



SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA  
UNIFIED WELLNESS



# WELCOME!

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Welcome to SOfit, and thank you for taking steps not only to help others live happier, healthier lives, but also to invest in your own wellness. Wellness is a personal, intimate process and should be approached with patience, resolve and understanding. The decision to put time into wellness is for ourselves and for our loved ones. Truly it is a responsibility to take care of our health, but that doesn't mean it has to be done alone.

A few key things to keep in mind:

Remember, change doesn't happen overnight. Habits take time to create, and therefore take time to recreate and replace. Wellness should be approached as a journey, and we take small steps along that path every day. Goals must be attainable to be met.

Every day is different. What is easy one day may be challenging the next. Experiencing stress about wellness can be counterproductive and can negatively affect progress. Results will vary so keep long-term goals in mind, and don't become discouraged.

Wellness is a holistic view of health, encompassing all four of the identified pillars of wellness in SOfit – Physical, Emotional, Social and Nutritional. These pillars, or sections, of wellness work together; there's more to being healthy than exercise and eating well. When one aspect is lacking in daily life, the others will be impacted.

Wellness is a massive, broad topic, but it can be simple to make positive changes within our lives. One part should be worked on at a time. When a participant feels in control of that part of his or her wellness, having made good progress, repeat with another part. This is how healthy habits are formed for individuals, and quality of life improves.

Thank you for bringing the message of health and wellness to your group. You are positively impacting many lives as a leader of the SOfit program!





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# EMOTIONAL WELLNESS





In this pillar, **EMOTIONAL WELLNESS** will be discussed in combination with mental wellness. Emotional wellness has to do with our feelings and emotions. Emotions are reactions we have to things that happen around us, and we use “feeling” words to describe them. Because the events we react to are constantly changing, it’s natural that our emotions change too.

Mental wellness has to do with our thoughts and choices. Examples of mental wellness include being able to see new ways of doing things, facing challenges in a positive way, being patient with yourself, taking action to reach goals, keeping promises, making healthful choices, and taking responsibility for actions.

When we’re emotionally and mentally stable, we’re able to think more clearly and manage our stress in a healthy way.

In the Emotional Wellness pillar, we’ll learn about stress management and explore different ways to express our emotions in a healthy way, without hurting ourselves or other people. We’ll also work to improve how we feel about ourselves.

## **LESSONS IN EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

Healthy Expression of Emotions  
Stress Management  
Mindfulness: The Art of Being Present  
Relaxation and Breathing Techniques  
Goal Setting  
Decision-Making  
Healthy Self-Esteem



# HEALTHY EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

## Key Messages

People have a range of emotions, and this is normal.

I will identify and express my feelings in a healthy way without hurting myself or others.

## Background

Emotions are sometimes a complicated topic. That's because emotions aren't concrete objects that people see, touch, or easily describe. Emotions are the feelings people have in reaction to other people, situations, activities, or their environment. People can experience a wide range of emotions. Psychologist Paul Eckman suggested that there are six basic universal human emotions: fear, disgust, anger, surprise, sadness and happiness. In the late 1990s, he expanded this list to include: excitement, embarrassment, contempt, pride, shame, amusement, guilt, relief, contentment and satisfaction. Along the same lines, psychologist Robert Plutchik created what he called the "wheel of emotions." He said that the basic emotions sometimes combine to create yet more, different emotions, similar to the way an artist mixes colors. This model for understanding emotions is more complex, because it demonstrates how the "basic" emotion changes when it's either blended with another emotion or changes in intensity. The model also categorizes emotions as polar opposites. According to Plutchik the "basic" and conflicting emotions are: joy versus sadness; anger versus fear; trust versus disgust; and surprise versus anticipation. Within and between each category is a range of emotions.

While it's normal to experience all of these emotions, the way people express these emotions can impact relationships with others or ourselves. Unhealthy expressions of emotion can harm a relationship, sometimes mildly and sometimes severely. On the other hand, healthy expression of emotions can help bond a relationship and make it stronger. It's important in emotional health to express emotions, because expressing emotions appropriately can solve problems, ease relationship tensions, and even make life a little lighter and easier. Often, when emotions are held on to, life becomes more complicated. Small problems may turn into big problems. Some of the ways people express emotions include:

- **Words**
- **Actions**
- **Facial expressions**
- **Body language**
- **Tone of voice**
- **Crying or laughing**

While people express emotions in many ways, it's most important to understand that how we express those emotions has the greatest impact. The purpose of expressing emotions is to be honest and open. The point is not to hurt or shame others. Here are a few ways people can express their emotions in a healthy way:

- **Body language and facial expressions.** People respond to body language and facial expressions in different ways. When expressing emotions, think about your body language and the expression on your face.
- **Breathing patterns.** Use deep breathing techniques to help calm yourself when expressing emotions.
- **Use "I feel..." phrases instead of "you make me feel" statements.** Saying "I feel..." takes ownership of the emotions being experienced. When the listener hears "you make me feel," he or she has a hard time hearing what the speaker has to say. The perception is accusation, rather than being there for someone who's hurting.

It's okay to have a variety of emotions. The important thing is to learn how to express those emotions in a healthy way, without hurting yourself or the people around you.

# HEALTHY EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: EXPLORING FEELINGS\*

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description

- Brainstorm a list of feelings with the group and write them on the whiteboard or poster paper.
- Ask a volunteer to come to the front and act out one of the feeling words listed on the board. Give the group three guesses. If the group hasn't guessed correctly after three tries, have the actor reveal the feeling.
- Allow others to take turns acting out the feeling words listed on the board.
- Discuss how different feelings can look the same. For example, it can be hard to tell the difference between loneliness and tiredness.
- Ask the group how to find out what a person is feeling - and the danger of assuming you know what someone else feels.

### Coach's Notes

Optional to discuss ways of care for yourself when certain feelings emerge. What do you do to take care of loneliness? Or fear? Or some other feeling? This can be done as a large group or with partners.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

## Key Messages

Stress is my body's response to events happening around me and is an everyday experience felt by all people at all ages.

I can find positive ways to manage my stress.

## Background

Stress is the body's reaction to emotional, physical and environmental pressures. These pressures can be caused by events, feelings, or situations that make a person feel tense, nervous, anxious, angry or frustrated. Even minor frustrations can turn into stress if not handled in a healthy way. Additionally, stress compounds upon stress and builds up to create long-lasting impacts on the brain and the body if not controlled or resolved in a healthy way.

## Effects of Stress

Stress creates an imbalance of the chemicals in the brain. As a response, the brain releases or prohibits certain hormones and different chemicals that cause people to think, act, and feel differently. Stress can cause us to have **mental stresses** (brain fog, fatigue, moodiness, easily angered or saddened, difficulty interacting with others, anxiety) and **physical stresses** (difficulty sleeping, weight gain, lowered immune function, tense muscles or aches, upset stomach), as well as many other problems. Stressors are the sources of stress. They are common events such as being late for an activity, competing in a sporting event, or losing a friend. Stress and stressors are a normal part of life and, unfortunately, unavoidable. The way people deal with stress is what determines the effect the stress has on the body and the mind.

## Combating Stress

Because stress is part of everyday life, combating it sounds challenging to most people, but there are ways to combat stress that appeal to everyone.

**Be active.** Stressors happen every day. A great way to combat both the physical and emotional effects of stress is through exercise. Exercise can release endorphins, which are chemicals in our brains that make us feel good about ourselves. Exercise increases mood and gets the body moving, which both counteract the negative effects of stress. Running, bike riding, hiking and yoga are particularly good exercises when trying to relieve stress.

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

**Eat well.** It's important to eat nutritionally dense foods when stressed. It's easy to emotionally eat and eat "comfort foods" when stressed, but eating nutritionally dense foods can combat stress. Some good foods to eat when feeling stressed are: asparagus, avocados, berries, cashews and walnuts, garlic, chamomile and green tea, citrus fruits, oatmeal, and even chocolate. These foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which have positive impacts on the brain when experiencing stress.

**Create self-care time in your day.** When feeling stressed about the many different moving pieces in life, it's important to take some time for yourself in the day. Watching a movie, taking a bath or shower, reading a book, listening to music, cooking a good meal, or simply spending time alone can be rewarding and combat the stress of constantly being with others. In order to do one thing every day to take care of yourself, you might need to schedule the time, but it doesn't need to take more than 5-10 minutes.

**Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques.** Mindfulness itself can reduce the impact of stress and even prevent situations from becoming stressful in the first place. An added technique to mindfulness is relaxation. Useful relaxation techniques are different for everyone and may include simple stretches, visualization, walking, yoga or meditation. Additionally, practicing deep breathing techniques during a stressful situation can immediately counteract the effects in the moment.

**Get organized.** Organization can help combat stress by adding predictability to the day. When people feel stress they are more likely to forget or lose things, which can add even more stress. Keeping a calendar, planner, and folders with important information or documents can help to decrease stress by creating predictability. Planning ahead and mentally preparing for what comes next in the day, week, or month is much easier when organized.

**Spend time in nature.** The natural world is extremely healing, and the benefits of spending time in nature have been proven. Even if you simply sit in a park or open green space for a few minutes, time in nature (without a cellphone or other electronics) can be therapeutic and healing. The brain and body respond very positively to nature, and spending time in nature can release similar chemicals to exercising or deep-breathing. Scheduling your self-care time in nature is a great way to make sure it happens from time to time.

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Copies of self-care calendar for all participants**  
**Pen/pencil**  
**Whiteboard or poster paper**  
**Markers**

### Activity Description

- Explain to participants that being stressed out can make us really moody. No matter what is causing the stress, it's important that we take care of ourselves.
- Give all participants a copy of the self-care calendar. Explain that their job for self-care is to choose one activity every day for themselves. They can keep track of what they do each day on the calendar.
- Brainstorm ideas for activities that participants can do to take care of themselves and make a list on the whiteboard or poster paper. Examples may include: *Stop and breathe for a few minutes, listen to music, drink a cup of tea, go for a walk, stretch, talk to a friend, dance, write in a journal, draw or color.*

### Coach's Notes

It may be helpful to check in on this activity with participants from week to week. Allow them to share with the group what they have been doing to take care of themselves.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE CALENDAR

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: SELF-CARE CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday



# MINDFULNESS: THE ART OF BEING PRESENT

## Key Messages

Mindfulness is paying attention. This includes paying attention to how I'm breathing, how I'm moving, how I'm eating, how I'm living.  
I can slow down and pay attention to my thoughts, feelings, and surroundings.

## Background

Mindfulness is the deep awareness of thoughts, feelings, and the surrounding environment at the present moment. This means paying close attention to things as they are experienced. Mindfulness is often the key to enjoying the sweetest moments in life as well as dealing appropriately with the moments that are challenging or stressful. Using mindfulness in everyday life can have many positive impacts on our well-being as well as on relationships with others.

Mindfulness has been proven to have a myriad of positive impacts on both emotional and physical well-being. Some examples include:

- Better focus in situations riddled with environmental or psychological distractions, such as a loud workplace or thoughts about something other than the task at hand.
- Healthier immune system to fight off illness and infection. Less stress means having a better immune system. Mindfulness not only helps to de-stress mentally, but also allows deep rest and relaxation to occur. This helps sleep, which has always been known to boost the immune system. Mindfulness can also help us pay attention to what we're eating, and nutritional wellness plays a key role in the health of the immune system.
- Better control over emotions and more compassion towards others. Mindfulness allows us to more easily find compassion towards ourselves and others, even in challenging situations, because it teaches us to have more control over our emotions. Mindfulness can help us take a new, clearer approach to a conflict or stressful situation, opening the door for compassion. Being present also allows us to acknowledge our emotions, take ownership over them, and then find solutions more quickly and easily. When people are in a more relaxed state, they can think more clearly. Mindfulness teaches us to be intentional and allows us to reap the added benefit of feeling more relaxed naturally.
- Relieving stress or pressure. Deep breathing, relaxation, and more control over thoughts and emotions lead to relief from stress. Stressful situations will still arise, but with mindfulness it's possible to handle those stressful situations a little more easily, relieving some of the stress.

A few simple ways to incorporate mindfulness into everyday life include:

- Paying attention to breathing. Breath is an indicator to how the body is responding automatically or subconsciously to a situation. If something seems stressful or even exciting, stopping to notice the breath will help to "check-in" with oneself and use brain power to control the physiological response the body is having. If breathing is short and quick, it can be changed using mindfulness.
- Paying attention to the senses sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, and other physical sensations helps us to slow down. Experiences then become either more enjoyable or more manageable. This can also help to maintain patience, for example, while waiting in a line or traffic. Thinking about how exciting and enjoyable the destination is can help to keep thoughts positive, rather than turning to the possible range of negative thoughts in these situations.
- Paying attention to body language, facial expressions, and movement. This helps maintain mindfulness in interactions with others. Paying attention to our own body helps us to pay attention to others in conversation as well. This can ease communication by being fully aware of the many unspoken communications between people in a conversation.

# MINDFULNESS: THE ART OF BEING PRESENT

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: BREATHING MEDITATION

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Quiet music  
Yoga mats or chairs

### Activity Description

- Allow participants to lie down on mats or sit comfortably in chairs. Have quiet music playing.
- Read the script slowly, pausing to allow participants to focus on their breath.
- *Sit or lie comfortably with your eyes closed or just look down softly. Take a few deep breaths and let yourself settle in. Feel yourself letting go of any tension you are holding in your body. Let your muscles relax and your breathing slow.*
- *As you listen to the music, focus on your breath for several minutes. Inhale...exhale. Inhale...exhale. **Pause here to allow participants to focus on breath for several minutes.***
- *Begin to deepen your breath and come back to the room. Bring some movement into your body. Wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers, turn your head side to side. If you are lying down, slowly roll onto one side and make your way up to seated.*
- *Slowly open your eyes. Take a deep breath in and sigh it out. One more breath in and sigh it out.*

### Coach's Notes

Another option is to find a relaxation script online or in a book.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WALKING MEDITATION

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Quiet music

### Activity Description

- Play quiet music and tell participants that we are going to do a walking meditation. Explain that they will be asked to walk around the space without touching anyone or making any noise. They should be aware of the other people around them so as not to bump into anyone.
- The goal of the walking meditation is to walk slowly and focus on the movement of the body, the breath, and ideally nothing else.

