

# 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Session #1

## Assertive Communication

### Objectives:

1. Students will define and give examples of assertive, passive and aggressive communication.
2. Students will define sexual harassment and identify it as a type of aggressive communication.
3. Students will practice identifying passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors.

Rationale: Sexual harassment, intimate partner violence and sexual violence are all examples of aggressive behaviors. The societal factors that allow them to persist are often passive actions like: collective silence around these issues, not empowering women and girls, and lack of intervention on the part of bystanders. By teaching teens to recognize the differences between passive, aggressive and assertive communication, the lessons seeks to give them the skills needed for treating themselves and others with respect.

### Standards of Learning:<sup>1</sup>

1. Knowledge and Skills: The student will apply critical thinking skills and personal management strategies to address issues and concerns related to personal health and well-being. Key concepts and skills include:  
6.1a: the importance of significant friends or adult mentors
2. Knowledge and Skills: The student will analyze the consequences of personal choices on health and well being. Key concepts and skills include:  
6.4b: the importance of accepting responsibility for personal actions

Supplies Needed: Pre-test papers, post-test papers, sexual harassment brochures, candy

Introduction: Introduce yourself as a teacher from the Family Resource Center. Explain

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf)

(or remind the students) that the FRC provides services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Go over some of the services we provide:

- crisis hotline
- accompany victims of sexual and domestic violence to the hospital and to court
- emergency shelter
- individual counseling
- support groups
- education/presentations
- We serve Wythe, Smyth, Bland, Carroll, Grayson and Galax.

Pre-test: Pass out the pre-test, ask students not to put their names on their papers. Read the questions aloud to the students and let them circle the appropriate answers. Assure students that they are not expected to know all the answers, and it's fine if they don't. Take up the papers.

Introductory Activity: Ask the students to what they think these words mean: passive, aggressive and assertive. Then, define them as follows:

**Passive communication** is communication that does not honor the self. It is often more about what is not said or done, rather than what is said. Examples include: not telling others when they have upset you or not saying what you need or want.

**Aggressive communication** is communication that does not honor others. Examples include: name-calling or yelling.

**Assertive communication** is communication that honors others and yourself. Examples include: telling others what you want/don't want or respectfully letting others know when they have upset you.

Assertive communication is difficult.

Examples:

Offer the following as examples of passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors.

Imagine you are a part of a group that is putting together a school play. They are deciding which play they will put on, "Romeo and Juliet" or "Great Expectations". One young woman says, "I'd like to do Romeo and Juliet. We could do it around Valentine's

Day and lots of people would come." This is assertive communication because she is honoring herself by communicating her idea and why she thinks her idea is valuable. Another young woman says, "That's the lamest idea I've ever heard of. None of your ideas ever work out. *Great Expectations* would be much better." This is an example of aggressive communication because it insults the other person instead of honoring her. The rest of the students feel like doing *Romeo and Juliet* is a good idea, but don't want to say anything because the discussion seems tense. This is passive communication because they are not honoring themselves or their ideas by not communicating them. In fact, because they are passive, the group may make a decision based on what the most aggressive voice communicates, rather than the opinions of everyone.

Write the word passive on a paper or poster and tape it at one end. Write the word aggressive on a poster and tape it at the other end. Write the word assertive on a poster and tape it in the middle. Read each of the following scenarios. Then, ask the students to decide if they are examples of assertive, passive or aggressive communication and stand near the appropriate poster.

1. Someone cuts Judy off in traffic and she yells and makes rude hand gestures at them. (aggressive)
2. Jim thinks the cashier at the grocery store didn't give him correct change. Jim walks away with \$10 less than he thinks he should have. (passive)
3. Judy and her friends, a group of young men and women, go to the lake for Spring Break. Their first day out on the water, one of her friends decides it would be fun to go skinny dipping. Most of the group quickly agrees and begins undressing to swim. Judy feels uncomfortable, but she doesn't want to be teased, so she joins in anyway. (passive)
4. Jim's friend Kyle borrowed his shirt last month. Jim has asked him repeatedly to give the shirt back, but Kyle keeps forgetting. Jim calls Kyle and offers to come by his house to get the shirt. (assertive)
5. Judy and her boyfriend are making out, and her boyfriend takes off his shirt. Judy tells him that things are moving too fast for her and asks him to put his shirt back on. (assertive)
6. Jim is at a friend's house with a group and they all want to see a horror movie. Jim doesn't like horror movies, but he doesn't want to upset his friends. He stays and watches the movie, even though it scares him. (passive)
7. Judy and Michael have been dating for a while and always go out to eat on Saturday nights. Michael always asks Judy where she would like to eat, and she always says, "wherever you'd like to go is fine with me." (passive)

