

# Red Light Green Light

**CASEL Core Competencies:** Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness

**State Health Standards:** Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

**Learner/Participant Objectives:** Self-efficacy (personal boundaries/assertiveness, Gender norms

**Content Warnings:** Intimate partner violence, mental abuse

**Facilitator Tips:** When working with youth, remember that relationships can look different for participants. This activity can appeal to a wide range of youth by recognizing that participants may come from a wide range of different backgrounds, language should be inclusive and not assume the gender/sexual orientation of the youth or their family, friendships, and other relationships that may be discussed.

**Key Terms:** Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

**Time:** 30 – 60 minutes

**Materials needed:** Red Light, Green Light, and Yellow Light Paddles (Participants can create their own). White board or large paper, writing utensils, crayons or markers, paper. *Without materials, this activity can also be adapted to a physical demonstration using the model of the game red light, green light*

**Background:** Prompt a discussion about the criteria the Participants use to categorize the qualities or behaviors that are healthy or desired in a relationship. Although every relationship is unique, there are certain behaviors that are objectively unhealthy. Discuss the qualities that Participants feel fall into definitive categories as well as behaviors that are worrisome. This activity is an interactive way to discuss what is acceptable and unacceptable in various circumstances.

**References:** <https://parents-together.org/simple-language-swaps-to-make-your-family-vocab-more-lgbtq-inclusive>

## Discussion Questions

- Why do some behaviors depend on the situation?
- How may people who are displaying green light behaviors feel?
- How can the “red light” behaviors be dangerous?

## Procedure

- Begin by handing out red, green and yellow light paddles or have Participants create their own.
- Explain what each category means:
  - **Green light** = Acceptable/Healthy Behaviors
  - **Yellow light** = Sometimes acceptable or based on circumstances
  - **Red light** = Completely unacceptable

Note: It is helpful to record these definitions on a visible location for Participants to refer to such as a white board.

- Name off a few scenarios from the table below and ask Participants to raise their paddle according to what category they believe each situation belongs to. If there are any outlying answers ask the Participant to explain why they feel the action belongs in that category. *If participating “red light, green light” style (staying put if red, moving slowly if yellow, going fast if green).*

Green Light	Yellow Light	Red Light
Talk to each other/ good communication	Embarrasses you	Clingy
Trust each other	Is annoying sometimes	Jealous
Support each other	Shows off	Asks you to commit crimes or participate in illegal activity
Feel happy around the other person	Calls you on the phone often	Asks you to do something you are not okay with
Communicates feelings	Is competitive with you	Have limited trust
Have freedom within the relationship	Makes plans and then breaks them	Controlling/manipulative
Have fun together	Tries to make you more like them	Makes you feel bad about yourself
Compromise	Uses sarcasm	Does not make time for you
Encourages you to pursue your goals	Disagree from time to time	Discourages you from being close to anyone else
Encourages other friendships	Have unequal power	Always criticizes you
Trust and honesty between each other	Ask you to change things about yourself	Uses you
Laugh together	Tells you not to play outside until you finish your homework	Asks you to keep secrets you are not okay with

- As a group, expand on the green light scenarios. Have Participants select and write the most important quality to them on their paddle. They can decorate their paddles and display them throughout the ROOTS space.
  - Keep me safe
  - Listen
  - Care about how I feel
  - Encourage me to do better