the behaviours in the different versions of the sketch that were considered respectful and "correct" and those that were not.

SCENE 1

Control over Physical Appearance

Claudine is waiting for her boyfriend, Eric.

Claudine: What's he doing? He was supposed to be here at nine o'clock. The party's already started and I can't wait for him to see my new skirt; Julie has one just like it and he likes it a lot.

Eric knocks at the door.

Claudine: Well, it's about time.

Claudine opens the door.

Claudine: Hi there! We'd better get going. My mother wants me back by midnight. Hey, you know that exam I thought I was gonna flunk? It ended up being a piece of cake . . .

Eric is looking her up and down.

Eric: Why aren't you wearing your jeans? What are you wearing anyway? It looks stupid.

Claudine: It's the skirt I was telling you about. The one I really like. My mother bought it for me yesterday.

Eric: Well it doesn't look good at all. Do you know what you look like? You look like a fool. You're not going out like that, are you?

Claudine: What's the matter with you? Julie has a skirt just like this and you said you liked it . . .

Eric: Yeah, but that's different.

Claudine: What do you mean, that's different?

Eric: Julie's not my girlfriend.

Claudine: What's that got to do with anything?

Eric: Listen. If you wanna go to the party with me, put your jeans on. And hurry up; it's already nine-thirty!

After having encouraged the students to participate, replay the scene. Then, discuss this type of control.

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 1: CONTROL OVER PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Objective: To identify abusive control over the physical appearance of another person.

Main Message

- Wanting to control the appearance, look or style of the other person, whether in clothing, hairstyle or makeup, is unacceptable.

Related Messages

- This type of control is a way of trying to possess someone by not letting him or her be attractive to the other sex. Yet many people like to be appealing to others, not just to their partners.
- It is important to give your partner reasons why you are uncomfortable with his or her look. You may want to help your partner or show him or her you care, but you can also give your partner a complex or prevent him or her from being what he or she wants to be. Such behaviour, when consistent or demeaning, is unacceptable.
- The controller's fear is understandable: "If my partner is too attractive, I may lose him (or her)." It is a question of trust.

Comments

- For girls, control over their boyfriends' appearance often seems to be a matter of not wanting them to look foolish. The same may hold true for boys, although they seem to be motivated by a desire to limit their girlfriends' sexiness. Some boys may like it when their girlfriends are appreciated by their male friends, but only when they are present.

Possible Reactions

- Some girls may rebel:
 - "I don't tell *you* how to dress."
 - "Listen, if you're not happy, I'll go alone."
- Others may give in:
 - "It's too hard to fight; it's easier to just give in quietly."

Suggested Questions

- Was any control involved in this scene?
- Was it positive or negative control?
- Who was exerting negative control?
- What did Eric want to control?
- Why was he trying to control the way Claudine dressed? Because she looked too attractive?
- How might Claudine react to Eric's behaviour? What could she tell him?
- Do you think that adolescents often try to control their partners' physical appearance?
- Do girls want to control the way their boyfriends look?
- Do they do it the same way?
- What solution could you suggest? *If the students have not suggested a denouement, having them act out the scene might allow them to visualize a solution.*
- What may happen if someone controls a partner's physical appearance?
- Could this happen to you? Does it happen often?
- What happens? How is the problem solved?
- Does it happen as often to boys as to girls?
- What feelings are being masked by Eric's attitude? Remember that he is reacting this way because he finds the skirt too short.
- What is missing in their relationship? (communication, trust)
- Do you have the right to give your opinion on an item of clothing that your partner has just bought? How?
- Sometimes, when two people start dating, one may change his or her look. If this is a personal choice, there is no problem. If it is because one person is exerting pressure on the other, it is unacceptable.
- Be careful of the power you have as a boyfriend or girlfriend. Everyone knows how important a partner's opinion can be.

SCENE 2

Control over Relationships with Others through Possessiveness

Claudine calls Eric on the telephone:

Eric: Hello?

Claudine: Hi, Eric. Mrs. Garfinkle just called to say she's going to be late. We're not gonna be able to go to the movie.

Eric: Well I can still go . . .

Claudine (*sweetly*): Oh, no! Come and babysit with me.

Eric: But my friends are going to the movie. I could go with them. I haven't seen them in a long time and I really want to see that movie.

Claudine: Well fine, then. You'd rather go see a movie with your friends than see me. Who are you going out with, anyway?

Eric: I don't say anything when you go out with *your* friends . . .

Claudine: That's because you don't care! It bothers me when you go out with your friends. You're gonna have to choose between them and me.

After having encouraged the students to participate, replay the scene. Then, discuss this type of control.

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 2: CONTROL OVER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS THROUGH POSSESSIVENESS

Objective: To identify abusive control over one's partner's relationships with others through possessiveness.

Main Message

- Preventing your partner from seeing his or her friends and insisting on total availability is unacceptable.

Related Messages

- You cannot insist that your partner give up his or her friends for you.
- Social control can hinder a person by preventing him or her from experiencing satisfying relationships.
- Dating someone does not mean that you have to spend all your free time with him or her, or that you have to account for how you spend your time alone.
- Friends can be dealt with in either of two extremes, both of which are harmful to a couple: forcing the other person to give up his or her friends, or avoiding intimacy by always being with friends.
- Claiming that the friends are a bad influence often leads to bad feelings. It is important that you respect your partner's choices.

Suggested Questions

- Was any control involved in this scene?
- Was it positive or negative control?
- Who was exerting control? Why?
- How was Claudine exerting control?
- How do you think Eric felt?
- What could Eric do?
- Do some people insist that their partners give up their friends without doing the same themselves? *I can, but you can't . . .*
- If I decide I do not want to see my friends any more, do I have the right to insist that my partner stop seeing his or her friends?
- What will happen in the long run in this situation?
- What could Claudine do about her problem?
- What do you think about the reverse situation, in which someone always wants to be with his or her friends and avoids being alone with his or her partner?
- What might happen?
 - Eric might get angry and leave Claudine (if it happens often).
 - Eric might give in to Claudine and lose his friends (if it happens often).
 - If Claudine lets Eric go with his friends but pouts, how will Eric feel?

If you do not have enough time for all four scenes, skip Scene 3 and proceed to Scene 4.

SCENE 3

Control over Relationships with Others through Jealousy

Eric and Claudine are sitting together. Eric is in a bad mood.

Claudine: Did you have fun yesterday?

Eric: It was O.K.

Claudine: What's the matter? You've been sitting there brooding for half an hour.

Eric: *You* certainly seemed to be having a good time yesterday . . .

Claudine: What do you mean?

Eric: You spent all evening talking to Don!

Claudine: I didn't talk to him *that* much!

Eric: You talked *too* much. Who are you going out with, anyway?

Claudine: What are you, crazy?

Eric: I'm not crazy. I can see you're interested in him.

Claudine: Are you jealous?

Eric: I'm only jealous because I love you. . . .

After having encouraged the students to participate, replay the scene. Then, discuss this type of control.

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 3: CONTROL OVER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS THROUGH JEALOUSY

Objective: To identify abusive control over one's partner's relationships with others through jealousy.

Main Message

- Deciding who your partner can talk to or go out with is unacceptable.

