

# USING HEALTHY COMMUNICATION TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS



**Directions:** Read the communication scenarios below and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the Traffic Light Rating categories on the right to answer the first question in each scenario.

## SCENARIO A: Nick and Sam

Nick works at an after-school basketball program with Sam and Sam's older brother. But Sam's brother stopped showing up, leaving the program short-staffed. Sam says his brother has started smoking marijuana and has lost interest in his job.

**Nick's Reaction:** "Your brother is putting us in a bad situation. He should get help to stop using marijuana."

1. Where does this behavior/language fall in the spectrum of healthy to unhealthy communication?
2. Sam's brother says that Nick and Sam are making a big deal out of nothing. How might Sam's brother's drug use impact how he perceives this situation? (See "Reality Check" sidebar.)

## SCENARIO B: Jordan and Gabby

Jordan and Gabby used to be on the debate team together. Jordan decided that she didn't want to hang out with Gabby after school anymore. Gabby thought that Jordan was her friend. Gabby calls or texts Jordan every day to try to connect.

**Jordan's Reaction:** Jordan sent a text that said "STOP TEXTING ME!" Now Jordan ignores Gabby's calls and texts and glares at Gabby when they pass in the hall.

1. Where does this behavior/language fall in the spectrum of healthy to unhealthy communication?
2. Gabby decides one day to call Jordan 25 times. How can Jordan respectfully tell Gabby that she is scaring Jordan?

## SCENARIO C: Connor and Lara

Connor wants to protect his girlfriend, Lara, and he's worried that she attracts the wrong kind of attention from guys with the way she dresses.

**Connor's Reaction:** To show her how serious he is, Connor grabs Lara's arm and tells her never to wear certain outfits again.

1. Where does this behavior/language fall in the spectrum of healthy to unhealthy communication?
2. Lara cares about her boyfriend's opinions, but she knows he doesn't have a right to grab her arm like that. What should she do, and how can she respond using healthy communication?
3. If Connor is truly worried about Lara's safety in attracting the wrong kind of attention from guys, rather than just being jealous, how could he have approached this situation more respectfully?

## Traffic Light Rating

Red

**STOP!** Get help! This behavior has crossed the line and could be unsafe.

Yellow

**CAUTION!** This behavior is unhealthy and worrisome. You could try using healthy communication skills or talking to a trusted adult.

Green

**GO** ahead and continue these healthy behaviors.

## Reality Check: Drugs and Dating Violence

Drugs and alcohol can impair a person's judgment, perception of a situation, and ability to read social cues. They can also impact a person's mood and ability to control his or her emotions and behaviors.

In a 2014 study, drugs were involved in approximately **50%** of youth dating violence incidents that resulted in emergency room visits.<sup>1</sup> Drug use can also be a consequence of dating violence. Studies show that people who are victims of dating violence are at a higher risk for later drug use.<sup>2</sup>

**Think About It:** Discuss the different ways that drugs may contribute to dating violence as well as how avoiding alcohol and drugs may help reduce the risk of dating violence.