### Coach's Notes

Option is to try the walking meditation with a purpose. For example, four steps forward, four steps backward. Or, find a local labyrinth to check out.

# RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

## Key Messages

Taking deep breaths can help me to focus and experience less stress.

I can find many different ways to experience relaxation.

## Background

There are many benefits to relaxation techniques, but sometimes it's difficult to remember why it's so important to take time to just relax. Some of the benefits of relaxation and breathing techniques include:

- Reduced anger and frustration.
- Less fatigue.
- Slowed heart rate.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Slowed breathing rate.
- Reduced activity of stress hormones.
- Reduced muscle tension or pain.
- Improved concentration and mood.
- Improved sleep quality.
- Improved digestion.
- Increased blood flow to muscles.
- Maintained blood sugar.

There are many breathing and relaxation techniques. You can try them all to find one that works for you. Here are some great techniques that anyone can do:

- **Massage.** Through massage, we can gain a host of medical and emotional benefits by releasing the chemicals from stress that muscles hold onto.
- **Music and Art Therapy.** Music and art both help a person release emotions and stress and can be deeply relaxing. Certain music can be played to trigger "good" hormones in the brain that replace the negative hormones.
- **Aromatherapy.** Certain scents can bring about positive memories, and some scents can even trigger a hormone shift in the brain. Lavender, sage, patchouli, and frankincense, as well as many other scents, have positive impacts on the chemicals in the brain.
- **Yoga or Tai Chi.** As mentioned previously, being active can help to calm stress. These two types of exercise are centuries old and have been used by many different cultures specifically to relax the mind.
- **Meditation and Guided Relaxation.** Meditation or guided relaxations can help to restore peaceful and positive images to the imagination and mind, giving a sense of peace, comfort and security. They require intentional and positive thoughts, as a way of rewiring the chemicals that come through stress.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** Progressive muscle relaxations have the effect, in some ways, of both a massage and a guided relaxation. Much like the brain, other muscles hold stress as well, and a progressive muscle relaxation can help to release those chemicals. This is done by tightening different muscle groups, holding for several seconds, and then releasing.
- **Visualization.** Visualization is making a picture in your mind of positive places, hopes, and dreams. In visualization, we might envision ourselves on a beach, in our dream home, or succeeding at something really challenging. Sending positive images to the imagination can alter our future line of thought and block stress from becoming overwhelming in the first place.
- **Deep Breathing.** Much like exercise, deep breathing, or "belly breathing," has a physiological response that alters the chemicals in our brain. Deep breathing helps to lower the heart rate, which lowers the risk of going into a stress response. The impacts on the heart rate and brain can be felt instantly through deep breathing. It's important to make sure that the breath is in the diaphragm and not the chest.

# RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: VOLCANO BREATH\*

### TIME

**2-5 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Optional - quiet music**

### Activity Description

- Sit in a chair, cross-legged on the floor, or stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Place palms together at the heart.
- Take a slow, deep breath through the nose and pause when the lungs are full.
- Hold the pause and bring the arms up over the head.
- Exhale and slowly breathe out, moving arms out to the side and then back together at the heart.

### Coach's Notes

Not all participants will be able to breathe in through the nose and that's okay. Option is to think of someone you would like to send your thoughts to. Picture that person in your mind and send out thoughts to them in Volcano Breath. Allow individuals to share who they sent their thoughts to. Another option is to think of something they would like to bring into their life. As they exhale, they can shower this image around them. Examples include strength, joy, calm, and more.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Optional - quiet music  
Optional - yoga mats or blankets

### Activity Description

- Allow participants to lie down on yoga mats or sit comfortably in chairs. Have quiet music playing.
- Read the script slowly, pausing to allow participants to relax.

*Sit or lie comfortably with your eyes closed or just look down softly. Take a few deep breaths and let yourself settle in. Let your muscles relax and your breathing slow. **Pause for a few moments.***

*During this relaxation you will be asked to gently tense or squeeze various muscles throughout your body.*

*Let your hands rest loosely in your lap, or by your side. Begin to become aware of your breathing, noticing how your abdomen (belly) rises and falls with each breath. Now take a long slow deep breath in through your nose, all the way down into your stomach, and let it out slowly. Continue to breathe deeply. **Pause here to allow participants to take a few deep breaths.***

*Now let your breathing rhythm return to normal...and relax....**Pause.***

*Bring your awareness to your feet and toes. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and as you do, gradually curl your toes down and tense the muscles in the soles of your feet. **(Pause briefly.)** Now release the muscles in your feet as you breathe out. Feel the tension in your feet wash away as you exhale. Notice how different your feet feel when they are tensed and when they are relaxed.*

*Now bring your awareness to your calf muscles and lower leg muscles. As you draw in a deep breath, flex your toes up towards your knees and tighten the muscles in your lower legs. Let those muscles release as you exhale.*

*Now, draw your attention to your thighs and upper leg muscles. Take a deep breath in, and tense the muscles in your thighs. **(Pause.)** Now release as you exhale. As you do this, you may notice a warm tingling sensation. Enjoy this feeling of relaxation in your thighs.*

*Draw in a deep breath and gradually tighten the muscles in your buttocks. **(Pause.)** Release your breath and the muscles. Feel the tension leaving your muscles and relaxing completely.*

*Bring your awareness to your stomach. Draw in a deep breath and tighten these muscles. Imagine you are trying to touch your belly button to your spine. **(Pause.)** Now release your breath and let your muscles relax.*

*Bring your awareness to the muscles in your back. As you slowly breathe in, arch your back slightly and tighten these muscles. **(Pause.)** Now release your breath and let your muscles relax.*

# RELAXATION AND BREATHING TECHNIQUES

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION CONTINUED

*Give your attention to your shoulder muscles and the muscles in your neck. As you slowly draw in a nice deep breath, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly. (Pause.) Now breathe out completely, and allow your tightened muscles to completely release.*

*Feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out. Feel the heaviness in your body. Enjoy this feeling of becoming heavier and heavier. If it feels comfortable, think to yourself, "I am calm. I am at peace."*

*Now, draw your awareness to your upper arms. As you breathe in, flex your wrists towards your shoulders and tighten the muscles in your upper arms. (Pause.) And now gently release your arms and breathe all the way out.*

*Bring your awareness to your forearms. As you breathe in, curl your hands inward as though you are trying to touch the inside of your elbows with your fingertips. (Pause.) And feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.*

*Now, take another breath in and tightly clench your fists. (Pause.) And now release. Notice any feelings of buzzing or throbbing. Your hands are becoming very soft and relaxed. Your arms and hands are feeling heavy and relaxed.*

*Now tighten the muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut, clenching your jaw muscles and squeezing your lips together. As you do, breathe in fully. (Pause.) Breathe out and relax all your facial muscles. Feel your face softening.*

*You are now completely relaxed from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. Take a few more moments to rest. This time is for you. Relax. Listen to the sound of your breathing and enjoy the lovely, warm sensation of physical relaxation. **Pause for a minute or two to allow participants to relax.***

*Begin to deepen your breath and come back to the room. Bring some movement into your body. Wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers, turn your head side to side. If you are lying down, slowly roll onto one side and make your way up to seated.*

*Slowly open your eyes. Take a deep breath in and sigh it out. One more breath in and sigh it out. You can carry this feeling of relaxation with you as you continue the day.*

**When participants have started returning their consciousness to the room, the group can have a short discussion about how that felt and whether they'd like to continue doing that, even on their own. Also discuss when it might be helpful to do an activity like this.**

### Coach's Notes

A number of guided relaxations and progressive muscle relaxations are available to anyone on the internet as well as in books. There are even some great videos on youtube.com that include relaxing music along with the relaxations.



# GOAL SETTING

## Key Messages

It's important to set goals in all areas of wellness (physical, nutritional, social, and emotional) as well as other areas in life (work, school, home).

Short-term goals will help me achieve my long-term goals.

## Background

A goal describes where you want to get to or what you want to get done. The definition of a goal is: something that you are trying to do or achieve. Setting a goal is like creating a plan to do better, or to get something done. Some goals are easy to reach, while others may be more challenging. When setting goals, it's important to set realistic goals and to consider your strengths and limitations. This may help you achieve your goals within a reasonable time.

When setting a goal, it's helpful to:

- Establish a plan to reach the goal.
- Consider barriers (what could get in the way).
- Suggest solutions to the barriers.
- Identify a reward.
- Evaluate progress.

We can set both long-term and short-term goals. A long-term goal is a goal that you plan to reach over an extended period of time. An example of a long-term goal is becoming a teacher. A short-term goal is a goal that you can achieve in a short time. Short-term goals can contribute to the long-term goal. Short-term goals that contribute towards becoming a teacher may include getting a job tutoring or applying to a teaching program at a university. Barriers to consider for the long-term goal of becoming a teacher might include not getting into the university or not having enough money to pay for the classes at the university.

Goal setting is a powerful tool that you can use to shape your future. Goals help us focus and can give us a sense of purpose. Goals can also boost our self-confidence, and this strengthens our mental and emotional wellness.



# GOAL SETTING

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH\*

### TIME

**30-40 minutes**

### MATERIALS

- Copies of “My Goals for Better Health” worksheet for all participants
- Pen/pencil
- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Markers

### Activity Description

Tell participants they'll be setting goals for themselves in four different areas of their life right now. Explain each of the areas:

- *Social* has to do with family or friends.
- *School or work* has to do with school or work.
- *Physical* has to do with nutrition or exercise - anything to do with the body.
- Emotional has to do with feelings, emotions, or thinking.
- Explain that we'll also think about the people who support us in achieving our goals.

For each area, have the group brainstorm ideas for goals in that area and write the ideas on the whiteboard or poster paper. Then allow partners to think about specific goals in each of the areas and write it in the box on the worksheet.

Examples of goals in each of the areas:

- *Social Goal:* Meet someone new, eat lunch with a different person once a week, call a friend every weekend
- *School or Work Goal:* Be on time every day, try not to complain, take a deep breath when frustrated or mad
- *Physical Goal:* Drink five glasses of water a day, eat five fruits/vegetables every day, take the stairs instead of the elevator, exercise thirty minutes each day
- *Emotional Goal:* Use positive self-talk (“I can do it,” “I can be responsible”), write in a journal every day, do one thing each day to take care of myself

Explain to participants that we don't need to try and reach our goals on our own. We have people in our lives who can help and support us in reaching our goals. Sometimes it even helps us to reach our goals faster when we have support. Brainstorm with the group about people who can support them in reaching their goals. Make a list on the whiteboard. In partners, have them write the specific names of people in the box “People who support me” on the worksheet.

### Coach's Notes

After the worksheet is complete, it could be fun for participants to come into a strong pose and picture themselves reaching that goal. This lesson could be done in combination with the “Volcano Breath” activity from the lesson on Relaxation and Breathing Techniques, picturing themselves reaching their goal in volcano breath.

\* Activity adapted from The Power of Me, Mad Hatter Wellness, [www.madhatterwellness.com](http://www.madhatterwellness.com) and used with permission.



# GOAL SETTING

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH\*

### MY GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH

SCHOOL OR WORK GOAL :	EMOTIONAL GOAL (FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, THINKING):
PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT ME :	
SOCIAL GOAL ( FAMILY, FRIENDS) :	PHYSICAL GOAL (NUTRITION, EXERCISE):

\* Activity adapted from The Power of Me, Mad Hatter Wellness, [www.madhatterwellness.com](http://www.madhatterwellness.com) and used with permission.



# DECISION-MAKING

## Key Messages

I can make decisions in my life to lead to a healthier lifestyle.

If I'm making an important decision, I will think about what I want and what my options might be before making the decision.

## Background

We make decisions every day. Some decisions are small choices such as deciding what to wear or what to eat for breakfast. Other decisions are larger choices and may be life changing or affect other people in our lives, such as whether or not to get in a car with someone who has been drinking alcohol or how to respond to hurtful comments made by a friend.

Several decision-making models are available that are helpful in supporting a person when making a decision. Those models are typically used when we are making the larger choices rather than small choices such as figuring out what time to set your alarm clock. Whatever decision-making model a person uses, there are some really important concepts to think through. It's important for us to think through the decision and to do the right thing for ourselves. Sometimes we forget that the right choice for one person might not be right for another person. When making decisions, we need to think about ourselves.

We all have different styles of decision-making. Usually we begin by assessing whether something is an important or an unimportant decision. If it's an important decision, we think carefully about what we want and what options we have. Then we weigh possible positive and negative consequences. Thoughtful decision-making gives us more control over our lives and contributes to our health, safety, and sense of well-being.

It's okay to ask for help when thinking through a larger choice that might affect others or could be life changing for ourselves. Talking things through is another helpful step in making important decisions.

# DECISION-MAKING

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CONFLICTING FEELINGS\*

### TIME

**30-40 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description:

- Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Ask the group to imagine it's a hot day in July and the individual is standing on a steep cliff, looking into a cool river below. A friend has encouraged him or her to jump into the water below. The individual has two conflicting feelings that are speaking very loudly inside his or her body. What are they?
- On the whiteboard or poster paper write each of the two feelings the group identifies side by side. Ask the group what each word is saying to the individual. Then write those responses under each word. For example, if the feeling words are "afraid" and "brave," under "afraid" you might write things like, "You'll die!" or "You'll break a leg!" Under "brave," you might write, "Don't be a wimp!" or "You can do it!" Encourage the group to come up with seven or eight responses for each feeling.
- Now ask for two more volunteers to play the parts of the different voices. Standing on either side of the person about to jump, have each individual read his or her respective feelings from the board. After watching this for a few minutes, ask the group which voice they think the individual should obey.
- Allow the volunteers to sit down, and ask the group if it's possible for the individual to listen to both feelings. Help them come to a solution that honors both feelings. For instance, some solutions to the face-off between feeling both afraid and brave could include jumping from a lower rock after checking the depth of the water; watching others jump and then deciding if it's safe; and asking others for information in order to make a better decision.

