

# Healthy Relationships

## SUMMARY

**Objective:** To provide students with an understanding of the important role relationships play in developing who we are.

**Process:** Students will participate in an activity that uses the metaphor of a journey to explore the role relationships have in supporting us to reach our goals. Attention is also drawn to power of personal choice.

This lesson is one in a series of Grade 8 lessons. If you aren't able to teach all the lessons, try pairing this lesson with the "Media Influences," "Who I Am" or "Peer Influence" lessons.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- understand the concept of personal resiliency
- identify positive friendships, role models and personal support systems
- build a broad base of positive and supportive relationships
- commit to healthy supportive relationships with family and friends, including positive peer leadership

## CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

- 1.1 Introduction to Relationships (20 minutes)
- 1.2 Activity: Relationship Journey Map (20 minutes)
- 1.3 Closure: Key Messages (5 minutes)

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

Cell phone  
 Map  
 Some sort of nutritious food (e.g., an apple)  
 Bag  
 Worksheet: Relationship Journey Map

Teaching about substance use and gambling can and should cross all subjects. Here are a few suggestions for use in other subjects.

### LINKS TO SUBJECTS

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- **Language Arts:** Write a short essay, poem or story about relationships and the role they play in our lives and choices.
- **Drama:** Act out the scenarios from the Relationship Journey Maps as skits.

## 1.1 Introduction: Relationships

(20 minutes)

Throughout our lives, relationships play a significant role in developing who we are and what we choose to be. Understanding the key components of healthy relationships and how to build those relationships is important.

Tell your class that you are going on a vacation, and you've packed a few things that you will need for the drive. Before class, place these items in a bag: a cell phone, a map, and some sort of nutritious food (e.g., an apple). Once you've announced your upcoming trip, pull each item out one at a time. Ask your students why they think you are bringing that item. Each item represents key components of a healthy relationship:

- **Cell phone = Communication.** We use a cell phone to call for help, to be in touch and connect with people. We need to connect with people if we have questions, if we are lost, or even if we just want to talk and have fun with someone else.
- **Map = Direction and support.** The map provides a route to get where we are going. It reminds us where we started and where we're going, and shows us the different ways we can use to get there.
- **Nutritious food = Sustenance and self-care.** We all have basic needs to take care of, to make us stronger for the journey ahead.

Now that you've established a few of key components of healthy relationships, brainstorm with your students the most important qualities in a healthy relationship. Record their answers on the board; their answers may include trust, communication and honesty.

Once students have listed all of the healthy relationship qualities, move on to brainstorming some unhealthy relationship qualities. As a way into this topic, you may wish to ask students what happens when their cell phone battery is dead, when a map is wrong, or when they bring junk food instead of nutritious food.

Lead a discussion with students about healthy relationships. The following questions could be considered to guide the discussion:

- What role do relationships have in our lives?
- Why is it important to have healthy relationships?
- What connections are there between relationships (healthy or unhealthy) and substance use or gambling?
- How are you influenced by your relationships, and what role do your relationships have as you make decisions?

## 1.2 Activity: Relationship Journey Map (20 minutes)

**Objective:** To visually represent the choices and detours we meet along the road of life, and the role that others have to play in influencing our choices.

**Instructions:** Begin the activity by asking students how many ways there are to get to the local store. Students will call out the different ways. Use this to illustrate that there is no one way to get somewhere. Each way is different: there may be a scenic way, a fast way, a dangerous way, or we may even get lost along the way. No matter which path we take, reaching the destination and learning from our experiences along the way is the ultimate goal.

Using the “Relationship Journey Map” worksheet (attached at the end of this lesson), have students decide what their destination is (e.g., a life goal or something they want to achieve before the end of Grade 8). They will record their goal in the destination spot on the map.

There are blank scenario points along their journey. Students will need to create potential “detours” (scenarios, challenges or decisions) they may encounter along the way to their destination. For each detour, have students consider how somebody they have a healthy relationship with (e.g., a parent, friend, teacher or coach) would support or assist them in making that decision. Also attached for your information is a sample map that outlines a student’s journey toward making the basketball team.

Use the following debrief questions to further explore this activity. You can either debrief these through a discussion, or assign them as journaling questions:

- What is the difference between the support offered by the healthy and unhealthy relationships?
- What role do healthy and unhealthy relationships play in your life?
- How does this exercise help you evaluate the role of relationships in your life?
- Are you in control of your decisions, or are you influenced by your relationships?

