

# Year Seven

## Unwritten Rules and Managing Conflict

Time: approximately 60 minutes

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this lesson:**

**All young people will be able to** explain how some unwritten rules can lead to stereotypical expectations; identify what may lead to conflict between people;

**Most young people will be able to** identify that some unwritten rules can influence our perception of what is masculine and feminine and reinforce our view of what is acceptable and unacceptable in a relationship; understand why conflict occurs and know some simple effective strategies for managing conflict;

**Some young people will be able to** explain how and why conflict can occur in relationships and know and feel confident about using assertive techniques for dealing with such conflict.

### Resources

- ✓ Suggested Ground Rules (provided in section 4);
- ✓ Information on Sources of Help (provided in section 4);
- ✓ Flip chart paper and pens;
- ✓ Examples of Unwritten Rules – Appendix 1;
- ✓ Healthy Relationships – Appendix 2;
- ✓ Managing Conflict Scenarios – Appendix 3.

### **A** Activity 1

Time: about 30 minutes

1. Set ground rules or use prepared ground rules provided in section 4. (Please note that these activities may lead to disclosure so it is advisable to read the guidance on dealing with disclosure in section 1 prior to the lesson).
2. Explain that in society we have laws which dictate how people should behave but we also have a set of 'unwritten rules' as well. Examples of unwritten rules might be: not speaking with your mouth full; if you bump into somebody, say sorry; if somebody gives you something, say thank you; wait your turn in the queue; etc.
3. Ask: "Can anybody think of any other unwritten rules?" Discuss ideas.
4. Discuss – who makes these unwritten rules, how are they enforced and how are offenders punished?
5. Some rules may relate to whether we are male or female. Different things may be expected of different genders. This can start very early with the kind of toys boys and girls 'should' play with; the colour of clothes they 'ought' to wear etc. Ask: "Can anybody give me any examples of 'rules for boy's' and 'rules for girl's'. Discuss ideas.
6. Take pupils into a large space, if possible, and create an imaginary line on the floor. Label one end of the line 'HELPFUL'; the other end 'UNHELPFUL' and 'DEPENDS' in the middle.

**7.** Read out a selection of the unwritten rules from appendix 1 and ask young people to stand on the line at a point that reflects their opinion. Ask for volunteers standing at different points to explain their views.

**NB.** If you do not have the space to do this method, you could read out the statements to the group and ask them to put thumbs up for 'helpful'; thumbs down for 'unhelpful' and arms folded for 'depends'.

**8.** How might these rules make some people feel or behave? Do we have choices about whether we follow the rules? What happens if we don't follow the rules?

**9.** Ask the young people for ideas about how some of these unwritten rules might affect relationships and discuss.

**10.** Explain how rules about men being 'macho' and women 'soft' are often to do with who has the power and can make unhealthy or abusive relationships more likely. For example, some men believe they should be the dominant partner and some women feel that they are expected to put up with bad behaviour because they care about their partner or think they might be able to change him.

**11.** Ask the young people for ideas about what kinds of behaviour will help to make a good or healthy relationship and discuss. Write these on the board. See Appendix 2 for prompts.

## **B** Activity 2

**Time: about 20 minutes**

**1.** Explain that all relationships will experience conflict at some time, and so we are going to look at some scenes where people disagree and see if we can find a way to solve the conflict without the use of aggression, power or insult.

**2.** Stress to the young people that it is possible to resolve conflict by negotiating or reaching a compromise – it is always best to try to resolve conflict in a friendly way without losing your temper.

**3.** Working in small groups again, distribute one of the scenarios from Appendix 3 to each group. You can choose which ones to use. It can be useful to have two groups looking at the same scenario so that suggested resolutions can be compared.

**4.** Ask them to consider the questions from each scenario and think about and discuss how the conflict could be resolved.

**5.** Take feedback from groups and ask other groups to comment on the suggested resolutions.

## Plenary

Time: about 10 minutes

1. Ask the young people for ideas of what you should not do when trying to manage a conflict situation. Ideas might include: don't interrupt or shout; don't do all the talking; don't call names or put people down.
2. Explain that there are different styles of managing conflict, such as:
  - a. **Avoidance**; this might be useful if you are feeling under threat – however, the problem may not go away and you might have to face it some time.
  - b. **Diffusion**; this means being calm and trying to sort out the problem by giving you time to think about things.
  - c. **Negotiation**; (both people can win) – this means you will have to compromise, nobody gets everything they want, but all will get something.
  - d. **Confrontation**; this means tackling something head on, which may result in one person using power over the other person in order to win. This might be physical force, using threats or another type of abuse. This is not the way to deal with conflict and certain types of confrontation can actually be a criminal offence.
3. Ask the young people what kinds of skills are necessary for effective negotiation. Their answers should include: good communication skills; assertiveness skills and problem solving skills.
4. Ask the young people how knowing strategies to manage their anger and resolve conflict now might help them in their adult relationships.
5. Remind the young people of what help is available (see Sources of Help in section 4) and who they can talk to if there is anything that concerns them.

## Suggested Extension Activities

- Develop a role play based on the scenarios in Appendix 3;
- Prepare an assembly on the theme of managing conflict;
- Prepare a poster or leaflet for other young people on tips for managing conflict;
- Prepare a poster or leaflet for other young people on what a healthy relationship should look like, using Appendix 2 for ideas;
- Further lessons on conflict resolution and problem solving – see Women's Aid's directory of appropriate educational resources on [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk).