### Coach's Notes

Try this activity presenting a situation that generates other feelings such as anger and calm, responsibility and playfulness - any pair of feelings that people may struggle with when making a decision. An important part of this activity is to help participants learn that the feelings are not bad. They are warning signals from the body. It may be helpful to ask the group what life would be like if we listened only to one emotion, such as fear, bravery, or any other single feeling. In this way, participants can learn how to listen to, evaluate, and balance competing thoughts and emotions.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# Healthy Self-Esteem

## Key Messages

I can have healthy, positive self-esteem.

Using positive self-talk helps me to feel better about myself. I can do it!

## Background

Self-esteem is the image and thoughts we have about ourselves. Positive, or high, self-esteem is the ability to accept, appreciate and be honest about strengths and weaknesses we have. Having high self-esteem can yield many benefits in life. It can lead to a healthy social life and decreased stress. Having negative, or low, self-esteem can lead to many issues, including physical and emotional health problems. The effects of stress caused by low self-esteem can be long-lasting. It can take considerable effort to change low self-esteem into high self-esteem, but it's certainly possible.

## Highs and Lows of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is present and evolving throughout life and can change through new experiences and meeting new people. It is often formed during childhood and the growing-up years, through experiences and feedback from parents, siblings, teachers, coaches and friends. Self-esteem is affected by the way both successes and failures are handled by these external people, as well as other factors.

Low self-esteem is defined by having a negative self-image and a feeling of unworthiness, incompetence, and incapability. It is often an unconscious pattern of behavior and thought. Some negative experiences (especially during childhood) that contribute to low self-esteem are:

- Being ignored, ridiculed, teased or demeaned.
- Being harshly criticized, especially continuously.
- Feeling expectations of perfection. A parent, guardian, teacher, coach or peer may have reacted as though a one-time mistake or failure was a failure of the whole self.
- Experiencing an emotional trauma, such as emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Experiencing bullying.
- Experiencing societal pressure to be different or "better."
- Experiencing an unhealthy relationship.

Some positive experiences that contribute to high self-esteem are:

- Being listened to or heard.
- Being spoken to respectfully and compassionately.
- Getting appropriate attention and affection.
- Feeling like expectations are realistic and attainable.
- Feeling like accomplishments are celebrated and recognized, while feeling like failures are acknowledged and accepted as normal.
- Experiencing healthy relationships and encouragement.

Past experiences continue to impact daily life, including self-esteem. Even if an experience feels as if it happened a long time ago, all experiences impact the brain and can impact self-esteem both positively and negatively.

# Healthy Self-Esteem

## Improving Self-Esteem

Improving self-esteem may sound like a daunting task, but with some work and perseverance, is readily attainable. It may take some time and extra practice, but everyone can improve their self-esteem with patience. Try practicing a few of these techniques:

- **Managing thoughts through mindfulness.** People control their own thoughts. When experiencing a negative thought about oneself, it's okay to say "Stop!" and replace that thought with positive self-talk, such as "I can do this."
- **Taking pride in accomplishments, ideas and opinions.** Each individual is unique, which is what makes the world a wonderful place. Being kind to oneself and accepting differences in self and others can boost self-image.
- **Goal setting.** Setting goals, even big goals, helps to boost self-esteem. When people reach goals they've set for themselves, they feel accomplished and proud. Celebrating the attainment of a goal internally helps to boost self-esteem.
- **Doing something for someone else.** Volunteering or simply helping someone in need of assistance - no matter how big or small the task - boosts confidence.
- **Facing and conquering anxieties or fears.** Sometimes conquering a fear can make a person feel strong, powerful and on top of the world. What better way to feel good about oneself than the feeling of having conquered something that was scary or challenging?
- **Taking pride in what can be done and accepting what can't be done.** Everyone has strong suits as well as limitations. Accepting limitations is a part of celebrating abilities and is important for a healthy self-esteem.
- **Focusing on positive attributes.** By focusing on things one does well, the brain can be trained to consistently focus on the positive.

Learning to have patience with oneself can take time if it's lacking, but patient self-acceptance is achievable by anyone. Having a healthy self-esteem has an incredible amount of benefits, including reduced stress and generally more contentment and happiness. Contentment and happiness are what make life joyful. It's possible to train the brain to have high self-esteem through some patience and practice.

# Healthy Self-Esteem

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: I AM...

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper**

**Markers or colored pencils**

**Paper**

**Pen/pencil**

### Activity Description:

- Discuss positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is telling ourselves positive things. When we use positive self-talk, feelings about ourselves improve and can actually help us to do things that may be difficult.
- Examples of positive self-talk include: "I can do it," "I am strong," "I am creative."
- Brainstorm "I am" statements on the whiteboard.
- Individually, in partners, or as a group, allow participants to create a poster of "I am" statements.
- Allow participants to share with the group.
- Discuss when it might be helpful to use positive self-talk and "I am" statements in life.

### Coach's Notes

Another option for practicing positive self-talk is to ask participants to assume a balance pose, such as "tree" pose (standing on one foot). While participants are standing in tree pose, ask them to think, "I am balanced," "I am strong," "I can do this." Next try standing in tree pose and use negative self-talk. Think to yourself, "I can't do this," "This is too hard," "I'm bad at this."

# Healthy Self-Esteem

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROUD OF MYSELF

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Markers or Colored Pencils

### Activity Description:

- On a piece of paper at the top of the page, have participants write down at least five things they're proud of. Explain that their choices can include an unusual talent, a skill, or anything they're excited about in life.
- With a partner, answer the following questions at the bottom of the page.
- What are two strengths of this person?
- What is this person's most important accomplishment? What is he or she good at?
- How is this person a good friend to others?
- What does this person do to show a positive attitude?
- If there's time, participants can decorate their posters with markers or colored pencils.
- Allow participants to share their posters with the group. Explain that looking at a poster like this can help improve our self-esteem. Brainstorm where they could keep these posters to be reminded of the amazing things they do.

### Coach's Notes

Remind participants that maintaining high self-esteem is not always easy, and some days can be very hard. With a little work and attitude adjustments, a strong and positive self-esteem is attainable. Learning to appreciate who you are as a person and all that you can do can help you to have a positive and healthy self-esteem.







# NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS



Nutrition is one of the most important parts of our health. The food and drink we put into our bodies impacts how we think, feel and behave. It's a challenge to eat and drink in a balanced way to get the nutrients our bodies need. We can meet the challenge if we understand what healthy eating is and have access to a healthy variety of foods.

Food doesn't have to be "low fat" or "low calorie" to be balanced. Foods like that may have additives that aren't good for us. It's important to make sure that we eat a variety of nutrient rich foods.

Lessons in the **Nutritional Wellness** pillar will explore what's in our food and on our plate. We'll talk about where our food comes from and how to prepare nutritious meals. We'll explain some basic terms and discuss what "balanced" means. The lessons also offer tips for making sure we're in balance and getting the essentials our bodies and minds need.

## **LESSONS IN NUTRITIONAL WELLNESS**

**What's in My Food?**

**What's on My Plate?**

**Balanced Eating Every Day**

**Preparing Balanced Meals for the Week**

**Balanced Eating on the Run**

**Hunger or Appetite**

**Where Does My Food Come From?**

**Understanding Beverage Choices**

**Caffeine**

**Alcoholic Beverages**



# WHAT'S IN MY FOOD?

## Key Messages

There's no such thing as "good" food and "bad" food.

Essential nutrients are minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, fat, protein and water.

Nutrient dense foods include many or all of the essential nutrients. Nutrient deficient foods provide none or lower amounts of essential nutrients.

## Background

Let's begin by taking a look at some basic nutrition concepts. Food is fuel for the body. It gives us the energy we need for everything we do. To measure how much energy a given food supplies, we use calories. A **calorie** is a unit of energy in food. Calories are found in all types of food, including food that is "nutrient dense" or "nutrient deficient." **Empty calorie** food has calories - but without the nutrition we need.

**Nutrient dense foods** are rich in essential nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Our bodies also need the essentials of fiber, protein and unsaturated fats. Nutrient dense foods provide long-term energy and satiety (feeling of fullness). They fuel the brain for better concentration, learning, confidence and stress relief. Examples of nutrient dense foods: Fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, oatmeal, whole grain breads, rice, cereal, lean meat, and milk.

**Nutrient deficient foods** lack the above essential nutrients and may be made up of empty calories. Nutrient deficient foods provide short bursts of energy followed by feelings of hunger and fatigue. They can contribute to insomnia, lower concentration, learning difficulty, and difficulty managing feelings and emotions. Examples of nutrient deficient foods or food with empty calories: Sugar, cookies, soda, fruit drinks, ice cream, chips, pizza, bacon, cake, and donuts

## Essential Nutrients Recommendations

**Carbohydrates:** Whole grains, fiber and vegetables

**Protein:** Nuts, legumes, and lean meats such as fish, chicken, and turkey

**Fats:** Unsaturated fats (baked foods instead of fried foods)

**Vitamins:** A, D E, K and the B vitamins

**Minerals:** Iron, calcium, potassium

**Water:** 8-12 cups

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THIS OR THAT

### TIME

**20-30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Labels and pictures of food that are in the same food category (cereals, snacks, drinks, etc.)**

### Activity Description:

Show a series of photos or bring in the real food. Hand out food labels for the different foods. Ask participants which foods would be considered nutrient dense or nutrient deficient (empty calories). Show pictures of the following foods:

- Wheat and white bread
- Sugar rich cereals
- Brown pasta and white pasta (or rice)
- Granola bar options
- 100% or fresh squeezed juice or 5% juice

# WHAT'S IN MY FOOD?

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THIS OR THAT CONTINUED

- Banana pudding or a banana
- Applesauce or an apple

Have participants look at the food label and tell why each is in its category.

### Coach's Notes

Highlight the vitamins, minerals and sugar content in each food. Be sure to explain that fresh fruit is sweet because it's made up of natural sugars. Sugar such as high fructose corn syrup is added to some products to make them sweet. Fresh fruit may have sugar, but it also has many more vitamins and minerals. Compare wheat products and white products (cereals, breads, pasta and rice). "Whole grains" have all the vitamins and minerals intact, not removed as with white products. White products have been stripped of the nutrients and may have extras like sugar added for flavor.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PROCESSED FOOD...IT'S EVERYWHERE!

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**A variety of coupons with pictures of food  
Scissors**

### Activity Description:

- Have participants look at the coupons to find three to five foods that would be considered nutrient dense and three to five that are nutrient deficient. Have them cut out the foods and sort into two categories.
- Allow individuals to find more if time permits.
- Have participants share some of their food items and why they put them in each category.

### Coach's Notes

"Processed food" is a term used to define foods that are changed through processing from their natural state. For example, a french fry was a potato in the ground at one time. Another example, corn from the stalk is processed into high fructose corn syrup. The ingredients in the label that do not seem to be in their raw state are using chemicals added to the food. Some reasons why chemicals are added to our food include:

- Change the color. Example: yellow color of some drink products
- Disinfect and deodorize food (as in bleaching). Example: white flour
- Change texture. Example: the crunch in chips or the smoothness of spreads
- Soften. Example: cheese spread creamy
- Improve shelf life. Example: boxed items like macaroni and cheese
- Sweeten. Example: high fructose corn syrup added
- Mask smell. Example: covers up all the processing in processed food
- Add flavor. Example: orange flavor in drinks instead of real oranges

Essential nutrients are often destroyed in processing. This leads to a food that is nutrient deficient rather than nutrient dense. As a general rule for ingredient lists-- if it has five or more ingredients, it is most likely processed.



# ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

## Key Messages

- There are long-term and short-term effects from drinking alcohol.
- It is my choice if I want to drink alcohol.
- I can be safe if I drink alcohol responsibly.
- Media messages about alcohol can be misleading.

## Background

How much is one drink? 12-oz beer, 5-oz glass of wine or 1.5-shot of hard liquor (such as vodka). Excessive alcohol consumption is responsible for about 88,000 deaths in the United States each year (CDC\*). Binge drinking is responsible for more than half of these deaths. Binge drinking is defined as having four or more drinks in a two-hour period.

## Short-Term Effects of Alcohol Use

- Impaired speech
- Drowsiness
- Vomiting
- Digestive problems such as diarrhea and upset stomach
- Impaired judgment (tendency to make poor decisions)
- Impaired coordination, reaction time and perception
- Impaired vision and hearing
- Blackouts (impaired memory during alcohol consumption)

## Long-Term Effects of Alcohol Misuse or Abuse

- Disruption of normal brain development
- Liver diseases such as cirrhosis
- Damage to brain cells
- Stomach and intestinal ulcers
- High blood pressure that can cause heart disease and stroke
- Decrease in male sperm production

Moderate drinking is better. Moderate drinking means you drink only a small amount. For women, moderate drinking is one alcoholic drink a day. For men, moderate drinking is two alcoholic drinks a day. Of course you don't have to drink alcohol at all.

The phrase "Drink Responsibly" can mean different things to different people. There are a number of different aspects to what it means to drink responsibly. The main thing to remember is to be sure you and the people around you stay safe.

- Avoid drinking and driving.
- Avoid getting in a vehicle with someone who has been drinking.
- Wait until it's legal to drink (age 21 in the United States).
- Avoid mixing alcohol and other drugs.
- Avoid going to parties alone where alcohol may be present.
- Never leave a drink unattended.
- To drink responsibly, use your common sense. If your inner voice is telling you that something is not a good idea, then it probably is not a good idea.

\* Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

# ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHY DRINK WHEN I CAN...?

### TIME

**15-40 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Large paper for poster making  
Markers or colored pencils**

### Activity Description

Ask participants: *Why do you think some people start drinking, even if they don't want to drink?*

- Attention from certain groups of people
- Do not want to be different
- Do not want to cause an issue with people, give in
- Advertising makes it look cool
- Media and movies portray it as if everyone is drinking to have fun

Ask participants: *What are some things to say if you feel pressured to drink?*

- "No, thanks."
- "I don't feel like it- do you have anything else to drink?"
- "No, alcohol really isn't my thing."
- "Please respect my decision. I said no. Please don't ask me again."
- "My family has a history with alcohol, and I don't want to go down that path."

People can find lots of things to do to have fun that don't involve alcohol. Write this sentence starter on the board: *"Why drink when I can \_\_\_\_\_?"*

- Generate a list of all the fun things people could do instead of drinking alcohol.
- List the fun activities you can share with friends who have common interests.

If time, have the group make posters of their "natural highs," naming all the things they enjoy and can do instead of drinking.

### Coach's Notes

Make sure participants know that natural highs act on the same part of the brain that alcohol does to produce a feeling of high or euphoria. Also, by learning to communicate with people about your wants and needs, you can stay true to your beliefs and morals around drinking. Encourage participants to stay true to who they are, and encourage them to look closer at the people trying to pressure them. It is helpful to listen to our inner voice. If your inner voice says something is wrong or not for you, listen to it. Your value system is trying to protect you from guilt or poor decision making.

# WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?

## Key Messages

- Foods shouldn't be labeled as "good" or "bad," but as "nutrient dense" or "nutrient deficient."
- All foods have purpose in a balanced diet.
- I will study and learn the content of food labels.

## Background

When thinking about the food on our plate, it's important to consider a variety of foods from all food groups as well as the variety of essential nutrients that we get only from these foods. Understanding the nutritional information of the foods we eat is a way to become more aware of balance in our eating. Our body and mind need proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and plenty of water. The only way to accomplish this is to eat a variety of food.

It's important to recognize that all foods hold a purpose for our bodies. Labeling foods as "good" or "bad," and even "healthy" or "unhealthy" may add to feelings of shame some people feel about eating. Think of foods as "nutrient dense" (or "nutrient rich") and "nutrient deficient." These terms keep the focus on the important goal of getting all the essential nutrients. Some foods are high in calories, yet have all the essential nutrients, while others are low in calories but offer few essential nutrients. This is why it's important to understand the contents on food labels and the misconceptions about how foods are labeled.

- **Balanced Eating:** Eat a variety of foods so your body and mind get the essential nutrients you need.
- **Empty Calories:** Foods that do not have any of the essential nutrients.



## Tips to Balanced Eating

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables because they are nutrient dense.
- Drink 8-12 glasses of water each day.
- Eat a variety of meats, including lean meats such as fish, chicken and turkey, as well as other protein sources such as nuts and legumes.
- Remember foods such as ice cream, candy, baked goods, soda, and fruit beverages are nutrient deficient and should be eaten in moderation.
- Know the ingredients in the foods you eat (for example: fresh food or processed food).
- Eat throughout the day: breakfast, lunch, dinner and two-three snacks.
- Balanced eating is a great way to get us to stop and think about what our body and mind need for energy and being at our best. Balanced eating shows that we understand that not all foods are equal in nutrients.

# WHAT'S ON MY PLATE?

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

### TIME

**15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**1-3 food labels for each pair**

### Activity Description:

This activity will help explain the contents of a food label.

- Find serving size. The nutritional information is for one serving.
- Find the calories ("fuel for our bodies"). Multiply by number of servings for total calories.
- Find the ingredients list. It's ordered from greatest amount to least. Are the ingredients real food or are they chemicals?
- Find the sugar, sodium, and saturated fat daily percentage. Is there a high percentage for daily value?
- Find the percentages of daily vitamins and minerals. Is there a high percentage for daily value? Or is it zero percent?
- Find daily recommendations for calories. Are the calories for this food empty calories or packed with essential nutrients?

### Coach's Notes

Option to have another label with a similar food and compare the two labels. Have participants recommend the better choice for balance and essential nutrients.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT IS A SERVING SIZE?

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Chips, crackers, cereal, a sugary drink**  
**Measuring cup**  
**Bowls for each food**  
**Clear glass for the drink**  
**Copies of the food labels for everyone, or display on a screen**

### Activity Description:

Give participants an item of food or drink. Talk about the serving size of the food or drink. Have participants measure what one serving looks like using measuring cups.

Then have the participants measure out the amount they would choose to have of the food or drink. This is most likely a more realistic serving.

Then have the participants do the math to determine the calories in the more realistic serving.

### Coach's Notes

"Portion control" and "moderation" are terms that are used quite often in nutrition. Most of the time when we read a food label, we don't think about the calories and nutrients listed as one serving of the product. Discuss how people often eat more servings than what is listed on the label. We can take in more calories than we need in certain food items and still not get our essential nutrients.

# BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

## Key Messages

- A balanced meal plan is important every day.
- Balanced eating takes planning and preparation.
- Balanced meal planning can include dessert.

## Background

Eating habits are hard to change when you've been following them for a long time. Gradual changes make all the difference when creating new healthy habits. The most important thing you can do to balance your diet is to become aware of your eating habits.

## Be Aware of What You Are Eating

- Choose foods that are considered nutrient dense: *whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and lean meats such as turkey, chicken and fish.*
- Stay away from foods that are considered nutrient deficient: *candy, soda, cookies, chips, ice cream and fried foods.*
- Educate yourself about the information in food labels: *serving size, ingredients, nutrients, and more.*
- Strive to eat fresh, unprocessed foods. This includes whole grain breads, meats and dairy products without antibiotics, and fresh fruits and vegetables without packaging.
- Balanced meal planning can include dessert. It's okay to treat yourself once in a while.

## Identify Areas for Growth

- Try to eat 3-5 meals per day.
- Include lean proteins, unsaturated fats, and complex carbohydrates for long-term energy.
- Try to eat something every two hours, including balanced snacks, to keep metabolism (energy) levels up.
- Eat smaller snacks between meals to avoid hunger and lowered energy.
- Drink 8-12 glasses of water per day.
- Limit caffeine intake late in the day, as this can impact sleep if after 2 pm.
- Avoid late evening snacking, as this can impact sleep if after 6 pm.

# BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY IN OR ENERGY OUT

### TIME

**5-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description

Read the following scenarios with participants and complete the questions.

Explain to the group that they will use the formula 1 pound = 3500 calories to answer the questions about energy in and energy out.

It may be helpful to write the formula on the whiteboard or poster paper.

**Scenario 1:** A soccer player has been eating about 3000 calories per day. With her rigorous training, she has been burning about 6500 calories per day.

- What do you notice using the energy in vs energy out formula? Example of answer: She isn't eating enough calories for her daily routine.
- How do you think this athlete feels during the day? Example of answers: Tired, sluggish, not much energy for games, etc.
- Using the formula 1 pound=3500 calories, what may happen to this athlete after a week of this pattern of eating? Example of answers: She may lose about a pound a day and 5-7 pounds by the end of the week. Due to the high exertion, this loss could be muscle weight, which is not what an athlete wants.
- What do you recommend she do differently? Example of answers: Eat more calories from protein and other essential nutrient dense foods to maintain muscle weight and energy level.

**Scenario 2:** A busy educator has little time to prepare balanced, nutrient dense meals. He is constantly running from place to place and eating on the run. His calorie totals are about 3500 per day. Due to the lack of time and energy, he is not exercising at this time.

- What do you notice using the energy in vs energy out formula? Example of answer: He's eating too many calories for his daily routine.
- How do you think this educator feels during the day? Example of answers: Tired, sluggish, not much energy due to the lack of essential nutrients in the body.
- Using the formula 1 pound=3500 calories, what may happen to the educator after a week of this pattern of eating? Example of answers: He may gain about a pound a day and 5-7 pounds by the end of the week. Due to the low exertion and lack of exercise, he may not have much energy.
- What do you recommend he do differently? Example of answers: Plan and prepare meals and snacks to guarantee more balance in nutrient dense foods. Try to walk or do some form of exercise to keep metabolism up.

### Coach's Notes

Be sure to mention Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) and Body Mass Index (BMI). BMR is the rate at which the body burns calories. There is a formula based on height, weight, and age. The formula determines how many calories an individual needs for everyday body functioning at rest. BMI is used to determine ideal weight. BMI is not an accurate representation of ideal weight, as it doesn't take into account the difference between fat and muscle in the body. For example, a bodybuilder would be considered obese when using this formula, 1 pound = 3500 calories.

# BALANCED EATING EVERY DAY

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ABCS OF BALANCE

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Paper or chart with ABCs listed**  
**Pen/pencil**

#### **Activity Description:**

Divide participants into partners or groups of four.

Have participants fill in the blanks for the following food groups, matching the first letter with a different spot on the ABC chart.

- Fruits
- Complex Carbohydrates (include vegetables)
- Complete Proteins (include dairy and nuts, etc.)

Use this as a fun speed game to see who can fill in the most blanks.

After completed, discuss the carbohydrates and proteins chart. Discuss which foods are balanced choices with essential nutrients.

#### **Coach's Notes**

When discussing the complex carbohydrates, be sure to point out foods that are not nutrient dense (white bread, rice, pasta, white crackers, simple sugar rich cereals, etc.). For protein, point out fried foods (bacon, sausage, etc.) and cheese and how these foods may be high in saturated fats (solid fat). Educate participants that solid fat is what is deposited inside the arteries. Over time, it could possibly cause heart attacks and high blood pressure. Discuss how meat is cooked and that it may be a better choice to grill, broil, bake and cook with vegetable oils rather than cook with butter or grease.





# PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

## Key Messages

I will understand steps to planning a balanced meal.  
Foods of different colors can have different nutrients.  
Planning and preparation guarantee balance.

## Background

Meal planning is a good way to start making balanced food choices. It can help you guarantee a balanced plan that includes all the essential nutrients to provide enough energy for your mind and body. Your plan can also help you achieve any special goals, such as the nutrition you need for a sport or other activity. One way to start meal planning is to write a list of your favorite foods and meals. Then create a one-month rotation of your favorite recipes by noting them on a calendar. Remember to include a variety of food groups, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your daily plan. Each week, create a grocery list including all the ingredients you'll need to make your meals for the week. Making a grocery list before you go to the store is one way to prevent making impulse decisions and buying foods that are nutrient deficient.

Another consideration is keeping a variety of snacks such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein choices like nuts, cheese and yogurt stocked in the kitchen. It's easier to make balanced decisions when you have a variety of nutrient rich options readily available.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	Whole Grain cereal and milk	Whole grain toast and almond butter	Oatmeal with bananas or raisins and milk	Greek yogurt and fresh fruit	Egg and whole grain toast	Whole grain pancakes and fresh fruit	Greek yogurt and fruit shake
Lunch	Turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread and an apple	Grilled chicken and fruit salad	Cheese and whole grain crackers with carrots and hummus	Grilled lean meat on a salad with various dressing	Whole grain pasta or rice with vegetable	PB&J sandwich on whole grain bread with a banana	Whole grain tortillas with stirfried chicken and vegetables
Snack	Carrots and hummus	Celery and almond butter	Almonds and/or Chex mix	Apple and almond butter	Black bean nachos	Whole grain granola bar	Yogurt or fresh fruit
Dinner	Meatloaf and green beans	Chili	Chicken fajitas with black beans	Steamed or grilled fish with a vegetable	Hamburger and grilled vegetable	Pizza with a variety of toppings	Tacos and brown rice

# PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

## Plan and Prep

The two P's for successful meal planning are Plan and Prep. Plan your meals for the week as discussed above. Take the time once a week to prep your food. This includes washing, peeling, chopping and cutting your fresh fruit and vegetables so they can be available later in the week when you are preparing a meal or have a quick snack.

## Suggested Activity: My Rainbow Meal

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Paper  
Pen/pencil  
Markers**

### Activity Description

- Have individuals make a list of their favorite foods in all the food groups.
- Use those foods to fill in a plan for a week like the chart above.
- Color code the foods to make sure there is balance.

**Red:** *Fruits*

**Green:** *Vegetables*

**Orange:** *Grains*

**Blue:** *Dairy*

**Purple:** *Meats and protein*



### Coach's Notes

Emphasize the importance of seeing a rainbow of foods every day and in every meal.

## PREPARING BALANCED MEALS FOR THE WEEK

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							



# BALANCED EATING ON THE RUN

## Key Messages

I will understand ways to make balanced choices when I am in a hurry.  
I can make balanced choices even when I eat at fast food restaurants.

## Background

When you're on the go with a busy lifestyle, sometimes it's hard to make balanced decisions. The main thing to remember is to be mindful of what you may be eating and if you are maintaining balance in essential nutrients.

## In a Hurried Week

If you have to stop at a fast food restaurant, you can still make balanced choices with nutrient dense foods. Things to consider when ordering at a fast food restaurant:

- Order a smaller size, which can save you from excess empty calories.
- Add vegetables to your sandwich.
- Choose grilled options instead of fried.
- How about a salad? Use less dressing to make the salad more nutrient dense.
- Unsweetened ice tea or soda? There are no empty calories in tea, but it does have caffeine.
- Order fruit as a side for a nutrient rich choice.
- It's okay to have a sweet snack if you're still hungry.

## On Vacation

Relaxing on vacation is a must, but it's still important that we nourish our body and mind to give them an energetic, balanced vacation as well. It's easy to let our appetite take over on vacation, but make it a goal to still pay attention to hunger cues and be mindful of including the balanced meals we need. When you notice yourself getting hungry, take a moment to think of balanced options. You can buy food beforehand at a local grocery store or find alternatives at a restaurant. There are many different ways to fill yourself up on food that tastes good and also offers the nutrients you need.

