



Honouring Me and You

Grades 6-8

Humans are social beings with a need for healthy and supportive relationships, especially during times of uncertainty. Activities in this unit will help support the development of healthy relationships, both in-person and online. The activities will help you grow relationship skills as you learn the importance of connecting with yourself, connecting with others, and connecting with your community.

Honouring Me: *Connecting with Myself*

Healthy relationships make us more resilient, which means we handle life's challenges better. This is important! Sometimes, relationships can be unhealthy. This can happen to people of any age, sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, or religion.

We all need love and emotional connection to survive. A good place to start receiving love and connection is from ourselves. We can love ourselves by practicing **self-compassion**. There are three components to self-compassion: self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness.



Self-kindness

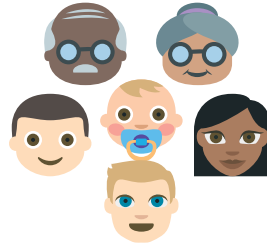
Treating yourself the way you would treat a supportive friend.



Self-kindness happens when...

we notice our thoughts when they are unkind

we re-frame the thoughts with a positive?



Common humanity

Recognizing that everyone struggles and we are not alone



Common humanity happens when...

we stop asking "why me?"

we stop feeling alone and afraid



Mindfulness

Noticing how to pay attention to each moment and experience.



Mindfulness happens when...

we notice what is happening right now

we notice and celebrate happy experiences

we notice that we are being too hard on ourself

Self-compassion means we love and accept ourselves deeply and respectfully. We can turn this self-care outward to others and grow healthy relationships. (Neff, 2014)

Breath, Body, Need: An activity to grow self-compassion

- Sit in a quiet place and check in with your breath.
- Take a deep breath in and release a deep breath out.
- Repeat 3-10 times.
- As you sit quietly, check in with your body to notice whatever is happening in the moment. Are your shoulders tight? Is your mind racing? Can you feel the breath in your body?
- Then turn your attention to your needs. What might your thoughts be telling you – do you have a need to feel safe, peace, or love? What do you want or need right now? Listen to yourself and know it is okay to have needs.



Follow-up Activities

Try one or both of these activities or create your own to practice self-compassion.

1. Write or Vlog like no one is watching! Write or record a message to yourself as if you are a supportive friend giving yourself advice about something you are struggling with right now.
2. Create a visual image of what "calm" looks like. Use collage, sketching, photography, or other visual means to create your work.

Self-compassion and being calm are tools that help maintain successful relationships.

Honouring You: Connecting with Others

Healthy Relationships

Mi'kmaq have the highest regard for the web of relationships between the land, animals, plants, waterways, and people.

Mi'kmaw cultural values inform all aspects of life and interactions. These cultural values help develop healthy relationships and are passed on to future generations.

For example, respect is learned and sustained by fostering respect for all people and things. Also, sharing is at the heart of the culture and extends from food and childcare to land and resources. Sharing is an extension of the interdependence of life and the respect for all things.

(Mi'kmawey'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk: Teaching about the Mi'kmaq, 2015)

The Mi'kmaq, Peskotomuhkati and the Wolastoqey are members of the Wabanaki confederacy together with the Abenaki and the Penobscot.

If you are interested in learning more about Mi'kmaw cultural values, [click here](#) or [here](#) if you would like a pronunciation guide.



Adapted with permission from Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre

