

CWK Marriage and Family:

# Spotlight Marriage and Relationships

**Lesson Title:** Expectations in a Relationship

**Grade Level:** High School

**Extension for:** SEL Spotlight High School

**Topic:** Marriage and Family Project: Developing and Managing Realistic Expectations within an Intimate Relationship

**Essential Question:** How can you develop positive relationship expectations with an intimate partner?

## Materials and Preparation

- A resource for further reading and support can be found at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) website operated by the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
- Posters or poster sized pieces of paper
- Markers and writing utensils

## Procedures

Review and restate session norms. These should remind students how to interact and communicate respectfully. The topic involves intimate relationships and should be discussed appropriately. Essential question should be prominently displayed.

[2-3 minutes]

## Activity 1

Have students stand up and go to an open space in the room. This activity is a common group building exercise called "Where Do You Stand". Facilitator will ask students move to 2, 3 or 4 areas of the open space based on their thoughts or beliefs about several questions the facilitator will ask. The facilitator may use the following suggestions or come up with additional ones.

Facilitator will say,

- "What toothpaste do you prefer? Colgate, Crest others?" [point to a different space for each and have students go to that location]
- "What is your favorite food for dinner? Steak, chicken, turkey, pork, others?"
- "What is your favorite sport to play? Basketball, baseball, soccer, football, others?"

Come up with others as you like based on the group. The purpose is for students to see that there can be many differences between people and what they like to do.

Debrief with students by discussing that the goal is for students to see that there may be many differences between people. It may also be helpful to use one of the questions for a deeper discussion on different attitudes. For example, students whose favorite sport to play is basketball may also really like baseball. Someone else could prefer to play soccer but like to watch football on tv. Encourage students to discuss that there can be many degrees of preference and this can relate to intimate relationships.

[10-15 minutes]

## Activity 2

### Individual Reflection

Ask students the following questions. Give students time to think and possibly write down some answers or thoughts.

- What are some types of differences that two people could have in an intimate relationship?
- Have you heard of people who have set unrealistic expectations for a relationship? What are some examples?

After students have reflected, have them share some thoughts. You may wish to read students' comments aloud to the group to keep the comment anonymous and less emotionally charged.

[10 minutes]

## Activity 3

### Group Activity

Discuss with students the following suggestions for appropriate boundaries and expectations within a healthy intimate relationship. These come from the [loveisrespect](http://loveisrespect.org) website.

#### Time Apart

- No one person can satisfy all of your needs, it is important to have time apart and doing things with others.

#### Physical Boundaries: Take your time

- Discuss how physical you want to be and do not rush into anything.

#### Physical Boundaries: Sex isn't currency

- No one owes the other sex-sex is mutual when both parties are ready and willing.

#### Digital Boundaries

- What do we post online?
- When is it okay to post relationship status?
- Is it okay to friend request the intimate partner's friends?
- What is okay to post about each other and our relationship?

- Is any type of sexual text message okay? If so, what are the limits? [Facilitator should mention that anyone sending electronic messages and/or photos loses control over those. Also posting sexually explicit messages and/or photos of minors is illegal.]

### **Saying the “L-word”**

People in romantic or intimate relationships often do not experience the same emotions at the same time. If one person feels more connected and the other is not there yet, it is okay and should be discussed respectfully.

The facilitator may wish to show the webpage with this list to the group, it is found at <https://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/setting-boundaries/>

Using your knowledge of students in the group, place students in groups of 2, 3 or 4. Give each group a poster and markers.

Each group will come up with a set of “relationship expectations”. Ask groups to brainstorm and develop five expectations (avoid using the word rule) that all in the group can agree are reasonable. If the advisory group is mixed gender, it might be a good idea to have mixed-gender smaller groups to develop the expectations.

After groups have completed their expectation posters, have each group share their expectations and have the opportunity for others to question why certain expectations were chosen. Ask questions as appropriate focus on positively worded expectations. Facilitator should be mindful that abusive relationships are covered in other sessions and attempt to keep students focused on expectations in a non-abusive relationship (of course, it may be necessary to discuss abusive situations).

[20-30 minutes]

### **Conclusion:**

#### **Debriefing questions.**

- Why is it important to set expectations within an intimate relationship?
- Is it a good idea to discuss expectations early in an intimate relationship?
- How early should expectations be discussed?