

Intimate Relationships 2

Y11 RHSE [PD] Extraction 2026+

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

A caring relationship involves attention, patience, empathy, and responsibility toward another person. It requires a lot.

We know respecting boundaries builds trust. Some people struggle here. Can we explain why?

Consent requires empathy.
How do people show this in relationships?

Why might curiosity and patience be important?

What might emotional vulnerability and safety look like? How can being kind help.

What do selfish and caring attitudes look like?

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Consent is about how we treat another human being.

In healthy romantic and sexual relationships, we think about the other person's feelings, comfort, safety, confidence, fears, boundaries, emotional wellbeing, and vulnerability

A caring relationship involves attention, patience, empathy, and responsibility toward another person. It requires a lot.

Consent Requires Empathy

Empathy means trying to understand another person's experience and emotions.

In relationships, empathy appears as:

“How might they be feeling right now?”

“Do they feel safe?”

“Are they comfortable?”

“Could they feel pressured?”

“Would they feel able to be honest with me?”

A selfish attitude focuses only on:

- personal desires
- Excitement
- Status
- proving something
- getting what you want

A caring attitude focuses on:

- shared comfort
- Trust
- emotional safety
- mutual happiness
- protecting another person's dignity

Real maturity is shown by caring about another person's wellbeing even when it means slowing down or stopping completely.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Understanding Vulnerability

People are emotionally vulnerable in relationships because they care about being accepted, liked, valued, or loved.

We may:

- worry about rejection
- fear disappointing someone
- feel pressure to fit in
- struggle with confidence
- want approval
- find it difficult to say no
- be inexperienced or unsure
- not fully understand our own feelings yet

Understanding Vulnerability

Someone may smile or laugh even when uncomfortable because they feel awkward, nervous, or afraid of upsetting the other person.

Caring for another person involves more than waiting for a clear “no.” It means paying attention to how the person actually seems to feel.

A thoughtful person notices:

Hesitation
Nervousness
Silence
Uncertainty
Discomfort
changes in mood or body language

Kindness means slowing down and checking in rather than ignoring those signs.

Respecting Boundaries Builds Trust

Every person has boundaries:

- emotional boundaries
- physical boundaries
- social boundaries
- digital boundaries

Healthy relationships depend on respecting these boundaries consistently.

Trust grows when someone learns:

- “I can say no safely.”
- “My feelings matter.”
- “I won’t be mocked or pressured.”
- “This person listens to me.”
- “I am respected as a person, not treated like an object.”

A relationship without respect for boundaries often becomes unsafe emotionally, even if it may not appear dramatic from the outside.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Kindness Means Protecting, Not Pressuring

Sometimes people know another person is unsure, insecure, inexperienced, lonely, or eager to please. A harmful person may use that vulnerability to get what they want.

For example, unhealthy behaviours include:

- making someone feel guilty
- saying they would leave if refused
- acting upset until the other person gives in
- using popularity, age, confidence, or experience to influence them
- pushing boundaries little by little
- treating hesitation as something to “overcome”

This is not care. It is manipulation.

A kind person does the opposite:

- they reduce pressure
- they make the other person feel safe saying no
- they reassure rather than persuade
- they respect uncertainty
- they prioritise emotional wellbeing over personal gratification

Someone who truly cares never wants another person to feel trapped, frightened, ashamed, or emotionally cornered.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Emotional Safety Is Part of Consent

Someone may technically say “yes” while internally feeling:

- Anxious
- Pressured
- Uncertain
- afraid of losing the relationship
- scared of conflict
- emotionally overwhelmed

This is why emotional safety matters so much.

A caring person does not simply look for permission. They care whether the other person feels:

- Calm
- Respected
- emotionally secure
- genuinely willing
- free to change their mind

Consent should come from comfort and trust, not fear or pressure.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Genuine Care Requires Patience

Patience is one of the clearest signs of respect.

A person who genuinely values another human being understands:

- trust develops over time
- comfort develops gradually
- boundaries deserve respect
- emotional readiness matters

Someone who becomes angry, cold, manipulative, or insulting after hearing “no” is showing that their priority was themselves rather than the wellbeing of the other person.

A caring person understands that another person’s comfort matters more than immediate gratification.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Paying Attention Matters

Consent is active attention to another person.

