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Curriculum Toolkit for Teachers and Learners in Wales

Healthy Relationships

Introduction

Welcome to the healthy relationships toolkit. This toolkit has been co-constructed with teachers for use with both primary and secondary learners. It should be used flexibly to meet the identified needs of your learners within the context of your school.

This toolkit focuses on developing and maintaining healthy relationships as a key theme within the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience. Teaching and learning about the benefits of healthy relationships should link to all statements of what matters within the Health and Well-being AoLE, where possible. In particular, **Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being** and **Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others**.

It will support learners to understand that as they go through life, they will have many kinds of relationships. They will learn how to build strong, respectful relationships and how to look after them. This will help them understand that having kind and healthy relationships is important for feeling happy and staying well.

You should consider...

- Whether the content of these resources are developmentally appropriate for your learners
- The appropriateness of the content of the resources and its relevance to *your* learners in *your* context
- How this resource may support prior learning for healthy relationships

The **RSE** strand Relationships and Identity has supported the design of this toolkit as a foundation for learners to develop healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships based on mutual trust and respect. By learning how relationships form and develop, learners will build skills to navigate various relationships throughout their lives.

How this Toolkit is organised

Teacher guidance is designed to support classroom teachers plan and prepare lessons on the topic of healthy relationships.

It includes:

- Curriculum for Wales links
- Why this learning is needed
- Important key messages
- Overviews of the knowledge banks
- Possible learning and activity suggestions are shared at the end of each knowledge bank.
- Sources of further information to support teaching and learning.

Teachers should make themselves familiar with this guidance prior to planning for delivery.

Teacher Knowledge Banks are a professional learning tool which provide teachers with the key background knowledge and understanding about the topic of healthy relationships linking with the big questions to inform their curriculum design. They include why this topic is important for learners' health and well-being.

Possible learning and activity suggestions are suggestions to support teaching and learning in relation to the health topic. They provide a hook to engage learners in critical thinking, discussion and deepening understanding. They should be used flexibly and can be adapted to meet the identified needs of learners.

Why this learning is needed

Children and young people form a wide range of relationships throughout their lives - in school, at home, online and in their communities. It is important to help them understand what makes relationships positive, respectful and supportive, as these experiences are key to their emotional, social and personal development. Relationships with ourselves and others are fundamental for our mental well-being.

Healthy relationships are defined by trust, respect and emotional safety. They enable authenticity, growth, resilience and a sense of belonging. Children and young people learn about how to build relationships with themselves and others through interactions in the environments where they live, learn, grow and play.

However, not all relationships are positive. It's important to teach children and young people to recognise warning signs such as feeling pressured, ignored or fearful. Raising awareness empowers them to make informed choices, seek help when needed and develop confidence in managing their interactions.

Technology and social media play a role in shaping relationships. While they can support connection, they also introduce significant risks.

Relationship challenges are a normal part of growing up and provide opportunities to build resilience and problem-solving skills. By fostering reflection and empathy, children and young people can navigate these experiences and develop the skills needed to form and maintain healthy relationships throughout life.

Key messages for Healthy relationships

We all form a wide range of relationships throughout our lives and these naturally evolve as we grow and change, shaping our understanding of ourselves and others.

Our relationships span across family, friends, colleagues, classmates, teammates and members of groups or organisations, each contributing differently to our sense of connection and belonging.

What matters most is the quality and strength of our connections to others, this is more important than the quantity of relationships.

Most relationships are healthy and grounded in kindness, respect, honesty and open communication, creating a sense of safety and mutual understanding.

Healthy relationships foster a sense of belonging and contribute to stronger self-esteem and confidence by helping us feel valued and supported.

Positive relationships play a significant role in our overall well-being, influencing our ability to learn, engage and make healthy choices in daily life.

Our relationships can have a strong impact on our thoughts, emotions, moods and behaviours, with positive interactions supporting our well-being and negative experiences sometimes causing stress or self-doubt.

Unhealthy relationships can negatively affect our mental and emotional well-being, potentially leading to reduced confidence, increased isolation or feelings of loneliness.