Related Messages

- Abusive control over a partner's social life is often exerted under the pretext of love since, for many people, jealousy is an indication of love.
- Abusive control over a partner's social life can be harmful since it prevents him or her from experiencing satisfying relationships with others.
- According to research conducted in Montréal, 94 percent of people experience jealousy. You don't have to hide your jealousy, but there are different ways of expressing it. Unfortunately, in some cases, it may lead to unacceptable and even irreparable actions or threats.
- Jealousy should be seen as a sign that we need to talk to our partner, to see if we have reason to be afraid, if the threat is real.

Message to Avoid

- Jealousy is an indication that you love the other person: **FALSE**. If you really love the other person, you must accept that he or she may talk to or go out with other people as long as he or she respects your relationship. Jealousy is an indication that the other person's social life "bothers" you. This feeling may have a basis in reality if your partner does not respect you and treats you with indifference in going out with others. It may, however, be a product of your imagination if you see danger when your partner makes an acceptable demonstration of his or her attachment to you while maintaining other friendships.

Possible Reactions

- "If you're not jealous, you're not in love!" *To them, jealousy seems appropriate in some cases and unacceptable in others.*

Suggested Questions

- Was any control involved in this scene?
- Was it positive or negative control?
- Who was exerting control?
- What did Eric want to control?
- Why?
- Is jealousy an indication of love?
- If there is no jealousy in your relationship, can you be in love?
- How does it feel to be jealous?
- Is it flattering when someone is jealous over you?
- Why do we become jealous?
- How can this problem be solved?
- How do you know if jealousy is "appropriate" or whether it is a form of abusive control of your partner's relationships with other people?
- What can jealousy make us do?
- What can you do when you feel jealous?
- Can living with a very jealous person change your life? If so, how?
- Is there an acceptable form of jealousy and another, unacceptable, form? If so, what is the difference? Is it difficult to draw the line between the two?
- Jealousy is related to the trust we have in one another, but also to our own self-confidence. For example: When I don't feel good, I am more afraid of losing my partner. I ask myself why he (or she) is with me and not with someone else.
- How far can jealousy go?

SCENE 4

Control through Emotional Blackmail

Claudine is doing her homework. The doorbell rings and she answers it.

Claudine (*hesitantly*): Oh! Eric. . . .

Eric: I just want to talk to you. . . .

Claudine: Well, I'm not sure I feel like it. After the way you treated me . . .

Eric gives her a bouquet of flowers.

Eric: For my favourite person. . . .

Claudine (*embarrassed*): Oh, thanks. I . . . I . . . They're pretty, but . . . You know, yesterday, you really hurt me by laughing at my drawings like that in front of everybody.

Eric: Well, I did laugh at you a little, but it wasn't my fault. I had just found out that I failed math and French, so I took it out on you.

Claudine: It really hurt.

Eric: Yeah, but do you understand that I'm having problems? I failed two classes. Imagine what my parents are going to say . . . I'm really depressed.

Claudine (*understandingly*): Poor you. . . .

Eric: Claudine, you see that it's not my fault. Don't leave me, I need you. You're the only one who understands me. . . .

After having encouraged the students to participate, replay the scene. Then, discuss this type of control.

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 4: CONTROL THROUGH EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL

Objective: To identify manipulation of one's partner's feelings as abusive control.

Main Messages

- Playing with someone's feelings to get what you want is unacceptable.
- Controlling others does not always involve the use of aggressive or mean behaviour. For example, you may elicit feelings of pity or give gifts to obtain your partner's sympathy and take advantage of him or her.

Related Messages

- Ridiculing is a form of negative control over another person.
- A personal problem is no excuse for controlling behaviour. Your partner should not have to take responsibility for your personal problems or solve them.
- Giving gifts can be used to obtain forgiveness as long as you admit your mistakes and agree to discuss the problem.

Suggested Questions

- Was any control involved in this scene?
- Was it positive or negative control?
- Who was exerting control?
- What was Eric trying to control? How?
- How do you feel when your partner ridicules you?
- In your opinion, why did Eric ridicule Claudine's drawings?
- Why did Eric give Claudine flowers?
- Do people have the right to use their personal problems to control their partners?
- What do you think about Eric's way of trying to convince Claudine not to leave him?
- In your opinion, should Claudine remain in the relationship? Should they discuss the issue first?
- Do you think this is a believable situation?
- Were the flowers necessary?
- Did Eric come to apologize? *Help the students see that Eric was making excuses for his behaviour rather than apologizing.*
- What could Claudine do to ensure that the situation not be repeated?

You have seen four types of control: control over physical appearance, control over relationships with others through possessiveness, control over relationships with others through jealousy, and control through emotional blackmail. Can you think of other types of control?

Suicide threats should be dealt with carefully in order not to contradict the messages conveyed by suicide prevention programs. Emphasize the idea that even when some people threaten to commit suicide if their partner leaves them, and when they do so as an attempt at control, they should always be taken seriously since losing someone can be painful and some people attempt suicide and succeed. In such a situation you should:

- seek help from an appropriate resource (suicide prevention centre);
- avoid being alone, whether it is you or your partner who is contemplating suicide;
- not attempt to handle the problem alone;
- remember that it is important to leave a partner you no longer love, but that you should remain available, that is, not drop the person entirely.

IMPORTANT: *Do not allow this discussion to shift to control in adult couples.*

CONCLUSION

Abusive Control Is Not Love—It Is Violence

Abusive control is a form of violence that is not always obvious to the victim or to those around him or her. The three (or four) scenes of abusive control that were played out and discussed are examples of psychological abuse. Each scene presented a character exerting control over another's physical appearance, emotions, or relationships with others, preventing him or her from being fulfilled and experiencing a satisfying dating relationship. In dating, a control situation may arise once or twice without having serious consequences for the partners. However, when these situations arise frequently and it is always the same person trying to dominate the other, it is a case of abusive control—and violence.

To solve a problem involving control, the dominating partner must agree to make an effort to change or the situation will never improve. If the dominating partner refuses to change, the healthiest solution for the dominated partner is most often to end the relationship, since control problems are above all problems of personal behaviour and do not stem from the relationship itself.

What is the advantage of controlling another person? What is lost? In the short term, controlling another person may seem advantageous. However, the other person will end up fearing his or her partner's reactions. This will probably lead him or her to stop talking about certain aspects of his or her life, or even to lie about them. Communication will be limited and the relationship will suffer.

Unfortunately, psychological abuse easily leads to physical abuse. That is why it is necessary to learn to recognize the signs of abusive control for the sake of both the victim and the abuser, in order to react and prevent the relationship from ending on a tragic note.

Message Review

Controlling a person by preventing him or her from attaining fulfilment is incompatible with love. However, if adolescents are in a relationship that includes abusive control, they should know that there is no situation devoid of hope. Everyone has the power to change things. It

is important to discuss the situation and, often, it is best to do so with friends because we feel more at ease with them.

It is important to discuss problems with people we trust. There are also resources designed to assist adolescents with this problem. It must also be remembered that this is not a rare occurrence (it happens in one couple out of five). Although people did not talk about it before, it is now recognized that abuse in intimate relationships is widespread, even in adolescence. We must therefore talk about it and stop abusive control and violence.



SECOND PERIOD: RIGHTS

- Objectives:**
- To be familiar with the definitions of the different types of abuse.
 - To be familiar with some of the rights of both partners in a relationship.
 - To be able to apply these rights in specific situations in which there is a risk of abuse.
 - To know that each partner has a responsibility to respect the rights of the other.
 - To understand that the abuser, not the victim, is responsible for the abuse.