8. Jim has been dating his girlfriend Carrie for several months and cares a lot about her. At a party, Jim sees her kissing another guy. Jim gets angry and begins yelling at Carrie and hitting the other guy. (aggressive)
9. Judy's teacher asks her to stay after class to talk about her test paper. The teacher offers to give her a better grade if she goes out to dinner with him. Judy asks her girl scout leader to help her report it to a school official. (assertive)
10. Jim is hanging out with some of his male friends at the swimming pool. They decide to rate women as they walk by in their swimsuits. Some of the guys begin making crude comments to the women as well as rude hand gestures. This makes Jim uncomfortable. He asks them to stop and tells them they're getting out of bounds. They continue and Jim decides to leave. (assertive)

NOTE: If time permits this activity could be expanded by discussing how to make passive and aggressive scenarios into assertive scenarios.

#### Discussion: Sexual Harassment

Ask the following questions to the students and discuss the answers. It's important to let them offer as much information as possible so that the discussion will be relevant to their situation and you can have the opportunity to address misinformation.

1. What is sexual harassment? Explain that sexual harassment is a type of aggressive communication that is against the law. It can be defined as any **UNWELCOME** behavior of a sexual nature. The word harassment means annoying, teasing or bothering someone. We add sexual to the word harassment when the behavior involves doing something hurtful to that person because that person is a boy or a girl. Sexual harassment is done without any concern for the wishes or comfort of another person.  
Sometimes people get confused between sexual harassment and flirting. Flirting is a way to show someone that you really like him or her. What is the difference between sexual harassment and flirting? Flirting makes someone feel good. It is an assertive behavior because it honors both people, and it's fun. Sexual harassment is an aggressive behavior because it makes a person feel afraid, confused and it's not fun. Sexual harassment doesn't honor the other person.  
**It's important to understand that sexual harassment is not about the intent of the harasser. It is about whether or not the behavior is**

**welcome by the recipient.**

Examples are:

- touching (arm, breast, buttock, shoulders, etc.)
- verbal comments (about parts of the body or what type of sex the victim would be good at)
- name calling (honey, sweetie, etc.)
- sexual or dirty jokes
- pulling down someone's pants
- standing too close to someone
- rating an individual (on a scale of 1-10 for example)
- wedgies
- rude hand gestures
- howling, catcalls, etc.

**2. What can you do if it happens to you?**

\* If it's safe, assertively communicate that the behavior is unwanted. The person may not know it's unwanted and stop immediately if you let them know.

\* If the behavior continues tell a trusted adult. They can help you report it to a teacher or school administrator if it happens at school. A trusted adult can often help you report it in other places as well. Who are some adults that you trust to help you?

\* Document the harassing behavior. Write down what happened, when it happened and where it happened. Write down who you told and the date.

\* If the first person you ask for help isn't helpful, keep trying. There are people out there who can help you.

\* You can contact the Family Resource Center for help as well.

**Activity: Assertiveness and Compliments**

Often, people confuse verbal sexual harassment with the giving of a compliment. Sometimes people perceive comments about someone's body and its attractiveness as

complimentary rather than sexually harassing. There are some important differences. First, part of the definition of sexual harassment is that the sexual behavior is **UNWANTED**. Unwanted sexual comments can never honor those on the receiving end and is aggressive communication. A true compliment honors the person receiving it, so it is an assertive form of communication. Also, true compliments never manipulate another person or make them uncomfortable.

Giving compliments can be an important part of assertive communication.

Divide the students into groups of 3-4, and let them choose who they'd like to be with so that they'll be comfortable discussing the questions. You also might want to read the discussion questions before you let them find groups. Assist anyone having trouble finding a group to join.

1. What is the best compliment you've ever received?
2. What made it a good compliment?

Give the students 3-4 minutes to discuss and then announce a contest. The groups will have 2 minutes to write down as many ways as they can think of to compliment someone without making comments that might make someone feel uncomfortable, fearful or disrespected. After the students make their lists, let each group share with the class. If you wish you can bring a bag of candy as a prize and give groups a piece for each compliment on their list. (Just make sure everyone gets at least one piece.)

Closure: Pass out brochures on sexual harassment and the Family Resource Center. Ask students if there are any questions and answer them. Thank them for their participation.

