Lesson for
What You See Isn’t What You’ll Get

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

1) Form an assertive statement to effectively communicate their needs to another person.
2) Describe at least one emotion they think they would feel if placed in a hypothetical relationship situation.
3) Identify at least one situation in their own life (past or present) in which assertive communication could be/could have been applied.

TIME NEEDED
50 minutes

MATERIALS
• Copies of “What You See Isn’t What You'll Get”—one per student
• Index cards or small slips of paper—one per student
• PowerPoint slide or newsprint or blackboard with the four questions listed under “Preparation”
• Pen or pencil for each student
• Blank pieces of 8 x 11 paper—one per student

PREPARATION
• Copy or paste each of the scenarios onto a different colored slip of paper or index card. (See Attachment A.) If you have more students than scenarios, you can give the same scenario to more than one student.
• Write the four questions below on the board or a piece of newsprint. (You can also create a PowerPoint slide with all four questions):

1. What’s the problem?
2. What’s the feeling?
3. What do you need?
4. What is one specific way your partner can meet your need?
• Gather pens or pencils and blank paper—enough for each student to have one of each.

PROCEDURE
1. Review class ground rules with your students. Let students know that today’s class is going to involve some skill practicing. [1 minute]
2. Distribute a copy of “What You See Isn’t What You'll Get” to each student. Ask for several volunteers to take turns reading paragraphs from the article out loud. [5 minutes]
3. When students have finished reading, use the following questions to encourage a brief discussion:

- What are some other examples of unrealistic media portrayals of sex and sexuality?
- In what ways do unrealistic media portrayals of sex and sexuality put teenagers at a disadvantage?
- How can teenagers use unrealistic media portrayals of sex and sexuality to start conversations with their partners? [10 minutes]

4. Tell students that today’s lesson is going to focus on a skill that is rarely depicted in Hollywood movies: effective communication. Explain to students that there are a variety of communication styles that people use in their everyday lives. Ask students if they can identify the three main styles of communication. Explain that the three main styles of communication are passive, aggressive and assertive.

Passive communication is when a person doesn’t say directly what he or she wants or what is important to him or her because a person thinks that what he or she has to say isn’t important for others to hear.

Aggressive communication is when a person communicates in a hostile or angry way, intimidating or belittling another person in the process and leaving no room for the other person to share his or her perspective.

Assertive communication is when a person communicates what he or she needs in a direct way that leaves room for the other person to also share his or her perspective.

Give an example of each style, starting with passive, then moving to aggressive, and finishing with assertive. Ask students to describe what happens when each type of communication is used, i.e. when someone uses passive communication, other people don’t know what that person wants or needs. [5 minutes]

5. Tell students that assertive communication is the most effective, yet often hardest, style to use in interpersonal relationships. This style of communication allows a person to say clearly what she or he wants without bullying or becoming submissive. Tell students that they are going to have a chance to practice this style of communication in a moment. Assertive communication will be another tool at their disposal if a situation ever comes up in their lives where it would come in handy.

6. Explain to students that the activity will consist of a hypothetical romantic relationship (not one that exists on their favorite TV show, just one that is realistic to their own age and life). Explain to students that they will receive information about a problem that has arisen within that made-up relationship. They will be asked to write and then verbalize assertive statements related to this problem.

7. Tell students that their responses to four questions will form four parts of an assertive statement. Reveal the four questions. Read the questions and example responses to students, so they have a sense of how they’ll answer each question. Remind students that they’ll write a response to each question, and each response will form one part of their assertive statement:

1. What’s the problem? I don’t like it when you try to hold my hand in public.
2. What’s the feeling? It makes me feel self-conscious and embarrassed.
3. What do you need? I need for us to come up with other ways to show people we’re together when we’re in public.
4. What is one specific way your partner can meet your need? I’d be more comfortable holding hands when it’s more private, like in a movie theatre or when we’re alone. I don’t mind if you put your arm around me while we’re together in public.

8. Ask if there are any questions before you proceed. [Steps 5 to 8 should take 10 minutes]

9. Tell students to imagine that they are in a made-up romantic relationship that is pretty long-term, i.e. six months. Tell them that within this relationship a problem has arisen. You want them to create a four-part assertive statement related to this problem and a possible solution. As you pass out the scenarios, remind students that they
should keep their scenario to themselves, because their “test” will be to see how clearly they can communicate that problem in their actual statement. Remind students that they should write out their entire statement, which will include their responses to the four questions. Tell students you are available if they are confused about their particular scenario. Be sure each student has his or her own scenario. [1 minute]

10. Allow several minutes for students to write their statements. Circulate through the room to be sure students are on track. [5 minutes]

11. When everyone is finished, ask for several students to read their statements out loud to the class. After each student reads his or her statements, ask these questions:

   What was the problem in this scenario?  
   How is the problem affecting this person?  
   What solution was offered? 

Remind students that they should not read what is written on their scenario card. If you have a large number of students, you can ask for a few volunteers to read their statements. You can also draw names out of a bag, so the contributions come from a range of students. Remind students that they should be listening for the four parts in their classmates’ statements, particularly the identification of feelings. When necessary offer suggestions when one of the four questions is not answered in their statements. [10 minutes]

12. Close the lesson by facilitating a discussion around the following questions:

   • What was it like to participate in this experience?  
   • What did you notice about the assertive statements that you heard?  
   • What do you think would’ve happened if people’s responses were passive? Aggressive? [3 minutes]
Attachment A: Scenarios

Note: Language to describe sexual behaviors and involvement varies from area to area. With each of these scenarios, feel free to adjust the language or setting to reflect the population(s) with whom you work.

- You don’t think your partner is setting aside enough time for your relationship.
- You are jealous when your partner talks with other guys/girls.
- Your partner says s/he will do something and then doesn’t keep his/her word.
- You feel like your partner texts, calls and/or Facebook posts you too much.
- You want to spend less time with your partner because your grades are slipping and you need to adjust your life accordingly.
- You and your partner keep doing the same things together socially and you’re bored.
- You’re going through some difficult times with your family and you need your partner’s support.
- You feel differently about your partner than you did when your relationship started.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You don’t like the way your partner treats you when you’re out in public.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your partner tries to start something sexual after you’ve just had a big fight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your partner tries to start something sexual with you while your parent(s) are in the next room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your partner tries to start something sexual with you and you don’t have any condoms or dental dams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your partner tries to do something sexual with you that you two have never done before and you don’t want to do it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Someone who your best friend likes romantically comes on to you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You want to do something sexual that you and your partner have never done before and are worried about how your partner will respond if you bring it up.</td>
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