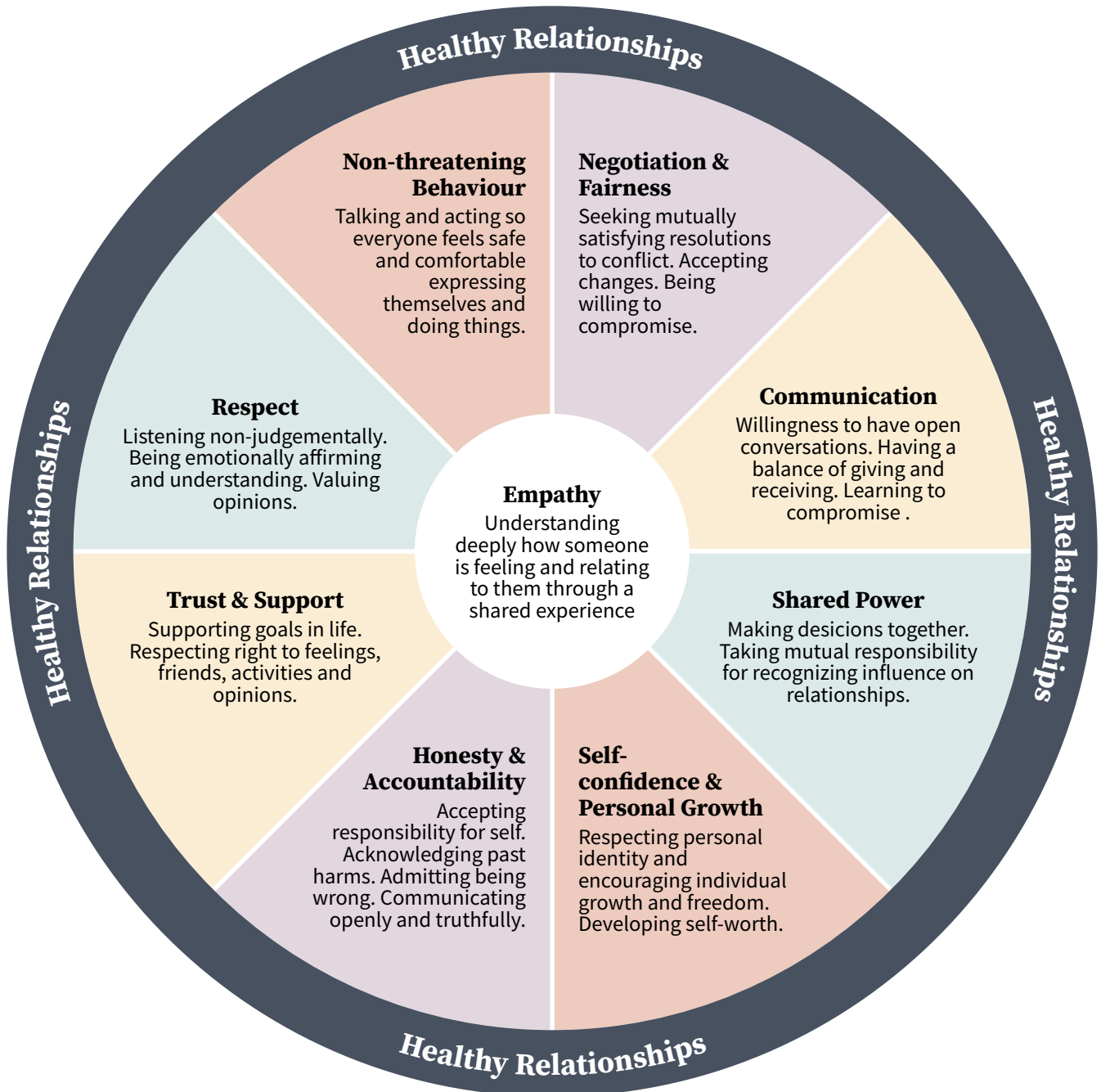
Healthy Relationship Wheel

Humans are social beings with a need for healthy and supportive relationships, especially during times of uncertainty. Healthy relationships can take many forms. For example, you have relationships with your friends and classmates, your teachers, and your family and siblings. You may have romantic relationships, too.

Want to learn more about what makes a relationship healthy?

[Check this out!](#)

Take a minute to consider the healthy relationship wheel below.



