

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES: SCENARIOS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Relationship Challenge #1 (Isolation)

Jamie: I have been having issues with my new boyfriend...he's really into me... but doesn't like when I hang out with friends without him. At first I thought it was just ones he didn't know, but now he even gets annoyed when I hang out with people in our friend group. What should I do?



FACILITATOR TIP

Students will come up with advice for Jamie. Supplement what the students say about this scenario with the following points, if needed:

- It's important to listen to your instincts and not let your boyfriend keep you from being with friends or family.
- **Isolation**—keeping you from others—is an unhealthy behavior that can be easy to miss because it might seem like the other person is just really into you. But this can be part of your boyfriend's attempt to control you.
- If you feel like you're being pulled away from people you care about, share your concerns with your boyfriend. In a healthy relationship, he will listen to you and change his behavior.
- If he doesn't, or if you feel uncomfortable talking with him about it, I suggest asking an adult you trust for advice.

Relationship Challenge #2 (Gaslighting)

Quinn: I've been having a problem with a friend. Lately, she acts like I'm stupid or something. When I'm talking to someone else, she jumps in and corrects me, which makes me feel bad about myself. I tried to talk with her about it, but she says I'm being ridiculous. Am I being too self-conscious?



FACILITATOR TIP

Students will come up with advice for Quinn. Supplement what the students say about this scenario with the following points, if needed:

- It can be difficult to have conversations about things like this with friends. When your friend says you're being ridiculous, she may be manipulating you so you start to doubt your own experience and begin to feel like you're being too sensitive. That type of manipulation is called "gaslighting."
- Remember to trust yourself and know that your feelings are valid. If you feel comfortable, find a time to talk calmly with your friend and explain how her behavior makes you feel. Tell her you are reaching out because you care about the friendship.
- If she continues to put you down after you've talked with her, it might be time to distance yourself from that relationship.

Relationship Challenge #3 (Lack of Trust)

Rowan: My best friend thinks I shared a secret about her. Now she is acting paranoid, like I'm spreading rumors about her. If she sees me Snapchatting or talking to other girls, she'll freak out and ask what I'm saying. It's frustrating and stressful, and I'm not sure how to talk to her about it.



FACILITATOR TIP

Students will come up with advice for Rowan. Supplement what the students say about this scenario with the following points, if needed:

- It sounds like your friend wants to be sure you don't share her secret with others, but she's not expressing her concerns in the best way. Try talking with her about her behavior and how it makes you feel.
- Often, when someone is feeling a lack of trust, the problem comes from a misunderstanding. Reassure her that you can be trusted and that you haven't spread any rumors about her.
- It's also possible that her insecurity has nothing to do with you. She may have been betrayed by someone else in the past. Try to have an open mind and be compassionate when you talk with her.
- Remember that you and your friend care about each other. You can't make her trust you, but if you show that you're committed to the friendship, that will help a lot!