This means noticing:

whether they seem relaxed or tense

whether they are participating willingly

whether their mood changes

whether they suddenly become quiet

whether they stop responding enthusiastically

Caring relationships require emotional awareness.

For example, if someone:

- pulls away slightly
- stops making eye contact
- becomes unusually quiet
- seems uncomfortable
- looks anxious

...the caring response is not to ignore it or continue anyway.

The caring response is:

- slowing down
- Stopping
- asking gently if they are okay
- giving them space to speak honestly
- accepting their feelings without anger or disappointment

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

Consent Is About Human Dignity

At the deepest level, consent is about recognising that another person is:

- not an object
- not a challenge
- not something to “win”
- not responsible for satisfying someone else

They are a human being with:

- Emotions
- Fears
- Boundaries
- Insecurities
- Hopes
- personal experiences
- the right to autonomy and safety

Healthy relationships are built when both people protect each other's dignity and wellbeing.

The central question in a caring relationship is not: “How far can I go?”

The central question is: “Am I treating this person with kindness, respect, care, and attention to their wellbeing?”

Healthy relationships are built when both people feel emotionally safe, genuinely respected, and confident that their needs and vulnerabilities matter.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

What Caring Relationships Feel Like

In a healthy relationship, people should feel:

- listened to
- emotionally safe
- Respected
- valued beyond appearance or physical attraction
- able to speak honestly
- accepted without pressure
- comfortable setting boundaries

Care is shown through:

- Patience
- Listening
- Gentleness
- emotional awareness
- respect for vulnerability
- willingness to stop when someone is unsure
- protecting trust instead of testing it

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Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

A power dynamic is the way influence or control exists between people in a relationship. Why do these happen?

How do we spot when people are trying to manipulate us?

Student slide

How do we know when people are genuinely free to choose?

How do we grow our emotional power?

How do we create real, authentic, trust?

How can experience of the world help us be more powerful?

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

A power dynamic is the way influence or control exists between people in a relationship.

Power does not always mean physical strength or authority. It can come from such things as:

- Age
- Popularity
- Confidence
- Experience
- emotional dependence
- Attractiveness
- Reputation
- Knowledge
- size or strength

Even small differences in power can affect how safe someone feels being honest.

A caring person recognises these differences rather than ignoring them.

Consent is only meaningful when someone feels genuinely free to choose.

If someone feels:

- Intimidated
- Dependent
- emotionally trapped
- scared of conflict
- worried about rejection
- desperate for approval
- pressured by social expectations

...they may agree to things they do not truly want.

This is why ethical relationships require more than simply hearing words. They require awareness of emotional reality.

A person can technically say “yes” while internally feeling:

- Frightened
- Cornered
- Obligated
- Pressured
- emotionally overwhelmed

A caring person notices these possibilities and acts carefully and responsibly.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

Sometimes people assume:

- “They didn’t say no.”
- “They went along with it.”
- “They didn’t stop me.”

But unequal power can make silence complicated.

Someone may stay silent because they:

- feel intimidated
- do not want conflict
- freeze under pressure
- fear disappointing someone
- worry about anger or rejection
- feel emotionally overwhelmed

This is why paying attention matters so much.

Ethical relationships require emotional awareness, not just technical permission.

Emotional power is especially important in relationships.

One person may:

- care much more deeply
- fear abandonment
- depend heavily on the relationship for self-esteem
- struggle with loneliness
- crave validation
- feel lucky that someone likes them

The other person may not fully realise how much influence they have.

If someone says:

- “If you loved me, you would.”
- “You’d do this if you cared.”
- “Maybe we shouldn’t be together then.”
- “Everyone else would say yes.”

...they are using emotional pressure.

Even if spoken calmly, these statements can create fear, guilt, and emotional coercion.

A kind person does not use another person’s feelings against them.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

The more influence a person has, the more responsibility they have to act carefully.

A stronger, older, more experienced, more confident, or more socially powerful person should be especially attentive to:

- signs of discomfort
- Hesitation
- Imbalance
- emotional dependency
- Pressure
- vulnerability

Kindness means asking:

- “Do they feel genuinely free with me?”
- “Could my influence make this hard for them?”
- “Am I creating pressure without realising it?”
- “Do they feel safe disagreeing with me?”

Real maturity involves using power responsibly, not selfishly.

