

RESPECT! Conversation Starters: Respectful Relationships

RESPECT! shines a bright light on respect in relationships – all relationships – those with family, friends, co-workers, and particularly an intimate partner. You can help the next generation build healthy, non-violent relationships by teaching young people early and often about the importance of respect.

Here are some conversation starters to begin important conversations about what's okay, and not okay, in relationships.

The Importance of Self Respect: *What do you like most about yourself? Why is it important to respect yourself? How can you give respect to yourself?*

Talking points:

- You deserve to be treated with respect. Surround yourself with people who appreciate and support you.
- You have the right to make decisions that keep you safe, healthy and comfortable.
- You are somebody I love and respect.
- Trust yourself and your instincts on what is safe, appropriate and respectful.

Personal Boundaries: *What are some examples of someone saying or doing something that crosses your personal boundaries? When does playing or teasing become too much and is no longer fun? What can you say and do to communicate your personal boundaries?*

Talking points:

- Everyone has a right to communicate how they want to be treated by others. This includes how you're treated by friends, family, and classmates, both online and offline.
- Communicating personal boundaries includes telling others your expectations and expressing when your boundaries have been crossed.
- Each person has different boundaries on what's okay or not okay. Treat others how they want to be treated and if you're unsure, ask them directly what they're okay with.

Dating: *What are you or your friends' dating relationships like? What qualities are important to someone you would date or go out with? What makes a relationship good? What makes it bad? What does respect look like in a relationship?*

Talking points:

- Respect is the foundation for healthy, happy and safe relationships.
- In mutually respectful relationships there should be safety, support, individuality, equality, trust and communication. (*refer to the Respect Wheel for more talking points*)
- Pay attention to how certain situations make you feel – good and bad – and trust your instinct when you feel disrespected.

Recognizing Abuse: *Have you ever seen a couple act in a way that made you worried or uncomfortable? What happened that made you feel worried or feel like someone was being treated badly? Have you ever been in a similar situation? What would you do if you felt uncomfortable, controlled, pressured, or threatened?*

Actions and Talking points:

- Abuse or violence in a relationship can include using harmful language, physical violence or digital technology to control, pressure or threaten someone. It's NEVER okay for anyone to use pressure, control or threats in a relationship.
- If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a relationship, there are resources available to help. You can always talk to me and I will help you. You can also talk to your teacher, counselor or the helpline.
- If you ever witness abuse or learn about abuse occurring, report it to me or another adult you trust immediately.
- The National Dating Abuse Helpline is available for anonymous and confidential help and information. You can contact them online and by chat at www.loveisrespect.org or by phone at 1-866-331-9474.