

RM 5–HR: Relation Shifts: Case Study*

“I met Danny last year, not long after I broke up with my ex. I had just seen my ex with his new girlfriend. I was so hurt that he had moved on so fast. Danny found me crying in the park and asked me what was wrong and told me that a girl as pretty as me shouldn’t be crying . . . he was sweet. We ended up just talking for the longest time. He was so sensitive and he listened, he even got me laughing. From that moment on we were inseparable. We were just friends at first, but the chemistry was off the charts. If we weren’t together we were talking online or on the phone. He just made me feel so safe and so beautiful.”

“I started to realize I was falling for Danny but I was too scared to say anything. So when he told me I deserved a good love, someone who would cherish me and he wanted to love me that way, he won my heart. From that moment on we were known as Paige and Danny.”

“Things started to feel a little weird when he first started making comments about my clothes. I mean he never said they were ugly . . . at first he’d just joke about how I was just too sexy. It made me laugh, but then he started to seem like he was actually pissed off. He’d tell me that he just didn’t like the way other guys would look at me. He didn’t want people to think I was a slut or anything. It kind of hurt, but he seemed like he really wanted to protect me. He was afraid that some loser would grab me or something.”

“But then I saw a different side of him. One day, when he was picking me up for our date, he slowed down, but then all of a sudden he just drove off—he drove right passed me. I was so confused and thought it was a joke at first but then I pulled out my cell phone and I called him, but he was so pissed off, calling me a slut and accusing me of just wanting to get guys turned on. So I just begged him to come back and pick me up and I tried to smooth things over. But when he came back he was just so pissed off. He got out of the car and he just lost it. He started shaking me and he kept threatening me that I was gonna get what I deserved if I didn’t stop dressing like a tease. I was stunned and heartbroken. I couldn’t believe it.”

“The next day I refused to take his phone calls. I couldn’t believe the way he had treated me—I mean it was awful. But then he texted me and said he was really sorry. He made it up to me by buying me new clothes, the kind he said that wouldn’t send out the wrong message. It seemed weird, but I guess I just really needed to believe that he did love me and just wanted me to be safe.”

Pause here and ask the following questions:

1. Did either of the people start dating because they were planning on experiencing abuse?
2. What were some of the first signs of abuse in this relationship?
3. What abusive behaviour did you notice in this couple?
4. What excuses did the person acting abusively use?
5. Do you think the person believed his or her own excuses? If yes or maybe—Does that make the abuse okay?

Resume reading the case study.

“I didn’t want to lose him and I thought he loved me but things got worse . . .”

“I needed help—I needed to get out, but I didn’t want to break up with him. I talked to my aunt and she told me that even though he could be a real sweetheart he was also hurting me and I had to decide if that’s something that I wanted in my life.”

* Source: Klinik Community Health Centre. Teen Talk Program. *Relation Shifts*. DVD and Facilitator’s Guide. Winnipeg, MB: Klinik, 2007. Adapted with permission.

