

Virtual Health Messenger Training Guide

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# Overview

The aims of Health Messenger training include:

* providing athletes with a technical skill set that enhances their ability to be a leader and advocate for themselves and others in all aspects of health (e.g., health, fitness, with healthcare providers),
* empowering athletes to advocate for the health needs of people with intellectual disabilities, and
* promoting athlete knowledge of health and change in health behaviors.

# Training Objectives

The objectives of the training are to:

1. Educate Health Messengers about the health status of people with ID and the Special Olympics Health Program;
2. Review how to build positive health behaviors and be a peer role model;
3. Teach the skills and activities Health Messenger can use to help their local communities or teams become healthier;
4. Empower Health Messengers to advocate for the health of people with ID;
5. Create individual Health Messenger activation plans;
6. Develop a network of Health Messengers who can share ideas, discuss challenges and celebrate successes with each other.

As a result of attending this training, Health Messengers will:

1. Have increased confidence in their ability to act as peer leaders and role models within their Special Olympics communities for fitness and preventative health programs.
2. Understand the steps involved to lead activation and advocacy within their broader communities and with their peers to raise awareness and influence other community members to be more inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities.
3. Have knowledge on how to catalyze and support external organizations to work toward making their services, programming, or policies more inclusive.

# Why virtual?

The COVID-19 pandemic led the Special Olympics movement to create innovative measures to continue connecting with athletes. Virtual training was one of the adaptations created to continue Health Messenger training and activation. Many Programs found virtual (or hybrid) training to be a useful option. Virtual training can occur without some of the expenses and obstacles that in-person training presents. For in-person training, athletes may need to travel long distances for a training. This can be a large financial obstacle. Training Health Messengers virtually allows people from diverse locations to join without traveling. This is the same for guest speakers. By connecting virtually, the possibilities are endless.

This toolkit is to support Programs to host their own virtual “Becoming a Health Messenger” training. Programs are encouraged to adapt the materials to best fit their training or add relevant components. Nevertheless, **athletes trained and reported as new Health Messengers on or after October 1, 2022 must complete a training that meets the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards below.** To distinguish this training from other trainings that Programs may be providing to Health Messengers, this can also be called the “Becoming a Health Messenger” training.

# New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards

**Athletes trained and reported as new Health Messengers on or after October 1, 2022 must complete a training that meets the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards.** To distinguish this training from other trainings that Programs may be providing to Health Messengers, this can also be called the “Becoming a Health Messenger” training.

## Requirement 1 – Time

The training must include at least 8 active training hours.

* These hours can be in-person or virtual but should not include times allocated to breaks or lunch, unless there is also work occurring during those sessions
* The training hours do not need to be held consecutively – they may be divided over a number of days or weeks

## Requirement 2 – Topics

The following topics must be covered for at least the period of time listed:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Minimum time** |
| Introduction to Special Olympics Health and the role of the Health Messenger | 1 hour |
| Health disparities of people with intellectual disabilities | 1 hour |
| Physical activity | 1 hour |
| Nutrition | 1 hour |
| Emotional Health | 1 hour |
| Communications | 1 hour |
| Advocacy | 1 hour |

You will notice that these minimum times add up to 7 hours of active training. That leaves a minimum of 1 hour for Programs to add additional time or topics that are tailored to their athletes’ needs.

## Requirement 3 – Registration

All newly trained Health Messengers must be registered in SOI’s Health Messenger Database (using the Health Messenger Information Form) in order for a Program to count them as newly trained. Programs will continue to report the number of new Health Messengers trained on the Single Health Evaluation (SHE). SOI will cross-check the numbers reported in the SHE with the numbers registered in the Health Messenger Database for the corresponding period. Programs may be asked to revise the information reported through the SHE number or ensure the registration of their athletes in the Database.

**Currently, the Health Messenger Information Form exists in** [**English**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0e1be8a1b99d41b0b43530771e890c1c) **and** [**Spanish**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/dc76b41833774271a02ce27021844508)**.**

## Requirement 4 – Activation Planning

Activation Planning is to plan a Health Messenger activation (Requirement 5). An activation may be less elaborate/involved than the previous practicum requirement, which many athletes and Programs found intimidating or overwhelming.