Adapted from www.avaloncentertn.org/dv-sa-information-resources

Follow-up Activity

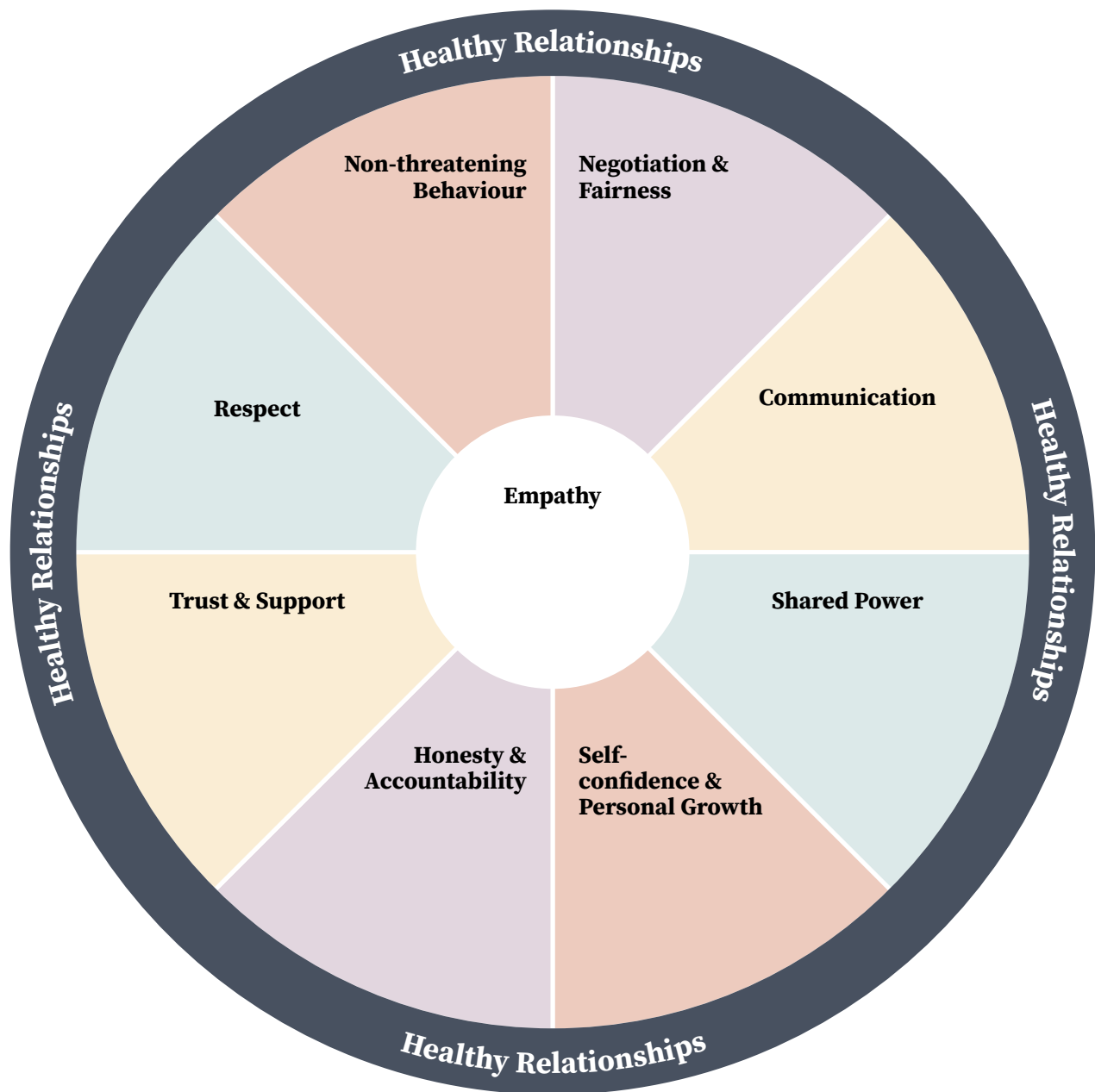
Reflect on the Mi'kmaq cultural values and the Healthy Relationship Wheel as you develop your own healthy way of relating to others.

Think of a time when you were able to demonstrate some of these qualities in a positive way.