The best way to avoid hunger when you're on the road is to pack snacks. That way you can choose what you're eating. This prevents you from letting your appetite and cravings take control. Some snacks to pack and take on the road are:

- Fruits
- Pretzels
- Crackers and hummus
- Tortilla chips and salsa or guacamole
- Vegetables and garden dip
- Cheese and whole wheat crackers
- Popcorn
- Nuts or trail mix

# BALANCED EATING ON THE RUN

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: FAST FOOD MENU

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Two or three fast food menus  
Paper  
Pen/pencil**

#### Activity Description:

- Have participants choose a fast food restaurant menu to look at.
- Ask them to write down a meal they have had in the past. Include a sandwich, side dish and drink.
- Alter the meal in a way to add more essential nutrients and lower saturated fat, sodium and calories.
- Have participants share their changes and discuss.

#### Coach's Notes

Share the information above about how to make balanced choices at a fast food restaurant. Consider limiting sizes, adding vegetables, and choosing baked or grilled items.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: A SNACK WITH BALANCE

### TIME

**5 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**None**

#### Activity Description:

Ask participants to bring a balanced snack to the next session.

Explain that they will each be allowed to share what their snack is and why it is balanced with the group.

#### Coach's Notes

Share some of the above examples or others of your own to give the participants ideas of snacks.

# HUNGER OR APPETITE

## Key Messages

- I will learn how to identify my individual hunger cues.
- I will understand the difference between hunger and appetite.
- Breakfast can help maintain balanced, consistent eating throughout the day.

## Background

Hunger is the physical need for food. It occurs when the energy level in our blood is low several hours after eating. It is a protective measure that makes sure the body has the right amount of energy.

Appetite is our desire for food. It is a sensory reaction to the look or smell of food and can make us think that we are hungrier than we actually are.

Appetite is closely linked with behavior and cravings. Cravings are linked to snack items that are considered empty calories or nutrient deficient. Have you ever been really full from dinner but still ate a piece of chocolate cake for dessert because it sounded delicious? That is your appetite and sometimes it is stronger than hunger. It's difficult to determine whether you are actually hungry for food or if you just have an appetite or craving for food. The problem is that our appetite can make us want to eat food even when we are not really hungry. Our appetite or cravings can be hard to ignore, especially when we get into the routine of listening only to our appetite rather than paying attention to hunger cues.

## What Can We Do?

The best way to decide when to eat is simply to listen to your body. Are you exhibiting symptoms of needing food or exhibiting symptoms of wanting food?

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling fatigued or tired
- Stomach growling

Appetite or wanting food usually stems from boredom or cravings. This is a battle between your stomach and your brain. Each may be telling you different things. Stop and listen to what your stomach is saying, because that is where hunger comes from. If you're actually hungry, then you can think of nutrient rich foods that you can eat to satisfy the hunger and provide the body with long-term energy. If you're not hungry and are simply craving food, you can recognize this and remind yourself that this is not hunger, but instead, your appetite.

Sometimes it's difficult to tell the difference between hunger and appetite. The key is to take a second to listen to what your body needs, rather than what your brain wants. There's nothing wrong with giving in to our appetite and cravings sometimes. Food provides comfort in more ways than just satisfying hunger. It's important to make sure we're getting the essential nutrients our body and mind needs. By recognizing hunger cues, we can be more aware that this is our body telling us it needs balanced nutrients that provide long-term energy.

Plenty of research supports the fact that eating a balanced breakfast can help decrease the probability of binge eating or appetite-guided eating throughout the day. Studies around breakfast tend to show that people who eat a balanced breakfast:

- Eat more nutrient dense foods throughout the day.
- Participate in more physical activity.
- Are less lethargic, restless and irritable.
- Choose foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein while low in added sugar.

# HUNGER OR APPETITE

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HUNGER QUICK WRITE/JOURNAL

### TIME

**5 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Paper  
Pen/pencil**

#### **Activity Description:**

Have participants write a short reflection on their eating practices for the current day or the day before.

Questions to think about when writing:

- What time did you eat?
- Why did you eat when you did?
- What did you eat?
- How did you feel when you were eating?
- How did you feel after you ate?

Allow participants to share with the group if there is time.

#### **Coach's Notes**

The idea with the quick write is for participants to pay attention to the cues surrounding our eating. We want to see if there is an emotional connection or if we are truly eating when our hunger cues are triggered. It's also helpful to consider whether we're truly eating a balanced diet rather than a diet encouraged by our appetite and cravings.



# HUNGER OR APPETITE

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THE POWER OF BREAKFAST

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

#### Activity Description:

Ask participants: What does the term “breakfast” mean?

- Break: to separate or divide
- Fast: a period of time without food
- Breakfast: break the fast
- How many hours do you usually sleep? This period is the fast.
- How many hours on a typical day between lunch and dinner?
- **Why is breaking your fast so important before you start your day?** Example of answers: *Less tired, more alert and able to concentrate, more active, less likely to binge eat throughout the day, more likely to make balanced food choices, perform better academically and on extra curricular activities*
- **Explain to participants** that our bodies are not meant to fast from dinner one night to lunch the next day. This puts our bodies into a starvation mode and causes the brain and body to slow down to naturally conserve energy. Because of this protective measure, it leaves you feeling lethargic, less able to concentrate, and irritable throughout the day.
- **Ask participants:** Why do some people not eat breakfast? Example of answers: *Want to sleep in, no time, nothing to eat at home, not hungry, too long to prepare, and do not like breakfast foods*
- **Ask participants:** What are some solutions for eating breakfast each morning? Example of answers: *Go to bed earlier, get up 15 minutes earlier, eat school breakfast, pack breakfast to eat on the way to school or work, plan a couple quick breakfasts beforehand, and eat leftovers from the dinner the night before.*
- **Ask:** What makes a balanced breakfast? Example of answers: *Choosing at least three from the following food groups: Fruits, whole grains, protein, and dairy, plus foods low in added sugars and fat, but high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.*
- Suggest for participants to try breakfast and come back to the group and share their strategy for making sure they had breakfast and what they chose to eat.

#### Coach's Notes

The discussion in this activity can be a great way for participants to learn from each other about breakfast habits and the importance of breakfast. It may even provide each other with ideas about what to eat for breakfast.

# Where Does My Food Come From?



## Key Messages

I will follow a food footprint from the ground to the store.  
Eating local has less processing and can be cheaper in price.

## Background

The grocery store has thousands of products, and people don't tend to think about where the food comes from. If asked where our food comes from, many people would say grocery stores, restaurants or corner markets. We don't always think about how products came to be in these locations or how they grew in the ground. One reason for this is that we see the food in a final stage of processing, after it has been packaged or cooked and prepared for eating. What do we think about with orange juice? We rarely remember that it was once an orange hanging on a tree. How about pasta sauce? Sometimes we forget that the tomatoes were actually growing on a vine.

It's important for us to understand where our food comes from and how it gets to our plates. Would our grocery shopping choices change if we knew?

# Where Does My Food Come From?

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: FOOD FOOTPRINT

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Peanut butter (picture or real prop)**

#### Activity Description:

- Ask the following questions about peanut butter:
- **Growing:** Where do the peanuts come from? Example of answers: *Grown in fields*
- **Transportation:** How do peanuts get to the factory? Example of answers: *Trucks to the factory*
- **Processing:** Why do peanuts need to go to a factory? How are the peanuts changed during processing? Example of answers: *They are roasted and cooled, peanuts are ground up and the shells are removed, salt and oils are added and then cooled to package.*
- **Packaging:** What is the packaging made of that holds the peanut butter? Example of answers: *Plastic containers or glass jars*
- **Buying:** Where can you get peanut butter? Example of answers: *Grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, make your own*
- **Cooking:** Example of answers: *Baking...any others?*
- **Eating:** How do we eat peanut butter? Example of answers: *In cookies, on toast, in cereal, etc.*
- **Recycling/Reusing:** What can we do with the packaging after we eat the peanut butter? Example of answers: *Rinse out and recycle in appropriate container or reuse it for something else.*

#### Coach's Notes

If someone in the group has an allergy to peanut butter, choose a different product to explore, for example, sun butter or almond butter.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT IS YOUR FOOD FOOTPRINT? \*

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Copies of Food Footprint  
Questionnaire for each participant  
Pen/pencil**

#### Activity Description

- Go through each question of the questionnaire as a group to assist with comprehension.
- Have individuals complete the questionnaire.
- Allow participants to share their final score.
- Discuss how their food footprint can have an impact on the environment.
- As a group, brainstorm other ways they can reduce their food footprint.
- Ask participants to try two things to decrease their food footprint.

#### Coach's Notes

It might be helpful to go through each question with the participants to point out definitions of terms such as farmers market, fast food, diet choices and different fruits.

\* Activity used with permission. What's On Your Plate? Project. DVD, book, online games, & curriculum can be found at <http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>. Produced by Aubin Pictures [www.aubinpictures.com](http://www.aubinpictures.com) in collaboration with Solar One. To view other Solar One curricula please visit <http://www.thegreendesignlab.org/>



# What's Your Food Footprint?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Answer the questions below. See how you did by using the key below!

**1. How often do you eat meat?**

- a. I'm vegan (I eat no animal products.)
- b. I'm a vegetarian (I don't eat any meat.)
- c. I eat meat 1 to 4 days a week.
- d. I eat meat every day.

**2. If you eat meat, which type of meat do you eat most often?**

- a. I told you already! I don't eat meat!
- b. Turkey or Chicken
- c. Lamb or Pork
- d. Beef

**3. How often do you eat fast food?**

- a. I never eat fast food.
- b. Sometimes. 2-3 times a month.
- c. I eat fast food a lot. But I would rather eat healthy!
- d. I love fast food. I would eat it everyday if I could (and sometimes I do.)

**4. How often do you buy food from local farmers markets?**

- a. I go to the farmers market every week.
- b. I go to the farmers market sometimes. Maybe once a month.
- c. I don't know of any farmers markets but I am interested in going!
- d. Never. I am not really interested in starting.

**5. How much of your own food do you grow?**

- a. I grow lots of my own food! I have a garden or a farm.
- b. I grow some food. I have a few plants in my yard or window garden.
- c. I don't have a garden but I would like to grow some food.
- d. I have never grown any food. Ehh. Not that interested.

**6. Do you try to eat food that is in season?**

- a. Yes, I only eat food that is in season.
- b. Sometimes if I remember.
- c. I don't know what food is in season when, but I would like to learn.
- d. No, I eat what I want when I want

**7. How often do you eat home-cooked food?**

- a. I eat home-cooked food almost every night.
- b. I eat home-cooked food 3-5 times a week.
- c. I eat out a lot, but I would eat more home-cooked food if I knew how.
- d. I never eat home-cooked food.

**8. Do you try to buy fruit and vegetables that were grown locally or in your state?**

- a. I always check to see where my food is grown. If it isn't grown locally, I don't buy it.
- b. I try to buy locally grown fruits and vegetables usually but not always.
- c. I never thought about where my food was grown. I will try to eat more local food.
- d. I don't care where my food comes from.

- 1 point for every **a** answer
- 2 points for every **b** answer
- 3 points for every **c** answer
- 5 points for every **d** answer

## Your Score

**8-14** Congratulations, you have awesome eating habits! Your next challenge: work to make sure ALL people have access to healthy, affordable food.

**15-24** Not too bad. Seems like you have some good eating habits and aspire to have even better ones. 10-24 acres are used to support your food habits. Unfortunately we would still need at least one more planet to support your consumption.

**25-32** Yikes, big foot! It seems some of your habits are damaging to the environment. 24-40 acres are used to support your food habits. We would need 3-4 more planets to sustain your life style into the future.

\* Activity used with permission. What's On Your Plate? Project. DVD, book, online games, & curriculum can be found at <http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>. Produced by Aubin Pictures [www.aubinpictures.com](http://www.aubinpictures.com) in collaboration with Solar One. To view other Solar One curricula please visit <http://www.thegreendesignlab.org/>

# UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

## Key Messages

Water is an essential nutrient.

All drinks are not equal in nutritional content.

## Background

Your body is made up of 60% water, so it's not surprising that the most important beverage to drink is water. In order for our body to function at its best, we should drink 8-12 glasses of water per day. There are creative ways to increase your water consumption. You can bring variety to the water you consume by drinking sparkling water or adding flavored powders. Sparkling water can be purchased at the store and is a good substitute when you're craving something bubbly. You can also purchase water flavorings that are either liquid drops or powder packets. These tend to be low in calories and add taste to simple water. Another option is to add fruit or fresh herbs, such as mint leaves, mixed berries, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, lemons, or limes.

Beverages such as milk have various types. Milk is sold as skim, 1%, 2% and whole milk. The percentages indicate the amount of fat in the milk. These beverages also pack in essential nutrients that your body needs.

Tea and coffee are inexpensive, nice alternatives when served plain. They're loaded with antioxidants that can help remove harmful chemicals from our bodies. On the other hand, tea and coffee with added sugar and cream can add many empty calories, sometimes more than 500 calories per drink.

Sports drinks have carbohydrates, minerals and electrolytes. They also have added coloring and flavoring such as high fructose corn syrup. They're meant to replace water and electrolytes lost during fitness activities. They can be helpful to athletes who are doing intense exercise, but be aware that they are not replacements for the water your body needs on a regular basis.

We may think that low-calorie or diet drinks have nutritional benefits. Diet sodas or other diet drinks might be advertised as being enticing choices. However, these alternatives can actually have negative effects on your body. Diet drinks are loaded with artificial sweeteners. Some studies say they might actually lead to weight gain and other body changes. Be aware of the claims that companies make about the health of their products. Read your labels. As a general rule, if you can't understand the ingredients in a drink, it might be filled with chemicals instead of essential nutrients.