Activation Planning may be part of the training or may occur as separate calls/meetings. A staff member from the Health Messenger’s SO Program should participate in this planning session along with the Health Messenger and their mentor. For Health Messengers who don’t have in mind a specific way they would like to be activated, the SO staff member can help provide ideas and opportunities for activation within the Program’s planned activities and/or aligned with priority or strategic areas.

The idea behind shifting from a practicum to an activation is to recognize that some Health Messengers may not yet feel ready to “organize the dance” and may prefer to practice their skills with more guidance and structure.

****The ***Health Messenger Activation Guide*** was developed with athletes’ needs in mind to give ideas about the types of activities they may be interested in carrying out. The ***Health Messengers in Action*** section of the Health Messenger Resources page is another location where Programs may get ideas—or have their Health Messengers’ activities featured!

**Programs must be very careful to avoid tokenism in activation planning. If an athlete is ready to plan their own activation, please follow their lead. If an athlete would still like more support, please be prepared to speak about different options so that the athlete still has the opportunity to choose how they’d like to be activated.**

## Requirement 5 – Activation

****All newly trained Health Messengers must be activated at least once within the first year after completing the didactic training. This activation must be reported to SOI using the [Health Messenger Activation Tracker](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/793040a8ee0d450d8b912939494ee9d8).

Within one year of being trained, each Health Messenger must be activated. They will work closely with their Special Olympics Program to do so. Activation gives Health Messenger the chance to practice what they learned in training and to show their leadership skills. Some examples of Health Messenger activation are:

* Leading a fitness or wellness challenge
* Hosting health activities, such as a cooking demonstration for healthy and simple recipes
* Participating in a meeting with health decision-makers
* Participate in health-related media interviews discussing a new health initiative

## Requirement 6 – Evaluation

Programs must ensure that new Health Messengers complete the three evaluation forms for the training. These evaluation forms are:

* ****[pre-test](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJUs03e5lSIk3VI),
* [post-test for immediately after the training](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_06tmoK3nMZxKMVo), and
* [post-post-test for 3 months after the training](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ePXcjlINGTRzWom).

These evaluations should be completed electronically (via the links above and on the Health Messenger Resource page). Programs may consider costs for engaging a consultant for entering this data in their Health Impact Grant.

In very limited circumstances and for compelling reasons, SOI will consider assisting Programs/Regions with data entry for scanned paper evaluation forms. Please contact the Pillar 4 team to discuss: healthmessenger@specialolympics.org.

# Data Management

## Registration of Health Messengers

The New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards require that all newly trained Health Messengers be registered in SOI’s Health Messenger Database (using the Health Messenger Information Form) in order for a Program to count them as newly trained. SOI will cross-check the numbers reported in the SHE with the numbers registered in the Health Messenger Database for the corresponding period. Programs may be asked to revise the information reported through the SHE number or ensure the registration of their athletes in the Database.

Health Messengers who are not activated within 1 year after training will be marked in SOI’s Health Messenger Database as inactive.

**Currently, the Health Messenger Information Form exists in** [**English**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0e1be8a1b99d41b0b43530771e890c1c) **and** [**Spanish**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/dc76b41833774271a02ce27021844508)**.**

## Activation of Health Messengers

****The New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards require that all newly trained Health Messengers be activated at least once within the first year after completing the didactic training. This activation must be reported to SOI using the [Health Messenger Activation Tracker](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/793040a8ee0d450d8b912939494ee9d8).

After the first activation, Programs/Health Messengers are welcome continue to report their activations using the form. Alternatively, Programs may (and are encouraged to!) share stories of Health Messenger activations in their Health Impact Grant monthly reports. SOI will review these and select stories to highlight on the ***Health Messengers In Action*** section of the Health Messenger Resources page.

Health Messenger Reach

In order to keep track of the reach of your Program’s Health Messengers—for example, how many people they have provided with peer education, mentorship, engagement in wellness opportunities—you may want to consider creating some sort of form that you collect periodically. This form could be filled out by the coach, school, or Health Messengers themselves.