Experience as a Form of Power

One person may have:

- more dating experience
- more sexual experience
- greater confidence
- more knowledge about relationships

An inexperienced person may:

- not know how to set boundaries
- feel unsure what is “normal”
- copy the other person’s lead
- agree because they think they are “supposed to”

A responsible person understands this imbalance and behaves with patience and caution.

They do not:

- Rush
- Overwhelm
- Pressure
- manipulate confusion
- treat inexperience as weakness

Instead, they create space for honest communication and uncertainty.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

Manipulation is not always obvious or dramatic.

It can appear as:

- sulking after hearing no
- withdrawing affection
- acting disappointed repeatedly
- comparing someone to others
- pushing “just a little further”
- making someone feel immature for having boundaries
- using kindness only to get something
- repeatedly bringing up the same request until the person gives in

These behaviours can slowly wear down someone’s confidence and freedom to choose.

A healthy relationship protects freedom instead of exhausting it.

In healthy relationships, influence should never become control.

Unhealthy power looks like:

- making someone feel guilty
- controlling emotions through anger or silence
- making affection conditional
- threatening to leave
- creating jealousy intentionally
- pushing boundaries repeatedly
- making someone feel responsible for your emotions
- isolating someone from friends
- using insecurity to gain compliance

Healthy care looks like:

reassuring instead of pressuring

accepting boundaries calmly

encouraging honesty

respecting hesitation

valuing emotional safety over control

wanting the other person to feel fully free

A caring relationship does not depend on one person feeling weaker or less confident.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

Trust Requires Equality

Healthy relationships aim for emotional equality:

- both people matter equally
- both voices matter equally
- both boundaries matter equally
- both people can speak honestly without fear

Trust grows when someone knows:

- “I can disagree safely.”
- “I won’t lose affection for saying no.”
- “This person respects my feelings.”
- “I don’t have to earn care by giving in.”

The safest relationships are the ones where honesty feels safe.

Power and Responsibility Online

Power dynamics also exist online:

- pressure to send images
- fear of screenshots or humiliation
- being pushed to reply constantly
- older teens influencing younger teens
- popularity affecting behaviour
- public attention creating pressure

Someone may agree online because they fear:

- Embarrassment
- Exclusion
- Rumours
- losing attention or affection

Responsible people never exploit this vulnerability.



Why are stereotypes harmful in relationships?

What is consent, and why does stereotyping potentially weaken our chances of understanding it?

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

How do harmful attitudes spread? How can we stop them spreading?

Why do misogyny and misandry thrive on stereotyping?

Student slide

How might stereotyping affect those with protected characteristics in their relationships with others?

Stereotypes are harmful because they reduce people to assumptions instead of treating them as individuals.

They can affect how people think about:

- Consent
- Respect
- Power
- Emotions
- Relationships
- Safety
- gender roles
- Vulnerability

When stereotypes become normalised, they can encourage disrespectful behaviour, excuse cruelty, and make harmful actions seem acceptable or “normal.”

This can damage both individuals and society more broadly.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

Consent depends on:

- Empathy
- Listening
- Equality
- Respect
- recognising another person’s autonomy

Stereotypes can weaken these values by encouraging people to ignore another person’s individuality or boundaries. Stereotypes may wrongly suggest:

- some people “owe” affection or attention
- certain genders are naturally dominant or submissive
- persistence is romantic
- rejection is a challenge to overcome
- some groups are less trustworthy or less deserving of respect
- some people are “supposed” to tolerate mistreatment

When these ideas spread, unhealthy behaviour can become normalised.

Misogyny and Harmful Attitudes Towards Women

Misogyny means prejudice, contempt, or hostility towards women and girls.

Misogynistic attitudes can appear openly or subtly.

Examples include beliefs that:

- girls “owe” boys attention or affection
- boys are entitled to sexual access
- girls are responsible for controlling boys’ behaviour
- girls who set boundaries are “cold,” “mean,” or “dramatic”
- women exist mainly for appearance or sexual attention
- emotional manipulation is acceptable if someone feels rejected
- harassment is “just flirting”
- aggressive persistence is romantic

These attitudes can normalise disrespect for consent.

For example, media or peer culture may portray:

- refusing to accept “no” as determination
- jealousy as proof of love
- controlling behaviour as caring
- emotional pressure as normal relationship behaviour

This can teach people to ignore discomfort and boundaries instead of respecting them.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

One major problem with misogyny is objectification. Objectification means treating someone more like an object for pleasure, status, or control rather than as a full person with feelings and autonomy.

