



#GreatRSE : Relationship Duplo Bridges

This activity is taken from **Great Relationships and Sex Education: 200+ activities for educators working with young people** by Alice Hoyle & Ester McGeeney. The activity below is taken from the chapter on relationships.

Relationships Duplo Bridges

Summary: Using duplo or Jenga, this activity invites participants to consider what makes a strong and robust relationship and what causes relationships to weaken or collapse. The activity encourages play and experimentation is great fun for children, young people (and adults!) of all ages. It can be used to explore friendships, romantic or family relationships. With thanks to Sexual Health Youth Worker, Glen Wiseman, for helping develop the original idea for this activity and to Year 4 primary school pupils for helping test and refine the idea.

Time: 20 - 30 minutes + extension activity of 15+ minutes

Age: 11+

Resources: Flipchart and pens, at least 3-6 duplo blocks per participant or jenga set for alternative. One Dry wipe marker per participant. Wet wipes. Duplo figures (optional).

Give each participant 3-6 duplo blocks and a dry wipe pen. Ask participants to write one quality of a strong relationship on each building block, choosing the qualities that are most important to them.

Set up two tables about 10cms apart. Ask participants to use their duplo pieces to build relationships bridge(s) across the tables. For younger participants you may want to use duplo characters and set this up so that the characters have to build a relationship bridge so that they can meet in the middle.

Once the bridge is successfully built ask participants to brainstorm the following question: What factors destabilise relationships? E.g. What can cause arguments or friction?

Each time a new factor is mentioned try and see if it is possible to take away relevant block from the bridge (eg. if Jealousy is mentioned then the Trust block might be removed, or telling lies might mean the honesty block removed.) This won't be an exact science but the group will enjoy working out which block could have been destabilised by the factor. The value is in the discussion and not the perfect answer.

Some brick removals will leave the bridge intact but less stable and others will cause the bridge to instantly collapse. Introduce the idea of Rupture/Repair in relationships. All relationships will go through moments of 'rupture' where there is conflict in the relationship. This can happen very quickly for just a few moments (quick

moments of irritation, disagreement, anger etc) or they can last for days, weeks, months or years. The key is recognising these moments when they are happening (or after they happened) and focusing on what can be repaired and rebuilt to move forwards. This may mean ending the relationship or rebuilding it in a way that makes it stronger. This sounds simple but it can be difficult to know when to rebuild and when a relationship is beyond repair. Focussing on what's important to you in a relationship, understanding what's important to your friend and drawing on support from those around you can help with this to help you learn and reflect.

As a group discuss what qualities strengthen and build relationships and what qualities can cause them to weaken or rupture. Task participants with rebuilding the bridge and thinking about what qualities they want to include / exclude to repair and rebuild the relationship bridge and make it robust.

At the end of the activity use wet wipes to wipe the writing off from the blocks before the next session.

Jenga alternative: You can also try this activity using a giant garden set of Jenga blocks and chalk. Build the Jenga tower with qualities of relationships written on each layer, then look at how the relationships can be destabilised by taking a relevant block away from the Jenga tower. The game ends when the tower topples. As described above, use participants ideas about what qualities strengthen a relationship and which weaken it and consider rebuilding the tower with this in mind. Consider what qualities to include / exclude to make the relationship tower robust. This time you can experiment with introducing a new rule in which the tower creator identifies 5 blocks that cannot be removed by their opponent. These should be the qualities that they think will help keep their relationship strong and robust but also those that are strategically placed to prevent the tower from falling!

Extension activity- Make your own relationship bridge, tower or structure

Task participants with creating their own relationship or friendship bridge or tower or other structure using duplo or other building blocks. Participants can work individually or in pairs or small groups. Their structure should be given a name and a short description of why it is built that way. Each block should be labelled with the qualities that they want in a relationship and built in a way that reflects how they want their relationships to grow and develop. Showcase the creations to the rest of the group and take photos to share online.