The structure of the reporting form and the type of information collected depends on the activities of your Health Messengers. If they are giving presentations, they could record the number of athletes in attendance. If they are engaging athletes in conversation outside of a Healthy Athletes screening, they could record the number of athletes with whom they spoke. Make an effort to also capture qualitative data, including inspirational stories and feedback/suggestions from the Health Messengers and those with whom they interact.

Arm yourself and/or your team members with a camera and digital video recorder. This content can be used for a later pitch to media and to share the best stories with your internal network and with the wider Special Olympics Movement.

# Training Resources

****You can access all Health Messenger training resources [here](https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/health-messenger).

The symbol on the left appears throughout this document when a training resource is referenced. Some training resources are linked directly in this document.

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The symbol appears in red when the training resource must be accessed/downloaded separately.

# Icon  Description automatically generatedStep 1: Plan Your Training

## Assemble your Health Messenger training planning team

Athletes have keen insight into the health problems they face as well as ways these problems can be addressed, so include them in every stage of the planning process. In addition to athlete(s), you may also want to include Clinical Directors or other groups as you plan your training.

## Determine the health needs of your Special Olympics athletes

Think about the health issues and barriers to health facing people with ID in your Program, country, state, or community. Talk to athletes, coaches, caregivers, Clinical Directors, and others. Each of these groups can provide you with valuable insight about what health knowledge and behaviors you should tailor your training to address.

## Select Health Messengers

There are a few different options for selecting your Health Messengers. You might have existing athlete leaders who would be natural fits for the program. Alternatively, you might ask coaches, teachers or volunteers to nominate athletes who they consider leaders and would be strong leading in health and fitness. You could also invite interested athletes to complete a short application.

****See the ***Sample Training Application.***

Please ensure that you create leadership opportunities for athletes of different interests, ability levels, and strengths. It is useful for your Program to train some Health Messengers who are interested in and strong with public speaking or media, but there should be a number of other ways that Health Messengers can be active in your Program and community.

**We suggest training a maximum of 15 athletes in any one virtual “Becoming a Health Messenger” training.**

## Identify and train Mentors

Health Messengers benefit from the support of a mentor. A mentor works with and supports the Health Messenger to exercise their leadership. Mentors can be coaches, family members, Special Olympics staff members or friends (including Unified Partners!).

****To equip mentors—especially new mentors—to work with Health Messengers, please have them complete the ***Athlete Leader Mentor course*** on learn.specialolympics.org before attending the Health Messenger training along with the Health Messengers.

## Design your training agenda

Athletes trained and reported as new Health Messengers on or after October 1, 2022 must complete a training that meets the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards (see above).

Please ensure that your agenda meets these minimum requirements while also taking into account other factors, including your Program’s Health Messenger needs and athlete communication styles. The agenda should include several opportunities for peer-to-peer athlete discussions on a variety of health topics, led by an athlete leader.

Aim for a training agenda that includes a combination of:

* Classroom-style lecture (10%)
* Group discussion (25%)
* Hands-on activities (40%)
* Individual work time (25%)

You can access all Health Messenger training resources [here](https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/health-messenger).

You should also provide your athletes with ample breaks, refreshments, and opportunities for fun.

Consider the health knowledge and literacy levels of your Health Messengers. SOI provides template training materials for the “Becoming a Health Messenger” training. You may work with Clinical Directors, health partners or others with expertise in developing training materials to customize or develop materials that are appropriate for your advocates, provided these meet (or exceed) the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards.

You will need to determine how is best for you to structure your training. We recommend that the training be broken up into a few different sessions so that there is focus and participants are not overloaded with information. We would suggest limiting individual sessions of the training to a maximum of two hours. You can decide how to break down the training. Some examples are eight 1-hour sessions, twice per week, for four weeks. Another possibility could be eight 1-hour sessions, once per week, for eight weeks.

****See the ***Sample Agendas*** (Appendices A and B below, as well as Appendix A of the “Becoming a Health Messenger” In-Person Training Guide) for more ideas.

If you have current Health Messengers in your Program, consider how they can participate in training new Health Messengers. For example, you may ask them to share what they have done for their practicums/activations, ask them to be a co-facilitator, or invite them to “audit” some sessions to refresh their learning.

