

# Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story

Teaching resource for Years 11 and 12

Jelena Dokic: tennis prodigy, Women's Tennis Association champion and former world number 4. Survivor of family violence that unfolded under the world's gaze. Now, the new documentary based on her memoirs, *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story*, shares her experience with a wider audience. The film provokes questions about the vulnerability of young athletes in elite sport: how could this have been allowed to happen? How can we prevent it happening to someone else?

## *Unbreakable* in your school

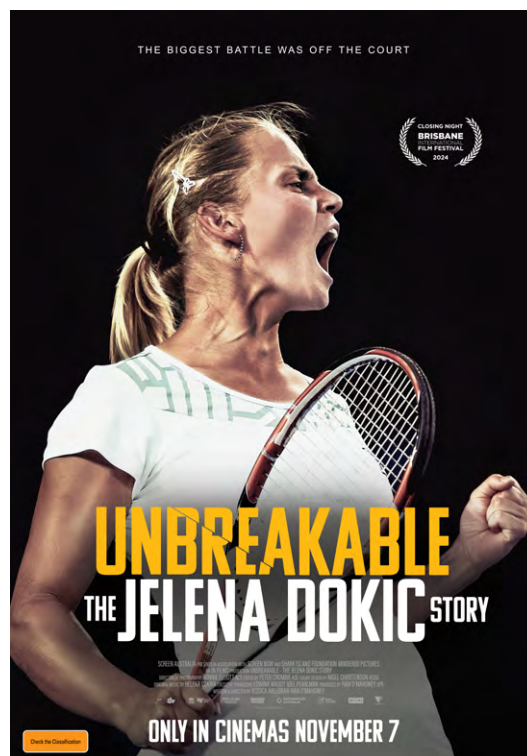
Senior secondary students are invited to watch *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* in conjunction with curriculum themes regarding health, wellbeing, ethics and English, as well as cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities. The film presents outstanding engagement potential, with an absorbing narrative set amid high performance sport, and with Jelena Dokic as a celebrated and relatable protagonist who was a teenager at the height of her tennis career.

This sequence of four lessons considers Jelena's story as a launchpad for conversations around personal safety, healthy relationships and bystander behaviours, with potential to generalise to other contexts. Each lesson plan includes an excerpt from the documentary and activities for reflection and broader application.

While the subject matter of *Unbreakable* is confronting, it also presents a powerful opportunity for students to develop skills in recognising harmful situations and seeking help for themselves and others, while learning to appreciate the importance of listening to survivor stories.

## Guidance for teachers

*Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* is M-rated. It includes mature themes including abuse, family violence, self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, sex references and strong language. Please watch the film and seek your leader's advice before screening it to students. You may also wish to inform wellbeing staff in case the film prompts an increase in help-seeking or peer referral.



## Tips for creating a safe learning environment

A calm, safe and supportive classroom atmosphere will support students to process the difficult content of *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story*. This is particularly important for students with experience of family violence. The following tips may be helpful:

- Before and at the beginning of the lessons, disclose the sensitive themes in the film's excerpt (noted in the lesson plans). Advise students they might feel upset or uncomfortable.
- Discuss the options for seeking help, such as talking to a teacher, wellbeing staff or external helplines. Discuss the pros and cons of disclosing abuse to friends.
- Refresh the school's PBIS values, if you have them, and/or agree to respectful boundaries during discussions. This includes students' rights to:
  - Privacy, including not being asked private questions
  - Learn in environments free from abuse, harassment and vilification
  - Express themselves and be listened to
  - Make mistakes
  - Change their mind.
- Keep the discussion to Jelena's story rather than personal experiences. Scenarios maintain students' privacy and offer protective distance on difficult topics.
- Make it clear that as a child, Jelena is not responsible for her own safety. It is the responsibility of the adults around her. If you think a student may disclose in front of their peers, protectively interrupt them and then follow up privately. You could say: 'I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I'd prefer to talk about this with you privately after the class. Is that OK with you?'
- Have a safe withdrawal space ready for any students who wish to leave the room during the lesson. Refer those students to school wellbeing support and check in on them afterwards.
- If students make a disclosure, thank them for trusting you with this information and follow your institution's reporting frameworks.
- Care for your own wellbeing. Present Jelena's story in collaboration with other teachers if you have the opportunity, clear your diary for an early mark if possible and reset with people and activities you enjoy. Seek help from support services if you need to.
- Remember that Jelena's ultimate message is uplifting and inspiring. She is proud of her strength and self-determination, identifying not as a survivor but a thriver.