- Materials:**
- Activity sheets entitled "Equal Love"
(one copy per student)



Review of the First Period and Definition of the Different Types of Abuse

Begin the session by asking students to sum up the main points brought out in the first period (abusive control of others and the fact that it is unacceptable). Then, give definitions of the various types of abuse (Health Canada, 1990) so as to establish a link between abusive control and violence. Explain that the program deals mainly with psychological abuse, since it is the most difficult to detect. The students will understand more easily if they are asked to give examples of each type of abuse.

Sexual abuse may involve sexual relations without consent, unwanted sexual touching, or being forced to engage in humiliating, degrading sexual activity. Coercion or the threat of coercion is often used to gain the compliance of the victim.

Physical abuse may involve punching, kicking, slapping, pushing, choking, biting, burning, hair pulling, physically confining, striking with an object, or assaulting with a weapon.

Psychological abuse may involve intimidation, fear, threats, humiliation, insults, pressure, destruction of property, control of one's partner's movements, yelling and screaming to induce fear, forced isolation from friends and family, or other expressions of jealousy.

EXERCISE: EQUAL LOVE

This exercise is intended to help students reflect on their rights and those of their partners. The activity sheet may be completed individually or in groups (reading aloud). Present one drawing at a time.

Instructions for the Students

- First, you will be given some pages with drawings representing five situations.
- You must decide whether or not each situation is acceptable. Then, consult the list of rights provided on the first page and attribute or refuse a right to Claude and Dominique.
- *First option:* You have a few minutes to complete the sheet and then we will have a class discussion about each situation.
- *Second option:* We will describe the five situations aloud and you will be given a few minutes after each presentation to write your answers.

EQUAL LOVE

A *In your opinion, is this situation acceptable or unacceptable? Circle your answer.*

B *Use the statements in the following list to fill in the blanks in each situation. Use each number only once.*

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. To demand respect
2. To expect that what you did or said in intimate moments will not be made public
3. To refuse to go any further; to set limits
4. To want to share affection
5. To change your mind
6. To have preferences different from the other person's

YOU DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT:

7. To take revenge by attacking your partner's reputation
8. To put down your partner or insult him or her
9. To force your partner to have sexual relations

SITUATION 1

Claude often asks
Dominique:



The situation is:

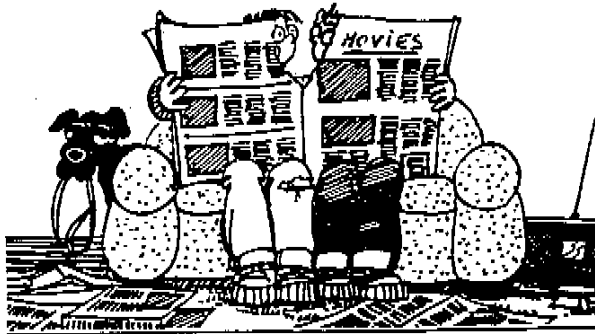
- acceptable
- unacceptable

Dominique has the
right:

Claude does not
have the right:

SITUATION 2

It's Friday night and Dominique wants to go see a horror movie. Claude would rather go see a comedy.



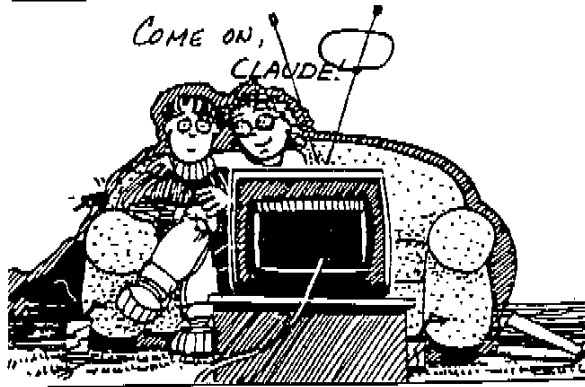
The situation is:

- acceptable
- unacceptable

Claude and Dominique have the right:

SITUATION 3

Dominique's parents are out and Dominique keeps saying:



The situation is:

- acceptable
- unacceptable

Dominique has the right:

But Claude also has the right:

SITUATION 4

Claude and Dominique used to date, but Claude broke off the relationship.



The situation is:

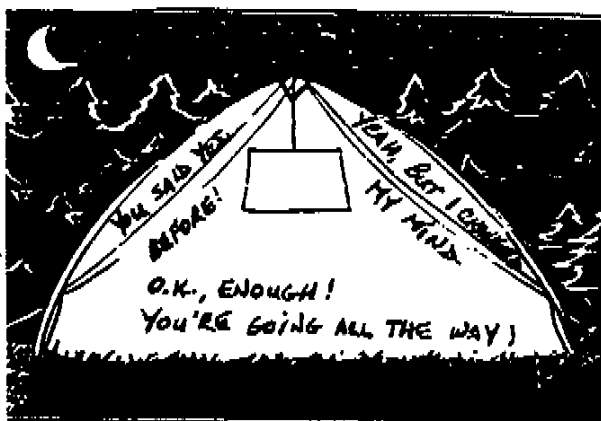
- acceptable
- unacceptable

Claude has the right:

Dominique does not have the right:

SITUATION 5

Claude and Dominique are on a camping trip.



The situation is:

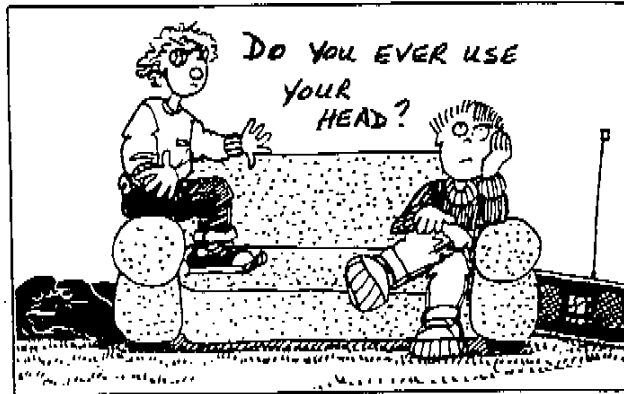
- acceptable
- unacceptable

Dominique has the right:

Claude does not have the right:

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 1: INSULTS



Objective: To become aware of the fact that verbal abuse is destructive in a dating relationship.

Main Messages

- Insults are a form of violence. They do not represent an effective way of communicating as a couple.
- When you are constantly insulted, you may come to believe that you are not worth much, especially when the insults are made by your partner, a person you trust and who knows you very well.
- You must treat others with respect and demand the same treatment in return.

Related Messages

- You have the right to be angry, but some ways of expressing anger are unacceptable.
- Even if insults are commonplace and used as a reflex in all your interpersonal relationships, even on yourself, being put down continually cannot be a positive experience. It has a negative effect on self-worth.
- It is not up to the person being insulted to try to solve the problem by avoiding situations that anger his or her partner.

Possible Reactions

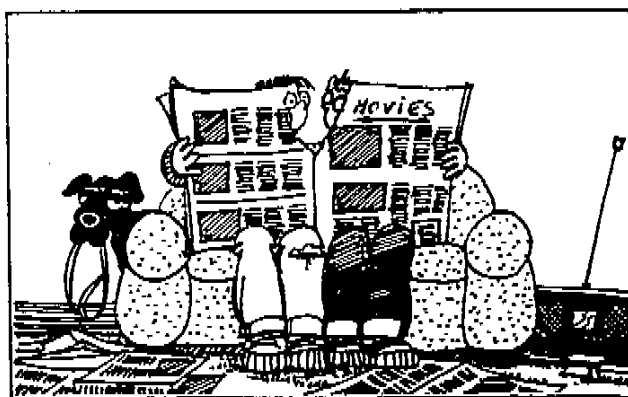
- Emphasis on the triviality of insults:
 - "People are always saying things like that."
 - "It's all in the tone. It's not always taken as an insult."