## Consider homework

To reinforce the lessons learned and keep participants engaged, we recommend providing optional homework assignments after the sessions. These are typically training activities that would have been done at an in-person training. For some participants, completing homework assignments online may not be the best option. As discussed below, it can be beneficial to mail the participants all resources, including worksheets, ahead of time.

****See the ***Sample Agendas*** (Appendices A and B below, as well as Appendix A of the “Becoming a Health Messenger” In-Person Training Guide) for more ideas.

## Determine meeting logistics

### Facilitation

For a virtual “Becoming a Health Messenger” training with 15 or fewer athletes, we recommend that you have at least 2 training leaders.

### Internet connection

Virtual training will only work if participants have access to good internet connection before deciding on a platform to use to host the training. Programs may include in their Health Impact Grant costs for athlete data/internet that are necessary to enable them to participate in a virtual Health Messenger training.

### Meeting platform

SOI recommends hosting the training on a platform that athletes may already be familiar with through other programming. It is important for the Program and participants to feel comfortable navigating the platform during the training. For many, the most familiar platform will be Zoom.

SOI has created an athlete-led Zoom tutorial. Please feel free to use this resource and share it with your Health Messengers.

Specific considerations for Zoom include:

* Subscription

Not all participants need a license to attend the meetings, just the host will need a license. Different Zoom licenses will limit the duration of the meeting and how many participants can join. For more information on Zoom licensing, click [here](https://zoom.us/pricing). Additionally, Programs may request to use an SOI Zoom Pro account to host their training. Email healthmessenger@specialolympics.org for more information.

* Break Out Rooms

If you want to break into smaller groups for certain points of the training, you have an option to personally select groups (ideal for making sure that Health Messengers and mentors are in the same group). To learn more about break out rooms, click [here](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Enabling-breakout-rooms#h_9285303e-c6b2-46d6-96af-59c5bb206448).

* Polling

 Zoom allows you to use polls during your meeting. This can be a great to keep everyone engaged and do a quick knowledge check! To learn more about using polls, click [here](https://blog.zoom.us/3-ways-to-use-polls-in-meetings/).

* Additional Features

Zoom’s additional features include the capability for closed captioning, recording, annotation, and registration. Zoom meetings can also be livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube, and more. Meetings are designed to be a collaborative event where all parties can share. For online event best practices on Zoom, please click [here](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/article_attachments/360047066292/Zoom_Online_Event_Best_Practices.pdf).

## Share training resources and materials

You can find all slides, handouts, supplementary resources, and facilitator supports [here](https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/health-messenger). For some participants, using all the resources online may be difficult. Printing the materials that you are using, binding them, and mailing it to participants ahead of time can provide an alternative option to following along online. To accommodate different learning styles, we recommend that you share the resources for participants with them by (a) mailing and (b) uploading in file sharing platform, like Dropbox or Google Drive.

Additionally, recording the training sessions can be useful for Health Messengers and mentors to refer back to. After each session, send out an e-mail to participants with the recording, slides used, and any additional resources relating to the topic.

## Share examples of Health Messenger activation

The New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards require that you ensure athletes dedicate time to plan their activation and that newly trained Health Messengers are activated at least once within the first year after completing the didactic training. This will help the Health Messenger to put into practice what they learned at the training and help them think about what leadership skills they have and can use as Health Messengers.

****Before the training starts, send the ***Health Messenger Activation Guide*** to each participating athlete and mentor attending, so they have time to start thinking about how the Health Messenger might want to be activated.

# A picture containing vector graphics  Description automatically generatedStep 2: Implement Your Training

## Distribute the pre-training survey

Collecting information before training will help SOI and SO Programs to understand the baseline health knowledge, behaviors, and empowerment levels. When compared with Post-Training Survey responses, we can better understand the impact of health messenger trainings on improving these aspects.

****Whenever possible, this survey should be taken electronically, through this [link](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJUs03e5lSIk3VI). Programs who must use the paper version of the survey must input the data electronically. Programs may budget in their Health Impact Grant for costs to engage a consultant to do this data entry.