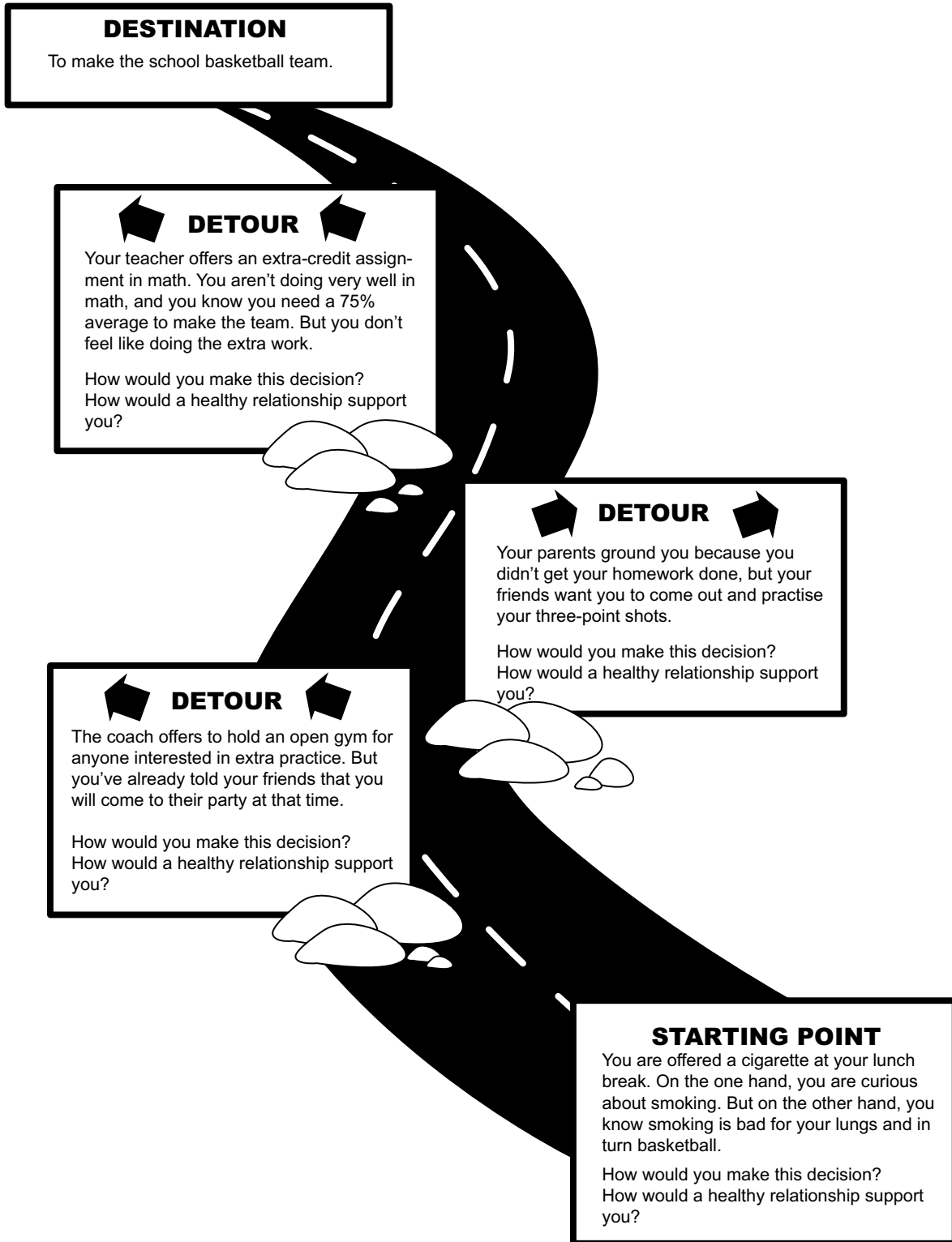
### 1.3 Closure: Key Messages

(5 minutes)

Healthy relationships are key to becoming resilient. Resiliency is the personal strength to recover quickly when facing difficult or challenging life experiences.

An adolescent with strong social skills and competencies such as decision-making skills, problem-solving abilities and self-confidence is better equipped to make good choices.

# SAMPLE: Relationship Journey Map



# Worksheet: Relationship Journey Map