Post-test: Pass out the post-test papers and read the questions to students again. Have the circle the answers and take them up.

## Assertive Communication Pre-Test

Circle the best answer.

Ann Marie needed to move the pile of wood, but she was tired and wanted help.

1. Which choice is an example of passive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
2. Which choice is an example of aggressive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
3. Which choice is an example of assertive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
4. Which of the following is an example of sexual harassment?
  - a. Lisa sees Malik outside the school playing football and calls him names like fatso and stupid.
  - b. Jessica and Matt give each other a hug each morning when they meet at school. They are good friends, and a quick hug is their way of saying hello.
  - c. When Michelle is walking home from school, 2 kids who live in her neighborhood start teasing her about kissing boys. They tell her that they are going to tell everyone at school what she did.

## Assertive Communication Post-Test

Circle the best answer.

Ann Marie needed to move the pile of wood, but she was tired and wanted help.

1. Which choice is an example of passive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
2. Which choice is an example of aggressive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
3. Which choice is an example of assertive communication?
  - a. Ann Marie asks her brother to help her move the wood.
  - b. Ann Marie moves the wood by herself.
  - c. Ann Marie finds her brother and says, "Get down here, lazy! I'm moving this wood all by myself and I can't believe you aren't helping!"
  
4. Which of the following is an example of sexual harassment?
  - a. Lisa sees Malik outside the school playing football and calls him names like fatso and stupid.
  - b. Jessica and Matt give each other a hug each morning when they meet at school. They are good friends, and a quick hug is their way of saying hello.
  - c. When Michelle is walking home from school, 2 kids who live in her neighborhood start teasing her about kissing boys. They tell her that they are going to tell everyone at school what she did.

# 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Session #2

## Changing Our Culture

### Objectives:

1. Students will define sexual assault.
2. Students will identify at least three major societal factors that create a climate where sexual violence exists.
3. Students will work together to create an example of media that seeks to address and change these societal factors.

Rationale: In order to have a fruitful discussion about the issues of sexual assault and the cultural factors that help create and reinforce its existence, students must first define sexual assault. Then, students can move on to use critical thinking skills to analyze causes of the problem. Students will work together to create media-based response to some of these causes for several reasons. Media influences are a powerful part of this problem, and a powerful part of teenagers' lives. Also, teens are at a stage in their development where creativity, and problem solving skills are high. Their ideas might just change the world, and it's important to give voice to those ideas.

### Standards of Learning:<sup>2</sup>

1. Information Access and Use: The student will access and analyze information for the purpose of improving personal and family health. Key concepts and skills include:  
6.6b: recognition of the persuasive tactics used by various types of media

Supplies Needed: Pre-test, Post-test, Ben and Shawna scenarios, Sexual Assault brochures, FRC brochures, small poster board, markers, teen magazines, gender stereotype cards

Introduction: Introduce yourself as a teacher from the Family Resource Center. Explain (or remind the students) that the FRC provides services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Go over some of the services we provide:

- crisis hotline
- accompany victims of sexual assault and domestic violence to the hospital and to court

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf)

- emergency shelter
- individual counseling
- support groups
- education/presentations
- We serve Wythe, Smyth, Bland, Carroll, Grayson and Galax.

Pre-test: Name 3 things in our culture that influence our ideas about sexual assault.

### Activity #1: Discussion

1. Define sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual activity that can include kissing, touching of private parts or sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse is also when an adult engages in ANY sexual activity with someone under the age of 18. It is not appropriate for adults to have those kinds of relationships with teens because there is such a huge difference in power. It's never fair to the younger person.
2. What can you do if you or someone you know is sexually abused?
  - Tell an adult that you trust. Have the students identify trustworthy people.
  - Call the Family Resource Center and talk to someone.
  - Remember that it's not your fault.
  - You deserve to get medical care.
3. Go over the factors listed below as things in our society that keep us from addressing the problem of sexual abuse.
  - \* **Silence:** Sexual abuse is not something we talk about, so people don't think it happens very often. It actually happens to 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys. But, because we don't talk about it very often, people think it's not a big problem.
  - \* **Media Influences:** There are many television shows, movies, advertisements and magazines that show women and men as sex objects or make us seem valuable only for our looks or sexuality. Ask the students to offer some examples of a media that they think contribute to this problem.
  - \* **Gender Roles:** Gender roles are what we think men should do because they are men and what we think women should do because they are women. The idea that men are supposed to be sexually aggressive and that women are supposed to fight them off can make us think that sexual abuse is normal behavior when it is against the law and wrong.

