

# Making Sense of Relationships

Lesson 1:

## My values

Key stage 4

**NSPCC**

In partnership with

**PSHE**  
Association



# Lesson 1:

## My values

Key stage

4

### Context

As young people start having relationships, it's important that they develop techniques for recognising unwanted behaviours and for keeping themselves safe. That's why there follows a series of three lessons that focus on empowering and supporting young people with those techniques. Building upon the six lessons for key stage 3, and the first lesson for key stage 4 focuses on identifying your personal values, understanding how they affect your relationships, and learning how to communicate them to a partner assertively.

While PSHE education lessons should be pacy, of course you want to meet the needs of your pupils. Since the

activities take one hour to complete, this lesson is planned as a minimum one-hour lesson. But pupils can gain more from a longer in depth exploration of an activity, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and you feel pupils are progressing towards the objectives. If you want to do this, you might want to extend the time to two lessons.

#### Note:

None of the lessons are designed to be taught in isolation. They should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. These lessons would fit comfortably within other learning about relationships and sex education or as part of your teaching about online safety.

### Learning objectives

- We are learning about the importance of personal values to making decisions
- We are learning how to recognise and challenge coercion or manipulation in relationships

### Intended learning outcomes

- ✓ I can identify core values and explain how they help someone to make and stick to their decisions
- ✓ I can explain what it means for an individual and a couple to be ready for sexual intimacy
- ✓ I can explain or demonstrate how to communicate decisions assertively and confidently
- ✓ I can identify and describe coercive or manipulative attempts to influence someone's decision making

### Resources required

- Box or envelope for anonymous questions
- Post cards for exit card activity
- Resource 1: *Diamond 9 card sort*
- Resource 2: *Passive, Aggressive or Assertive?* [optional resource]

### Climate for learning

Before teaching this lesson make sure you have read the accompanying Resource Guidance. It has guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, communication and handling questions effectively.

---

## Key words

Values, communication, assertiveness, negotiation, compromise, coercion, manipulation

## Baseline activity

### Introduction 5 min

Revisit ground rules and remind pupils of the importance of keeping personal stories private. Draw attention to the anonymous question box and remind them that they can submit questions at any time during or after the lesson.

Share the learning objectives and outcomes with pupils. Explain that today the class will be thinking about the personal values we bring to a relationship and how they affect our behaviour towards one another.

### Baseline assessment 10 min

Ask pupils to reflect on their personal views, specifically in relation to the purpose of sex. In order to do this effectively, provide pupils with a range of statements and ask them to consider where on a continuum their view would sit, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These statements are intended as quiet, personal reflection and are most effective when pupils write the statements (or the statement number) along a continuum line on paper. You may also choose for pupils to write a reason to justify their opinion. It is not appropriate at this stage for the continuum activity to expect young people to move around the room as a visible representation of where they stand.

1. *Sex is to express love to your partner.*
2. *Sex proves you are an adult.*
3. *Sex boosts someone's confidence and self-esteem.*
4. *Sex is to have fun.*
5. *Sex is to create children.*
6. *Sex makes a relationship stronger.*

To modify teaching throughout the lesson, you should circulate the room and observe learners' attitudes to sex. You may choose to collect this work in at the start of the lesson.

Invite pupils who are confident and willing to do so to share their views with the class. Use questioning to address misconceptions, for example:

- Does having sex with someone automatically prove you are an adult? How else do people show adulthood?
- Does sex always boost confidence and self-esteem? Are there some circumstances when sex might have the opposite effect?

And if necessary explore different religious and cultural beliefs around the purpose of sex being to create children and the importance of respecting others' views and beliefs within relationships and when discussing relationships.

---

## Core activities

### Passive, aggressive, assertive? 15 min

Present pupils with a range of situations that might occur within an intimate relationship. Next ask them to create a table with three columns: passive, aggressive and assertive. The pupils should enter different examples of what the other partner might say in reaction to each scenario, demonstrating passive, aggressive or assertive communication. Before starting this activity, it will be important to clarify the terms passive (*to allow others to do what they want without resistance*), aggressive (*ready or likely to attack or confront others*) and assertive (*having or showing a confident and forthright personality*).

For a more interactive alternative, you may wish to organise pupils into small groups and give each one scenario on A3 paper. They should write ideas for passive, aggressive and assertive responses to their scenario, before passing on to the next group. Each group can then continue to add their own ideas or examples of behaviour, until each sheet has been passed to all groups.