Drinks such as soda, fruit drinks, and energy drinks have high sugar content and added chemicals. They aren't nutrient dense with vitamins and minerals. Many of the energy drinks and sodas also have high amounts of caffeine. Excess amounts of these drinks can actually lead to dehydration rather than providing the body with the water needed for proper functioning. It's important to drink as much water as we can and keep the drinks with high sugar, caffeine and empty calories in moderation.



# UNDERSTANDING BEVERAGE CHOICES

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GOT SUGAR?

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Sugar cubes  
Bowls or plastic bags  
Drink labels**

#### Activity Description:

- This can be done as a demonstration or participants can measure out the sugar.
- Ask individuals to figure out how much sugar is in the whole bottle (most bottles have more than one serving). Multiply the grams of sugar by the number of servings. Sugar g x servings = total grams of sugar.
- Have participants measure out the sugar cubes for a visual of how much added sugar is in the drink. 1 cube of sugar = 3 grams.
- Groups can share their results in a short presentation and discuss. Below is a short powerpoint from CNN that shows how much sugar is in some popular beverages.

#### Coach's Notes

Sweet comparisons: How much sugar is in that drink?

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/02/health/gallery/sugar-sweetened-beverages/>

Another option is to measure out the sugar beforehand and discuss as a group.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN MY DRINK?

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Nutrition Labels for a  
variety of drinks**

#### Activity Description:

Print out the nutrition labels for a variety of drinks. Be sure to include popular ones that you know participants enjoy drinking.

- Energy drinks
- Soda
- Diet soda or other drinks
- Fruit juices
- Milk
- Sports drinks
- Protein drinks
- Yogurt shakes
- 

Go through each label and look at ingredients, sugar content, vitamins and minerals, etc. Discuss which options are better drink options for nutrition.

#### Coach's Notes

Be sure to discuss some of the marketing messages such as low fat or diet, and compare the ingredient labels. Ingredients are listed from most to least.

# CAFFEINE

## Key Messages

Caffeine is a drug and not a nutrient.  
I will explore caffeine levels in a variety of drinks.

## Background

Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance in plants, but it can also be a man-made substance added to our foods and drinks. The recommended limit for adults is approximately 400 milligrams or less of caffeine per day. This equates to four cups of coffee, ten cans of soda, or two energy shot drinks. Note that soda and energy drinks can have a wide range of caffeine levels. This information is on the label. Caffeine can also be found in tea, cocoa, chocolate, fruits and leaves. Caffeine has no nutritional value. It acts as a stimulant to the central nervous system. It can increase alertness and is commonly used to stay awake. Consuming caffeine on a regular basis can lead to increased tolerance or even addiction. A person is addicted to caffeine when he or she cannot function normally (awake in the morning) without it. A person who is addicted may have adverse side effects when caffeine is not available. Side effects such as headaches, irritability and nervousness are the most common. Caffeine tolerance leads people to consume more than the recommended amount of caffeine to prevent the adverse symptoms listed above. A person using caffeine for alertness will notice that over time, they need a larger amount in order to stay alert.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY DRINKS

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Labels from a variety of energy drinks  
Copies of the caffeine chart for all participants  
Pen/pencil

### Activity Description

Ask the participants what they know about energy drinks.

Define energy drinks (show an example)

- Energy drinks: Beverages that have similar ingredients as sports drinks but also have caffeine and guarana, which are stimulants. These drinks often have more caffeine per serving than other beverages. This can increase the chance of consuming more than 400 mg. This can be dangerous and potentially have lasting harmful effects.

Ask the participants if they can name any other energy drinks.

Bring in a several energy and sports drinks or have participants bring\ in some that they like.

- Red Bull
- Rockstar
- Monster
- Aspire



# CAFFEINE

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ENERGY DRINKS CONTINUED

In small groups, have participants look at the various drink bottles or pictures of labels.

Look at the content of caffeine. Determine the amount of caffeine in the bottle, taking the serving size into consideration (caffeine mg x servings). Write down answers on the caffeine chart.

Compare the caffeine levels to the 400 mg daily recommended limit.

Discuss the results. Which drinks had the most caffeine? How safe do you think these products are to use? Are there better choices?

### Coach's Notes

Caffeine side effects include increased heart rate, high blood pressure, difficulty sleeping, anxiety and nervousness. Withdrawal side effects include headaches, fatigue, decreased alertness, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and muscle pain and stiffness. Energy drinks and sports drinks are also very acidic and can damage the enamel of teeth.

For more information about caffeine: <http://www.healthpoweredkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Energy-Drinks-Updated-222939.pdf>

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WARNING: CAFFEINE!

### TIME

**15-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Label warning from tobacco and alcohol product  
Markers  
Paper  
Pen

### Activity Description:

- Show the warning labels that are on all tobacco and alcohol products.
- Discuss how alcohol and nicotine are considered drugs. Many people believe there should be warning labels on energy drinks, because caffeine is a drug.
- In small groups, have the participants develop and design what they think would be a good warning label for products with caffeine. What should that label look like?
- Have groups share their label and discuss.

### Coach's Notes

For more information about caffeine and energy drinks:

Energy Drinks: What You Need to Know

<http://www.healthpoweredkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Energy-Drinks-Updated-222939.pdf>

Caffeine Content of Drinks

<https://www.caffeineinformer.com/the-caffeine-database>







# PHYSICAL WELLNESS



An important aspect of wellness is being able to move your body with strength and endurance. **Physical wellness** is much more than just exercise. Physical wellness is anything and everything having to do with your body. In this pillar we will explore many topics that are important for your body, all being a part of physical wellness.

With movement and exercise, it's important that we explore a variety of movements. Variety helps us maintain interest; there is nothing worse than forcing ourselves to be active in ways we don't enjoy.

A comprehensive program should include activities in four categories: balance, strength, cardiovascular fitness and flexibility. Find movements in each of these categories that you enjoy. Finding ways of moving that you especially like will help you get moving consistently. If you enjoy an exercise or physical activity, you'll be more likely to continue it.

## **LESSONS IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS**

**Balance in Physical Wellness**

**Taking Care of My Body**

**Alternative Fitness Options**

**Cardiovascular Endurance**

**Flexibility**

**Muscular Strength and Endurance**

**Movement at School or Work**

**Sleep**

**Dealing with Illness**



# BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

## Key Messages

Water, movement, nutrition and sleep are the four basics of physical wellness.  
I can find balance in each basic area of physical wellness every day.

## Background

The human body is a complex, yet well-organized system. Fortunately, we don't have to know everything about how it works in order to increase our physical wellness. Unfortunately, we get many mixed messages from a variety of professionals and wellness enthusiasts. This makes it difficult to decipher what we need to do to improve our overall physical wellness. The following guidelines will help to clarify and recalibrate what's important for improving and maintaining a physically active lifestyle.

"Wellness" is a broad term that includes all aspects of a balanced lifestyle. For example, you may find that a lack of drinking water makes it harder to fall and stay asleep. Not eating with balanced nutrition affects your energy levels. Once a person understands the links between the areas of physical wellness, he or she can begin to find a balance for themselves.

We'll look at four areas of physical wellness. Try and find balance in each area, every day. Consider creating an attainable goal for each area. Achieve that goal and move right along to the next challenge.

## Water

One of the simplest, most important things a person can do is drink more water. Water is a vital part of being physically well, and it affects every system in the body. The digestive system needs water to process our food, and the brain needs water to think and remember. Below are several recommendations for drinking more water on a daily basis:

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up and before you go to bed. You'll start your day with a simple health habit, and you'll find you sleep better.
- Drink a glass of water at every meal.
- On hot days or on days you work out and sweat, make sure you drink even more water than usual.
- Urine should be clear or slightly yellowish in color. If the color is darker, we might not be drinking enough water.
- In general, drink 8-12 glasses of water per day, but more if you are sweating a lot.

# BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

## Movement

Movement doesn't mean that you have to exercise every day. Most people don't need this level of fitness to maintain balance in physical wellness. In fact, if the other areas of physical wellness are lacking, it may not be the best option to over exert yourself with exercise. Being active can mean going for a walk, strength training, playing a sport, or cleaning the house or gardening. General guidelines include:

- Train with resistance at least two times per week - either using body weight or a form of strength training with bands or weighted items around the house (milk jug, water bottle, etc.).
- Walk or move as much as possible. If you have a movement tracker, like a Fitbit, try to take as many steps as you can. Many recommendations encourage about 10,000 steps per day.
- Get your heart rate up for 10-30 minutes, 2-3 times per week.
- Make movement as enjoyable as possible. Find an activity you enjoy, as you'll be more likely to do it consistently.
- Take the stairs whenever possible.
- Park the car at the last parking spot when shopping. Or, ask to be dropped off at the bus stop before your regular stop to add a few more steps in your day.

## Nutrition

Nutrition is the category many people get stressed out about, as it's easy to feel as if they aren't eating as balanced as they should. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Eat green and colorful foods such as fruits and vegetables in good quantity. Eat 1-2 cups (or as much as you want in excess of this) with every meal.
- Eat about 20 grams of a lean source of protein (poultry, fish, or eggs) with each meal. This will help control hunger and prevent your appetite from taking over.
- Choose whole grains for sandwiches or add a small portion of brown rice or pasta to meals. This will provide the essential nutrients as well as give you some long-term energy to get a workout in during the day.
- Eat breakfast. Give your metabolism a boost by eating lean protein (eggs), whole grains (oatmeal) or dairy (yogurt) and some fruits. Peanut butter on whole grain toast is also a great way to start the day.

## Sleep

Sleep is an extremely important component of wellness. Here are some helpful tips to improve your sleep:

- Strive to go to bed at the same time every night. When your sleeping patterns become consistent, you feel more rested. It is recommended to get at least eight hours of sleep per night.
- Short naps of less than thirty minutes during the day can provide us with additional energy. If the naps lead to tired and sluggish feelings, try to shorten the duration.
- During sleep, our body repairs damage done by our environment and activity level. It's important to give our body that time to rest and heal.
- Sleep is when our brain processes what we learned during the day.
- Try to avoid empty calories such as sugar or caffeine in the afternoon. This will allow your body to relax and sleep.
- If you have difficulty sleeping, seek the help of your doctor. He or she may have other tips to consider.

It's important to note as well that individuals are unique by definition, so not all guidelines are perfect for all people. Try some of these tips and see what works for you.



# BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: BALANCE IN PHYSICAL WELLNESS

### TIME

**20-30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Paper**  
**Colored pencils or markers**

### Activity Description

Have participants make seven columns on the blank sheet of paper and label them for each day of the week across the top.

Then, label time of day down the left side, from 6 a.m. to 6 a.m.

Have participants use the following color code to fill in their chart for the previous day. Encourage them to fill in the days for the rest of the week to see if there is balance in their physical wellness.

**Green:** *Eating whole grain, vegetable, or fruit*

**Red:** *Sleeping*

**Orange:** *Exercising or moving*

**Blue:** *Drinking water*

### Discussion questions

How often are you eating a balanced diet?

How many hours between meals?

Why is it important not to skip a meal?

How much sleep are you getting?

How much water are you drinking? How much movement?

### Coach's Notes

You can print out daily record or planner sheets online if you'd like to have them prepared ahead of time. This a great way for participants to have a visual of how well they are doing in the four areas of physical wellness.



# TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

## Key Messages

Taking care of my body helps me to look and feel my best.

Taking care of my body is my responsibility, but if I need help I can ask a trusted person in my life.

## Background

Hygiene is an important part of your overall wellness, as it has to do with keeping your body neat and clean. Your hair, skin, and teeth need your care on a daily basis. As we get older, it's even more important to take care of our bodies, since this can prevent many infections. Every person has a responsibility to take care of his or her body. If there is something you need help with, it's important to think about who you can ask to help you. Here are a few tips to remember in keeping our bodies clean.

## Washing Your Hands

Washing your hands is a simple way to keep clean throughout the day. By washing your hands, you get rid of dirty germs. This prevents you from getting sick or possibly making others sick. The best way to wash your hands is by following these three steps:

- Wet your hands with warm water.
- Rub soap in your hands for about 20 seconds (or sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself). Be sure to get between your fingers and onto your forearms.
- Rinse your hands with warm water and dry them using a towel or air dryer.

It is recommended to wash your hands before and after you eat, after you use the restroom, after you play with animals, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or whenever you think your hands may have gotten some germs on them. Note: When coughing, a great strategy is to cough into your upper arm rather than into your hands. If you don't have soap and water, try using hand sanitizer. It's important not to use this on a regular basis, as it can dry out the hands and lead to roughness. This can lessen the protective barriers of the skin that are helpful in reducing infections.

## Taking a Shower or Bath

Showering or taking a bath is how we can get the whole body clean. When bathing, use a wash rag and body soap to remove the dirt and germs from the day. Some people like to shower or bathe every day as part of their routine. The key is to have a routine and stick with it. As we get older, we release more sweat each day, so a shower can keep you fresh and clean. Some people prefer an every other day routine. That's fine, as you are the one who knows your body best. Like other body parts, our private body parts need to be cleaned and taken care of. Washing hair is not something that needs to be done with each shower. Sometimes, washing hair too much can lead to dryness in the scalp and itchiness. Use a good shampoo (and conditioner if you choose) when you wash your hair to keep your hair clean.

# TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

## Brushing Your Teeth

Brushing your teeth should be a priority two times a day: once when you wake up and then again before you go to bed. If you have a sticky snack that gets stuck in your teeth sometime during the day, it's important to brush an extra time. Make sure that you brush your teeth for two minutes (30 seconds on each quadrant of your mouth). A timer at the sink or an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer is a helpful way to make sure our teeth get the time they deserve. Brush all parts of your mouth: front teeth, back teeth, and even your tongue. Germs and leftover food can hide all over the mouth, so pay attention to brushing thoroughly. Brushing can also help keep breath fresh. Flossing between the teeth is also a good daily habit, since many foods can get stuck between our teeth. This can lead to cavities. Foods such as popcorn can become lodged, and only a good flossing will remove it. Flossing is important for your gums, because it prevents redness and infections such as gingivitis. Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria buildup. By brushing and flossing daily, our gums and teeth will stay clean and healthy.

