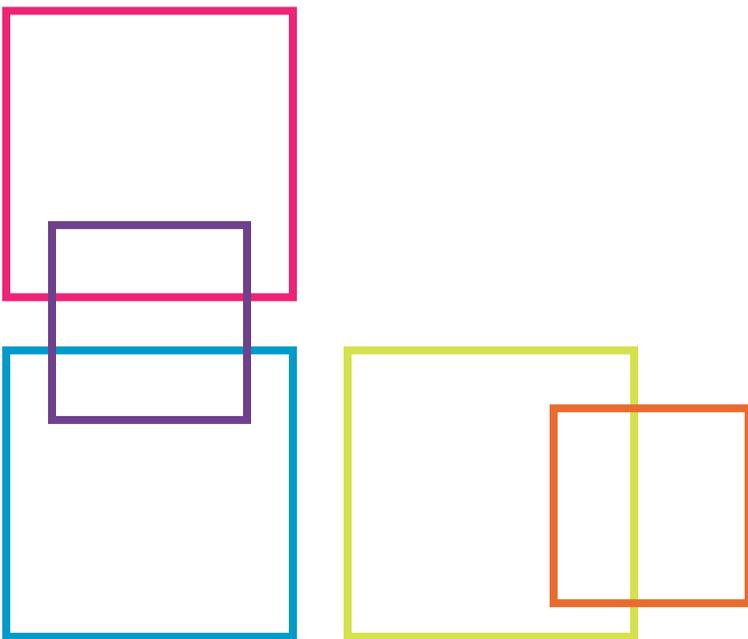


MODULE 6



TELL IT LIKE IT IS
Sexual Health + Wellness Education



“Love to Love You Baby” - Donna Summer

CHECK IN:

- Briefly review the main concepts covered during the previous module
- Address any questions or concerns that participants may have at this time
- Introduce the concepts that will be covered during this module

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

- Review of the Stages of a Relationship
- Online Dating
- Dating and Romantic Relationships
- Ending a Relationship

REVIEW OF STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

We are all unique and have different preferences when it comes to dating and relationships. Knowing if we want a relationship, the type of relationship we might want, and the general qualities of the people we might like to date helps us make good decisions. All relationships are different, but the stages of a relationship may include:

- Meeting someone and getting to know them
- Dating
- Agreeing on the nature of the relationship (e.g., short-term, long-term, casual, committed, monogamous, open, etc.)
- Developing strong romantic feelings for one another. This may involve falling in love or milestones such as living together or getting married.
- Deciding to end a relationship or break up.

WHAT IS A DATE?

A date is when two people, who may have a crush on, or strong romantic feelings for each other, agree to meet and do something together within their shared interests. A date is a great way for people to share stories and information about themselves. Dates provide people the opportunity to get to know each other better and decide if they want to be in a relationship. Dates should be something that is fun for everyone involved. People sometimes get nervous before going on a date, which is normal.

ONLINE DATING

Online dating has become a common way to meet a partner. There are lots of different online dating websites that cater to specific interests and groups. Before you can begin exploring an online dating site, the first step is to make your own profile. Making a profile allows others to learn more about you. Dating profiles typically consist of a photograph and basic information. Information shared may include: age, who you are looking to meet (e.g., man, woman, both), the age range that you are interested in, your location (city), details about how you look, your interests and hobbies, and more. Once you've created a profile you are able to start browsing and messaging others.

It is important to be cautious when online dating and keep in mind the following safety tips:

- Do not post any personal or contact information such as your full name, birthday, banking information, address, phone number, passwords, or email address.
- Think carefully about information and photographs before posting them online. Once something is posted online many people can see it, save it, and share it.
- Notice red flags and set boundaries. Stop talking to anyone that asks you to send money or packages, or continually makes excuses as to why they cannot meet in person. This may indicate a possible scam or that the person is not who they say they are.
- Suggest talking on the phone before you meet someone in person. Even if you've been messaging, texting, or e-mailing for weeks, a phone call can help confirm that the person is real and who they say they are.
- If you decide to meet in person, make sure to meet in a public place. Suggest meeting at a coffee shop, a restaurant, a sports game, a festival, or a movie theater. Make sure there will be plenty of other people around.
- Never go to a person's house or vehicle, or meet somewhere private like a hotel room..
- Let someone you trust know where you'll be going and share the details of your plans.
- Ensure you have your cell phone with you to contact someone you trust in case you need support.

ACTIVITY: LET'S CREATE A DATING PROFILE!