In very limited circumstances and for compelling reasons, SOI will consider assisting Programs/Regions with data entry for scanned paper evaluation forms. Please contact healthmessenger@specialolympics.org with such requests.

## Use existing training resources…or share your own

SOI has provided template training materials, including PowerPoint presentations and activity guides.

You may wish to tailor these or work with subject-matter experts to create your own, as well! If you create a new activity, please share the activity with healthmessenger@specialolympics.org so it can be shared with other trainings and SO Programs.

## Don’t forget the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards!

****Athletes trained and reported as new Health Messengers on or after October 1, 2022 must complete a training that meets the New Health Messenger Minimum Training Standards.You can find these above and in the ***Health Messenger Overview*** document.

## Gears outlineRecognize Health Messengers

It is important to recognize your Health Messengers for their hard work at the training. We supply a ***Certificate Template*** that you may want to use.

Additional ways to recognize Health Messengers include:

* Distribute a press release with photos of participants
* Post the story on your website and social media channels
* Submit your success story to Special Olympics International for posting on social media channels

(specialolympics.org/Stories/Share\_Your\_Stories\_about\_Special\_Olympics.aspx)

* Submit information about their activities in your monthly Health Impact Grant report or to healthmessenger@specialolympics.org. SOI will review these and select stories to highlight on the ***Health Messengers In Action*** section of the Health Messenger Resources page.

## Gears outlineGather participant feedback

Please administer [the Post-Test](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_06tmoK3nMZxKMVo) immediately after completing the didactic training and [the Post-Post Test](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ePXcjlINGTRzWom) three months later. When compared with Pre-Training Survey responses, we can better understand the impact of health messenger trainings on improving these aspects.

Whenever possible, these surveys should be taken electronically. Programs who must use the paper version of the survey must input the data electronically. Programs may budget in their Health Impact Grant for costs to engage a consultant to do this data entry.

****In very limited circumstances and for compelling reasons, SOI will consider assisting Programs/Regions with data entry for scanned paper evaluation forms. Please contact healthmessenger@specialolympics.org with such requests.

The mentors can also provide their feedback on the Health Messenger training by completing the mentor post-training survey using this [link](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6rkbqSCcDDiok5v).

You may also want to meet with your Health Messengers and mentors to discuss the training and lessons learned. You might choose to debrief with the Health Messengers following events, quarterly, or at the end of the grant period. Take their opinions seriously and use the feedback to shape future health education programming or training.



# Step 3: Support Your Health Messengers

After the training, check in with your Health Messengers regularly to monitor their work and provide any necessary support. The Health Messengers should have a specific person in your Program to go to if they need more materials, are asked a question they can’t answer, or need any additional support.

**If you have questions or would like support putting together your Health Messenger training, we’re here to help! Please send an email to:** **healthmessenger@specialolympics.org**

# Appendix A, Sample Training Agenda #1

## Session 1: Introduction

**Objective**: Familiarize Health Messengers with the format of the training and set expectations for the workshop.

**Additional resources:** [**Training Pre-Survey**](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJUs03e5lSIk3VI)

**Slideshow**: ***Health Messenger Overview***

**Session details**

The first session should be dedicated to making sure everyone is comfortable using the virtual tools and resources for this training. Participants should learn about the different features of Zoom (or whatever online platform you are using) and how to use it. It is important to talk about proper Zoom etiquette for the training (using the raise hand feature, staying on mute, etc.).

**Homework**

****

Ask Health Messengers to respond to three discussion questions (below) and complete the ***What You Can Do As A Health Messenger Worksheet***.

* Introduce yourself!
* What are challenges you face to achieving good health? What challenges do others face to achieving good health?
* What is the Athlete role in educating and motivating leaders/influencers in communities, schools, local organizations, and government to promote and support health of people with ID?

## Session 2: Health Overview

**Objective**: Health Messengers learn about what health is and what healthy decisions look like. This session will give a preview of what Health Messengers will learn throughout the training.

**Slideshow**: ***Health Messenger Overview***

**Session Details**

The health overview helps participants become familiar with Special Olympics health initiatives. It also provides an opportunity to learn what health means to the participants! You can incorporate participation by asking questions like, “What does being healthy mean to you?” and asking participants to type their answers in the chat or raise their hand to share.