Suggested Questions

- Why is this situation unacceptable?
- How do you feel when you get a message like that?
- Can you keep getting messages like that for a long time and become desensitized, or do you begin believing them?
- If this situation is unacceptable, does that mean that you are not allowed to get angry?
- What would be the best way for each partner to get his or her message across?
- Should you avoid subjects that make your partner angry?
- Do you think there are acceptable ways of expressing anger or criticism? (Possible answers: "Saying what you feel." "Criticizing the action, not the person.")
- What can you say to a person who insults you without resorting to insults yourself? (Possible answers: "I will not put up with your insults." "When you talk to me like that, it hurts me more than you know.")
- How does Claude feel in this situation? If it happened often, how would he react?
- Can you avoid being hurt by insults by putting up a wall? Why do people put up walls?
- Does this happen to boys as often as it does to girls?

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 2: INFLUENCE



Objective: To differentiate between abusive and non-abusive behaviour.

Main Messages

- You have the right to have your own preferences, but you cannot impose your preferences on your partner. You have to talk. Often. Negotiation is a "normal" process in a dating relationship, and conflicts may arise regularly without there being any abuse.
- Imposing your choices on your partner most or all of the time is abusive.
- Trying to control your partner with money is unacceptable.

Related Messages

- It is dangerous when decisions are always made by the same partner in a relationship. This may seem convenient for the person making the decisions, but there are disadvantages—the other partner will begin to lose confidence in his or her own judgment.
- Your partner may find your company essential in certain situations and that must be taken into consideration. You must try to understand why your presence is important (e.g. support, assistance). For example, your partner may insist that you accompany him or her to the funeral parlour.

Possible Reactions

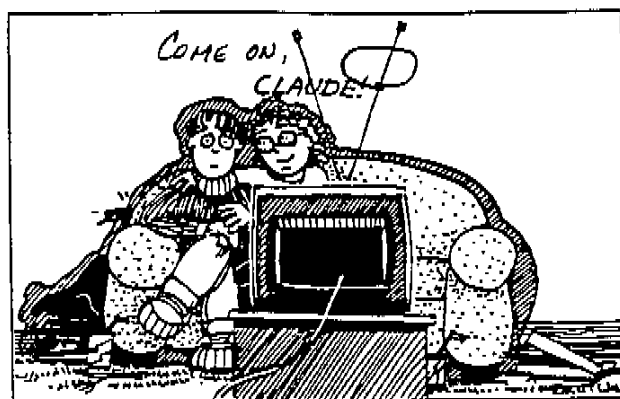
- "If the boy is paying, he decides what movie to go to."

Suggested Questions

- Why is this situation acceptable?
- How do you solve such a problem?
- Is it easy to solve?
- In general, does one partner make most of the decisions, or is decision-making shared equally?
- Does paying for the date entitle you to make all the choices?
- What happens when the same person always makes the decisions?
- Do you think that always paying for dates can be a way of controlling a partner's activities?
- How can you maintain your self-respect in such a situation?
- Have you ever dated someone who always agreed with you? How did you like it?
- Can this happen to boys as well as to girls?

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 3: EXPRESSION AND RESPECT OF LIMITS



Objective: To identify sexual coercion (control) and the importance of clearly expressing one's limits.

Main Messages

- You have the right to say no.
- You have the right to not want to be touched in a certain way, or to refuse sexual intercourse. You might think that everyone has sexual relations at a young age, but that is not true. Some young people prefer to wait.
- You have the right to express your sexual desires or needs, but you should not exert pressure on your partner. For example, if you keep saying "Oh, come on" to your partner, he or she may begin to feel ill at ease.
- Simply wanting something does not give you the right to demand it.

Related Message

- It often seems that sexuality is a magical affair: you don't need to talk, you base your actions on appearances and signals (e.g. his or her way of looking at you, of dressing or dancing) and you decide that he or she wants to be touched. That is how serious errors of judgment concerning the other person's intentions may arise. You must always ask how the other person feels and respect him or her.

Possible Reactions

It is difficult for young people to admit that boys can find themselves in such a situation, that is, victims of pressure in matters of sex. Also, many young people find it difficult to express their sexual desires.

Suggested Questions

- Why is this situation unacceptable?
- Does the pressure exerted in this situation annoy the partner?
- Can one give in without really wanting to?
- Does giving in solve the problem?
- In your opinion, is pressure often used?
- Who exerts pressure?
- Is it true that boys always want to go further sexually because of peer pressure?
- How about girls?
- If a boy is dating a girl who is sexually experienced, might he think that she will automatically want to have sexual relations with him?
- Can this happen to boys as well as to girls?
- Have you ever heard people say that "no" means "yes"? What do you think?

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 4: RUMOURS



Objective: To recognize that attacks on another person's reputation are motivated by a desire for revenge and control.

Main Messages

- Defaming another person's character is never acceptable. By starting negative rumours, you are hurting the other person and taking advantage of the trust that person had in you.
- It is important to respect the intimate moments you shared with your partner.

Information

- Rumours and reputations are usually distorted versions of the truth. The version that circulates by word of mouth often changes from person to person.
- Rumours are often sex-related. For girls, they are almost always negative (she doesn't go far enough and is "green," or she goes too far and is "easy.") Boys can also earn a "green" reputation. On the other hand, boys who have had sexual relations with several partners may be labelled "jerks," but may gain greater popularity with their male peers. Rumours may also concern the size of a boy's genitals.

Related Messages

- Once a rumour has been started, it is possible to rectify the situation with the person who started the rumour.
- Everyone can help stop a rumour by deciding not to believe or repeat it.
- Sometimes rumours are well founded: it is important to ask the people in question about them.

Possible Reactions

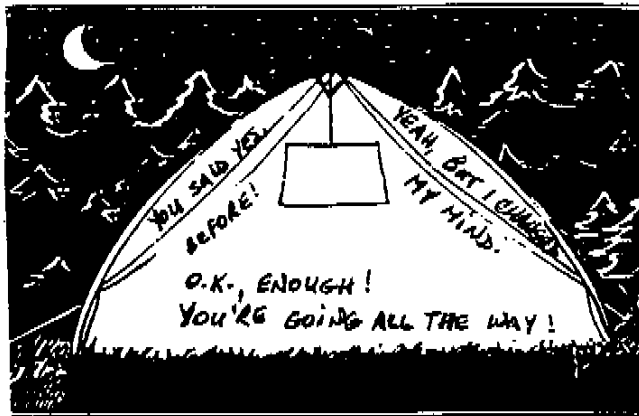
- "It usually happens with younger people—in elementary school or Secondary I or II."
- "If someone starts a rumour about me I can start one about him or her to defend myself." *Do not encourage this solution.*
- Young people may take advantage of the situation to confirm a classmate's or a friend's reputation. "It's true that so-and-so doesn't put out. She's a real prude. A cold fish." *In this case repeat the messages: rumours are not necessarily true and, in any case, sexual contact should not be made until both partners feel ready for it. Remind the students that they should not name anyone.*

Suggested Questions

- Why is this situation unacceptable?
- Do rumours exist?
- Why do people start rumours?
- How do people solve the problem?
- When you hear a rumour about someone you do not know, do you believe it automatically?
- What can you do when someone tells you a rumour? (Possible answers: "Not believe everything you hear because the truth is often distorted." "Tell the person that, by spreading rumours, he or she is helping to destroy another person's reputation." "Tell the person that most of what he or she is saying is probably not true." "Inform the victim of the rumour and help to find a solution to the problem.")
- What do you think about the following rumour: "He's dangerous"?
- Is it sometimes worthwhile checking whether the rumour is true?
- How would you go about it?
- Is this as common in groups of boys as in groups of girls?

