

**Fifty Shades of a Healthy Relationship?**

Or is Fifty Shades of Grey abuse?

**Aim:** To consider indicators of a healthy or unhealthy relationship with young people, and challenge some the damaging messages about consent found in the 50 Shades of Grey books and film. The young people do not have to have read or seen these as most of the activity focuses on the widely-seen publicity poster and some quotes. It would be best to complete this activity in single gender groups.

It is important for facilitators to understand that abusive relationships involve a deliberate misuse of power, and power and control are key factors in determining whether a relationship is healthy or abusive. It would also be useful for facilitators to have a working knowledge of some of the issues surrounding 50 Shades of Grey; the blog [https://50shadesofabuse.wordpress.com/](https://50shadesofabuse.wordpress.com/%20) has a useful chapter analysis, and highlights some of the issues with the material.

**Resources:** Relationship cards (see appendix 5), for larger groups print out multiple sets. Print outs of quotes from 50 shades, and poster.

**Time:** At least 30 mins.

**Method:**

1. Ask young people to form small groups or pairs and give each group/pair a set of relationship cards. Ask the groups to divide the cards into healthy or unhealthy relationship behaviour. If they are unsure about whether or not the behaviour belongs to a healthy or an unhealthy relationship, ask them to place the card aside. Encourage discussion along the way.
2. When the groups have finished, see if everyone agrees what belongs to a healthy or an unhealthy relationship by reading the statements about relationships and asking young people: “Is this behaviour an indicator of a healthy or an unhealthy relationship?”
3. Ask for reasons, especially when young people define some behaviour as unhealthy.
4. Once you have completed this exercise and reached a consensus on what constitutes a healthy relationship and why, move on to looking at the quotes (below) taken from 50 Shades of Grey.

**Questions to ask:**

* Would these quotes fit in the ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy’ relationship side?
* Are the quotes similar to any of the other healthy/unhealthy behaviours?
* Have they seen this poster around on bus stops? Who has power in this situation? What does the image say about men/women?
* What sort of messages do these posters promote?
* Is ’50 shades’ a healthy or unhealthy depiction of a relationship?

**Follow up activity**

* Ask young people to design a poster for a valentines’ film with positive messages about relationships.

Fifty shades quotation posters originally created by Bethany Penny.







**Relationship cards:**

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| **You spend time with friends and family without them** | **You can be yourself when you’re around them** |
| **You feel respected by them** | **They send you dozens of texts every day** |
| **You resolve arguments by talking** | **You lie to them about what you have been doing and who you have been with** |
| **You feel confident about saying ‘no’ to them** | **You avoid certain topics so as not make them angry** |
| **You’ve met each other’s friends** | **You don’t answer the phone straightaway when they call** |
| **You agree to do things that you do not want to, in order to avoid making them angry** | **They ask for your Facebook password. They say you shouldn’t mind since there should be no secrets between you** |

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| **You get jealous if they spend time with their friends, and you try to stop them doing it**  | **They says things about you in front of other people that make you uncomfortable or embarrassed, but say they were only joking**  |
| **You respect and take care of yourself and each other**  | **They call you horrible names when you argue**  |
| **They phone you all the time to check what you are doing and who you are with**  | **You meet them outside work or school every day**  |
| **They threaten to tell other people secrets about you**  | **You seek constant confirmation that they love you**  |
| **They ask you to send them nude pics of yourself, saying everyone else is doing this**  | **You are able to talk about what you like and don’t like to do in bed** |