It is important to prioritise our own safety and well-being within any relationship, which may involve setting boundaries, expressing our needs, or distancing ourselves when necessary.

Being aware of our own emotions and how we manage and respond to our thoughts and feelings helps us to build a positive relationship with ourselves, rooted in self-compassion. This is essential for being able to build and maintain healthy relationships with others.

Resources are organised in Teacher knowledge banks linked to each 'Big Question'. These questions can, and should, be posed to learners as a vehicle for curriculum delivery.

Big questions	Knowledge bank	Links to statements of what matters
What is a healthy and supportive relationship? - Foundations of healthy relationships - The role of communication in building supportive relationships	What is a healthy and supportive relationship?	Health and Well-being AoLE
How does our environment shape our relationships? / Understanding the influences on our relationships - The role of family and social networks - Influences on relationships and social norms - How schools and communities support relationship growth -How technology affects relationships	Understanding the influences on our relationships	How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being - connections between experiences and emotions Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others – decision-making and critical thinking How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being - social influences, social norms and values
What are the challenges of building and maintaining good relationships? - Overcoming communication barriers in relationships - Dealing with conflict: effective strategies for resolution - The impact of mental health issues on relationship health	What are the challenges of building and maintaining good relationships?	Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being – healthy relationships

Supporting learners toward realisation of the four purposes

Ambitious, capable learners who:	Enterprising, creative contributors who:	Ethical, informed citizens who:	Healthy, confident individuals who:
- are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts - can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English - undertake research and evaluate critically what they find and are ready to learn throughout their lives	- connect and apply their knowledge and skills to create ideas and products - think creatively to reframe and solve problems - Express ideas and emotions through different media - identify and grasp opportunities - lead and play different roles in teams effectively and responsibly and are ready to play a full part in life and work	- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values - understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights - understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting - respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society and are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world	- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy - know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well - take measured decisions about lifestyle and manage risk and are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Knowledge Banks

Knowledge Bank	Title
1	What is a healthy and supportive relationship? Different types of relationships and key elements of a healthy relationship
2	Understanding the influences on our relationships How different factors shape relationships and influence how they develop
3	What are the challenges of building and maintaining good relationships? communication barriers, managing expectations, navigating conflict and supporting one another

Teacher Resources:

Sources of further information to support teaching and learning

NSPCC

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/talk-relationships>

[Promoting healthy relationships in schools | NSPCC](#)

[Learning](#)

[PANTS resources for schools and teachers | NSPCC](#)

[Learning](#)

[AGENDA: promoting positive relationships in schools and communities | NSPCC Learning](#)

Addysg Cwtch

[Addysg Cwtch - Empowering schools to deliver high-quality RSE](#)

Spectrum

[Spectrum Project - Educating schools in Wales about Domestic Abuse and Healthy Relationships.](#)

Into Film

[Resource - I'm the One - Health and Wellbeing - Into Film](#)

Public Health Wales

[Promoting individual and community wellbeing - Public Health Wales](#)

[Ways to better wellbeing - Hapus](#)

Mental Health Foundation

[Healthy relationships with ourselves and our peers - school pack | Mental Health Foundation](#)

Public Health Wales

Anna Freud Mentally Healthy Schools

[Home : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

[Healthy relationships: a toolkit to support primary-aged pupils | Anna Freud](#)

BBC Teach: Health & Wellbeing Videos (Ages 8–11)

mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

BBC Bitesize

[7 signs to look for in a healthy relationship - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Supporting your teenager with friendship fall-outs - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Relationships - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Bitesize Daily: 9-11 Year Olds - Wellbeing: 114.](#)

[Relationships and Connections - BBC iPlayer](#)

Empathy Lab

[Resources – EmpathyLabUK](#)

Brook

[Brook's PSHE Curriculum: Lesson plans and activities](#)

[Healthy Relationships: Resources for teachers - Brook](#)

CEOP

[Respecting me, you, us - RSE lessons](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following schools for their help and support in developing this toolkit:

**Ysgol John Bright
Ysgol Rhosneigr
Elfed High School
Ysgol David Hughes
Ysgol Deganwy
Ysgol Borthyn
Ysgol Eirias
Sandycroft CP School**