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 5a: RAPE



Objective: To recognize rape (sexual relations without mutual consent) as abuse, regardless of the previous behaviour of the victim and her relationship with the abuser.

Main Messages

- You have the right to change your mind even in a situation like this one. Just because at some point you would have liked to have sexual relations with someone does not mean you have to go through with it. You have the right to change your mind at the last minute and, if your partner does not respect that right, you are a victim of rape.
- Rape is a crime in Québec.

Information

- The term "rape" was struck from the *Criminal Code* in 1985. The term used now is "sexual assault," which includes a wider variety of behaviours. Sexual harassment is not considered a "criminal" act, although it is not tolerated by the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.
- *Rape (before 1985)*: any unwanted act involving both penetration and ejaculation.
- *Sexual assault*: "any unwanted act of a sexual nature, including rape and any other unwanted fondling or touching." (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991).
- *Sexual harassment*: undesired and repeated sexual advances or gestures, such as threats, blackmail and misplaced comments, generally made by a person who has power or authority over the victim. (Les Presses de la santé de Montréal, 1987).

Related Messages

- Sexual partners must communicate and tell each other the truth: what they want, how they feel, and so on, even if they do not know each other very well or if they are embarrassed. Telepathy, as we saw earlier, does not exist in sexual relations: having sexual relations with a person is important enough to talk about. It is important to verify *in words* whether the other person is interested rather than rely on what you "see" in his or her behaviour.
- When she is with a sexually aroused young man, a young woman will often feel that she has to go all the way with him. She will feel guilty if he is frustrated, and responsible if she is raped. Yet she has the right to want to touch and kiss another person without having intercourse.
- It is not true that a sexually aroused young man is unable to stop. A young man, even when he is very excited, is biologically and psychologically able to control himself.
- Dating someone does not mean that you belong to him. It does not matter who you are with, when you do not want something, you do not want it and that's final. If your partner continues, that is rape. Contrary to popular belief, most rapes are committed by a person known to the victim: her boyfriend, a schoolmate, a friend of her brother's, and so on. Statistics show that 84 percent of women who have been sexually assaulted knew their attacker and that 57 percent of rapes happen on dates (Health Canada, 1990).

Possible Reactions

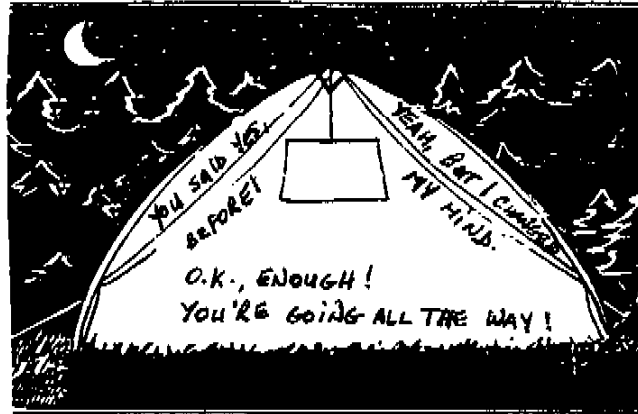
- Opinions on rape are varied. Many people consider it rape if the young man continues after the young woman has voiced her disapproval. On the other hand, many believe that the victim cannot press charges against her boyfriend. In that case, they speak of "moral rape" and believe that if it was her boyfriend, it's not so bad. Or she may press charges only if she has marks of physical violence, otherwise no one will believe her.
- "It's her fault. She said yes at first. Once you turn a guy on . . ." "She's a tease . . ."
- "She was looking for trouble; all she had to do was not go camping with him."
- "Some girls like boys who are rough, macho . . . they feel safe."
- *Some boys may become defensive after hearing how the male attitude is described in these discussions.*

Suggested Questions

- What is unacceptable?
- If the boy continues, what happens?
- How do you define rape?
- Can a woman be raped by her boyfriend?
- Is it a crime?
- What do you do if that happens?
- Why is the woman often held responsible for a rape?
- What do you think each partner had in mind when they decided to go camping?
- Why would the girl have changed her mind? (Possible answers: "The boy was not as nice as she thought; he did not bring any condoms; she is afraid the police will come; it's too cold.")
- Why did the boy behave the way he did? (Possible answer: "If he learned about sex through pornography, he may think that when a girl says no she means yes, that she wants to be forced and that girls like violence.")
- Can rape happen in an adolescent couple?
- Can a girl who has been raped by her boyfriend press charges?
- In our society, how can a boy express his desire to have sexual relations?
- How about a girl?
- How must it feel to be a victim of sexual assault?

DISCUSSION

SITUATION 5b: RAPE AND ALCOHOL



Objective: To dispel the myth that alcohol is an excuse for rape.

Main Messages

- Regardless of the situation, a woman is never responsible for a rape.
- Making someone drink or take drugs to abuse her sexually is unacceptable.
- A young woman who has been drinking or taking drugs is not any more responsible for her partner's abusive behaviour.
- A boy cannot excuse his abusive behaviour on the grounds that he was drunk or had taken drugs.

Suggested Questions

- Would the situation be more acceptable:
 - if only the boy had been drinking?
 - if only the girl had been drinking?
 - if both of them had been drinking?
- Is a boy who has been drinking still responsible for a rape he has committed?
- Is it acceptable for a boy to make a girl drink so that he can sleep with her?
- Is drinking a good way to build confidence in a boy with little sexual experience?

You have seen five situations in which partners in a relationship had to express their rights. *Repeat the rights for each situation.*

You probably also know of other rights we have not mentioned and that must be respected in an egalitarian relationship.

Risks and Advantages of Egalitarian Relationships

Sometimes we might be afraid to assert our rights in a relationship (*ask the students what they think*), and fear that our partner will become angry or that the relationship will end. Fear of losing a partner can make us agree to do things that are not right. We can also be afraid of what the other person will think. In sexual matters, for example, we might be afraid to say no for fear of being considered "green." A girl may be afraid of looking like a "tease." Boys can also be afraid of being laughed at. Finally, we can be afraid of letting our friends down, or of being rejected.

With all these risks, it is easy to understand why many people accept abuse. *Ask the students to think about the advantages of asserting their rights.* What could you tell them to foster their desire to be respected?

When each partner respects the other's rights, their relationship can be described as egalitarian. *Question:* "What advantages do you see in this type of relationship?" *Elaborate on the ideas expressed.* Thus, there can be discussion or negotiation, an exchange of opinions, values and expectations; honest, direct, person-to-person communication is possible; each partner's pace and choices are respected and both partners are free to develop their potential. Each partner feels better and the relationship goes more smoothly.

