“A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?”

SESSION PLAN

Preparation needed

- Projector/PC if needed
- Flipchart/whiteboard and marker pens if needed
- Relevant PowerPoint slides

Reflection

- Consider the last session and spend a short period of time covering any learning points and observations since the last session.
- If relevant **ask** – has anyone done anything that was influenced by this session?
- Reference any relevant news/information to update on the previous session.
- Re-do/remind the group the GROUP AGREEMENT

Setting the Scene

Learning Intentions:

- To recognise abuse within early relationships
- To consider the role of bystanders and ways in which bystanders can intervene

Introduce the session – Inform the group that this session will explore the issue of abuse within an intimate relationship.

Remind the group that for the session they are bystanders to a scenario.

Hands up if you have been aware of this happening in your school or with friends? – Have group discuss their thoughts and share any examples if appropriate.

The Scene

Have a volunteer read aloud the scenario? Thereafter read the scenario yourself.

You're in the corridor between classes. You see a couple you know arguing, then you see the boy push his girlfriend against the wall. Neither of them are close friends of yours but they are in the same year. Nobody else is doing anything. After ask group whether this is a realistic and relevant scenario.

ASK Could this happen?

Ask individuals/groups to discuss and identify any red flags in the scenario. Clarify you are looking for the words/phrases that appear wrong or unhealthy.

After few minutes get the red flags from the group.

Ask the group to raise their hands if they feel there is something wrong / hurtful in this scenario. Have group look around room at the responses from their peers.

My Challenges

Ask the group to discuss with a partner or within their group what they are thinking when they read this scenario?

Give the group a few minutes to discuss responses and feedback. Thereafter read aloud or show the following **train of thought.**

What's going on? Why is he pushing her? … Should I say something? If nobody else is doing anything, why should I? … If I get involved he might turn on me ... Am I ready for that?... Besides if he treats her like that and she stays with him is it any of my business? … But if I don't do something am I saying it's okay for him to treat her like this? … What should I do?

Ask – what reasons might someone give for not getting involved? Fear, don't know what to do, might lose a friend, not my business etc

Discussion Time

Agree/Disagree/Unsure (ADU) Activity & Discussion

Statement 1 – <u>There is a serious problem of some boys being abusive to their girlfriends</u>

Give a short amount of time for the group to make their choice then ask 2-3 people in each group: Why did you agree/disagree/why are you unsure?

Ask the group:

1. Would there ever be a reason for a boy to be abusive to his girlfriend? Take responses and conclude by highlighting that no matter what has happened, abuse in relationships is never right and never justified.

2. What makes a problem serious? Prompt: -If it happens once, is it serious? -If it happened to your friend, would that make it serious?

3. Can girls be abusive to their boyfriends? Yes, they can. Use current statistics from government/victim's websites to give key facts about relationship violence rates and to reinforce that the vast majority of relationship violence is perpetrated by males.

4. Does abuse always have to be physical? What else might happen in a relationship that could be seen as abusive?

Ask the group to take their seats

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Ask the group:

1. **Why might the boy be pushing his girlfriend in this scenario?** Responses may include: maybe she pushed him first, maybe she has cheated on him, maybe she's been horrible, maybe he lost his temper etc. **Where might he have got message that this is ok? Suggest – maybe from other boys/men…**

2. Could these reasons ever be used to excuse the abuse? No, there is no excuse for abusive behaviour. We can understand why someone does something, without condoning the behaviour.

3. Where does this scenario take place? You want the group to identify that this is happening in a public place, then ask: If this is happening in public, what might be happening in private? It may be even worse.

4. In the train of thought it says 'if no one else is doing anything, why should I?' So why should you? Suggestions may include: what's happening is not fair, she might be afraid, she might get hurt, abuse is wrong etc.

5. The train of thought also includes the statement 'If I get involved he might turn on me'. Might this fear put people off doing something? -Who else might turn on you if you say something? You want the group to recognise that the girlfriend might also turn on you. Why might the girl turn on you if you were trying to help her? Take ideas and then suggest to the group that there are many reasons this might happen, including that she loves him or that she is afraid if she doesn't stick up for him, he might be angry with her.

7. **It also says 'Besides if he treats her like that and she stays with him, is it any of my business?' Why do some girls stay with boys who treat them like this?** Responses should include (if these don't come up, be sure to share these reasons with the group): she likes/loves him, she thinks he will change, she might feel to blame, she might not think recognise that what he's doing is wrong, he might be pressuring her to stay with him, she might be afraid to leave him etc.

