

# Breaking Up is Hard to Do but Not Impossible

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

*Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.*

## NSES ALIGNMENT:

**CHR.8.INF.1** – Analyze how peers, family, media, society, culture, and a person's intersecting identities can influence attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about relationships

**CHR.8.SM.1** – Describe strategies a student might use to end an unhealthy relationship, including involving a trusted adult who can help

**TARGET GRADE:** Grade 8

**TIME:** 50 minutes

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Laptop
- Projector
- Screen
- Access to [www.mentimeter.com](http://www.mentimeter.com)
- Tablets/computers/or cell phones for student access
- Guide to the Healthy Breakup (one copy per student)
- Strategies for the Healthy Breakup - one per student
- Unhealthy Relationship National Resources - one per student

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze at least two external influences on a person's attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about relationships [Skill]
2. Identify at least one strategy to end a relationship [Knowledge]
3. List at least two resources that can be helpful when ending an unhealthy relationship [Knowledge]

## LESSON RATIONALE:

Learning how to identify the difference between healthy vs. unhealthy relationships is essential, but learning how to end a relationship is equally important. The ending of a relationship is often portrayed as a tumultuous event that could leave all parties in a negative space. This lesson identifies why a person views relationships the way they do, looks at strategies to end a relationship respectfully, and shares resources to provide support when ending unhealthy relationships.

## ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Prior to the lesson please access the word cloud feature at [Mentimeter.com](http://Mentimeter.com). Menti is an online engagement tool that allows for polling, quizzes, word clouds, etc. Menti requires creating an account but is free to use. Set up an account at [Mentimeter.com](http://Mentimeter.com) and access your account using school Wi-Fi to ensure full accessibility during class.

If you choose to not use Mentimeter there are word cloud tools online that can be found via a Google search. Be aware that some word cloud generators require the teacher to type in each word shared via the brainstorm.

At mentimeter, please create two word cloud prompts:

- What do you think of when you hear the word relationship?
- What do you think of when you hear the phrase break-up?

Be prepared to share the unique access link for Mentimeter with students so that they might be able to participate.

Students will need to use laptops, or computers in order to participate in the creation of the word cloud. If technology is an

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issue schedule the technology lab or reserve devices from the school if possible. If needed, students can pair up if devices are limited.

Print the Guide to the Healthy Breakup for each student.

Print one copy of the strategy half sheets and cut them so you can distribute one strategy to each group.

Print the unhealthy relationship national support resource cards and cut so that they can be distributed to each student. If possible you could also ask the students to take a picture of the resource card to save in their cell phones.

### PROCEDURE:

#### STEP 1:

Begin the class by saying, **“We are going to start class with a little art and create a word cloud. Raise your hand if you have ever created or seen a word cloud.”** Use this opportunity to see if any students need an explanation. If additional information is needed, say **“Word clouds are created by using a lot of different words together to create an image. If a word is added more than once it becomes bigger and bigger. The more times the word is added the larger it becomes. So, let’s try creating one. I’m going to ask you two questions and I would like you to think of romantic relationships when you answer the questions. While friendships and connections with family are meaningful we are going to focus on romantic relationships because starting and ending these kinds of relationships can be really challenging.”**

Ask students to open/start their devices and go to [www.mentimeter.com](http://www.mentimeter.com). Once there you will be able to share the unique code associated with your tool with your students. Make sure you write the code on the board or project it on the screen. Ask the students to plug in the Mentimeter code you shared with them. Launch the first word cloud prompt: What do you think of when you hear the word relationship? Allow students to populate the word cloud and then process the larger words in the cloud. Feel free to use the following probing questions.

- Why do you think so many of us think of [enter largest word] when we hear relationships?
- Would you say that as a class we have a positive, negative, or neutral view of relationships? What evidence supports your opinion?
- What can influence a person’s thoughts, beliefs and opinions about relationships? For example, past experiences, friends, family, their faith, etc.

Keep the word cloud projected on the screen and ask them to take out a sheet of paper and free write for three minutes on what influences their ideas on relationships. Once the time has passed, ask the students to circle the two strongest influences. Write one sentence explaining why they believe those are the two strongest influences. Ask a couple of students to share their sentence with the class, if willing.

(15 minutes)

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### STEP 2:

Say, **“Okay, we have looked at relationships and the different influences that help us shape what we think and how we respond to relationships. Now we are going to look at break-ups.”**

Ask the students to re-access the Mentimeter link you shared with them. Launch the second word cloud prompt: What do you think of when you hear the phrase break-up? Allow students to populate the word cloud and then process the larger words in the cloud. Feel free to use the following probing questions.

- “Why do you think so many of us think of [enter largest word] when we hear break-up?”
- “Would you say that as a class we have a positive, negative, or neutral view of break-ups?”
- “Does ending a relationship have to be a negative or bad experience and why?”