When people are objectified:

- their emotions matter less
- their boundaries are ignored more easily
- empathy decreases
- entitlement increases

Someone who sees another person mainly as:

- a conquest
- a status symbol
- a body
- a source of validation

...is less likely to think carefully about that person’s emotional wellbeing or vulnerability.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

Misandry and Harmful Attitudes Towards Men

Misandry refers to prejudice or hostility towards men and boys.

Harmful stereotypes about men can also damage relationships and emotional wellbeing.

Examples include beliefs that:

- boys should always want sex
- men cannot be emotionally vulnerable
- men should never express fear or hurt
- men who set boundaries are weak
- boys cannot experience coercion or abuse
- aggression is part of “real masculinity”
- emotional sensitivity is unmanly

These stereotypes can pressure boys and young men into unhealthy behaviour or silence:

- a boy may feel ashamed to say no
- a male victim may fear not being believe
- boys may hide emotional distress
- some may feel pressured to prove masculinity through dominance or sexual behaviour

These attitudes damage emotional honesty and empathy.

Healthy masculinity allows:

- emotional expression
- Gentleness
- Respect
- Vulnerability
- Kindness
- self-control

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

Rigid ideas about **gender** can harm everyone. Examples include:

- “boys should lead”
- “girls should be passive”
- “real men are dominant”
- “women are naturally emotional”
- “men cannot control themselves”
- “women secretly want persistence”
- “boys shouldn’t ask permission because it ruins the moment”

These stereotypes can:

- discourage communication
- blur boundaries
- normalise pressure
- make respectful behaviour seem “uncool”
- create shame around honesty and vulnerability

Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect, not rigid roles.

People may face harmful assumptions because of their **sexual orientation**.

For example:

- assuming LGBTQ+ people are predatory
- treating same-sex relationships as less serious
- fetishising bisexual people
- assuming consent works differently in LGBTQ+ relationships
- mocking emotional intimacy between boys or men

These stereotypes can create:

- Shame
- Isolation
- Fear
- difficulty seeking support
- increased vulnerability to mistreatment

Everyone deserves relationships based on equal respect and safety regardless of sexual orientation.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

Transgender people often face harmful stereotypes and dehumanisation.

Examples include:

- denying someone's identity
- treating trans people as deceptive
- mocking or excluding them
- seeing them as less deserving of dignity or safety

When society dehumanises a group, empathy can decrease and mistreatment becomes easier to excuse.

Respect means:

- recognising people's humanity
- using respectful language
- respecting boundaries and identity
- rejecting humiliation and harassment

Everyone deserves safety and dignity in relationships.

Racial stereotypes can also affect consent and relationships.

Examples include:

- fetishising certain races
- assuming some groups are more aggressive or submissive
- treating people as “exotic”
- viewing some races as less innocent or less vulnerable
- assuming stereotypes about masculinity or femininity based on race

These attitudes reduce individuality and can encourage objectification.

Racism can also affect whether victims are believed or treated fairly.

Healthy relationships reject stereotypes and value each person as an individual.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

People may face judgement or pressure because of **religion or beliefs**.

Examples include:

- mocking religious boundaries around relationships
- assuming religious people are naïve or oppressive
- pressuring someone to ignore their beliefs
- stereotyping certain religious groups as dangerous or inferior

Respect includes recognising that beliefs and values may shape:

- Boundaries
- comfort levels
- choices about intimacy
- expectations in relationships

Healthy relationships allow people to maintain their dignity and beliefs without pressure or ridicule.

Disabled people are often affected by stereotypes that can increase vulnerability.

Examples include assumptions that disabled people are:

- Childlike
- incapable of relationships
- less attractive
- Dependent
- easier to control
- less likely to be believed

Some disabled people may rely on others for support or communication, which can create unequal power dynamics.

This makes respect, patience, and protection of autonomy especially important.

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

Harmful attitudes often spread gradually through:

- Jokes
- social media
- peer groups
- films and television
- Influencers
- Music
- online communities

When disrespectful ideas are repeated constantly, people may stop questioning them.

For example:

- controlling behaviour may seem romantic
- humiliation may seem funny
- manipulation may seem normal
- emotional cruelty may seem deserved
- aggressive behaviour may be excused

Critical thinking is important because popularity does not make an idea healthy or ethical.