Given all these reasons, is it fair that some people might say it's a girls own fault if she stays with a boy who is abusive to her? You want the group to recognise that the reasons some girls will stay in abusive relationships are varied and complex.

<u>END DISCUSSION</u> - Ultimately it's a power and control issue and the girl should not be blamed for remaining in an abusive relationship she feels unable to get out of. The only person at fault is the abusive partner.

My Leadership

- **Ask** the group to discuss with partners/in groups what is their role in this scenario?
- **Ask** them to think who they should be thinking about in this scenario.
- The group should consider all those involved in the scenario including themselves.

My Plan

Provide the group with a short period of time to discuss in their groups their plan around what they could do in this situation.

Say - we have discussed the 'scene' and your 'challenges' lets now think what we can do. Ask group to make sure that they think of any consequences that could occur. Thereafter discuss the range of options available.

Option 1: Do nothing. It's none of your business.

Ask the group:

1. Is this an option that some might consider using? We have already identified some of the reasons people might give for not getting involved.

2. What might happen if you do nothing? Responses may include: It could get worse, the girl might feel isolated and unsupported etc.

3. What does doing nothing say to the boy and girl in this scenario? That his behaviour is acceptable.

Option 2: Distract the couple somehow to defuse the situation.

Ask the group:

1. What might you do to cause a distraction here? Come up with a couple of your ways ahead of the session in case you need to prompt the group. Suggestions may include: shout something about a teacher coming, or about something happening in another part of school etc.

2. Can anyone think of any possible consequences of using a distraction here?

3. What doesn't happen if you choose this option? The behaviour hasn't been challenged so it may happen again or in private.

Option 3: Shout at him to leave her alone and wait to make sure things have calmed down.

Ask the group:

1. How do you feel about this option? Is this safe? This option potentially puts the bystander at risk.

2. Who might start to argue with you if you choose this option? Both the boy and the girl might.

Prompt: Why do you think the girl might defend the boy even after he has pushed her? Suggest that some girls might be scared, and that potentially arguing back with the bystander to protect her boyfriend means she is less likely to be hurt / abused by him later in private.

Option 4: Talk to the girl at some point to offer her support.

Ask the group:

1. Why might this help the situation? Replies may include: maybe she needs to know others don't think what's happening is right, maybe she needs to know others can support her, maybe she needs help to figure out what to do etc.

2. What could you say to the girl? Take suggestions. Telling the girl that what he is doing to her is wrong, and isn't her fault might be enough to help her begin to think about what she can do to get out of the situation.

Option 5: Talk to the boy at some point about his behaviour.

Ask the group:

1. Why might someone not choose this option? Prompt: Is it an easy thing to do? This option clearly presents possible consequences for the bystander, which might put him/her at risk. It is important to choose the right time to have a conversation like this.

2. What could you say to the boy to make this a safer / easier option? Prompt: Could you ask if he is okay? Could you say you saw what happened and it's not the way to deal with issues in his relationship? Could you offer to help him?

3. Why is it important to challenge the boy about his behaviour? By challenging it, you are both saying you don't agree with his behaviour and also looking out for him as he might get into trouble for that sort of thing.

Option 6: Talk about this with a parent/carer, a teacher/adult you trust or an MVP mentor, and ask their advice on what to do.

Ask the group:

1. What might stop someone from talking to a teacher or someone at home? Suggestions may include: don't want to get involved; don't want to be a 'grass'; don't want to be targeted etc. Remind the group that telling an adult about a behaviour which potentially puts someone else at harm (in this case the girl might get hurt and the boy might get into trouble) is about being a good friend.

2. Might speaking to an MVP Mentor be an option here? Why? It might be easier to speak to a Mentor about it. They might be more comfortable talking to the boy about his behaviour etc.

Option 7: Personal Option

Ask the group:

Is there anything else you could do? Remember to explore the possible consequences for any additional options.

Thank the group for their answers and ideas.

Final words

Reinforce key messages

Let the group know that as leaders, they have the opportunity to make their school and community a safe and respectful place.

Ask the group: What have you learnt from today's session? You might want to note responses on flipchart.

Reinforce key messages from discussion to include:

- Spreading rumours is hurtful and can make a person feel alone and upset.
- Being respectful to your friends can help prevent the spreading of rumours.
- There are a number of options we can choose from to challenge behaviour when we don't agree with it.
- We have a responsibility to help our friends and keep ourselves safe.