The Role of Adolescents

Imagine that one of your friends tells you about a problem involving violence. How do you react:

1. if your friend is the abuser?
2. if your friend is the victim?

Solutions

1. If your friend is the abuser, you should:
 - listen to him or her and avoid judging him or her;
 - refuse to accept the violent behaviour;
 - confirm that his or her behaviour is violent;
 - suggest that he or she seek help (resource centre of a youth organization);
 - support him or her in his or her efforts.

2. If your friend is the victim, you should:
 - listen to him or her;
 - believe him or her;
 - avoid making him or her feel guilty (it is not his or her fault);
 - suggest that he or she seek help (resource centre of a youth organization);
 - support him or her in his or her efforts.

Message Review

In conclusion, it can be said that taking the rights of each person into account can help us judge whether our behaviour is respectful. A right is a freedom. Each person has a number of rights. Respecting someone means not treating him or her like an object. You can hide an object, bring it anywhere you want when you want, lend it, not take care of it, say anything at all about it or do what you want with it. There are people, adults as well as many young people, who treat their partners like objects. When both partners in a relationship are treated like human beings with their own rights and needs, when both partners are treated equally, the relationship cannot be violent.





COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Note: These activities can be carried out in other classes
(e.g. English Language Arts).



POPULAR ROMANCE NOVELS

Time: 45 minutes

Objectives

- To highlight the stereotypes perpetuated in popular romance novels.
- To establish a relationship between these stereotypes and conjugal violence.
- To demonstrate that these stereotypes are the reflection of men's dominant position in our society.
- To help students become more critical of the male and female models presented in these novels.

Main Message

Such stereotypes are unacceptable.

Material

- Blackboard and chalk
- Popular romance novels
- Paper and pencils for the students

Introduction

Read a selection of popular romance novels and highlight the passages describing male and female characteristics and approximately five violent scenes. You may also highlight non-violent scenes (e.g. scenes involving self-assertion or healthy anger), in order to allow the students to identify negative control.

Procedure

First, present the activity by asking questions about popular romance novels:

1. Are you familiar with popular romance novels?
2. Have you ever read one?
3. If so, what sort of stories are they?

Divide the class into groups, depending on the number of novels available. The students should first identify passages in the books describing the man's and woman's physical and psychological characteristics and personal data (e.g. age, marital status, financial situation, employment, recreational activities, possessions, environment).

Then, ask them to evaluate the highlighted passages for violent content (if you have decided to include non-violent scenes) and the form of abuse described (verbal, psychological or sexual). Appoint a secretary to note the responses. Then, synthesize the activity with the entire class.

Suggested Questions

- How are the characters described? *Note the answers on the board.*
- Are the descriptions realistic?
- Who is strong or weak?
- Do you think these models promote equality between men and women?
- As boys or girls, do you feel ready to conform to these models?
- In the highlighted passages, find those that involve violence and determine the type of violence involved. *Ask one group of students to read the passages aloud and to specify the type of violence involved, if any. Ask the other groups whether they agree or disagree.*
- Do you think these forms of violence are common or rather rare?
- How can reading such novels influence a person's idea of love?
- What hidden messages do these novels contain?

For example:

- When a woman says no, she really means yes.
- Women are always attracted to men who have power and control.
- Passion is expressed through violence.
- Women dream of being proposed to by rich men.
- Love without violence is dull.

LETTERS

Time: 60 or 120 minutes

Objectives

- To learn to identify signs of abusive control.
- To identify current myths about dating.
- To develop the skills required to communicate with an adolescent victim or perpetrator of abusive control.
- To apply concepts learned in the STOP! program.

Main Message

Adolescents in this situation can be helped.

Materials

- Photocopies of Letters #1 to #4
- Paper and pencils for the students
- Blackboard and chalk for the class discussion

Procedure

Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group one of the four letters. You may want to use only the first letter, which deals with the most common situation.

This is a two-part exercise. You may want to do only the first part (60 minutes). If you do both parts, the exercise will last 120 minutes.

Instructions

Present the students with the following scenario:

You have just found a letter on the floor and, although it was not addressed to you, you could not help reading it. It was written by an adolescent who is having problems in his or her relationship. Obviously, you are rather concerned since the STOP! program has made you aware of the subject. So you decide to answer the letter, even though you do not know the person who wrote it. Your response should offer some suggestions.

Before writing your response, read the letter and find:

- the motives for writing it
- the forms of abusive control
- the rights that have been denied in the relationship
- the myths or false ideas about love
- the emotions of both partners

When you have finished, you may begin discussing with your classmates your ideas about the responses that might help the person who wrote the letter, using concepts learned in the STOP! program. You may share the task of writing the letter so that everyone has the chance to participate. *At this stage, the students should be determining their responses and not writing the letter.*

The first part of the exercise takes 60 minutes. For the second part, there are two ways of proceeding:

1. Each group or each student answers the letter. They could then hand their answer in to you for evaluation. You might pick some letters at random and read them aloud to the class at the end of the period.
2. The groups' responses are shared with the class. One person reads the first letter aloud. The group or groups having worked on that letter comment on the five points they were

asked to consider and suggest ideas for their response. The process is repeated for each letter.

This part of the exercise is to be completed in 60 minutes, regardless of the procedure chosen.

LETTER #1

Dear Marie,

I am writing you this letter because I do not know what else to do. You have been my best friend for ten years and I trust you completely. I need your advice even though, unfortunately, you are far away.

Here's my problem. This year I met a boy that I had been wanting to meet for several months. You remember the tall, dark-haired boy who wore a brown coat with patches on it? I told you about him. Anyway, this year he finally noticed me. We started dating in September. His name is Johnny and he's really cute! I've always been a little shy with him because I can't imagine what he would see in me. Anyway, I feel great that he chose me instead of one of those other girls in Secondary IV or V. I'm only in Secondary III.

At first, things went well. We'd go out walking in the evenings when it was nice. Then we started visiting his friends. He said my friends were too young and a little silly. He told me it wasn't his style and that if I wanted to see him, I had to accept his friends, too. Well, that was O.K., because I figured I'd see my friends at school or at home from time to time. But then Johnny told me he didn't want me to see my friends anymore. He said they were a bad influence on me and that I acted like a baby when I was with them. He even comes to get me after class to make sure I don't go with them. The other day he found me talking to Antoine, Véronique's brother, and he was so mad he grabbed my arm really hard and pulled me away. He took me by surprise and I told him he was hurting me. And do you know what he said? He said that it was my fault, that I shouldn't have been talking to Antoine. He said that when you're dating someone, you don't have to look anywhere else. Apparently, he was insulted. And he told me not to do it again. Well, you can be sure that I won't! At least he has calmed down. And lately, more and more he's saying that he wants to sleep with me. He says we've been dating long enough and that it's only normal. He says he can't wait any more and that he has arranged to be alone in the house on Saturday, and that if I want to prove that I love him, it's now or never.

Marie, I don't know what to do! I guess that if he wants to sleep with me he must love me, or else he wouldn't ask. On the other hand, I don't feel ready yet. What should I do? I really don't want to lose him! And I'm all confused. It's my first serious relationship with someone I really wanted to go out with, but it's not going the way I thought it would. Sometimes I feel trapped and I wonder whether I'm normal. What do you think? You've got to help me. Let me know as soon as you can!

Desperately yours,
Julia

LETTER #2

Dear Steve,

You might find this funny, but I really need someone to talk to. I can't afford to call you long distance, so I'm writing you a letter to let you know what's going on.