Health Messengers learn about the different roles of Health Messengers and share practicum examples. This session helps set the stage for what they will learn throughout the course.

**Homework**

Ask Health Messengers to complete the ***Importance of Being Healthy Worksheet***.

Tell Health Messengers to come to the next session ready to work out (wearing proper clothes and shoes, and with space to move around).

## Session 3: Physical Activity

**Objective:** Teach Health Messengers about physical activity and exercise. They will learn about the different fitness resources and how to lead exercises for different ability levels.

****

**Slideshow**: ***Fitness***

**Session Details**

****

This session reviews the physical activity component of fitness! Physical activity is an important part of being healthy. Through this session participants will learn about different types of physical activity and resources, such as the ***Fit 5 Guide for Health Messengers***.

****

You can make this session very interactive. Using the ***Activity Guide - Create Your Own Workout***, you can work with your group by asking them to put suggestions into the chat. Once the workout has been created it is recommended you do workout with our group virtually!

**Homework**

Ask Health Messengers to create a video they would share with their fellow athletes on how to do an exercise or write a 10-minute exercise plan using the Fit5 Guide.

****

Related resources: [Fit 5 resources](https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5-page%20)

## Session 4: Nutrition and Hydration

**Objective:** Teach Health Messengers the importance of nutrition and hydration to keep your body healthy. They will also learn how to build a healthy meal.

****

**Slideshow**: ***Nutrition and Hydration***

**Session Details**

Nutrition and Hydration are important to keep a healthy body! This session gives health messengers an overview of what to eat and how to build a healthy plate. Health Messengers also will learn the importance of staying hydrated.

To make this session interactive, consider using breakout rooms to split the group into two smaller groups to talk about the meals participants have had that day and how they could be healthier.

**Homework**

Ask participants to respond to the following discussion questions:

* What can you do to help your Program make sure athletes have health meals, snacks, and beverages at competitions?
	+ - What would a healthy meal at games be?
		- What could be some healthy choices and how do we encourage athletes to pick those?
* What is one thing you might try to improve in terms of what you eat or drink in the next month?

****

Related resources: [Educational postcards](https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/health/disciplines/health-promotion/Health-Promotion-Brief-Educational-Postcards-for-Athlete-Engagement-July-2020.pptx?_ga=2.232141340.2030436349.1597857359-262637050.1571750982)

## Session 5: Emotional Health

**Objective:** Teach Health Messengers the importance of taking care of your emotional health. Health Messengers will learn about Strong Mind strategies that can help reduce stress and improve emotional health.

****

**Slideshow:**  ***Emotional Health***

**Session Details**

Emotional health is an important part of overall health. This session teaches Health Messengers about having an optimistic approach to life and being able to enjoy life. They learn Strong Minds strategies that they can use and share with anyone!

**Homework**

Ask participants to share a Strong Minds strategy with another person who isn’t part of the training.

****

Related resources: ***Handout – Strong Minds Tips for Stress***

## Session 6: Communications

**Objective:** Health Messengers will learn about how they can share their message and represent SO Health.

****

**Slideshow:**  ***Tips for Effective Communication and Storytelling***

***Social Media***

**Session Details**

The communications session reviews how to communicate, storytelling, being a brand ambassador for SO Health, social media and traditional media. This session helps participants learn how to deliver their message whether it’s through doing an interview or on their personal social media account.

****

Related resources: ***Worksheet – Social Media Planning***

**Homework**

Ask participants to practice creating a sound bite in preparation for future media interviews with the following three exercises:

*Exercise 1:* Answer the question - What is your personal definition of what inclusive health means for you?

*Exercise 2:* Start developing your Health Messenger story by answering the following questions:

* What is your name and what sports do you play?
* Why is Special Olympics important to your health?
* How are you inspiring others to commit to a lifetime of fitness and health?
* What is your call to action?

*Exercise 3:* Record yourself on your phone practicing what they would say in an interview, pretending that they are speaking to a reporter OR sharing your personal health story for review.

(This can also be done in writing by those who aren’t able to do or comfortable doing the speaking/video version of the task).

