

Spotlight Marriage and Relationships

Lesson Title: Good Questions in a Relationship

Grade Band Level: High School

Extension for: SEL Spotlight Marriage and Relationships

Topic: Using Good Questions to Support Healthy Relationships

Essential Question: How can good questioning improve communication and lower conflict in an intimate relationship?

Materials and Preparation

- **Facilitator Note:** It is recommended that this session be conducted after students have participated in SEL Spotlight Body Language and Tone series and Good Questions parts 1 and 2. While it is possible to conduct this session stand-alone, it would be helpful for students to have the background from these other sessions.
- Review any notes from previous Good Questions part 1 and part 2 sessions. It is designed to extend skills to relationships and marriage. It should not be necessary to watch the Harvard commencement speech of Dean James Ryan again.
- New Five Questions worksheets (from Good Questions part 2)
- Posters or poster sized sheets of paper
- Markers

Procedures

Review and restate session norms. These should remind students how to interact and communicate respectfully. Essential question should be prominently displayed.

[1-2 minutes]

Activity 1

- Review the discussion from the previous Good Questions session. Encourage students to comment regarding what they learned in the previous session using the thought bubbles and the scenarios that they created.
- Briefly review the Five Questions from the worksheet.
 - Wait, What?
 - I wonder...?...Why?...If?
 - Couldn't we at least...?
 - How can I help you?
 - What truly matters?

[5-10 minutes]

Activity 2

- Let's talk about some intimate relationship issues that can create conflict or stress.
- Ask students reflecting questions. Give them time to write down some thoughts on their own.
- "What are some situations that could cause conflict or high levels of stress between two people in a relationship?"
- "If you were in an intimate relationship what are some things you could say to your partner to help relieve (or lower) the stress in one of the situations you have thought of?"
- Have students share out their thoughts or comments, or the facilitator may wish to say student comments to keep comments anonymous.
- Write some appropriate situations on the board.
- Facilitator note: Use your knowledge of the group to limit sexual situations. For some groups a situation involving a couple choosing the best type of contraception might be okay, but not for others. No situations that involve violence should be used in this session (intimate partner violence is dealt with in other sessions).

[5-10 minutes]

Activity 3

- Using your knowledge of the students, split students in to small groups of 2, 3 or 4. Assign students one of the situations that students came up with. Hand out materials including Five Questions worksheets.
- Instruct students to create a storyboard of the action in their situation. A storyboard is like a cartoon except it depicts a particular event. Storyboards are often used when rehearsing for films, so that actors can see the what the director is trying to accomplish with a scene from start to finish.
- For this activity, students' storyboards should show one or two frames of the conflictual situation the group has been assigned. The next frame should show how the conflict will escalate so that one partner becomes angry or upset. Students will then create a second storyboard with the first frame or two the same. The next frame will use one of the Five Questions that would help diffuse the situation and one more frame that shows the situation being resolved in way that strengthens the relationship.
- Have each group present their storyboards, focus discussion on describing how asking a question in a caring, respectful manner can help lower conflict and strengthen the couple's relationship. Bring in information from Body Language and Tone sessions as well.

[15-30 minutes]

Conclusion:

Debriefing questions.

- "Can asking a question be a better choice than making a statement when there is a potential conflict in an intimate relationship?"
- "People who are angry are rarely listening to their partner, can the use of a respectfully worded question help diminish anger with an intimate partner? What results would you expect?"