## How to view the film

Broadcasted material will be available to schools, on demand, via the ClickView platform (this will usually be available within a day of its release on the initial broadcast channel).

# Lesson 1



## Resources:

- Access to *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* and facilities to screen to the class
- White/smartboard or butcher's paper, and markers
- Exit slips, printed and cut



## Learning intention:

We are learning to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships.



## Success criteria:

I have succeeded if I can contribute attributes of healthy and unhealthy relationships to a class discussion.

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## Introduction

Ask the class what they already know about Jelena Dokic.

Explain that we will be watching *Unbreakable: the Jelena Dokic story* over the next four lessons and reflecting on what we can learn from her story. This section of the film describes her childhood, including coming to Australia as a refugee, and early success as a tennis player amid escalating family violence.

Talk through the ground rules and wellbeing options, using the 'Tips for creating a safe learning environment' above.

Share content advice for today's section of the film:

- Strong language
- Accounts of neglect, and physical and emotional abuse.

Explain that child safeguarding has become an increasing priority in Australian sport, especially over the past 20 years. The approach and attitudes to child safeguarding have advanced, with sports providing more training, support and reporting methods.

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## WATCH SECTION OF *UNBREAKABLE: THE JELENA DOKIC STORY*

- Begin: 0:00
- End: 26:00 ('because he saw money in the picture.')

(Total: 26 minutes)

## Activity

In the film, Jelena describes her relationships with two adult couples: her parents, and coaches Lesley and Bill Bowrey. Compare and contrast how Jelena describes her relationships with them. How do we know they are healthy or unhealthy relationships?

There are two options for the lesson activity below – one for classes with a specific focus on sport and athlete pathways, and one for curriculum focusing on respectful relationships more broadly.

### OPTION 1: FOCUS ON RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

#### As a class

Draw two columns on the board, one headed Healthy Relationships and the other headed Unhealthy Relationships. Ask students to brainstorm the characteristics of each. Record them on the board or butcher's paper for reference in Lesson 2.

Examples below:

Healthy relationships	Unhealthy relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having fun together</li><li>• Mutual commitment and honesty</li><li>• Being able to spend time with your friends and on your own</li><li>• Sharing responsibilities</li><li>• Being kind</li><li>• Respecting differences</li><li>• Treating each other equally</li><li>• Using each other's strengths</li><li>• Feeling free to be yourself</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling scared, frightened, anxious or tense when the other person is around</li><li>• Disagreeing or arguing a lot</li><li>• Frequently breaking honesty, commitment or trust boundaries</li><li>• Difficulty in communicating</li><li>• The other person is constantly checking up on you</li><li>• Feeling manipulated</li><li>• The other person doesn't want you to see your friends and family</li><li>• The other person hurts you, for example physically, sexually, emotionally, socially or financially</li></ul>

Conclude by distributing **exit slips** for students to complete and hand back. This will inform how the class is feeling after the lesson content and whether any students might need a check in.

## OPTION 2: SPORT-SPECIFIC ACTIVITY

### As a class

Draw two columns on the board, one headed Healthy Coach-Athlete Relationships and the other headed Unhealthy Coach-Athlete Relationships. Ask students to brainstorm the characteristics of each. Record them on the board or butcher's paper for reference in Lesson 2.


Examples below:

Healthy Coach-Athlete Relationships	Unhealthy Coach-Athlete Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling motivated and inspired to do your best</li> <li>• Having a support team around you, including peers, family, other coaches, medical practitioners etc</li> <li>• Planning your training and performance together</li> <li>• Being able to speak up about your own training program</li> <li>• Being given feedback in a kind and considerate way</li> <li>• Feeling free to be yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling scared about the future of your whole sporting career if you don't follow their instructions</li> <li>• Feeling like you have to train through injury</li> <li>• Being told to keep secrets from your friends or family</li> <li>• Feeling scared, frightened, anxious or tense when the coach is around</li> <li>• Feeling like you can't speak up or have a voice</li> <li>• Being isolated from other teammates</li> <li>• Being given special favours or gifts that other athletes don't get</li> <li>• The coach hurts you, for example physically (hitting or shoving), flirts with you, verbally abuses you, or withholds money from you</li> </ul>