Respect Requires Seeing People Fully

The opposite of stereotyping is recognising another person's full humanity.

This means understanding that every person:

- has emotions
- has vulnerabilities
- deserves dignity
- deserves safety
- has the right to boundaries
- deserves to be listened to seriously

Healthy relationships require empathy strong enough to overcome prejudice, entitlement, and assumptions.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Friendships

What do great power dynamics look like in friendships?

How can friendships be great at work? What if the power dynamics are wrong?

How would great power dynamics look at work or in other relationships?

Why do some people stay silent when they are mistreated?

Student slide

What do some people have more influence over people than others?

What is emotional dependency, and why is it a problem for some people in some relationships?

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Friendships

Power Dynamics in Friendships

Friendships are healthiest when both people feel:

- Equal
- Respected
- emotionally safe
- free to be honest
- free to disagree
- accepted without fear

However, friendships can become unhealthy when one person holds much more social or emotional power.

Some people naturally have more social influence because they are:

- Popular
- Confident
- Funny
- Attractive
- Older
- admired by others
- central to a friendship group

This can create pressure, even without obvious bullying. For example, someone may:

- laugh along with jokes they dislike
- agree to things they feel uncomfortable with
- hide their opinions
- tolerate mistreatment
- fear exclusion from the group

The more socially powerful person may not even realise the effect they are having.

A caring friend notices these dynamics and avoids using social influence unfairly.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Friendships

Manipulation in Friendships

Manipulation is often subtle.

Examples include:

- guilt-tripping
- silent treatment
- spreading rumours
- making someone feel constantly “not good enough”
- embarrassing them publicly
- pressuring them to break rules
- mocking boundaries
- using secrets as leverage
- pretending harmful behaviour is “just joking”

Because friendships are emotionally important, manipulation can deeply affect confidence and mental wellbeing.

Emotional Dependency in Friendships

Sometimes one friend becomes emotionally dependent on another. They may:

- rely heavily on that friendship for confidence
- fear losing the person
- feel isolated without them
- tolerate poor treatment to avoid abandonment

An unhealthy person may take advantage of this by:

- controlling who their friend spends time with
- using guilt
- withdrawing affection as punishment
- making the friend “earn” approval
- creating jealousy
- threatening exclusion

This creates emotional imbalance and insecurity.

Healthy friendships allow both people to:

- maintain independence
- have boundaries
- spend time with others
- disagree safely
- express honest feelings

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Friendships

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Kind friends do not use emotional vulnerability as a tool for control.

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Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Work Relationships

Power Dynamics in Work Relationships

Workplaces involve formal power structures.

Power may come from:

- job seniority
- Authority
- Experience
- Pay
- Responsibility
- influence over opportunities
- evaluations or promotions

Because work affects people's:

- Income
- future opportunities
- Confidence
- Reputation
- security

...power imbalances in workplaces require especially careful behaviour.

Groups can create strong pressure to conform.

Someone may agree with harmful behaviour because they:

- want acceptance
- fear humiliation
- fear exclusion
- do not want conflict
- worry about becoming the next target

This can normalise:

- Bullying
- Cruelty
- Harassment
- Humiliation
- Discrimination
- disrespectful behaviour

Sometimes people participate in harmful behaviour not because they fully agree with it, but because social pressure feels overwhelming.

Moral courage means treating others well even when a group encourages unkindness.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Work Relationships

Abuse of Workplace Power

Unhealthy workplace behaviour can include:

- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Favouritism
- Threats
- Manipulation
- Harassment
- excessive control
- exploiting junior staff
- making people afraid to speak honestly

A responsible person in authority:

- treats people fairly
 - listens respectfully
 - avoids intimidation
 - gives constructive feedback calmly
 - does not humiliate others
 - avoids exploiting insecurity
 - creates a safe environment for questions and mistakes
- Leadership should be based on responsibility and care, not fear or dominance.

Sometimes abuse of power is subtle rather than obvious.
For example:

- constantly interrupting someone
- mocking ideas publicly
- pressuring employees socially
- excluding certain people intentionally
- using authority to create fear
- making people feel replaceable or worthless

These behaviours damage confidence and wellbeing.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Work Relationships

People often stay silent about mistreatment because they fear:

- losing opportunities
- damaging relationships
- being labelled “difficult”
- Embarrassment
- Retaliation
- Exclusion
- not being believed

This is why people with authority must act especially carefully.