## Session 7: Advocacy

**Objective:** Health Messengers learn what it means to be an advocate and how they can advocate for themselves and others.

****

**Slideshow:** ***Advocacy***

**Session Details**

This is a great session to include a previously trained Health Messenger as a co-facilitator. In this session, participants learn about different types of advocacy and how they might build advocate with stakeholders for inclusive health.

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A good exercise is to ask Health Messengers and their mentors to spend the allotted amount of time to prepare for how they would advocate and influence someone. This activity can be found on the ***Handout - Advocacy***.

**Homework**

****

Health Messengers should prepare to discuss their activation idea for the final session. They should use the ***Health Messenger Activation Guide***.

## Session 8: Activation

**Objective**: Each Health Messenger will present a one-minute presentation on their activation idea.

**Session Details**

For this session, each Health Messenger gives a minute to talk about the activity they would like to implement. This is a great chance for them to practice their public speaking and learn about what everyone is doing.

## After the Training

1. ****Send out the immediate post-training surveys for [Health Messengers](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_06tmoK3nMZxKMVo) and [mentors](https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6rkbqSCcDDiok5v).
2. Send out Health Messenger Certificates (***Certificate Template***).
3. Ask the Health Messengers to fill out the Health Messenger Information Form.
4. Don’t forget to activate Health Messengers! And make sure their activation is reported through the [***Health Messenger Activation Tracker***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/793040a8ee0d450d8b912939494ee9d8).

# Appendix B, Sample Training Agenda #2

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Topic** | **Date** | **People Involved** | **Notes** |
|  | Registration of Health Messengers and mentorsCreation of a WhatsApp group with athletes and mentors | June 24 – July 3 | Athletes + mentors (1 per athlete) |
|  | Mentor training* Presentation of the program
* The role of the mentor
* Explanation of the Health Messenger activation
 | July 14 | Training facilitator | Pre-training orientation for mentors |
|  | Send pre-test the day before the training starts | Before first group meeting | Training facilitator | Sets the baseline for evaluation |
|  | Health Messenger Activation planning meeting  | July 15 – 20  | Training facilitator | Meet with each Health Messenger-mentor pair individually to discuss interests for activation |
|  | The role of the Health MessengerInvitation/call to action by an existing Health Messenger, Barriers to Health, Right to HealthSpecial Olympics Health OverviewHomework: learn about Special Olympics Health programs in your country | July 21 | Training facilitatorExisting Health MessengerPresenters | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Presentation of homeworkHealth Messenger activitiesHomework: think about what you would like to do as a Health Messenger | July 28 | 1-2 Health Messenger-mentor pairsPresenter | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Health and Healthy HabitsHealthy Habits quizHomework: diary about nutrition, hydration, and sleep habits diary for a week | August 4 | Presenter | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Nutrition and hydrationHomework: set personal health goal | August 11 | Presenter | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Presentation of homeworkFitness and physical activityClass with physical trainerHomework: diary about physical activity for a week | August 18 | PresenterTrainer/group exercise instructor | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Emotional wellnessHomework: diary about emotions and coping techniques for a week | August 25 | Presenter | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Communications and sharing about healthy habits on social mediaHomework: share healthy habits on social media at least 2x/week, using tags | September 1 | Presenter | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | What is a habit?Building positive healthy habits | September 8 | PresenterHealth Messengers and mentors | **Group meeting**1.5-2hHealth Messenger-mentor pairs will draw a habit on which to present at random, prepare a short presentation, and present to reinforce learnings |
|  | Activation planning  | September 9-17 | Health Messengers and mentors | Meet with each Health Messenger-mentor pair individually to discuss the practicum project |
|  | Advocacy Issuance of Health Messenger certificate | September 22 | PresenterHealth Messengers and mentors | **Group meeting**1.5-2h |
|  | Send certificates and feedback/training evaluation survey | September | Training organizer | Send link to feedback/training evaluation survey and Health Messenger Certificate (virtual or paper, if possible) |
|  | Follow-up on activations | September on | Mentors |  |

This agenda is adapted from a training organized and facilitated in July-August 2021 by Gonzalo Larrabure (Special Olympics Latin America) and Vilma Sequén (Special Olympics Guatemala).