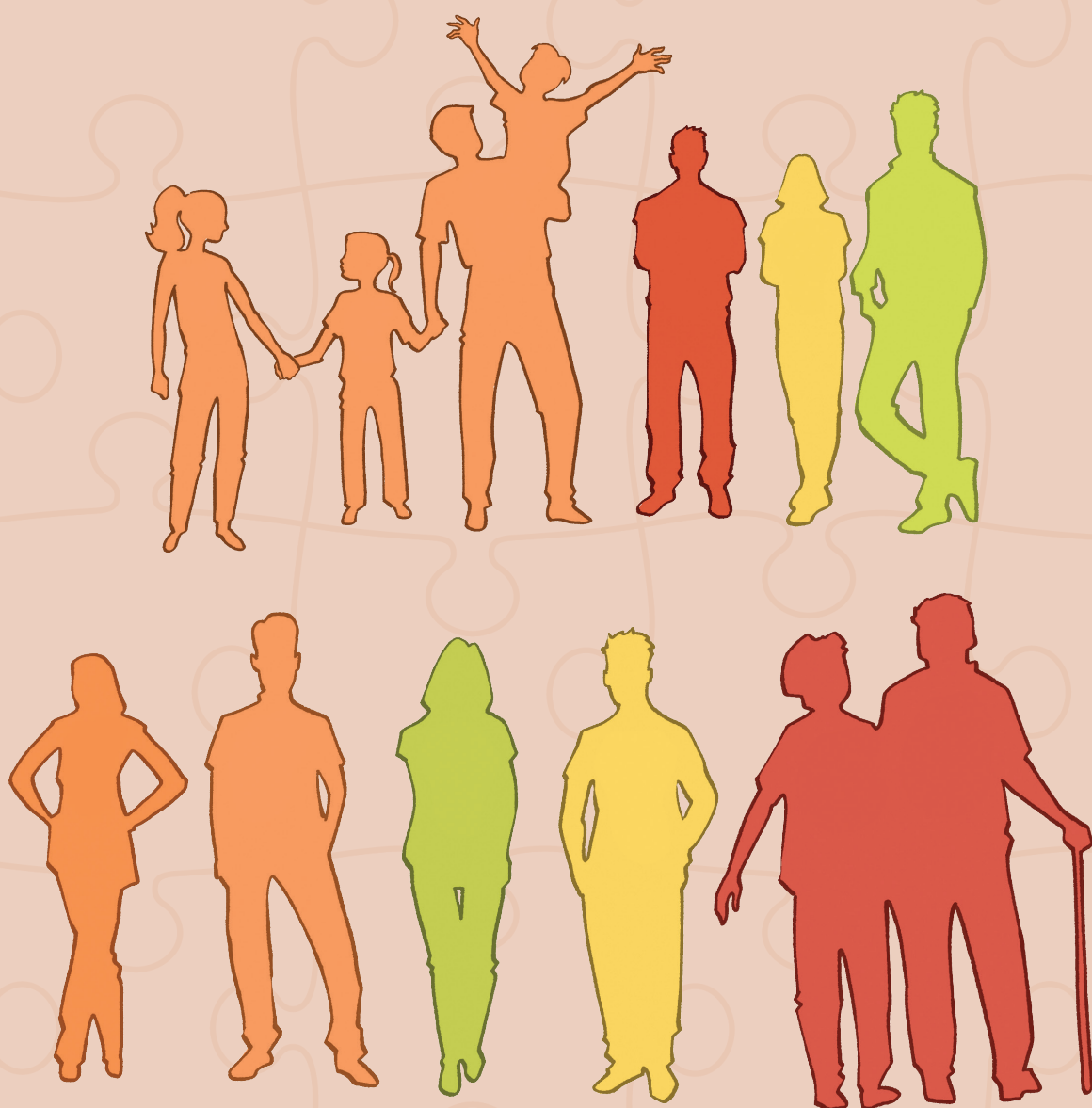


HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



РЦСЕ

Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is designed for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or autistic youth. It focuses on the topic of *Healthy and unhealthy relationships*, following the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework. The lesson helps students learn about different types of relationships—like family, friends, and romantic partners—in a way that is clear, respectful, and supportive. It aims to build students' skills in empathy, communication, and understanding what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy. The goal is to support students to make safe, informed, and respectful choices in their relationships with others.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery by providing structured resources, including visual supports and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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Healthy and unhealthy relationships



What does it mean?