The greater someone's power, the greater their responsibility not to misuse it.

Healthy work relationships require:

- Professionalism
- Fairness
- emotional self-control
- respect for boundaries
- awareness of vulnerability

People should never feel pressured to:

- tolerate harassment
- accept humiliation
- join inappropriate conversations
- ignore discrimination
- sacrifice dignity to fit in

Respectful workplaces allow people to:

- ask questions safely
- make mistakes safely
- express concerns safely
- maintain personal boundaries

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Work Relationships

Healthy Use of Power

Ethical people use power to:

- support others
- protect fairness
- encourage confidence
- create safety
- include people respectfully
- help others grow

They do not use power to:

- Dominate
- Humiliate
- Manipulate
- Pressure
- Intimidate
- control

Good leadership — in friendships, schools, workplaces, or relationships — is based on trust and responsibility rather than fear.

Recognising Healthy Relationships

Healthy friendships and workplaces usually involve:

- mutual respect
- Fairness
- Honesty
- emotional safety
- freedom to disagree
- Kindness
- Accountability
- clear boundaries

People should feel:

- Heard
- Valued
- safe expressing concerns
- respected even when imperfect

Kind and responsible people understand that:

- ***confidence can intimidate***
- ***popularity can pressure***
- ***authority can silence***
- ***emotional influence can trap people***

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

What does autonomy mean, and why is it important in our relationships?

What does it mean to objectify someone? Why does it happen in our society?

What does it mean to say a healthy sexual ethic keeps empathy and humanity central.

Student slide

How might pornography reduce autonomy and increase objectification?

What do we mean when we say disempowerment is sometimes normalised?

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

Autonomy means having ownership and control over:

- your body
- your choices
- your boundaries
- your identity
- your comfort
- your consent

Healthy relationships respect autonomy completely.

This means:

- nobody is entitled to another person's body
- nobody should feel pressured to perform, please, or comply
- every person deserves dignity and freedom
- boundaries should be respected without punishment or coercion

Respect for autonomy is central to healthy sexual ethics.

Objectification means viewing a person mainly as:

- a body
- a sexual object
- a source of pleasure
- a performance
- a product

When people are objectified:

- empathy can decrease
- emotional complexity gets ignored
- vulnerability becomes less visible
- consent may seem less important
- dignity can be overlooked

Healthy intimacy depends on recognising another person as a complete human being with:

- Emotions
- Fears
- Boundaries
- Needs
- Autonomy
- vulnerability

Objectification can weaken that recognition.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

Many forms of pornography involve unequal power dynamics.

Common themes may include:

- Domination
- Control
- Humiliation
- Aggression
- emotional detachment
- Objectification
- persistence despite hesitation
- unequal treatment of genders
- reduced emotional connection

Repeated exposure to these messages can sometimes normalise unhealthy ideas about:

Consent

Respect

Empathy

emotional safety

For example, some pornography may present:

pressure as exciting

aggression as attractive

emotional coldness as normal

lack of communication as acceptable

unequal power as desirable

- women's discomfort as unimportant

- dominance as proof of masculinity

When repeated frequently, these ideas can influence expectations about real relationships.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

Disempowerment happens when people feel less able to:

- make free choices
- express boundaries
- value themselves
- feel ownership over their bodies
- resist pressure

Disempowerment can affect:

- Confidence
- self-esteem
- body image
- expectations in relationships
- ability to say no
- ability to communicate honestly

A healthy culture should strengthen people's sense of dignity and autonomy, not weaken it.

Normalisation happens when repeated exposure makes behaviours seem ordinary, harmless, or expected. Something can become normalised even if it is unhealthy. For example, repeated exposure to media can make people gradually view:

- Disrespect
- Coercion
- Humiliation
- Aggression
- emotional detachment
- controlling behaviour

...as more acceptable or less serious.

This matters because people learn about relationships partly through observation and culture.

People who lack experience may especially absorb messages about:

- what sex is “supposed” to look like
- how men and women are “supposed” to behave
- what bodies “should” look like
- whether emotional connection matters
- whether boundaries deserve respect

Critical thinking is important because media is not always designed to model healthy human relationships.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

Pornography is performance-based media, not a guide to healthy relationships.

