

# WHAT IS LOVE?

Abuse  
Abusive Relationship  
Aggressive  
Control  
Domestic Violence  
Domestic Violence Act  
Perpetrator  
Victim

- ✓ 1. For learner to identify the behaviours and actions which contribute to a healthy romantic relationship and those which do not.
- ✓ 2. For learners to recognise the characteristics of an abusive relationship.

30 minutes

- **Worksheet:** 'What is Love?' (provided)
- ★ - **Handout:** 'Are You Headed for Trouble? Recognising the Warning Signs of Abuse.' (provided)
- **Blackboard and chalk or markers and paper.**

## PROCEDURE

### PRIOR TO CLASS

- 1 Research and collate a list of relevant services for domestic violence in your area.

### IN CLASS

- 2 Begin the class by asking learners how they define the word 'love'. Focus on 'romantic' love. A consensus definition should include attraction and affection/caring.
- 3 Divide the class into teams of two. Using the Worksheet 'What is Love?' (provided), ask each team to list behaviours and attitudes that they think show love towards a romantic partner, and those that do not depict loving behaviour. They should write these in the columns marked 'Love' and 'Not Love'.

#### Expect answers like:

LOVE	NOT LOVE
• Respect	• Aggression
• Caring	• Being controlling
• Trust	• Exerting power
• Acceptance	• Jealousy
• Concern	• Manipulation
• Patience	• Insults
• Listening	• Isolating someone
• Support	• Making false accusations
• Negotiation	• Threatening

- 4 Ask volunteers to share some of the words they have brainstormed, and write these in two lists on the board. As learners are calling out words, encourage debate and reflection on whether the words they have suggested are correctly categorised and whether variations of the same word/behaviour could be placed on either side of the list. For example, concern may be a loving behaviour, but concern that is too intense may be controlling.
- 5 Introduce the class to the idea of an abusive relationship, which involves behaviours that are controlling or otherwise harmful:

**ABUSE:** A pattern of behaviours used to **control** another person. Abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual in nature, or be a combination of all these types of behaviours.

- 6 Explain that abuse happens in both adult and teen dating relationships. As we don't often think of teen relationships as abusive, it is sometimes much harder for teens to recognise abuse, and also to reach out for help.
- 7 Provide learners with the Handout: 'Are You Headed for Trouble? The Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship'.
- 8 Remind learners that the **Domestic Violence Act** in South Africa includes protection for teens who are in dating relationships (whether they are short or long relationships, and whether they are sexual relationships or not). There are many NGOs and other service providers that can assist teens to get protection from abuse. Please provide learners with the following link to resources on domestic violence:
- 9 Provide learners with information you have collected on relevant local services, and also the following link to the MOSAIC website: <http://mosaic.org.za>, which has helpful information on domestic violence and the process of obtaining a protection order.

## TEACHER TIPS



### General

Although this exercise doesn't ask about personal experiences, and so should not carry a risk of triggering adverse reactions from learners who may have been or are the **victim** of an abusive relationship, any discussion of these topics requires sensitivity on the part of the teacher. In every class and school there are likely to be perpetrators and victims of violence. It is important for teachers to be mindful of this and to make sure that the discussion doesn't single out individuals or vilify people. It is more helpful to focus on the behaviour of a **perpetrator**, by saying things like 'it is wrong when someone verbally abuses someone else' rather than saying 'your boyfriend is wrong to abuse you'.

Different people in the class may have different opinions on what constitutes dating or domestic violence, and what is acceptable behaviour. Do not entertain long debates on this topic; rather refer to the definitions provided by the Domestic Violence Act.

Do not take on the role of counsellor during the class. If a learner discloses that they are in an abusive relationship, acknowledge their disclosure (by saying something like 'It was very brave of you to tell us that') and ask them to come to you after class so that you can provide them with more assistance. Be prepared with the telephone numbers and information of NGOs or other counselling services they could contact for assistance.



### **Making the Link with Gender and Violence**

This exercise explores and helps learners reflect about healthy romantic relationships as well as unhealthy or abusive ones. Learners who are in abusive relationships may not realise that they, too, are victims of domestic or dating violence, and may not know what they can do to protect themselves. This exercise provides a list of the warning signs of abuse.



### **Assessment Ideas**

Learners can be required to write a short paper about the attitudes and behaviours that appear in an abusive relationship of someone that they may have heard of, or may know. They do not have to disclose who the person is, and can use pseudonyms if they would like to. If they don't know or haven't heard of any anyone in an abusive relationship, they can make up a fictitious couple.





# ARE YOU HEADED FOR TROUBLE?

## ➔ RECOGNISING THE WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Make fun of or disparage the people that you care about, like your family and friends?
- Insult you, call you names or put you down?
- Pressure you to do things that you are not comfortable with, for example sexual activities?



## DOES YOUR PARTNER



- Act in a way that is very controlling, for example, telling you what to do or how to act, how to dress or who you can and can't speak to?
- Constantly check up on you – asking you questions like where you are, what you are doing and who you are with?
- Make you worried about how they will react to things you do or say?
- Believe strongly in rigid and stereotypical gender roles for girls and boys?

- Behave jealously?
- Abuse substances and/or alcohol?
- Isolate you from those you care about?
- Have an explosive temper?
- Blame you for their anger?
- Own weapons?

- Rush you into committing when you don't feel ready?
- Have a history of behaviour problems such as fighting, mistreating other people or hurting animals?
- Threaten or intimidate you, your family or friends?

- Constantly check up on you – asking you questions like where you are, what you are doing and who you are with?
- Talk badly about their previous partners, blaming only them for the failure of the relationship?
- Keep you from spending time with family and friends?
- Act too serious about your relationship too quickly?
- Stop you from breaking off the relationship?

**IF YOUR PARTNER DOES THESE THINGS, YOU MAY BE AT RISK OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.**



**RECOGNISE THE WARNING SIGNS, TALK TO SOMEONE AND GET HELP!**