Conclude by distributing **exit slips** for students to complete and hand back. This will inform how the class is feeling after the lesson content and whether any students might need a check in

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA | UNBREAKABLE: THE JELENA DOKIC STORY

## Lesson 2



### Resources:

- Access to *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* and facilities to screen to the class
- Set/s of scenario worksheets for groups of 2-4 students
- Exit slips, printed and cut



### Learning intention:

We are learning to apply our understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships.



### Success criteria:

I have succeeded if I can analyse scenarios to identify attributes of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

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## Introduction

Facilitate a quick whole-class discussion to recap Jelena's story so far.

Reflect on Lesson 1's list of attributes of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Remind students that healthy relationships make them feel good about themselves, feel good about the other person, and feel good about the relationship.

Share content advice for today's section of the film:

- Emotional and psychological abuse
  - Physical abuse
  - Humiliation
  - Strong language
  - Neglect
  - Financial abuse
  - Family violence
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## WATCH SECTION OF *UNBREAKABLE: THE JELENA DOKIC STORY*

- Begin: 26:00
- End: 42:50 ('What parent would do that.')

(Total: 18:50mins)

## Activity

Explain that we are going to examine some scenarios and think about the characters' behaviours and feelings.

As a class, recap Jelena's experience at Wimbledon, including the roles played by Jelena, her father Damir, her manager, the cleaner, and other observers like journalists and tennis officials. Ask:

1. What behaviours harmed Jelena?
2. What behaviours helped Jelena?
3. How might each person be feeling about themselves, the other person and the relationship?

### In groups of 2-4 students

Hand out worksheets with different scenarios per group. Allow time for groups to discuss. Circulate to support.

Regroup as a class to share.

## Lesson 3



### Resources:

- Access to *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* and facilities to screen to the class
- White/smartboard and markers
- Student workbooks and pens
- Exit slips, printed and cut



### Learning intention:

We are learning what it means to be an active and safe bystander.



### Success criteria:

I have succeeded if I can write wording to help intervene in an imaginary scenario.

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## Introduction

**Teacher note:** In considering what we can do when we see harm happening to someone else, it is important to know that children and young people are never responsible for their own safety or the safety of others. They may feel the need to support their friend or teammate by talking to a trusted adult, but they should never feel the burden of saving the friend/teammate from abuse or harm. The responsibility for keeping athletes safe remains with the adults who work with them.

As a class, recap the documentary thus far. What are your first impressions about Jelena's story?

Share content advice for today's section of the film:

- Strong language
  - Emotional abuse
  - Physical abuse
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## WATCH SECTION OF *UNBREAKABLE: THE JELENA DOKIC STORY*

- Begin: 42:50
- End: 1:11:40 ('there's no question she had the talent to be number one')

(Total: 28:50mins)



## Activity

Ask students to imagine that they were present during one of the moments in the film and had a chance to support Jelena.

Ask for contributions:

- What moment did you choose?
- What did you do?
- How would this have helped her?

Now think about some of the bystanders in the documentary:

- What are some examples of actions that were taken by bystanders that you thought were helpful? Are there any actions you feel they might have done differently?

Explain that there are times when bystanders can speak up if they are witnessing abuse and have the potential to help in a situation. However, you should emphasise to students that children and young people should always seek the support of an adult they trust and should never put themselves in danger by trying to intervene.

Explain, there may be occasions when the first adult you tell, doesn't - or isn't able to – take action. Tell another trusted adult who you feel may be better positioned to help. It's important not to act alone - continue seeking the help of an adult. If they cannot help personally, ask for their help in reporting to an appropriate government agency, such as Sport Integrity Australia, local police or child support services.

As a class, brainstorm practical strategies to help support if you witness abuse or anything else that you know is wrong. Record student responses on the board.