Teaching students about healthy and unhealthy relationships helps them to build and maintain positive relationships throughout their lives. This includes students developing an understanding of the characteristics of healthy relationships and the characteristics of unhealthy relationships.



Why is it important?

Teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum about healthy and unhealthy relationships and the behaviours within them helps students to develop skills for healthy decision-making regarding sex and relationships¹. Research has identified that people with intellectual disability are more at risk of experiencing sexual abuse as a result of not being taught about consent, personal boundaries and healthy relationships².

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives

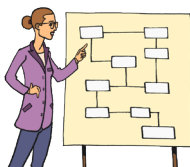


Learning outcomes

Students can identify healthy and unhealthy behaviours within a relationship.

Accessible learning outcome

I can tell the difference between good and bad behaviours in a relationship.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: **Healthy and unhealthy relationships**

Note for teachers:

Some students in your class might have experienced sexual assaults, abuse or rape. It is crucial that you provide students with a 'content warning' about the topic and that if they need a break or do not want to participate in these lessons, they do not have to. Additionally, it is important that you know the correct procedures for how to support students (school counsellors, hotlines and referral to additional support) and report incidents of sexual assault, abuse or rape. Be aware of the protocols for reporting disclosures.

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can identify healthy and unhealthy behaviours within a relationship.	Visual supports	Appendix 1: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask students what they think they know about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Prompts:

- What are some healthy behaviours?
- What are some unhealthy behaviours?

- How do you think a healthy relationship should make you feel?
- How do you think an unhealthy relationship could make you feel?



Activity 1: What makes a relationship healthy?

As a class, watch the [What makes a relationship healthy?](#) video on Amaze.org. What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What were some of the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships?
- What did the video say were the three things that all healthy relationships should have?
 - Respect
 - Equity
 - Communication
- What are some of healthy behaviours for the three things that all healthy relationships should have?



Activity 2: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship

As a class, students will write, draw and use visual supports to express some of the different behaviours in a healthy relationship.

Prompts:

- What are some things you could do together?
- How would you talk to each other?
- How would you resolve a disagreement?
- How should that relationship make you feel?



Activity 3: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship

Students will work individually or in a small group to match the visuals and key words to the different categories; healthy behaviours in a relationship, and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship.

Use the visual supports provided in [Appendix 1: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship](#).



Activity 4: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship

After students have completed the *Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship* sorting activity, have the class come together to discuss.

Prompts:

- What visuals/words did you put in the healthy behaviours in a relationship category?
- What visuals/words did you put in the unhealthy behaviours in a relationship category?
- Do we agree? Why or why not?

Conclusion: Recap what was taught in the lesson.

Ask students if they can recall the three things that all healthy relationships should have?

- Respect
- Equity
- Communication

Remind students of ways they can get support if they or someone they know is experiencing intimate partner violence (school councillor, trusted adult, or a support service).



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills for understanding healthy and unhealthy relationships and the behaviours of those relationships.
- Have I made it clear to students how they could get support if they are experiencing intimate partner violence?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

References

- 1 Strnadová, I., Loblinzk, J., & Danker, J. (2021). Importance of sex education for a successful transition to life after school: Experiences of high school girls with intellectual disability. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 49(3), 303-315. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12403>
- 2 Gil-Llario, M. D., Morell-Mengual, V., Ballester-Arnal, R., & Díaz-Rodríguez, I. (2017). The experience of sexuality in adults with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 62(1), 72–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12455>

Appendix 1: Healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship

Healthy Behaviours 	Unhealthy Behaviours 

My partner makes me sad	My partner controls me	I feel safe with my partner
We do activities we both enjoy	My partner steals my money	I feel happy with my partner
My partner listens to me	My partner hits me	