Proper hygiene is key to helping our bodies and teeth look and feel their best. Washing your hands is also part of the universal precautions for preventing disease transmission. Cleaning our bodies and teeth can prevent skin and gum infections from occurring. Create a routine. Your body and teeth will thank you.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: WASHING YOUR HANDS

### TIME

**5 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Glitter**  
**Vaseline (or something sticky and safe to use on skin)**

### Activity Description

Have participants put a small amount of Vaseline and glitter on their hands with a small brush.

Ask participants how this mixture could spread to other parts of the body and to other people. Examples of answers: *Touching the same doorknob, sneezing, coughing, rubbing eyes, sharing a glass, etc.*

Now have them wash their hands as they normally would. Some might use cold water, no soap or a very short wash.

Ask participants: Did you get all of the Vaseline and glitter off your hands? Discuss why not. Examples of answers: Used cold water, only for a few seconds, no soap, etc.

Optional to add more of the glitter or Vaseline, and now have participants wash hands using warm water and soap while singing "Happy Birthday" or counting to twenty while they are washing. Ask participants if this made a difference with removing all the glitter mixture? Discuss.

### Coach's Notes

Have the glitter mixture premade in a little jar. If the glitter mixture is not available, you can still go through the steps and ask the questions about how germs are passed through air, water or touch. Then have them practice the proper way to wash their hands.

# TAKING CARE OF MY BODY

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HYGIENE JEOPARDY

### TIME

**15-30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Internet Capability  
Computer  
Optional- projector**

### Activity Description

Search “Hygiene” in the browse section at [www.jeopardylabs.com](http://www.jeopardylabs.com). There are several games about hygiene on this website. Choose one that seems to fit the group.

Split the group into two or three teams.

Take turns answering questions in the Jeopardy game.

### Coach's Notes

Option can be to play the game as one large group to take out the competition.



# ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

## Key Messages

There are a variety of ways to get movement in your day.

I can explore a variety of activities in order to find something I enjoy doing for exercise.

## Background

Movement is extremely important in maintaining physical fitness. We can move our bodies in many ways that may not even be considered exercise. Depending on the goals for your fitness (flexibility, weight control, or increasing strength), it's important to have variety and keep things fresh and fun. Below are some ideas for activities to do that are different from traditional exercise such as lifting weights or running.

## Yoga

Yoga is an ancient system of movement much like a martial art (karate). It has become very popular in the United States and other countries around the world, though it began in Asia. Yoga is helpful for strengthening all aspects of the body through slow, smooth movements. Strengthening the core can lead to better posture and can lower the chance of back injuries. Yoga leaves your mind feeling energized and ready to face the challenges of a new day. Certain types of yoga focus on a gentle, restorative flow that can be relaxing at the end of a stressful day. Yoga can be done as a group, with a partner, or even by yourself. There are many types of yoga, so it's easy to find one that meets your goals. You can find yoga videos at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) as well as in DVD form. If you enjoy working with a group, find your neighborhood yoga studio, or check out other local fitness facilities. Most have classes.

## Hiking

Hiking is taking a walk in the wilderness or other natural environment, sometimes with a destination in mind. People often hike to a specific destination such as a waterfall, hilltop, cave, or some other natural or historical feature. Some hikes can be fast, just a few minutes over a short distance. Other hikes can last hours, or even days, and cover many miles. A long hike is usually called backpacking and can last anywhere from a couple days to several months. Hiking is a great way to get out and enjoy the outdoors on a beautiful day, learn about the area, and improve muscular strength and endurance. Be sure to wear shoes that have adequate grip when you go hiking. Boots are safer because they have better ankle support, and the soles grip the ground better than tennis shoes do. A hiking workout is a great way to strengthen the lower body muscles and improve endurance as well.

## Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is not for everyone, but it can be a great challenge and has become popular across the world. You don't have to climb Mount Everest to get a workout. There are a few different types of rock climbing. The easiest type is called "bouldering" and can be done without special gear, though a helmet is always recommended. Bouldering is climbing on terrain that is not high above the ground, usually just a few feet, so if you happen to fall you can jump down to the ground. The next level is rock climbing with a rope and harness. This requires more people to be involved to help make sure you don't fall. You are attached to a rope and climb up a taller cliff while someone holds the rope. This is the most popular type of rock climbing and can be done both indoors at a center or outdoors in the wilderness.

# ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

## Canoeing and Kayaking

If you live close to a body of water, canoeing or kayaking can be a fun active experience. This is a great way to increase the muscular strength and endurance of the upper body. You may find a variety of places on a nearby lake or river where you can rent a canoe or a kayak if you don't own one yourself. If you choose this form of exercise, make sure you go with someone who is experienced and that you use safety precautions. If you're really interested in knowing more, consider taking a certification course to prepare you for canoeing and kayaking on all types of water. Never canoe or kayak by yourself. It's important to have someone with you in case of an emergency.

## Biking

Biking has become one of the most popular activities around the globe. It's a wonderful way to work cardiovascular endurance as well as strengthen and increase the endurance of the lower legs. Biking is accessible to most people, but safety precautions have to be taken seriously. Always wear a helmet. Biking is one of the most dangerous activities, because it typically is done while sharing the road with vehicles. If you bike, try to find a path or side road where it's safe to bike. Mountain biking has also become very popular, and the same precautions of wearing a helmet apply. It's helpful to be familiar with the terrain when biking in backcountry hills or mountains, or go with an experienced mountain biker.

## Swimming

Swimming is a full-body workout that develops cardiovascular endurance. Swimming can vary from simply playing in the water to swimming a long distance. This sport is ideal for people who have difficulty walking or running, or who have chronic joint pain. Because swimming is a total-body workout, it's regarded as one of the best activities to rehabilitate from injury, illness or chronic weakness. It's ideal to take lessons when learning to swim. Swimming should always be done with a partner for safety.

## Yardwork or Housework

Yardwork may not always be fun, but why not let the body benefit from it. Yardwork can be physically demanding, whether you're digging a garden, raking leaves, mowing the grass, or painting a fence. Think about all the muscles you're using. Housework can also be good exercise, from stretching to dust the top of a bookcase to pushing and pulling a vacuum around, to carrying laundry up and down stairs. Include these activities when you're considering how much activity you get in a day. When cleaning the house, add a few squats, push ups or jumping jacks in between rooms.

These are just a few ideas about alternative options to what most people consider traditional fitness routines such as lifting weights or going for a jog. Feel free to brainstorm some ideas of your own. Anything movement related that you enjoy can be part of your fitness regimen, and is a great way to keep active without getting bored. Go out, move, and enjoy life!



# ALTERNATIVE FITNESS OPTIONS

## Suggested Activity: Yoga Class

### TIME

**30-60 minutes**

### MATERIALS

- **Yoga Video** (from Youtube or DVD)
- **Yoga mats or chairs**

### Activity Description

As a group, participate in a yoga class.

If time, allow for discussion after the class.

### Coach's Notes

Instead of using a video, consider bringing in a yoga teacher to teach a short yoga session to the group.



# Cardiovascular Endurance

## Key Messages

When building cardiovascular endurance, I can choose activities I enjoy.

I can improve the health of my heart, blood vessels, and lungs - this is cardiovascular fitness.

## Background

To be cardiovascularly fit means improving and maintaining the health of your heart, blood vessels, and lungs. The way this can be measured is through routine tests at a doctor visit. Blood pressure and heart rate are typical key measures. Normal blood pressure should be 120/80 or lower. If it is higher than 140/90, your heart may be working too hard, and there could be some blockages in the arteries around your heart. Resting heart rate should be between 50-80. When you are cardiovascularly fit, your heart muscle is strong and is more efficient in getting oxygen and blood to all the working muscles of your body.

To be physically fit does not mean you have to go out and run ten miles. It means that you have the ability to perform your activities for daily living with relative ease and that you can maintain the health of areas of your body such as your brain, heart, lungs and muscles. It also means that you have a sense of balance in the mind, body and spiritual side of wellness. When you move your body, you are benefiting not only the physical aspects, but also the mental aspects, of your health. Daily movement can lead to a happier, healthier, more productive way of life.

The leading cause of death in the United States is heart-related disease. This includes atherosclerosis and high blood pressure from clogged arteries. A consistent program with movement and cardiovascular endurance helps strengthen the heart and also helps clear clogged arteries. If we can get our heart rate up a little bit, this will give it a good workout.

Examples of common cardio exercises include:

- Walk or run
- Hike
- Bike or use an arm cycle
- Rollerblade
- Jump rope
- Swim
- Canoe or kayak
- Anything you enjoy that gets your heart rate up

# Cardiovascular Endurance

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HEART RATE CHECK

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Clock or stopwatch**

### Activity Description

Instruct participants to check their resting heart rate for one minute in their neck or wrist. Make sure to give extra instruction on how to find the pulse. Remind participants that the resting heart rate should be between 50-80 for one minute.

Lead participants through a one-minute cardio activity such as jump roping, doing sit ups, running in place, etc.

Recheck heart rate for one minute.

Discussion questions:

What did you notice about your heart rate after one minute of cardio exercise?

What was happening to your heart during the cardiovascular exercise? Examples of answers: Blood pumping faster to get to working muscles, strengthening the heart muscle

Brainstorm some cardiovascular activities you can do throughout the day without any equipment.

Think of other activities you can do with equipment.

Reiterate that the heart is a muscle that needs to be exercised just like the rest of the muscles in the body. The only way to do that is to have bouts of activity in which the heart rate is increased from the resting state.

### Coach's Notes

Discuss how the heart rate can be quickly checked. Six-second check and add a zero to the end. Ten-second check and multiply by six.

# Flexibility

## Key Messages

Stretching is important and should be done every day.

Stretching can help prevent pain in our joints.

## Background

Flexibility exercises such as stretching are often neglected. However, we need to make time to move our bodies through the full range of motion. This is arguably the most important aspect of any fitness program, because as we age, our joints become more prone to problems such as arthritis. Arthritis is a painful joint inflammation that can restrict our range of motion. Severe arthritis can prevent us from continuing activities we enjoy. Taking the time to ensure our joints go through their full range of motion can help decrease the impact of arthritis. This too will help us to continue activities of daily living throughout our lives.

The joints in our body are able to perform a variety of motions. Some joints bend in one direction (knee) or more directions (hip). Others rotate (shoulder). Pay attention to the natural bend of the joint when performing flexibility exercises. The joint should never be pushed into a painful motion. The following are stretches that should be performed on a regular basis. All stretches should be held a minimum of twenty seconds without bouncing.

**Hamstring:** Lie on back and straighten one leg. With your hands, gently pull it towards your head and feel a stretch in the back part of the upper leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

**Quadricep:** Stand straight and bend one of your knees. Grab your ankle below the knee with the hand on the same side of your body. Be sure to keep the knee pointing straight down to the floor. Feel a stretch on the front part of the upper leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

**Calf:** Stand close to a wall, facing it. Put one toe up on the wall and lean into the wall. Feel this stretch on the lower part of the back of the leg. Repeat with opposite leg.

**Shoulders:** Put one arm out straight from the body and then cross to the opposite side. Grab the arm with the opposite hand and pull gently. Feel the stretch on the outside of the shoulder. Repeat with opposite arm.

**Chest:** Stand in a doorway with goal post arms (arms straight out to sides with elbows bent and palms facing forward). Rest your forearms on either side of the doorway and take a step through the doorway. You should feel a gentle stretch across the chest.

**Back:** Lower to your hands and knees and gently sit back on your heels, keeping your arms stretched over your head. This is called “child’s pose” in yoga. Feel the stretch in your lower back and also in your shoulder area.

**Neck:** Gently bring your ear to your relaxed shoulder, then chin to your chest, then other ear to the opposite shoulder. Be sure to hold each side at least twenty seconds. You should never feel pain or dizziness.

# Flexibility

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GET ACTIVE WITH FLEXIBILITY

### TIME

**10-12 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Posters about stretches or a stretch routine**

### Activity Description

Lead participants through a full-body flexibility program. As you are stretching various parts of the body, ask participants if they know which muscles are being stretched. Use the count of twenty for each stretch.

Define “Ballistic Stretching” (bouncing of the stretch) and ask participants why that is not a safe way to stretch. Examples of answers: *It can tear muscle fibers, over stretch and cause pain.*

Define “Static Stretching” (stationary holding of a stretch without bouncing.) Ask why this is a safe way to stretch. Examples of answers: *Able to get a deep, less painful stretch. Able to safely push muscle to full range of motion, gradual stretch that can be pushed as muscles relax and get more flexible.*

Allow for discussion after stretching routine if time.

### Coach's Notes

As an option, consider using mats for these exercises. You can create your own stretching routine or find something online.

# Muscular Strength and Endurance

## Key Messages

Muscular strength and endurance exercises should be part of a balanced fitness program. It's important to work my muscles every day to keep them strong and moving.

## Background

It's important for us to keep up with muscular strength and endurance. We can lose these important assets if we don't work on them daily. It is important to continue to keep the muscles strong and moving, ideally with some resistance.

**Muscular strength** is the amount of force your muscles can exert in one motion. The ability to lift a heavy box from the floor or to hold a heavy bag of groceries are examples of muscle strength. **Muscular endurance** is the ability of a muscle or group of muscles to repeatedly exert force against resistance. For example, the muscle endurance of your legs allows you to walk a full flight of stairs or more without difficulty.