Include the following points:

- Do not place yourself in danger. Always seek the help of an adult you trust, or trusted adults around you e.g. if there are people in positions of authority, such as security or staff, make them aware of the situation. If they don't act, consider who else you might be able to speak to, including the police.
- If you witness abuse in sport, you can report it to Sport Integrity Australia or to the national body for the sport in question (e.g. Tennis Australia).
- If you witness violence occurring or obviously about to occur, call 000.
- Remember: you are not responsible for the safety of your teammates or friends, even if they have told you about the abuse or harm they have suffered. If someone confides in you, tell a trusted adult who can help.

You may wish to discuss with students the [5D's of bystander intervention by Right to Be](#) – **Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, Direct**. Again, this should be done in the context that they seek the support of a trusted adult and not take action on these by themselves.

## Individually

Mentally return to the moment in the film when you imagined you could speak with Jelena. Write down the words you would say.

Regroup as a class to share a few examples.

When considering the examples, encourage the class to be supportive, considerate, reassuring and understanding. Discourage them from examples that may put themselves or Jelena in danger, like confronting the father themselves or running away.

Some good examples could include:

- "What happened to you is not your fault. I believe you."
- "If you ever feel upset, scared or need someone to listen, I'm here."
- "You're not alone. People care about you. You can talk to someone you trust."
- "It's okay to ask for help when you need it. There are people who can help you feel better."
- "You are safe right now, how can we help you stay safe?"

## Lesson 4



### Resources:

- Access to *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic story* and facilities to screen to the class
- Whiteboard, butcher's paper or sticky notes, and markers
- 10 adhesive dots per student
- Exit slips, printed and cut



### Learning intention:

We are learning to identify a broad range of sources of support.



### Success criteria:

I have succeeded if I can identify a source of support that is safe and reliable for me.

I have succeeded if I feel confident to act in the best interests of a teammate if I thought someone was hurting them.

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## Introduction

Ask students what they hope will happen in the last section of the documentary.

Share content advice for today's section of the film:

- Self-harm and suicide
- Physical, emotional, financial abuse
- Eating disorders
- Strong language

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## WATCH SECTION OF *UNBREAKABLE: THE JELENA DOKIC STORY*

- Begin: 1:11:40
- End: 1:46:00 (film's conclusion)

(Total: 34:20 mins)

## Activity

As a class, list the moments in the whole documentary when Jelena was able to get help. These might include:

- Feeling safer as a teen with her coach Lesley Bowrey
- Finding support with then-boyfriend Enrique Bernoldi
- Building trust with co-author Jess Halloran to tell her story.

Brainstorm a range of people and places that provide advice, support and help for someone experiencing violence or abuse in a relationship. Encourage students to think broadly in terms of people, services, internet sites, organisations, and so on. Record students' suggestions on a whiteboard, butcher's paper or sticky notes.

Give each student 10 adhesive dots, which they can stick to the sources they feel most comfortable going to for advice, help or support. They can choose to add more than one dot to show it is particularly helpful.

When everyone has used all their stickers, discuss which sources:

- Students felt most comfortable with and why
- Students felt less comfortable with and why
- Give the most reliable information
- Are more likely to help a person in a violent relationship.

At the end of this activity, emphasise to students again that they should always seek the support of a trusted adult when trying to help a friend/teammate they believe is at risk of harm or abuse.

## Further reading

### Information and resources

#### [SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA](#)

The Australian Government agency that protects sports and their people from a range of integrity threats. The agency's education program includes [resources for schools](#).

#### [PLAY BY THE RULES](#)

Information and resources to support anti-discrimination, child safety and inclusion in community sport, in partnership with state and federal government agencies.

#### [ESAFETY COMMISSIONER](#)

eSafety is Australia's independent regulator for online safety. It educates Australians about online safety risks and help to remove harmful content such as cyberbullying of children, adult cyber abuse and intimate images or videos shared without consent.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

How are you feeling after this lesson?  
(Circle 1 to 3 of the faces)



Explain your choice/s:

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This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 1: Ava and Jo

Ava, aged 16, is about to compete in her first state judo competition. Her coach is pushing her to lose 5kg so she can compete in a lighter division. To 'motivate' Ava and others, the coach has begun weigh-ins in front of everyone. The 21 year old trainee coach, Jo, can see Ava is losing weight quickly and seems more tired and anxious than normal. One day Ava faints during training. Jo decides to tell Ava's mum about the head coach's methods. Ava's mum seems shocked and concerned. Ava doesn't return to training, but a few weeks later Jo sees her at the competition representing a different club. Ava says the coach there is nice and there's room for Jo if they want to come too.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
  2. What are some helpful behaviours?
  3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?
- 