### Activity #2: What do you like about being a boy/girl?<sup>3</sup>

Hand out sets of shuffled cards to groups of 4-6 students. The cards will have the following phrases on them: powerful, strong, aggressive, weak, passive, indecisive, athletic, good with children, kind, generous, creative, graceful, logical, understands feelings, like to talk, like to shop, cries when something is upsetting

Instruct them to sort them into 2 piles: those that describe males and those that describe females. After the students sort the cards, point out that each card could describe either any person, male or female. Then, discuss these questions with the entire class:

- \* Which cards did you put in the "describes males" piles?
- \* What cards did you put in the "describes females" piles?
- \* Who sends us messages about how males and females are supposed to act?
- \* Which characteristics do our society tell us are more valuable? Why do you think that is?

### Activity #3: Discussion

What kinds of things can we do to change the way people think about sexual abuse, gender roles, silence, and media influences? (Some examples of answers are listed below, but try to let the students generate at least some of their own ideas. Students are more likely to enact and own their own ideas.)

- \* Educate our friends.
- \* Look at media (tv, books, music, advertisements, etc.) with a critical eye.
- \* Be a part of positive peer pressure. Let your friends know that it's not acceptable to treat others with disrespect, make fun of someone for setting sexual limits, etc.)

### Activity #4: Changing Our Culture

Divide the students into groups of 4-5. Give each group a poster board, some magazines, a pair of scissors and a glue stick. Ask each group to look through the magazines and talk about what they are trying to communicate about gender roles. Let groups cut out

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.brown.edu/Students/MAT/2005/kwentwor/s3\\_sexunit.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Students/MAT/2005/kwentwor/s3_sexunit.pdf)

pictures and/or articles that show different gender roles and make a collage by pasting them on poster board. Have each group share their collage with the class.

Closure: Pass out brochures with information about sexual assault and the Family Resource Center. Ask if the students have any questions they would like to ask.

Post-test: Name 3 things in our culture that influence our ideas about sexual assault.

## Pre-Test: Changing Our Culture

Name 3 things in our culture that influence our ideas about sexual assault:

1.

2.

3.

## Post-Test: Changing Our Culture

Name 3 things in our culture that influence our ideas about sexual assault:

1.

2.

3.

# Healthy Relationships

## Objectives:

1. Students will identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
2. Students will identify healthy ways to resolve conflicts in relationships.
3. Students will identify positive actions to take if they are in a violent relationship.

Rationale: Recognizing characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships is crucial to ending dating violence. It teaches young people not only what kind of relationships to avoid, but also what kind of relationships to try to build.

## Standards of Learning:<sup>4</sup>

1. Knowledge and Skills: The student will analyze the consequences of personal choices on health and well being. Key skills and concepts include:  
6.4d: identification of risk behaviors
2. Knowledge and Skills: The student will demonstrate injury prevention and management skills to promote personal and family health. Key concepts and skills include:  
6.5e: awareness of behaviors that can result in violent acts
3. Knowledge and Skills: The student will access and analyze information for the purpose of improving personal and family health. Key concepts and skills include:  
6.6a: assessment of personal and family wellness

Supplies Needed: index cards, Healthy Argument handouts, Healthy Relationships handouts, Brochures on the FRC and dating violence

Introduction: Introduce yourself as a teacher from the Family Resource Center. Explain (or remind the students) that the FRC provides services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Go over some of the services we provide:

- crisis hotline
- accompany victims of sexual and domestic violence to the hospital and to court
- emergency shelter

---

<sup>4</sup> [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/healthsol.pdf)

- individual counseling
- support groups
- education/presentations
- We serve Wythe, Smyth, Bland, Carroll, Grayson and Galax.

Pre-test: Ask the students to respond to the following questions and write down their responses.

1. What are some ways you would describe healthy relationships?
2. What are some ways you would describe unhealthy relationships?
3. What are some healthy ways to deal with disagreements?

