
LECTURE NOTES:

A couple who cooperates together and is mutually understanding of each other has the greatest potential for developing a lasting and meaningful relationship. Dating is the first step toward meeting that goal. Two people from different circumstances must learn to work together. Successful dating is often accomplished through trial and error. The first few relationships an individual experiences often do not last. As people explore dimensions of self they are better able to select compatible dating partners. But that is just the beginning of building a long-term love relationship.

If a relationship is going to last, both partners must give to the relationship and receive mutual benefits from it. Relationships that work the best are ones that demonstrate respect and balance between the partners. Areas of importance when showing respect for one another include: valuing each other's ideas (sharing perspectives on an issue, asking the other's advice or counsel, making decisions together), caring about the other's feelings (limiting negative comments, allowing expression of differing emotions, taking care to be sensitive toward personal issues). Regarding another's personal boundaries by:

- a) Recognizing the importance of keeping each other safe (maintaining a relationship that is free of substance abuse, avoiding high-risk behaviors, and looking out for one another's general well being).
- b) Avoiding any type of physical contact that may be considered offensive, or result in harm or injury).

Healthy relationships also exhibit a sense of balance between the couple. Partners share responsibilities between them for the relationship. Both partners contribute equally to the needs of the other and they are able to settle differences through mutual agreement. Each must be willing to admit when he/she is wrong, without fear that the other will take advantage of his/her vulnerability.

Compromise is another important characteristic of relationships that are balanced. Couples who are flexible and open to change will be able to compromise more easily. The ebb and flow of needs in a relationship can be met when partners are willing to find common ground and agree on solutions that are best for both of them. It is important to stress that no one can have his/her own way all of the time in any relationship.

Participants of the *Connections: Dating and Emotions* unit should be able to identify specific concepts they have learned over the course of the program. It is hoped that these concepts will be integrated into the expected dating behaviors and life-long relationships of individuals who have completed the course materials.

STAYING TOGETHER



Keeping a dating relationship together takes a great deal of work. Both partners have to invest time, energies and emotions in order to maintain a positive and meaningful relationship. Good relationships don't just happen; they are developed through skills and knowledge that are acquired over time.

A. DEMONSTRATE RESPECT

1. How can you show respect for another person's ideas?

2. How can you show respect for another person's feelings?

3. How can you show respect for another person's safety?

4. How can you show respect for another person's body?

B. KEEP BALANCE

1. How can you share responsibilities within the relationship?

2. How should disagreements be handled if they develop?

3. Do you feel mature enough to apologize to the other person when you are wrong? Why is this important?

4. Do you feel mature enough to compromise with the other person when it is clear that you will not get your way?
