Talk about safety in a relationship

1. **How are things with you? What do you do together? How did you meet?**

2. **What do you like about your partner? What are the positive aspects of your relationship? What strengths do you have as a partner?**

3. **What kind of feelings does the relationship evoke in you? Can you talk about all kinds of feelings with your partner? Can you show all your feelings to your partner?**

   In a healthy relationship, both partners can freely express their thoughts and emotions. Experiencing a wide range of feelings is a natural part of a relationship.

4. **What do you disagree about? What are your arguments like? How do arguments make you feel?**

   There are disagreements in all relationships. It is important to learn how to argue constructively so that you and your partner both feel safe.

5. **What do you think about the personal boundaries in your relationship? Do you talk about the types of behaviours that are acceptable to you both and which are not? What makes you feel safe in your relationship?**

   Everyone has the right to draw boundaries, and it is important to discuss these with your partner. In early relationships, people are often still learning to recognise their boundaries. Controlling your partner is not a normal part of a relationship.

6. **What kind of intimacy do you share? Are your wishes and needs for intimacy similar?**

   Intimacy is often a part of relationships, but not always. Everyone has their own wishes, needs and expectations in terms of intimacy, and it is important to discuss these.

7. **Is sex a current topic or part of your relationship? How have you felt about any experiences you may have had? How do you talk about sex and consent?**

   You should feel able to talk about sex and sexuality – there is nothing to be embarrassed about. Sex always requires the consent of all involved, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. Any sexual act conducted without the consent of the other parties involved is sexual violence.

8. **What kind of relationship models have you learned at home or from other people? What good models have you learned? What about harmful ones?**

   Relationship models can be learned at home, from friends and through social media. Some models do not promote equality and safety.

9. **What concerns do you have about your relationship? Have you experienced or used violence in a relationship?**

   Concerns may include self-doubt about whether you are good enough or if your relationship will end. Young people may experience or use different forms of violence during or after a relationship: emotional, physical, digital or sexual. It is important to ask directly about violence.

10. **What makes you feel safe in the relationship? How could you strengthen your sense of safety? What do family and close ones think about your relationship? How could I support you?**

    Talking to parents or other people close to you about relationships may feel intimidating, and it may lead to a variety of consequences. It is important that young people have an adult they trust who they can talk to about relationships.

Instructions for support workers

Seurustelun Turva10 is a tool for introducing various topics concerning relationships with young people aged 13–19

The Seurustelun Turva10 tool is intended to support young people's wellbeing. It can help you to initiate a one-to-one conversation about a young person's experiences of safety, or lack thereof, in their relationship.

The purpose of the conversation is to support the young person's wellbeing, safety and sense of agency. Seurustelun Turva10 is not a tool for assessing the risk of violence. You do not need to be concerned about a young person's safety or suspect abuse in a relationship to discuss relationships with them. Seurustelun Turva10 is designed to be used with young people for whom dating and relationships are currently relevant topics.

Developed with young people, this tool contains a variety of themes concerning relationships. You can choose to discuss one, several or all of the themes presented. Select the order of the themes, topics and questions on the basis of the young person's situation.

- **Seurustelun Turva10 is a tool that supports discussions about safety.**
- **It is not necessary to cover everything – even addressing a single theme may be a good start for a conversation.**
- **Young people desire open and direct discussions about relationships, sexuality and violence.**
- **Respect young people's autonomy, agency and right to decline participation in discussions.**
- **Even one conversation or encounter may be significant.**

The conversation should provide the young person with an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and worries, as well as any violent experiences they have encountered in the course of a relationship or dating. The tool is designed for one-to-one use, but the themes can also be discussed with a couple. Please note, however, that questions about violence should always be asked in private, when the young person is alone with you.

It is important not to lead the young person in their responses, but you should maintain an open atmosphere and provide positive feedback for their courage in discussing sensitive topics.

When using the tool, consider their gender, sexuality and cultural background and how this may influence their experiences of a relationship. Be present, open and sensitive to their experiences.

If a young person tells you they have experienced or used violence, thank them for their trust and ensure that they are safe. Tell them you will support them. Discuss what steps may be necessary to stop the violence. Make sure you are familiar with your organisation's procedures for submitting child welfare notifications and reporting crimes, as well as the availability of local support services for young people.

Seurustelun Turva10 may evoke a variety of thoughts and feelings in a young person. Make sure that they can continue to discuss safety with you or other support services if necessary.

Further information:

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Väkivallattomuuden tukijat (Supporters of nonviolents) project (ESF+) 2024–2026

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