Introductory Activity:

Write the following words or phrases on 3 by 5 index cards:

- asking about what touches make you comfortable or uncomfortable
- touching you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable
- one person makes all the decisions
- you both participate in the decision making
- demands you dress a certain way
- respects your choices about how you dress
- allows you time with other people
- expects you to spend all your time with them
- keeps your private information private
- tells other people your secrets
- lies to you
- is honest with you
- it's safe to disagree
- yells, shoves, hits or kicks you when you disagree
- asks how you are feeling
- doesn't care about your feelings
- listens to you
- interrupts you constantly
- forces you or intimidates you into doing things you don't want to
- respects your boundaries
- values your opinion
- belittles your opinions
- gets mad at you over little things or things you don't have control over
- say I'm sorry when they upset you and stop doing whatever was upsetting

- says I'm sorry when they upset you but continues to repeat the upsetting behavior anyway
- blames alcohol or drugs for their anger or behavior
- takes responsibility for his or her actions
- both people can see things from the other's perspective
- a "my way is the only way" attitude
- obsessive jealousy
- you trust each other

Ask students to read what is on their card. Tell them all the phrases on the cards describe relationships, friendships or boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. Some describe healthy relationships, others unhealthy. Have those with unhealthy relationship cards go to one side of the room and those with healthy relationship cards go to the other. (NOTE: The class can give input on which card goes with which side so that no one is singled out.) Then, have the students read take turns reading their cards. When everyone has read their card, students can return to their seats.

#### Discussion:

1. What are some characteristics of relationships that are abusive? (hitting, kicking, pushing, name calling, threatening suicide if someone breaks up with you, etc.)
2. Is violence ever an acceptable solution to a problem in a relationship? (no)
3. What can you do if you're in a violent or abusive relationship? (tell an adult and/or friend you trust, get advice on how to end it, call the FRC)
4. What are some ways to deal with disagreements that don't involve violence?

#### Activity: How to Have a Healthy Argument

Pass out the handouts on how to have a healthy argument and go over each of these points:

- Only deal with one problem at a time.
- Describe how the problem affects you.
- Describe the problem without attacking the other person.
- Ask how the person is feeling.
- Keep an open mind and listen to what the other person says.

- Talk without interruptions.
- Keep a sense of humor, but don't make fun of the other person.
- Don't argue under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Don't try to have one winner and one loser.
- Take a break if you are not getting any closer to reaching an agreement.
- Do not destroy property.
- There is NEVER an excuse for violence. Period.
- Once you have come up with a solution to the problem, remember it doesn't have to be permanent.

Activity: What do we want from relationships?

Divide the class into 2 groups, a girls group and a guys group. Give each group 3-4 minutes to come up with a list of ways that describe how they like their friends to treat them. When the time is up, have each group share their list. Point out the similarities in what girls and guys want from friendships. Then, explain that these are also the same ways that we want boyfriends/girlfriends to treat us as well.

Activity: Healthy or Unhealthy?

Ask several students to volunteer to read the following scenarios. Then, the students can decide if they describe healthy or unhealthy relationships and why.

## Healthy/Unhealthy Relationship Scenarios

- Suzanne and Jason are at the homecoming football game together. Suzanne wants Jason to sit with her and her friends, but Jason says he wants them to sit alone. Jason never wants Suzanne to be with her friends.
- Carrie likes Kyle and wants him to be her boyfriend. She starts writing him notes and putting them in his locker. At first Kyle was flattered, but now the things she writes in the notes make Kyle uncomfortable.
- Jackie and Sarah have been friends since grade school. Jackie is also good friends with Marsha and Jeanne. Sarah doesn't like Marsha and Jeanne and threatens to stop hanging out with Jackie if she continues to be their friends.
- Tony and Maria have been a couple for three weeks. Tony's friend Carla asks Tony to come over to her house to play video games when her parents aren't home. Maria is uncomfortable with Tony and Carla being alone, and asks Tony to think about inviting another person to join them.
- Juan and Sarah started hanging out a couple of weeks before Valentine's

Day. When they talked about doing something special to celebrate, Sarah demands that Juan buy her a nice ring to show how much he cares about her. Juan doesn't want Sarah to break up with him, so he buys her the ring.

- Mark and Jonathan are riding the bus and some other boys start making fun of Jonathan's clothes. They ask Mark, "don't you think he looks ridiculous?" Mark tells them that he doesn't appreciate it when people make fun of his friends- no matter what they're wearing.
- Kristen tells Andy something private and asks Andy to keep it a secret. The next day at school everyone knows Kristen's secret.
- Angela and Jody are making plans for Valentine's Day. They want it to be special. They decide to exchange homemade gifts and go to the school's Valentine's Day dance with friends.

Closure/Post-Test: Pass out handouts on healthy relationships and brochures about the Family Resource Center and healthy relationships. Ask if students have any questions. Then ask the students to respond to the following questions again and write down their responses.

1. What are some ways you would describe healthy relationships?
2. What are some ways you would describe unhealthy relationships?
3. What are some healthy ways to deal with disagreements?