- *A person admits to having lied about how many sexual partners they had.*
- *A person says they don't like using condoms as they are uncomfortable.*
- *A person says their partner is not spending enough time with them.*
- *A person asks their partner to send them a nude selfie.*
- *A person feels jealous that their partner has lots of friends of the opposite sex.*
- *A partner wants to only have a relationship online and never meet in person.*

Take feedback from the class and record three or four examples of each type of behaviour on the whiteboard to display and refer back to during the lesson. Encourage pupils, through questioning, to reflect on the likely consequences of responding in each different way and why communicating assertively is likely to produce a better outcome for both partners than acting passively or aggressively in most circumstances. Ask pupils to suggest any possible examples where behaving aggressively or passively in a relationship scenario might produce a better result (for example, for a person's own safety).

### For pupils who need support:

Rather than focusing on the examples above, give pupils a set of cards (See optional Resource 2) with words and behaviours associated with either passive, aggressive and assertive behaviours and ask the pupils to organise them into the relevant piles.

### For pupils who need a challenge:

Ask pupils to explain (either in writing or through discussion in pairs) why some people might find it hard to act assertively in some of these situations. What are the barriers to acting assertively and how could these be overcome?

### Diamond 9 10 min

Working in pairs or small groups, give pupils Resource 1: *Diamond 9 Ready for sexual intimacy?* Ask pupils to work together to place the cards in a diamond shape as illustrated. At the top should be the one that they see as most important to deciding if a couple are ready for sexual intimacy, working down towards their 9th most important at the bottom of the diamond.

One card has been left intentionally blank for pupils to add their own suggestion. Remind pupils that there is no right answer, but that they should try to agree as a group and be prepared to justify their choices during feedback. The nine cards:

1. *Both people in the couple have friends who have already had sex.*
2. *The couple have discussed contraception and what they would do in the event of an unplanned pregnancy.*
3. *The couple are sexually attracted to each other.*
4. *The couple are married.*
5. *The couple are committed to each other and have fun together in lots of different (non-sexual) ways.*
6. *At least one of the couple really wants to have a child.*
7. *Both people are at least 16 years old.*
8. *The couple trust each other and are in love.*
9. *[Blank card]*

Following a quick reminder of the agreed ground rules if necessary, ask pupils to feedback some of their discussion, in particular identifying their most important and least important features for sexual intimacy. If necessary, draw out these points:

- Being 16 and knowing other people who have already had sex, are not appropriate reasons to have sex and don't mean that the couple is ready to have sex.
- If a couple has sex in order to have children, then this should be something they both want and have discussed.
- If a couple are not able or willing to discuss contraception, unplanned pregnancy and STIs, then they are probably not ready to have sex.
- While most married couples do have sex, being married does not automatically mean a couple wants to, or is ready to have sex.

Try to balance these discussions and ideas by emphasising that all people will consider themselves ready for sexual intimacy at different times and that all couples will reach a stage where they are ready to be intimate at different times. Refer back to the KS3 lesson on consent and emphasise that under no circumstances should one person in the couple put the other under pressure to do something they are not ready and willing to do and that it is always the moral and legal responsibility of the person seeking consent to ensure consent is given.

### **For pupils who need support:**

This could be reduced to a diamond 6 activity (using the first 6 statements) so pupils can focus their attention on core features of a sexual relationship.

### **For pupils who need a challenge:**

Hand pupils 9 blank cards and ask them to create their own features of a sexual relationship to prioritise.

### **Script writing 15 min**

Ask pupils to imagine they have overheard the start of a conversation between a couple about an intimate encounter:

*Joe: So last night was fun! I can't believe you finally let me go all the way.*

*Sam: Yeh... yeh I guess it was.*

*Joe: Do you want to come over again tonight? I've got some new ideas we could try out.*

*Sam: Ummm... I dunno. I think my mum wants me to look after my little sister.*

*Joe: Don't you like me anymore? Just make an excuse, like, say you're revising at my house. Come on... I got hold of some flavoured condoms this morning!*

*Sam: But yesterday you said you didn't like using condoms?!*

Discuss the scenario by asking pupils questions:

- How do you think Sam is feeling?
- How do you think Joe is feeling?
- What clues can you pick up about each character?
- How would you describe how Joe is acting towards Sam in this conversation?
- Is Sam clear about how Joe is feeling?
- Is Joe clear about how Sam is feeling?
- Would any of our answers be different depending on whether Sam is male or female? **[NB: Raising this question provides an opportunity to potentially challenge gender stereotypes and heteronormativity. It is important to draw out from the following discussion that coercion and manipulation can happen in any relationship and that the relationship skills needed to maintain healthy, equal relationships are the same for people of all sexes and genders.]**

.....

