



Activity Guide for Educators Healthy Friendships - Ask Ava Podcast Scavenger Hunt

Introduction

This activity is a simple way to introduce middle school students to the basics of healthy/unhealthy friendships and anti-bullying, as well as available victim services in Somerset County, NJ. By asking students to access specific podcast episodes and online tools, you directly connect them to resources that they can continue to use for information and support. After students listen to the episodes, they will be able to complete an easy assessment.

- *Note: Each podcast has a full transcript through the Buzzsprout site. Click any of the individual episodes from [here](https://www.buzzsprout.com/829681) (<https://www.buzzsprout.com/829681>) and click "Transcript" to the right of "Show Notes."*
- *Note: If this assignment is used as a printed out document, students should visit the above Buzzsprout link or <https://www.safe-sound.org/ask-ava/> to access episodes 76, 79, and 12.*

Estimated Time To Complete Full Assignment: 20 minutes

Grade Levels: 6-8

NJ Student Learning Standards

- 2.1.8.SSH.3: Demonstrate communication skills that will support healthy relationships.
- 2.1.8.SSH.4: Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- 2.1.8.CHSS.4: Identify community resources and/or other sources of support, such as trusted adults, including family members, caregivers, and school staff, that students can go to if they are or someone they know is being sexually harassed, abused, assaulted, exploited, or trafficked.

Key Talking Points

- Bullying (a form of abuse) and teen dating abuse are about POWER and CONTROL, not anger or love. Abuse is a PATTERN of behaviors that someone uses to gain POWER and CONTROL over their friend or dating partner.
- Approximately 1 in 3 teens will experience some form of teen dating abuse before high school graduation¹. This includes verbal, emotional, financial, sexual, technological, physical abuse, and stalking. Abuse can happen in-person or online, in casual or serious relationships.

¹ Haynie, D.L. et al. (2013). Dating Violence Perpetration and Victimization among US Adolescents: Prevalence, Patterns, and Associations with Health Complaints and Substance Use. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 53(2), 194-201.



- Impact is greater than intent – if the IMPACT of someone’s actions is that their friend is left scared or feels unsafe, that is more important than what the actor INTENDED.
- Jealousy is natural, but it is not an excuse to control or manipulate someone.
- Each person in a friendship has the right to be safe, to spend time with friends, to say no, and to change their mind. Each person has the responsibility to not bully their friend and to respect the other person’s boundaries. See our easy-to-use Rights and Responsibilities framework in the Middle School Student Resource Packet.
- A Power and Control wheel includes ways that someone uses Power and Control in an abusive relationship. See the Resource Packet for our printable Bullying Power and Control Wheel.
- **Safe+Sound’s middle school resource packets ([ENG](#)) ([ESP](#)) can provide students with more information and supports.**
- Safe+Sound Somerset is the designated, leading domestic and sexual violence organization for Somerset County, NJ. Anyone, including students and professionals, can call or text our 24/7 helpline at 866-685-1122, whether they need help, supportive listening, safety planning, or are looking for information on free services or these topics. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. We have free services including counseling and legal advocacy provided at no charge to Somerset County children, teens, and adults. Every county in New Jersey has similar services. Additional information is available on our website at <https://www.safe-sound.org/>.

Answer key:

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. Answers will vary. Empathy is trying to understand what someone is feeling or going through by looking at their point of view, not yours. Walking in someone else’s shoes.
5. Answers will vary. Signs of a healthy friendship include: equality; respect; feeling safe; listening when you are upset or hurt; being able to share opinions without being put down; spending time with other friends.
6. Answers will vary. Signs of an unhealthy friendship include: one person is scared of the other person; someone is making fun of or putting down the other person and not stopping when they ask; pressuring a friend to do something they don’t want to do, including giving up their passwords and privacy; cyberbullying.