This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 2: Ben

Ben enjoys swimming and was proud to finish third in the 50m freestyle at his school carnival. When he arrives at school the next day, a few kids laugh at him from behind their phones. Ben's friend Eddy pulls him aside, shows him his phone and warns him that it's bad. Ben sees a photo of himself at the swimming carnival that has been edited to make him look like he's drowning in the pool. It has hundreds of likes and mean comments. While Ben scrolls, he also notices other comments calling out the haters, including from strangers and unexpected friends. Ben decides to do something and tells his favourite teacher.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
2. What are some helpful behaviours?
3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?

This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 3: Mish and Dani

While they are getting changed for gymnastics, Dani notices that Mish's arms and legs are covered with bruises. Some seem fresh and dark, others are fading. Mish quickly covers up in long sleeves and leggings. Dani is worried about Mish, so after training asks her about the bruises. Mish says she tripped down the stairs last week. At first Dani accepts this explanation, but the situation stays on her mind. A couple of days later, Mish comes to Dani in tears. She says that her mother makes her do extra training at home and slaps her with a stick when she makes a mistake. Mish and Dani decide to go together to talk to their coach.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
  2. What are some helpful behaviours?
  3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?
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This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 4: Harry

After school, Harry coaches his little brother's under-10s soccer team. One of the fathers is always there, shouting directions at his son and cutting in on Harry's coaching. During games, the father yells from the sidelines for his son to play more aggressively and verbally abuses the referee and opposing team. After games, the father criticises his son's performance, calling him an embarrassment. All the parents want the behaviour to stop but are afraid of how the dad would react if confronted, so they do nothing.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
2. What are some helpful behaviours?
3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?



This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 5: Jesse and Millie

Jesse is excited to invite a school friend Millie to his birthday dinner. Millie happens to be a rising star of wheelchair athletics, representing the state at junior championships and often receiving awards at assembly. The next day, Jesse gets a call from Millie's father. Millie is not allowed to go to the birthday party because she is on a special diet and has a strict training schedule. He says that Millie needs to toughen up if she is going to compete at the Paralympics one day, something an ordinary person like Jesse wouldn't understand. Millie stops talking to Jesse and the friendship seems to be over.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
  2. What are some helpful behaviours?
  3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?
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This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 6: Ravi

Even though Ravi is still 16, he's earned selection in the senior hockey team. He is elated after his first game with the new team, where he scored a key goal. Back in the changerooms Ravi is half-undressed when he notices the changeroom is suddenly quiet and the team has formed a circle around him. The captain says it's time to welcome Ravi as a fully-fledged team-member. He hands Ravi a beer and says it's team tradition to skull after debut. Ravi has never had alcohol and gags as he tries to drink. The team reacts with laughter and applause. Ravi feels disgusted and ashamed.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
2. What are some helpful behaviours?
3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves, the other characters, and their relationships?

This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 7: Tom

Tom got into cycling to avoid being at home with his chaotic family. A friend's uncle offered to coach Tom one-on-one for free and even gave him a second-hand racing bike. Tom is doing well at road racing, so his coach offers to drive him to a junior event, three hours away. As they drive, the coach starts asking Tom personal questions about his love life and gives graphic details about his own. Tom feels very uncomfortable.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
2. What are some helpful behaviours?
3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves and their relationship?

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This scenario is fiction but might resemble a real situation. If this activity makes you feel upset, please talk to your teacher.

## Scenario 8: Sam and Felicity

Sam's team is having a great game of touch football and is moments away from securing a comfortable win. As she passes to her teammate Felicity, Sam overhears one of the opposition telling Felicity to get off the field and go back to Africa. Felicity seems shocked and drops the ball. Sam tells the captain about the comment, who signals for the whole team to sit down on the pitch. They've prepared for moments like this, and agreed they would rather forfeit the game than tolerate abuse.

Discuss:

1. What are some harmful behaviours by characters in this scenario?
2. What are some helpful behaviours?
3. How might the characters be feeling about themselves and their relationship?