You know I don't often confide in people, but I'm really confused. I'll start at the beginning.

Two months ago, I met a girl at Fred's birthday party. Her name is Nga-Lai and it was love at first sight. We spent the evening talking and I even kissed her goodnight. We've been dating since then. You know how I am; when I like someone I can give them the world. Well, I must *really* like Nga-Lai because I've been giving her a lot! At first I really enjoyed helping her with her homework because I'm good in school and I like helping people. So for the first two weeks, I went over Mondays and Thursdays. But now I'm going over every night! She tells me I have no choice, that if I want to go out with her on weekends I have to help her with her homework. Sometimes I even do her homework for her! The other day I wanted to go see a movie. She thought it was a good idea but she had to be the one to choose the movie. That wasn't the first time she did that. If I don't go along with it, there's hell to pay! A big fight and everything.

And I don't only have trouble when we're alone. Last Saturday we were at a restaurant when my friends walked in, so we sat together. She kept telling Frank, you know, the one all the girls are after, that I was just a kid and that he was surely more of a man than I was. Everyone started to laugh. When we left I told her that I didn't appreciate being laughed at. She told me that it was just a joke and didn't mean anything. She said that maybe I was smart in school, but that I was pretty stupid as far as girls go. She suggested I change or else she'd get bored with me and no other girl would ever want to go out with me. Then she wanted to make plans to go out with my friends next Saturday, as if nothing had happened. Something's not right.

Anyway, I feel weird. It's really complicated; I'm not sure I'm up to dating her. But maybe I'm making too much out of nothing. Give me a hand, here, Steve, I'm going crazy.

Your best buddy,
Oliver

LETTER #3

Hi Karl,

You'll never guess what happened. Do you want to hear a good one?

Do you remember Shelley, the girl who lives next-door to Stavros, and who's always hanging around with the student council? I told you I thought she was cute. So I asked her out and she said yes. What a mistake! Not only is she a prude, but she's just a little girl.

The only thing that's important to her are her friends, and they're a bunch of nerds who don't know anything about anything important. When I go out with someone, I'm interested in her, not her friends or her aunts and uncles or great grandparents. She's always insisting I see her friends. What a bunch of straights! Can you see me with those guys? I keep telling her that she has no business seeing them now that we're dating, that I should be enough for her, but she says she has the right to see her friends and that that does not stop her from seeing me as well. As if she could be interested in everyone at the same time!

And she's always organizing school activities and I'm tired of playing second fiddle all the time. I don't belong to 36 million clubs and I don't see why she has to be all over the place either. O.K., so we go out on Fridays and Saturdays, and sometimes Wednesdays, but that's not a lot. And how do I know what she's doing when I'm not there? She could be flirting with other guys. If you knew how she dresses sometimes, she's so sexy that . . . well, anyway. That's just window dressing because she doesn't put out at all. You can't touch her anywhere! She must have problems. And it's not because I haven't tried! At first I kept telling her it would be fun if . . . but she drew the line at just plain necking, you know what I mean? Then, all of a sudden, she told me to stop. But you know how girls are; they say no but they really want it. Well, she's not like the others. She gave me a speech on rape. Rape! I'm her boyfriend, for Pete's sake! I wanted to assert my rights so I told her that if she wanted to be my girlfriend, she'd have to sleep with me. So she got up and said, "Well, goodbye, then, I guess you don't want to go out with me anymore. If you change your mind, give me a call and we'll talk."

What a frigid chick! I almost called her tonight to apologize, but I'm not the one who should be apologizing. She should be apologizing, don't you think? She makes it a point to attract me, then she dumps me for no good reason. Talk about a tease! Anyhow, I think you should let people know about her. And don't get caught yourself; she might try to make a move on you. Just out of curiosity, have you ever come across someone like her?

Your frustrated pal,
Simon

LETTER #4

Dear Catherine,

Boys! They can be so touchy! Especially one in particular. You must know who I'm talking about. Get this.

You know I've been going out with David for a while. I've always found him a little dumb, but he comes in handy. When you're dating a boy with a car, you spend less on taxis and buses. Don't get excited, I know you've never agreed with me on that one. It's your business if you don't mind having to walk everywhere. In my opinion, girls have enough problems, so they might as well take advantage of boys when they can.

O.K. Something happened recently. When I used to tell David that I wanted to go somewhere, he would usually drive me there. I know he didn't always feel like it, but he had no choice; well, I didn't give him a choice. But last week, he started hemming and hawing. He must have been talking to his stupid sister again. She's always getting in the way. I don't know how many times I've told David that she's a pain. Anyway. On Friday, I told him that he had to drive me to the dentist's office for three o'clock. You won't believe what he answered. He said the car was starting to cost a lot in gas because of me, and that he didn't think he had the time any more to drive me everywhere all the time. Everywhere! A little exaggeration. He was really steaming. I mean, I *am* his girlfriend; he shouldn't be getting angry at me like that. I thought to myself, he's going to pay for this because I had just told Melanie that he would drive her home. How do you think that made me look?

The next day, Saturday, Caroline was having a party. So, as usual, he came to pick me up. As a joke, I asked him how much he wanted for giving me a ride. He said I didn't understand, that he just felt I had been taking advantage of him. He asked me if I felt anything for him. I'm telling you, his sister is behind this. I really didn't know what to say. I couldn't tell him I found him dumb, but I didn't know any more. So we left it at that. But at Caroline's he didn't follow me around like he usually does. He stayed away and talked to other people. Sometimes he would look at me. I didn't like seeing him like that. Then, all of a sudden, Melanie came up to me and told me I'd lost my lap dog. I got upset and told her it wasn't a big loss and that that's the way I wanted it. He heard everything! It was another joke, of course, but he turned around and I didn't see him again that evening. I didn't think he was so touchy.

Anyway, that was a week ago, and I haven't heard from him since. I was sure he'd call, but he didn't. Tell me, what would you do? I can't get him out of my mind. Even if he's no prize, I can't seem to let go of him. Do you think I'm right to want to continue to date a boy like that? Write me back as soon as possible and tell me what you think.

Your confused friend,

Diane

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To make the students aware of the reality of violence in dating relationships.
- To become aware of boys' and girls' different points of view.
- To confront these points of view.
- To analyze the situation.
- To consider some preventive measures.

Main Message

Violence in adolescent relationships must be taken seriously.

Materials

- Photocopies of newspaper articles about acts of aggression in adolescent couples
- Paper and pencils

Procedure

Divide the class into groups of six to ten students. Give each group photocopies of a newspaper article (you may assign the same article to more than one group). Ask each group to read the article and produce a monologue explaining why the aggressor acted as he or she did and how the victim felt in the relationship. Then, have each group break up into two teams of three to five students. Have one team write a short text on what the aggressor would say if asked about his or her motives, and have the other write a text on how the victim would describe his or her own feelings and perception of the relationship with the

aggressor. If the groups consist of relatively equal numbers of boys and girls, ask the boys to represent the victim and the girls to represent the aggressor.

When both texts are ready, the teams join up with their respective groups. Then, the students in the first group read their article to the class and the representatives from both of their teams give their monologues (beginning with the aggressor's). Repeat the process for each subsequent group.

Summarize the motives given by the aggressors and the feelings expressed by the victims. Have the students suggest solutions for the victim and the aggressor, and specify what might have been done to prevent this situation.