Like films or advertising, it is often designed to:

- attract attention
- create fantasy
- exaggerate behaviour
- focus on stimulation rather than emotional realism

This can create unrealistic ideas about:

- Bodies
- Behaviour
- Pleasure
- Consent
- Communication
- emotional connection
- relationships

Real healthy intimacy usually involves:

- Communication
- awkwardness sometimes
- Empathy
- Patience
- mutual comfort
- Trust
- emotional attentiveness

Pornography often removes these elements because emotional realism is not its main purpose.

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

Some forms of pornography separate sex from:

- emotional intimacy
- Vulnerability
- Trust
- Responsibility
- empathy

This can sometimes encourage emotionally detached attitudes toward other people.

Healthy relationships involve recognising that intimacy affects real human beings emotionally and psychologically.

Kindness matters because:

- people are vulnerable
- emotions can be deeply affected
- trust can be damaged
- pressure can cause harm
- humiliation can have lasting effects

A healthy sexual ethic keeps empathy and humanity central.

A healthy understanding of sexuality should strengthen a person's sense that:

- their body belongs to them
- they deserve respect
- they do not owe sexual access to anyone
- they can set boundaries safely
- they can change their mind
- emotional comfort matters
- mutual care matters

Autonomy means being able to make choices free from:

- Coercion
- Manipulation
- Pressure
- Humiliation
- Fear
- exploitation

Any influence — including media — that weakens this sense of personal dignity deserves careful examination.

Faith-Based Views on These Areas

Christianity stresses:

- loving others with compassion and respect
- protecting the vulnerable
- treating people as ends in themselves, not objects
- self-control and moral responsibility
- honesty and faithfulness in relationships

Islamic teachings often place strong emphasis on:

- Dignity
- Modesty
- Responsibility
- mutual respect
- protection from exploitation
- moral self-discipline

Consent is important in Islamic marriage teachings, and forced marriage is widely considered unacceptable in mainstream Islamic scholarship.

Buddhist ethics often focus strongly on:

- reducing harm
- Compassion
- mindfulness

Many Buddhist teachings ask people to examine:

- intention
- attachment

Sexual behaviour is often evaluated according to whether it causes:

- Suffering
- Manipulation
- emotional harm
- exploitation

Hindu traditions are extremely diverse, but many teachings emphasise:

- respect for others
- self-discipline
- non-harm
- Responsibility
- Balance
- spiritual development

Some Hindu philosophies teach that uncontrolled desire can cloud judgement and lead to harm or exploitation.

Citizenship Views

Student slide

Research cited by **NSPCC** found:

- many young people see abusive behaviours such as jealousy, possessiveness, and controlling behaviour as “normal” in relationships.
- 1 in 5 boys and 1 in 10 girls believed abuse against women could sometimes be acceptable.

According to UK survey data referenced by **Norfolk County Council** using NSPCC findings:

- 33% of girls and 16% of boys reported some form of sexual abuse.
- 25% of girls and 18% of boys reported physical abuse within relationships.

According to the **NSPCC**:

- over 7,000 “sexual communication with a child” offences were recorded by UK police in 2023/24.
- this represented an 89% increase since 2017/18.
- 81% of recorded victims were girls.
- nearly half of offences where a platform was known involved Snapchat.

According to the **Youth Endowment Fund**:

- 49% of teenagers who had been in a relationship reported experiencing some form of violent or controlling behaviour from a partner.
- 20% reported being pressured or forced into sexual activity against their will.
- About 1 in 25 teenagers overall reported physical or sexual abuse within a romantic relationship during the previous year.

The Office for National Statistics

(ONS) estimated:

- 29% of adults in England and Wales experienced some form of abuse before age 18.
- 9.1% experienced childhood sexual abuse.
- Women were more likely than men to report abuse overall (31.5% compared with 26.4%).
- The ONS also found that sexual abuse most commonly began between ages 13–15.

Citizenship Views

The **NSPCC** reported a sharp increase in children being blackmailed using sexual images online:

- Childline delivered more than 2,400 counselling sessions related to online sexual abuse and exploitation in one recent year.
- More than 1,000 involved blackmail linked to sexual images (“sextortion”).

The **National Crime Agency** receives more than 100 reports each month involving child sextortion.

Senior UK police officials warned that:

- reports of child-on-child sexual assault increased by 40% between 2019 and 2022.
- incidents occurring on school property increased by 81%.