Learning outcomes	National Curriculum – PSHE and Citizenship	Links to SEAL	Every Child Matters
<p><b>All young people will be able to</b> explain how certain words can lead to stereotypical expectations</p> <p>Identify what may lead to conflict between people</p> <p><b>Most young people will be able to</b> identify that certain words can influence our perception of what is masculine and feminine and reinforce our view of what is acceptable and unacceptable in a relationship</p> <p>Understand why conflict occurs and know some simple effective strategies for managing conflict</p> <p><b>Some young people will be able to</b> explain how language can be a very powerful tool in relationships – reinforcing gender expectations and stereotypes</p> <p>Explain how and why conflict occurs in relationships and know and feel confident about using assertive techniques for dealing with such conflict</p>	<p><b>Key Stage Three</b> <b>Young people should be taught/given opportunities:</b></p> <p><b>PSHE</b> 3a) about the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively i) to negotiate within relationships, recognising that actions have consequences, and when and how to make compromises k) to communicate confidently with their peers and adults. 4h) find information and advice</p> <p><b>Citizenship</b> 2c) contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates 3a) use their imagination to consider other people’s experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own</p>	<p><b>Empathy</b> 36) I understand the impact of bullying, on all those involved</p> <p><b>Social skills</b> 39) I can communicate effectively with others, listening to what others say as well as expressing my own thoughts and feelings</p> <p>43) I can work and learn well in groups, co-operating with others to achieve a joint outcome</p> <p>50) I can be assertive when appropriate</p>	<p><b>Be healthy</b> (physical, mental, emotional health)</p> <p><b>Stay safe</b> (from neglect, violence, abuse)</p> <p><b>Enjoy and Achieve</b> (personal and social development)</p> <p><b>Make a positive contribution</b> (develop positive relationships)</p>

## Year Seven – Appendix 1<sup>1</sup>

### Examples of Unwritten Rules

Men should bring in the money to support the family

Women need men to look after them

Men should not cry

Women should stay at home and look after the children

Men should always make the first move in a relationship

A women should wait for a man to ask her out

Men should never walk away from a fight

Men should be the head of the family

Women should not go out alone at night

Men should open doors for women

Men should not swear or tell rude jokes in front of women

Women should not use bad language

<sup>1</sup> This activity has been adapted from *Heartstrings: A PSHCE pack for secondary schools to challenge domestic abuse and build healthy relationships*. Cheshire County Council Community and Education Service Secondary Schools Project.

**Men should be tough**

**Men should know how to fix things**

**Men should be sporty**

**Men should not talk about their feelings**

**Women should be slim and attractive if they want to be successful**

**Women should not go to the pub on their own**

**Women should keep a nice home for their family**

**Men should be the head of the family**

## Year Seven – Appendix 2

### Healthy Relationships

A healthy relationship is when two people treat each other as equals, they trust each other and treat each other with respect.

#### In a healthy relationship, people should:

- Support each other;
- Listen to each other's feelings;
- When they have a disagreement, talk about it;
- Spend quality time together;
- Encourage each other;
- Take responsibility for their own actions;
- Respect women and men equally.

#### Healthy relationships consist of:

**Equality** – making decisions together, not expecting you to do more or give more to the relationship.

**Respect** – listening, being non-judgemental, understanding and valuing your opinions.

**Trust** – respecting your right to your own opinions, friends and activities.

**Support** – supporting you in your goals and ambitions, believing in you.

**Safety** – respecting your personal space, non-threatening behaviour, non-manipulative or intimidating behaviour.

**Honesty** – clear, open and truthful communication, being able to say if you're feeling scared or insecure.

**Responsibility** – acknowledging one's own behaviours and attitudes, asking not expecting.

**Freedom** – being able to live your life free from violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour and make choices for yourself.

**Negotiation & Compromise** – accepting that there isn't always a 'right' way to do things, accepting change, willingness to see the other side.

**Healthy relationships are possible and everyone deserves to be in one!**

## Year Seven – Appendix 3

### Managing Conflict – Scenarios

Your brother/sister has borrowed your new trainers without asking. You bought them especially for a PE competition at school and when you look in your wardrobe they are not there. You get them back later, covered in mud. What do you do?

Somebody tells you that they have seen your boy/girlfriend flirting with somebody else at the youth club. What do you do?

You are out with your brother who is disabled and walks with a limp. Some kids come up to you both and start making fun of him. What do you do?

One of the boys in your class is being picked on because he is quiet and shy. He hates sport but loves dancing and he has just joined the after school dance club. Now everyone is calling him a 'wimp'. Even some of the girls don't want him in their dancing class. On the way home, he is confronted by a group of lads who call him names and push him into the mud. What can he do?

You want to go to a party that finishes at midnight. Your friends have got permission to stay but your parents/carers say you have to be in by 10 o'clock at the latest. What do you say to them?

Your parents/carers find out that you have been seeing a boy/girl in your year. They come to your school and drag you out of the lesson. They really embarrass you, take you home and stop you from going out. Your dad starts dropping you off and picking you up from school. What do you do?

One of the girls in your class is really good at football and wants to join the all boys year 7 team. The boys won't let her. They say girls are rubbish at football and it is a boy's game. They also say all the other teams would laugh at them. What should she do?