MYTHS

Time: 45 to 75 minutes

Objectives

- To make the students aware of the myths about dating relationships.
- To help the students differentiate between myth and reality.

Materials

- Cards, each containing a true or false statement
or
- Blackboard and chalk

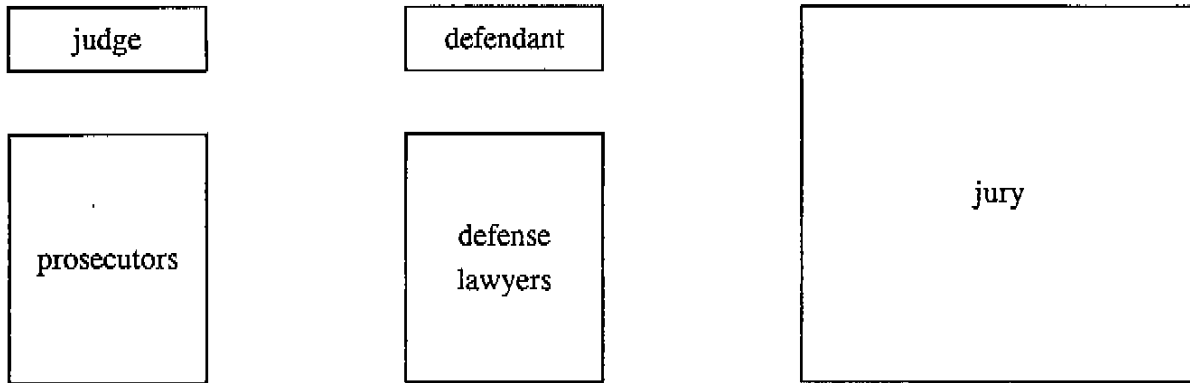
Procedure

Divide the class into three groups:

- jury
- prosecutors
- defense lawyers

The workshop leaders should play the roles of the judge and defendant.

The defendant and the judge sit in front of the class; the jury form two rows along the right-hand side of the room facing the far wall; the defence lawyers and prosecutors sit in the back, side by side. The person playing the role of the defendant is also responsible for the cards (or for writing the statements on the board).



Read a statement. The defense lawyers must defend this position, while the prosecutors must argue against it. Allow the defense lawyers and prosecutors some time to discuss the issue, then give a spokesperson for each group three minutes to present the group's arguments (each group should take turns going first). The jury must then decide whether the statement is true or false.

The person playing the role of the judge explains the correct verdict and hands down the sentence (true or false).

TRUE OR FALSE

A person commits rape because he cannot help satisfying a sexual need.

Answer: False

Rape is an act of violence and aggression. Its aim is to dominate, control and humiliate the victim.

Jealousy is an indication of love.

Answer: False

Being jealous is a sign that you think your relationship is being threatened and that you are afraid of not being able to deal with the situation. Jealousy can also be a sign that you consider your partner a possession; it then becomes a pretext for controlling your partner.

Psychological abuse precedes physical violence.

Answer: True

Physical abuse is always preceded or accompanied by psychological abuse. Psychological abuse is more difficult to identify, but its consequences are as, if not more, severe for the victim, since control is exercised far more subtly.

Most rape victims are raped by someone they know.

Answer: True

Rape victims are usually not raped by a stranger on the street. Health Canada (1990) reported that 84 percent of women who have been sexually assaulted knew their attacker and that 57 percent of rapes happen on dates.

The aggressor is the only person responsible for the rape; the victim should not feel guilty.

Answer: True

The victim is the one who will suffer physically and emotionally and whose life will change. Going out with a violent partner does not make her responsible for his actions. The aggressor has control over his own actions. He is therefore responsible for the rape.

When a girl arouses a boy sexually, she must also satisfy him sexually.

Answer: False

No one is obliged to have sexual relations simply because another person is sexually aroused. Everyone has control over his or her own body.

People who are violent in their dating relationships come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Answer: True

Violent people come from all walks of life: rich, poor, educated, uneducated, urban, rural, immigrant, non-immigrant, and so on.

If a person continues in a violent relationship, the abuse cannot be all that bad.

Answer: False

People may continue in a violent relationship for a number of reasons: fear, confusion, dependency (for adult women, financial dependency), loss of self-confidence, difficulty in identifying abuse, hope that the person will change, and so on.

RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT

Time: 30 minutes

Objectives

- To provide the students with learning situations to help them reflect on problems common in young couples.
- To determine the actions and behaviours that young people accept or do not accept in a partner.
- To encourage the students to imagine their reaction to unacceptable behaviour by their partner.

Materials

- Photocopies of the contract
- Pencils

Procedure

Have the students work individually to fill out a copy of the contract. When they have finished, have them discuss their answers in groups of two, three or four. The groups should also think about other items that might be included in the contract. Conclude the activity with a class discussion.

RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT

Clause 1

It is understood that the couple's social activities will be decided by:

Clause 2

If my partner drinks alcohol or takes drugs, I shall:

Clause 3

If my partner slaps, hits or otherwise mistreats me, I shall:

Clause 4

Expenses for social activities will be shared as follows:

Clause 5

If my partner wishes to explore more aspects of a sexual relationship than I am ready for, I shall:

Clause 6

If my partner always wants to choose my friends for me, I shall:

Clause 7

If my partner never wants to discuss his or her feelings with me, I shall:

Given that, for me, the most important thing in a relationship is:

I, _____, hereby agree to respect the clauses of this contract and to discuss them with my present or future partner.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

City: _____

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Note: Statement 2 is the only true statement.

Age: _____

Male

Female

Class: _____

Grade: _____

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree
1. Jealousy is an indication of love.		
2. A person who is often insulted by his or her partner is a victim of violence.		
3. Most rapes are committed by a person unknown to the victim.		
4. A person has the right to insist on having sexual relations if he or she has been dating the same partner for some time.		
5. An egalitarian relationship means that both partners have the same preferences and participate in the same activities.		
6. When you have agreed to have sexual relations with your partner and change your mind at the last minute, it is not really rape to be forced to go all the way.		
7. In a dating relationship, fear of losing the other person is an acceptable reason for tolerating incorrect behaviour.		

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Note: To be distributed at the end of the STOP! program. It would be interesting to compare how the students respond to the questionnaire before and after the program.

Age: _____

Male

Female

Class: _____

Grade: _____

Did you participate in:

First period: Control

Yes

No

Second period: Rights

Yes

No

Other: _____

Yes

No

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree
1. Jealousy is an indication of love.		
2. A person who is often insulted by his or her partner is a victim of violence.		
3. Most rapes are committed by a person unknown to the victim.		
4. A person has the right to insist on having sexual relations if he or she has been dating the same partner for some time.		
5. An egalitarian relationship means that both partners have the same preferences and participate in the same activities.		
6. When you have agreed to have sexual relations with your partner and change your mind at the last minute, it is not really rape to be forced to go all the way.		
7. In a dating relationship, fear of losing the other person is an acceptable reason for tolerating incorrect behaviour.		



EVALUATION

First period

Male

Female

Second period

Age: _____

1. What do you remember about the STOP! program?

2. Circle the face that best corresponds to the way you feel about each of the following statements:

a) I enjoyed the session.



b) I participated in the discussions.



c) I participated in the role plays.



d) I learned something useful.



e) I felt comfortable with the subject.



3. Do you have any suggestions for improving the session?

4. Would you recommend this program to your friends? Yes No

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