- What things are important to a healthy relationship in your mind?
- Are they similar or different from the wheel/circles provided?
- Are there aspects you want to add or delete?

Work alone or with a friend to fill in the blank wheel below or create your own.

How do you know when you are in a healthy relationship?



Boundaries in Relationships

Boundaries are the guidelines you establish to teach others how you want to be treated, and they are essential in maintaining a healthy relationship. Personal boundaries help us understand what is ok, not ok, safe and unsafe when it comes to the relationships we have with people. If your partner is not respecting your boundaries, you need to discuss that with them. If you feel unsafe doing so, that may be a warning sign that you are in an unhealthy relationship.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection provides information and activities on boundaries. Click [here](#) if you want to read more.

Physical

This is your 'personal bubble'. You decide who is allowed in and how!



Emotional

Think of these as your 'personal bubble' around your mind and your heart!



Digital

Think of these as your 'personal bubble' around your online spaces.



(Canadian Red Cross, 2015; Love is Respect, 2017; What's the Deal, 2016.)

You might not always have the same boundary needs as your needs may change. The needs of others might change too. Listen carefully for boundaries so you can be sure to respect them.

Healthy Communication

There are two forms of communication: verbal and nonverbal. In addition, there are multiple communication styles: assertive, aggressive, passive and passive-aggressive.

When in a relationship, it is important that you are able to communicate effectively with your partner.

For **healthier** communication, try to:

ACTIVELY LISTEN. This skill shows others that you are interested and understand what they are saying. You are not actively listening to someone if you already know how you are going to respond, or are thinking of how to respond, before they have finished talking.

FIND THE RIGHT TIME. Find a time to talk when both you and your partner are free of distractions, not stressed, or in a rush. This may involve scheduling time to talk if one or both of you are busy.

TALK FACE TO FACE. Don't talk about serious matters through text, email, letters, or over the phone. Messages can easily be misunderstood. Communicating in person is the best idea. If you are having trouble collecting your thoughts, consider writing them down ahead of time and reading them out loud to your partner.

DO NOT ATTACK. Your tone of voice and choice of words can influence how your partner will respond. For instance, using "you" (e.g. "You don't listen to me") can seem attacking, which can make your partner defensive. When approaching your partner, try using "I" or "we" instead. For example, say: "I feel like WE haven't been as close lately" instead of "YOU have been distant with me."

BE HONEST. Honesty is very important in a healthy relationship. Being open with a partner creates a trusting and supportive relationship.

BE AWARE OF YOUR BODY LANGUAGE. Let your partner know you are listening by giving them your full attention: sit up, face them and make eye contact. Do not cross your arms or roll your eyes when your partner is talking. Do not answer a phone call or text during a conversation. Show your partner you respect them by listening and responding appropriately.

USE THE 48 HOUR RULE. If you are upset with your partner, try taking 48 hours to think and process your emotions. If you are still upset after 48 hours, talk to your partner and discuss how you are feeling.

(Love is Respect, 2017b)

Follow-Up Activity

Find a friend who can practice these communication skills with you online and take turns practicing these new skills. Your partner will:

- a. guess what skill you are using.
- b. provide specific and corrective feedback on the skill you've demonstrated.

If you prefer to do this as a solo activity (by yourself), record yourself practicing the healthy communication skills and give yourself feedback to continue improving.



Verbal
communicating
with words

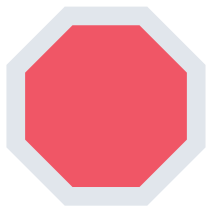


Non-verbal
communicating
with facial
expressions, body
language, and
eye contact

Conflict in Relationships

Conflict is a disagreement or a difference of opinion between people or groups. How do we tell the difference between a conflict and an unhealthy relationship?

When approaching a conflict, remember to:



Stop

Take a few deep breaths.



Feel

Recognize your feelings and be aware of what is making you upset.



Think

Think about what you want and try to understand the other person's point of view



Act

Work to resolve the conflict. Focus on a solution to the issue.