Ask pupils to continue scripting the conversation between the two characters using two different colours: one colour should demonstrate what the characters are thinking and one colour should demonstrate what the characters are saying. As the conversation progresses, pupils should demonstrate assertive and clear communication skills so that what the characters are thinking and saying are the same or similar, with neither character behaving passively or aggressively..

**For pupils who need support:**

Pupils may choose to just focus on what the characters would say to each other in order to reach a safe and happy conclusion for both individuals in the relationship.

**For pupils who need a challenge:**

Ask pupils to consider the possible consequences of Sam and Joe's experiences the previous night. What concerns might Sam and Joe have? What might they need to do to ensure their health, safety and respect for one another? Who or what might be able to help them manage these consequences?

## Assessment for and of learning

**Assess (demonstrate) progress      5 min**

Ask pupils to complete a 3, 2, 1 exit card. Hand each learner a post card and ask them to write on it:

- Three things today's lesson has made them think about or realise.
- Two skills they have developed or practised through today's activities.
- One question they would like to ask about the topic.

Explain that an exit card means that the card must be completed and handed to the teacher in order to leave the room. The teacher should stand at the door and collect cards as pupils leave. Use the learning and skills identified to inform future teaching and respond to the questions at the start of the following lesson.

## Extension and home learning

**Extension activity:**

Ask pupils to complete research on the Childline website about how to make difficult decisions. While conducting their research, pupils should decide which advice is most useful for people making decisions within a romantic relationship and use these tips to make an A5 informative flyer:

**[childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/life-issues-planning/making-decisions/](https://childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/life-issues-planning/making-decisions/)**

**Resource 1**

Diamond – ready for sexual intimacy



<b>Both people in the couple have friends who have already had sex</b>	<b>The couple have discussed contraception and what they would do in the event of an unplanned pregnancy</b>	<b>The couple are sexually attracted to each other</b>
<b>The couple are married</b>	<b>The couple are committed to each other and have fun together in lots of different (non-sexual) ways</b>	<b>At least one of the couple really wants to have a child</b>
<b>Both people are at least 16 years old</b>	<b>The couple trust each other and are in love</b>	

**Resource 2 [optional]**

Passive, aggressive or assertive



<b>Speaks clearly and confidently</b>	<b>Remains calm</b>	<b>Speaks quietly or not very much</b>
<b>Gets angry quickly</b>	<b>Is very shy</b>	<b>Speaks loudly or shouts</b>
<b>Is firm but fair</b>	<b>Is very forceful with their opinions</b>	<b>Backs down quickly</b>
<b>Apologises for everything</b>	<b>Blames other people</b>	<b>Takes responsibility</b>

Answers for teachers:

<b>Passive</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>	<b>Assertive</b>
<b>Speaks quietly or not very much</b>	<b>Speaks loudly or shouts</b>	<b>Speaks clearly and confidently</b>
<b>Backs down quickly</b>	<b>Gets angry quickly</b>	<b>Remains calm</b>
<b>Is very shy</b>	<b>Is very forceful with their opinions</b>	<b>Is firm but fair</b>
<b>Apologises for everything</b>	<b>Blames other people</b>	<b>Takes responsibility</b>





Together we can help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives. Together we can protect children at risk. And, together, we can find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening.

We change the law. We visit schools across the country, helping children understand what abuse is. And, through our Childline service, we give young people a voice when no one else will listen.

But all this is only possible with your support. Every pound you raise, every petition you sign, every minute of your time, will help make sure we can fight for every childhood.

**[nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)**

---

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is a school subject that supports pupils to be healthy, safe and prepared for modern life. The PSHE education curriculum covers a range of pressing issues facing children and young people today, including those relating to relationships, mental and physical health, staying safe and aware online, financial literacy and careers.

The PSHE Association is the national body for PSHE education. A charity and membership organisation, the Association works to improve PSHE education standards by supporting over 20,000 teachers and schools with advice, training and support. Find out more at **[pshe-association.org.uk](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk)**