Say, **“Ending a relationship is often seen as a negative or even traumatic experience. We see that in the media, perhaps we have even seen in it in the relationships we are involved in or around. Ending a relationship does not have to be overwhelming or bad. We are going to review ideas on how to have a healthy break up because not all relationships are meant to last forever and when it is time for one to end we can try to end it in a way that respects all involved.”**

(10 minutes)

### STEP 3:

Separate the class into five groups and give them the following instructions.

Say, **“Each group is going to receive a strategy on how to end a relationship in a healthy way. Read about your strategy and then as a group come up with a way to teach the class about your strategy. You will have about five minutes to review your strategy and then 3 minutes to share with the class. When you are not presenting you will be taking notes and filling out your Guide to the Healthy Break-up as you listen to your peers so that after each group has gone you should all have a complete guide. What questions do you have?”**

Watch the time and allow them about five minutes to review and prepare their share out to the class. Then ask for volunteers to share their strategy or go in the order of the guide. Distribute a strategy half sheet to each group and a Guide to the Healthy Break-up packet to each student. Once each group has shared, check in with the students to ensure that everyone has something written down about each strategy. This can be done by walking around the room to monitor that all students are writing during the exercise or asking students if they need more information after each strategy.

(20 minutes)

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### STEP 4:

As you begin to close the class, distribute the resource card for ending an unhealthy relationship.

In closing say, **“It’s important to understand that a break up can be a healthy experience but not all relationships are healthy and therefore the priority would be ending that relationship quickly as opposed to using the strategies we just discussed. If someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship and needs to end it as quickly as possible there are resources available to them in order to do so. I will share a resource card to access support when leaving an unhealthy relationship, and if you ever need these again just ask and I’m happy to share. I encourage each of you to take a picture of your card so that it is easy for you to find should you or a friend ever need it. Thank you so much for your hard work today.”**

(5 minutes)

**NOTE TO THE TEACHER:** *It can help to add the national phone number, text line and web address resources shared in the resources to end an unhealthy relationship card to your email signature line so that any time you communicate with a student you are reinforcing their ability to access these resources if they should ever need them.*

# Guide to the Healthy Break-Up

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	I LIKE/DON'T LIKE THIS STRATEGY BECAUSE...
1. AVOID GHOSTING		
2. ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOOD MEMORIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP		
3. MINIMIZE DAMAGE		
4. PROVIDE SPACE AND DISTANCE		
5. ALLOW YOURSELF TO HEAL		

# Guide to the Healthy Break Up Strategy Half Sheets

\*Please print, cut and distribute one strategy to each of the five groups

## **AVOID GHOSTING**

Ending a relationship can be a difficult experience especially for the person who has decided to walk away. This might make someone feel uncomfortable, scared, guilty, sad, etc. All of these feelings are valid. While a person might not feel comfortable the solution is not to avoid the person completely and disappear or ghost them. If you are ending a relationship, it would be best to do so in person. Clearly end the relationship and don't allow for false hope of it continuing. By ending the relationship via a conversation this allows all people in the relationship the ability to have closure in knowing that the relationship has officially ended.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOOD MEMORIES OF THE RELATIONSHIP**

Even when a relationship is coming to an end and there might have been some negative interactions at that point most relationships have positive memories or starts. Acknowledging that there was positive in the relationship can remind you to continue with that respect as the relationship comes to an end. At some point you probably cared for this person and potentially still do, so remember that as you end the relationship. By remembering the good memories, it doesn't mean that the relationship should continue but it is a more honest review of what happened in the entire relationship instead of only focusing on everything that went wrong.

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## **MINIMIZE DAMAGE**

Ending a relationship is a painful experience for the person who is being broken up with as well as for the person who is doing the breaking up. It is okay to be sad and disappointed. While this can be sad it does not have to be damaging. When ending a relationship there is no need to point blame at the other person, call them names, or try to belittle them or the relationship. Treating the other person with respect and minimizing the damage that an already painful experience of breaking up creates goes a long way in having a healthy break up. The goal is to end the relationship, not to destroy the other person and their self-esteem.

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## **PROVIDE SPACE AND DISTANCE**

When ending a relationship there might initially be a desire to keep this person in your life as friend and some people are able to do that successfully. Immediately following the break up it is important to allow some space and distance from each other to allow all parties the ability to digest the new normal of the relationship being over. While it can be difficult, not calling, texting, snapchatting, etc. will allow all involved an ability to adjust to life without the relationship. Then later, if a friendship is mutually desired that can be explored.

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## **ALLOW YOURSELF TO HEAL**

Whether you have been broken up with or have broken up with someone you will need to take time to heal. It is okay to be sad, it is okay to feel relieved, it is okay to feel guilty, it is okay to be happy. Regardless of how you feel it is important to allow this time to explore your feelings and meet your needs. Take extra good care of yourself. Hang out with family and friends who make you happy. Find something that you enjoy doing like a new hobby. Treat yourself to things that bring you joy and focus on yourself.