(Adapted from *Love is Respect*, 2017a)

Red flags are warning signs that you may be in an unhealthy relationship.

To check for red flags, ask yourself...

- ▶ Is your friend or partner jealous, possessive and insecure? Do they check your phone or social media to monitor what you are doing? *Remember - jealousy and love aren't the same thing!*
- ▶ Does your friend or partner want you to spend all of your time with them? Do you feel isolated from friends and family?
- ▶ Does your friend or partner put you down (e.g., call you mean names, say you can't do anything right, call you stupid)?
- ▶ Does your friend or partner try to control what you do and who you see?
- ▶ Does your friend or partner physically hurt or threaten to hurt you, your family, friends, pets or property?
- ▶ Does your friend or partner pressure you to do things you don't want to (e.g., drugs, alcohol, sexual activity)?

If you checked one or two items, it does not necessarily mean your relationship is unhealthy BUT it may be a good time to have a conversation about your safety and wellbeing. If feel unsafe having this conversation with your friend or partner, you may be in an unhealthy relationship.

Reaching Out: *Connecting with my community*

Abuse, or violence in a relationship, is also known as *family violence* or *intimate partner violence*. It can happen to anyone no matter their age, sex, gender, race, sexual orientation or religion. It can happen to people who are dating, married, common-law, broken up or divorced.

Whatever you're feeling is normal and valid.

If you need someone to talk to, there are people who want to help you:

- **Kids Help Phone:** call 1-800-668-6868 to talk to someone, text CONNECT to 686868 to text with someone, or visit [Kids Help Phone](#) to find resources near you or to chat with someone. Available in French, English and Arabic.
- **Chimo:** call 1-800-667-5005 to talk to someone.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters:** visit [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) or call 1-800-263-9133
- **Support Services for Victims of Abuse** are also available across New Brunswick. To find resources in your area, visit [Support Services for Victims of Abuse](#).
- You can find more information on the **Love Shouldn't Hurt** [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages or at www.gnb.ca/violence.

Violence at home takes different forms: yelling, threats, throwing or breaking things, hurting a pet. It is never your fault.

People in abusive or violent relationships may find it very difficult to leave. They may be scared of what their partner will do. They may feel they have no place to go. They may not understand that the relationship is unhealthy. They may blame themselves (feel they did something wrong). They may be afraid their partner will get in trouble. They may not know where to go for help.

There are ways to help an individual stay safer and feel supported even if they are unable to leave the relationship.

- Listen
- Ask for help
- Tell them it's not their fault
- Continue being their friend
- Ask what they need to feel safe

Remember – most unhealthy relationships don't start out violent. The violence usually happens over time.

Reconnecting with Myself

We all have stories to tell and our stories help shape our character.

As a final project, consider these options:

- Create a collage of how you see yourself. You may use hand drawn sketches, pictures cut from magazines, online materials or other images to complete your work. Consider taking 2 'selfies': one using a filter and one without. Consider which of these images reflects the 'real' you and how the images represent who you are. For example, the image of a diamond ring might symbolize how my personality shines bright, but if you look closely, I'm very intricate.
- Write song lyrics or a rap about how you see yourself (check out "[Crooked Smile](#)" by J Cole for inspiration) OR write a spoken word piece about an issue, or life changing event that has impacted your life. (Watch "[If I Should Have a Daughter](#)" by Sarah Kay or "[And Still I Rise](#)" by Maya Angelou, and, the "[Crickets Have Arthritis](#)" by Shane Koyzcan for ideas). What picture can you create with your words? You may want to perform and record this work to share with others, or to keep in a portfolio.
- Think about significant events that have happened in your life and how those events are connected. Write down those ideas to create a theme web (visual). Then, write a monologue to tell your 'Life Story'. You may want to perform or record this to share with your friends and family, or you may want to keep it to yourself to reflect.

A **monologue** is a long speech by one actor in a play, movie or theatrical production.