The **National Police Chiefs’ Council** linked this partly to:

- violent pornography
- misogynistic online content
- harmful social media culture
- normalisation of coercive behaviour

Research connected to the **Crown Prosecution Service** found significant misunderstanding among young adults about consent:

- 49% of respondents aged 18–24 said they did not properly understand consent laws.
- Only 53% recognised that rape can still occur even if a victim does not physically fight back.
- Many did not understand that someone can withdraw consent after previously expressing interest online.

Research on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

among young people shows important patterns:

- adolescent boys are statistically more likely to display harmful sexual behaviour than girls.
- many young people displaying harmful behaviour have themselves experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect.
- emotional, behavioural, and peer-related difficulties are common among those involved.

Intimate Relationships 2

Y11 RHSE [PD] Extraction 2026+

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Ethical Behaviours

A caring relationship involves attention, patience, empathy, and responsibility toward another person. It requires a lot.



Why might curiosity and patience be important?

Student slide

We know respecting boundaries builds trust. Some people struggle here. Can we explain why?

Consent requires empathy.
How do people show this in relationships?

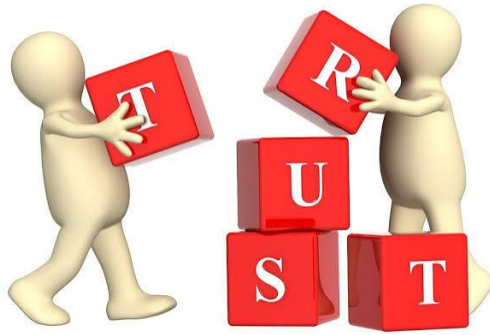


What might emotional vulnerability and safety look like? How can being kind help.

What do selfish and caring attitudes look like?

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Power Dynamics

A power dynamic is the way influence or control exists between people in a relationship. Why do these happen?



How do we spot when people are trying to manipulate us?

Student slide

How do we know when people are genuinely free to choose?

How do we grow our emotional power?



How do we create real, authentic, trust?

How can experience of the world help us be more powerful?

Why are stereotypes harmful in relationships?

What is consent, and why does stereotyping potentially weaken our chances of understanding it?



Why do misogyny and misandry thrive on stereotyping?

Student slide

Character Qualities Taking Us Beyond Consent: Recognising and Addressing Stereotypes

How do harmful attitudes spread? How can we stop them spreading?



How might stereotyping affect those with protected characteristics in their relationships with others?

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Friendships

What do great power dynamics look like in friendships?



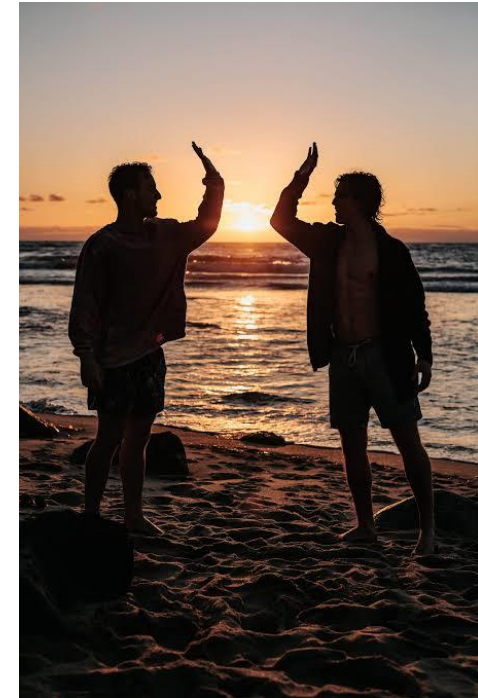
Why do some people stay silent when they are mistreated?

Student slide

What do some people have more influence over people than others?

How can friendships be great at work? What if the power dynamics are wrong?

How would great power dynamics look at work or in other relationships?



What is emotional dependency, and why is it a problem for some people in some relationships?

Addressing Issues of Power in Relationships: Pornography, Normalisation, Autonomy and Disempowerment

What does autonomy mean, and why is it important in our relationships?



Student slide

How might pornography reduce autonomy and increase objectification?

What does it mean to objectify someone? Why does it happen in our society?



What does it mean to say a healthy sexual ethic keeps empathy and humanity central.

What do we mean when we say disempowerment is sometimes normalised?

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