

Discussing relationships: It Takes Two

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None
Learning objectives	Discussing healthy relationships, identifying warning signs that relationships may be unhealthy; identifying effective communication practices.
Subjects	Social sciences, Psychology
Recommended Age	15 - 18
Material needed	Windows PCs or PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S
Sequence duration	2 - 3 hours
Individual or group activity	Group activity
Skills developed	Critical thinking, Collaboration & teamwork, Communication
Price range of the game	20-40€
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	Florence, Loved

Step by step: how to implement the sequence

- **Step 1: Introduce the game (10 minutes)**

The main topic of this sequence is to address healthy and unhealthy relationships (including friendships), how to recognise signs of unhealthy and potentially abusing relationships, and how to effectively communicate. To do so, we are going to use the video game It Takes Two.



Screenshot 1: Cody, May and Dr. Hakim, doctor of love. Source: <https://www.ea.com/en-gb/games/it-takes-two/media>

We recommend using this game in the classroom or for distance learning.

Game description: It Takes Two is an action-adventure video game that consists of 9 chapters. The game follows the story of a young girl, Rose, whose parents Cody and

May are close to getting a divorce. Thanks to a magic spell, Cody and May are turned into dolls and end up being trapped in a fantastical world where they try to save their relationship. The players need to help Cody and May overcome their differences and work together. The game also shows emotions about relationships, vulnerability and coping with parents' divorce (GeekDadGamer, Robertson, J. & Adams R., 2020). You can also watch the official trailer: [It Takes Two Official Reveal Trailer](#).

Cutting the cost:

To spend fewer resources on this sequence, we suggest buying one or several copies of the game and sharing them with the class. When you buy one copy of the game, the second player can join via "Friend's pass", which is free. Students can play the game at different moments and change their roles from spectators to players.

- **Step 2: Students play the game (120 minutes)**

Co-op is mandatory for this game (no single-player mode), but the second person who is playing online does not need to pay for the game ("Friend's pass"). The whole game takes about 10 to 12 hours to finish, but you can focus on just one chapter of the game and let the students play the rest of the game in their free time.

Cooperative games facilitate sharing, caring and appreciation for other players (Bui & Nguyen, 2018). Students will practice stress handling, decision making, collaboration and teamwork. They will also potentially deal with frustration and miscommunication, so it is important to provide them guidance, especially for students who are less experienced with video games.

- **Step 3: Discussion and debrief (20 minutes)**

Before starting the discussion, tell the students to consider other relationships apart from romantic ones, such as friendships.

- What is the game about? What is the goal of the game?
- What is the game trying to teach us?
- What kind of relationship do May and Cody have?
- What is your opinion on the relationship between Cody and May?
- Would you characterise their relationship as healthy or unhealthy? Why?
- How do people treat each other in a healthy relationship in comparison to an unhealthy relationship?
- How is divorce portrayed in this game? What is your opinion on this?
- Are failed relationships necessarily bad?
- How does the game end?

While discussing, you can also make notes of students' answers regarding healthy and unhealthy relationships on the whiteboard/blackboard or with online tools.

Ask the students how they felt while playing the game and check whether there felt some frustration and how they tackled it. You can also ask them how they like this type of lesson and check whether that would be something you could use again in the future.

References:

Bui, T., & Nguyen, H. (2018). Essential Feature-Cooperative Gameplay. *ART 108: Introduction to Games Studies*

GeekDadGamer, Robertson, J., & Adams R. (2020, July). It Takes Two Review [Blog post]. Retrieved from: <https://www.gaming4skills.com/en-gb/game/It+Takes+Two>

Electronic Arts (December 11th, 2020) 'It Takes Two Official Reveal Trailer' [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohClxMmNLQQ&t=75s>

Video game quoted: It Takes Two: <https://www.ea.com/en-gb/games/it-takes-two>

Image sources: <https://www.ea.com/en-gb/games/it-takes-two/media>