Materials Needed: Pens and Dating Profile handout (see Appendix 5.0)

- Give participants a copy of the handout and assist them as needed in completing the mock online dating profile. Ensure that this activity is a fun and positive experience for participants.
- Facilitators can create their own profiles to demonstrate what a completed online dating profile might look like.

ACTIVITY: LET'S GO ON A DATE!

Materials Needed: Flip chart and markers

Ask participants share their own ideas, thoughts, and beliefs about dates.

What are some activities that you might do on a date?

- Eat a meal at a restaurant
- Watch a movie
- Go bowling, play billiards, or play bingo
- Meet for tea or coffee
- Visit a museum, art gallery, or the science centre
- Take a walk
- Do something active like play Frisbee, golf, or laser tag
- Take a class together

What might happen if a date goes well?

- You may both want to go on a date again
- You may exchange personal contact information in order to keep in touch and make future plans
- You may both feel ready to engage in intimate touch which may include hugging, kissing, or more. To ensure a safe and pleasurable experience both individuals must consent freely and willingly.
- One person may feel ready to engage in intimate touch while the other doesn't. Both people must consent to any intimate touch freely and willingly. If one person does not feel ready or comfortable engaging in intimate touch, the other person must respect their choice and boundaries.
- A date may have been fun, but you may both decide that you don't share a special connection and enough interests to continue dating

Under what circumstances would you end a date?

- If one person is being rude, disrespectful, or hurtful.
- If you both feel that you don't share a special connection and enough interests to continue the date.
- If you are feeling uncomfortable in any way.
- If the other person makes unwanted sexual advances.

How would you politely end a date?

- You may decide to finish your planned activity and respectfully decline carrying on with the rest of the date.
- You can be honest and politely explain that you don't feel comfortable or a special connection and would like to end the date.
- If feeling unsafe, you can remove yourself from the situation and go to the washroom, step outside, leave, or go home. Reach out to a community helper or make a phone call to friend or someone you trust.

Going on a date can make us feel nervous and many other emotions. Remember, all we can do is take a deep breath, enjoy our time with the other person, and try our best to be ourselves!

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

When people like each other and the first date goes well, they may decide to continue dating. Eventually, they may decide together to begin a relationship. Everyone involved must agree to be in the relationship and on the nature of the relationship (e.g., short-term, long-term, casual, committed, monogamous, open, etc.). Regardless of the nature of a relationship, they often involve companionship and quality time, sharing thoughts and feelings, and social support. Relationships shared between people are unique, special, and based on personal preferences. Although every relationship is different, the following characteristics are common of a romantic relationship:

- Sharing romantic feelings
- Trust, honesty, kindness, and respect
- Laughter, joy, and playfulness
- Sharing common interests, hobbies, and activities
- Making future plans
- Sharing physical attraction
- Consensual and pleasurable intimacy, physical touch, and sex

Forming healthy relationships can help us learn important skills such as cooperation, compromise, empathy, and the ability to understand others' feelings. We all want to be loved and accepted. That's what makes dating and being in a relationship feel so good.

ENDING A RELATIONSHIP

Being in an intimate or romantic relationship should make those involved feel loved, happy, and safe. If we feel unhappy with an intimate partner, we can decide to end the relationship. This is called breaking up. Sometimes we may decide to break up with someone, while other times someone might break up with us, and we may not understand the reasons why. There are many reasons why a relationship may end. Encourage participants to identify reasons a relationship may end and use the following points to facilitate discussion:

- Drifting apart over time
- Having different future plans and goals
- Not enjoying spending time or doing things together anymore
- Arguing or fighting more often, and not getting along
- Feeling unhappy most of the time while together
- Being unfaithful or cheating
- Experiencing any form of abuse or violence

We may experience many emotions during a break up. Break ups can make us feel sad, rejected, lonely, guilty, hurt, relieved, and even happy. Everyone is different and has a unique break up experience. Spending time with family and friends, doing activities we enjoy, and talking to someone we trust for support and advice can sometimes help us feel better.

CHECK-OUT

- Review the main “takeaways” from today’s module
- Address any question or concerns that participants may have
- This may be a good opportunity to complete a “Head, Heart, and Hands” check-out. Head explores elements of ‘what’ and ‘why’, heart explores values, beliefs, and feelings, and hands explores practical skills and tools. Invite participants to pause and reflect on their learning experience, and ask:
 - Head: What’s one thing you learned?
 - Heart: What’s one thing you are feeling?
 - Hands: What’s one thing you can do?

REFERENCES

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