Here are some great tips to improve your muscular strength and endurance:

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park your car in the last spot to walk to the store.
- Perform 2 sets of 10 squats and heel raises while brushing your teeth in the morning and night.
- Carry the groceries to the car instead of using a cart.
- Rotate some core planks and push ups during commercial breaks of your favorite TV show.
- Lift something heavy like jugs of milk in a bicep curl for 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.
- Attach resistance bands to door knobs at home for a variety of exercises for the shoulders, arms, chest and back.
- Join a local gym or community fitness center and ask a trainer at the facility to help you create a program for yourself.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: EASY RESISTANCE AT HOME

### TIME

**20-30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Resistance bands of varying strengths  
Chart of resistance band exercises  
Copies of exercises for all participants

## Activity Description

Lead participants through a series of upper body resistance exercises with 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

## Coach's Notes

Search "resistance training band exercises" on the internet and you will find a number of charts to use. It will be helpful to make copies so participants can take them home. Make sure the chart comes from a respectable source and the exercises are safe for the general public.





# Movement at Work or School

## Key Messages

Even if I sit most of the day, I can stretch or bring movement into my day.

Movement throughout the work day or school day can help me to have more energy and get more work done.

## Background

It's important to break up your work day or school day with movement. Some workers sit at a desk for at least eight hours a day. Many students sit in class or at a favorite studying spot doing homework for most of the day. Why not spend a little time working and stretching your muscles during the hours of sitting? Researchers have found that movement at the office, during class, or while studying can increase productivity, concentration, and enthusiasm for the task. You may not be spending an hour in the gym lifting weights or doing cardio, but a couple movements every hour or two can make a lot of difference for you and your ability to be productive. If being more productive and enthusiastic doesn't motivate you, think about your body's need to move after being sedentary for an extended time. Sedentary office workers and inactive people have been reported to be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease because of increased levels of insulin, glucose and fatty acids.

Here are some examples of movements that can be done anywhere- at a desk in an office, in the classroom, or at home while sitting around doing homework.

**Shoulder Shrugs:** Shrug your shoulders up and down. Use a rotating motion and pull the shoulder blades back and down together. Repeat 10-15 times. Hold for five seconds on the up phase and then another five seconds on the back and down phases for a good stretch of the neck muscles.

**Glute Squeeze:** When you're sitting down, squeeze your glute muscles and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.

**Walking:** Instead of sending an e-mail or calling a person at work, walk over and talk to them. Instead of taking the bus to class, leave a few minutes early and walk.

**Pelvic Tilts:** While sitting, tighten glutes and shift hips forward, activating the lower abdominal muscles. Feel a stretch in the lower back and stability in the core muscles. Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10- 15 times.

**Focus on Posture:** Sit up tall, shoulders back, and activate your core muscles. Try sitting with straight posture for 5-10 minutes to relieve pressure on the neck and shoulders.

**Leg Lifts:** Kick your leg out until it's straight, hold for 3-5 seconds, and relax. Repeat for each leg 10-15 times.

**Calf Raises:** When standing, raise your heels off the ground. This can be done while waiting in the lunch line or waiting for your food to heat up. Do single or double heel raises, 10-15 each or together.

# Movement at Work or School

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: DESK EXERCISES

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Chairs for all participants**

### Activity Description

Do each of the above exercises as a group.

Have participants come up with additional exercises to be done from a chair and share with the group.

### Coach's Notes

It may be helpful to find images online of stretches from the chair.

# Sleep

## Key Messages

Sleep is important and helps my body and mind to function at their best.  
A sleeping routine will help me to fall asleep and stay asleep.

## Background

Sleep is a vital component of physical wellness. It helps both your body and mind to function at their best during the day. The benefits of sleep include:

- Maintain hormone levels to help control hunger and appetite
- Support growth and development and repair muscle tissue
- Improve learning and recall of information (turning short-term memories into long-term)
- Improve attentiveness and concentration
- Clear the mind to make sound, positive decisions
- Increase creativity

As we age, the amount of sleep we need changes. For example, a newborn baby will sleep 16-18 hours each day, whereas an adult should get about eight hours of sleep each day.

## REM (Rapid Eye Movement)

REM is the time in your sleep patterns when you are in the deepest sleep. The REM cycles usually happen about every 90 minutes throughout the night. This is when your body is totally relaxed and your mind is turning all the things you have learned during the day into long-term memories. This is also the time when most dreams take place. If you have a REM cycle just before you wake, you will most likely remember the dream from that cycle. The more REM cycles you have in the night, the better you feel and the more you will remember.

Some people have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. It's important to keep bedtime and wake time consistent. For example, try to go to bed at the same time each night and wake at the same time each morning, including weekends. The body benefits from predictability. Having a stable sleeping routine will help your body relax at the end of each day. Additionally, it can be helpful to make the hour before you go to bed quiet by avoiding exercise, technology, and eating large meals. Following the above guidelines will help you feel more rested in the morning.

## Feeling Sleepy?

Some people often feel "sleepy" during the day. They may fall asleep at unpredictable times, such as while watching TV or while eating lunch. This could be due to sleep deficiency or a sleep disorder such as insomnia. Insomnia is the inability to fall asleep.

Many individuals deal with sleepiness by taking a nap. However, a nap doesn't provide all the benefits of a good night's sleep. It's recommended that naps be limited, but if necessary, a nap should be taken earlier in the afternoon and should not last more than thirty minutes. Naps that are longer may make it difficult to sleep at night and can leave you feeling more tired than before the nap. It's also important to avoid caffeine and sugary foods beginning in the late afternoon. Caffeine and sugar tend to speed up body systems and can make it very difficult to relax at bedtime.

# Sleep

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHANGING CHANNELS\*

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Quiet music**

### Activity Description

- Allow participants to close their eyes and tell them to begin to think about what is on their minds. Then tell them they're going to practice changing the channel in their minds.
- Now ask them to change the channel by imagining themselves walking through a forest. "Imagine that you are stepping one foot in front of the other, walking through the forest. There are tall trees all around you."
- Keep them on that channel for thirty seconds or so, then have them change the channel to a sunny beach, imagining that they are lying on a towel with the sun shining on their face.
- Hold that image for thirty seconds or so, then change the channel. Do this four or five more times.
- Have participants open their eyes and come back to the group.
- After the activity, ask the group when this activity might be useful. Examples of answers: *"When I'm worried," "When I have a nightmare,"* or *"When I've seen a scary movie and I keep seeing the images over and over again."*

### Ideas for Channels

- At home on the couch, drinking a warm cup of cocoa
- Baking a batch of cookies and smelling them in the oven
- Swimming
- Being in a favorite place
- Holding a small pet
- Riding a bike
- Picking a bouquet of flowers

### Coach's Notes

Option can be for participants to change the channel for the group. Another option is to ask the group which channels we should use. Shift from something frightening to something pleasurable and notice the responses in the body. It's helpful to include sensory details (scents, sounds, sights, tastes, and touch sensations) when asking individuals to imagine the channels.

\* Activity adapted from *Yoga Calm for Children*, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# Dealing with Illness

## Key Messages

Illnesses can be caused by bacteria or viruses (germs).  
Illnesses can be spread through direct and indirect contact.  
It's important to rest when sick.

## Background

At some point in our lives, we are bound to get sick. Sometimes it's a stuffy nose, a fever or a stomachache. How we handle our sickness can determine how long we stay sick. Our choices also affect others we might spread our sickness to. It's important to note that bacteria and viruses can be transmitted through direct contact (touching) and indirect contact (air). Here are some things to consider when you are not feeling well:

- If you think you are sick, you should tell someone and possibly go to the doctor for a check up. The doctor will know the best course of action in treating what ails you and help you feel better.
- Sometimes we don't need a trip to the doctor because our body can fight off the illness on its own. This is why we have an immune system. Illnesses such as food poisoning or the common cold are illnesses that we can handle on our own over time. However, if the symptoms aren't going away, then seek a doctor's help.
- When you're sick, be sure to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Germs can spread through the air, and we don't want to make our loved ones sick. Carry around a package of tissue so you're prepared to catch those germs. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper arm. Coughing and sneezing into your hands is not recommended, as those germs can be easily spread to those around you.
- It's important to keep our body neat and clean. When you're sick, it's still important to continue your hygiene routine, even though you may not feel like it. Wash your hands often and especially after every cough or sneeze.
- Just as it's important to keep your body clean, it's also important to keep your surroundings clean. Disinfect things around you, such as cell phones, doorknobs, and electronic remote controls. This will kill germs and stop them from spreading. It's important to consider the other people in your house and protect them from the germs that made you sick.
- The most important thing to do when you're sick is to rest. This means getting as much rest and sleep as you can to help your body heal. Drink plenty of water to flush out the germs. It's also important to maintain balanced nutrition. Fruits and vegetables have antioxidants (infection fighting tools) to fight off the infection as well.

Listen to what your body needs. Don't push yourself to go beyond your limits. The better you take care of yourself, the faster you'll get better and back to your regular routine.

# Dealing with Illness

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: VIRUS OR BACTERIA

### TIME

**5-10 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster pad  
Markers**

### Activity Description

- Ask participants to list as many diseases or infections as they can. Put into two columns, one for sicknesses caused by viruses and another column for those caused by bacteria. Do not label the columns.
- Ask them if they know why you made two columns. Discuss that illnesses are caused by the body being infected with microorganisms.
- Discuss the difference between a virus and bacteria. An illness caused by a bacteria (strep throat) can many times be treated with an antibiotic. A virus (cold or flu) usually has to run its course, as there is no medicine to treat viral infections.
- Discuss vaccines. A vaccine is a shot of antibodies to help prevent various viruses from attacking the body. One example is the flu shot.
- Ask participants: What are the most common vaccines that are given? Examples of answers: *Chicken pox, tetanus, meningitis, HPV, flu shot, etc.*

### Coach's Notes

This activity can be turned into a game with small groups to see how many infections or diseases they can list. Then have the groups try to identify whether the infection or disease is caused by a bacteria or virus. You'll find a variety of premade bacteria or virus Jeopardy games online if you have access to the internet.







# SOCIAL WELLNESS



Being social means spending time in large or small groups and often means forming relationships with people in the groups. These relationships can take many forms, all of which have different meanings to us.

Relationships are an important part of a person's life. We have many different relationships in our lives, and we use different types of touch with all of those people. Some of those relationships are healthy and others are unhealthy. In the **Social Wellness** pillar, we will learn how to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as what to do if we are in an unhealthy relationship. We will explore safe and appropriate boundaries, different personality types in our relationships, and social skills to use in our relationships.

Who we spend time with can influence our choices, behavior and opportunities every day. All parts of wellness work together, especially when it comes to relationships. Having healthy relationships is important, not only for support and guidance, but also for fun and safety. Healthy relationships are fun, reduce stress, increase healthy hormones, and regulate good processes in the body. We can have many healthy relationships in our lives.

## **LESSONS IN SOCIAL WELLNESS**

**Relationships in My Life**

**Healthy Relationships**

**Social Skills in My Relationships**

**Safe and Appropriate Boundaries**

**Different People, Different Personalities**

**Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure**

**Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception**



# Relationships in My Life

## Key Messages

A relationship is a connection between two or more people.

We have many different relationships in our lives, and we use different types of touch or affection within all of those relationships.

## Background

Relationships are connections between two or more people. They are a natural and necessary part of life. Within the many different types of relationships, people use different types of touch or affection. Each person is unique. Some people like to have a wide-ranging network of people, while others are more comfortable with a smaller network. Let's look at some different types of relationships.

## Types of Relationships

**Family:** A family may include parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, and more. These are usually people related by birth, adoption, or marriage. Family will look and feel different for everyone. Family may include grandparents, step-family, foster-family, and other extended family members.

**Friends:** Friendships are a chosen relationship. Both people want to be in that relationship. Often they have something in common, such as a hobby or other interest, or school or work. Friends are bonded by these commonalities. Friendship is usually an informal relationship, but some friendships may be deeper than others. Some people have many friends, and others prefer to have only a few friends.

**Romantic Partner/Significant Other:** A romantic partnership is also a chosen relationship between two people. It's a different relationship from a friendship in that both people have romantic feelings for one another. They can be a boyfriend or a girlfriend, a partner, a husband or wife, or a significant other. Not everyone has a romantic partner. In a romantic relationship it is important that both people want to be romantic. If one person has a "crush" on the other, this means that they have sexual, happy feelings for that person. A one-way crush is when only one person is attracted to the other. A two-way crush is when both people are attracted to each other. In order for a romantic relationship to develop, both people need to be attracted to each other.

**Professional Relationships:** These are relationships we have through work or school. Sometimes these relationships turn into friendships. These people can also be called colleagues, peers, or classmates. People in relationships like these may or may not like each other, but they are connected through work or school. Some examples of professional relationships include classmates, co-workers, teammates and teachers. Caregivers and paid helpers also fit into the category of professional relationships. This may include personal care assistants, therapists, teachers, coaches, and more.

**Community Members:** Everyone is a member of a broader community. You may know these people well, a little bit, or not at all. All of the people in the above relationships are included in the broader community as well, but know each other much better than community members would know each other. Some examples of people in the community are: police officers, a member of a class or club, bus drivers, librarians, store clerks, neighbors, doctors, and many other people.

# Relationships in My Life

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Pen/pencil

Copies of “People in My Life” worksheet  
for all participants

### Activity Description

Write the names of all the people in your life, in each of the categories in the worksheet.

Try to think of as many names or roles as you can.

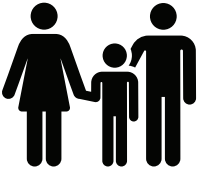




### Coach's Notes

Remind participants that we usually only have one or zero names at a time in the Romantic Partner category. It's possible for people to have more than one romantic partner at a time, but it's important that we learn how to have a healthy relationship with one romantic partner before we can have a healthy relationship with more than one partner.

Insert People in My Life worksheet

# PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

INSTRUCTIONS: Write down the names of the people in your life for these categories.

<p>My Family</p> 
<p>My Friends</p> 
<p>Romantic Partner</p> 
<p>Professional Relationships</p> 
<p>Community Members</p> 

# Relationships in My Life

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: RELATIONSHIP CIRCLE\*

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

- Pen/pencil
- Completed “People in My Life” activity
- Copies of “Relationship Circle” worksheet
- Pen/pencil

### Activity Description

Start by writing your own name in the middle circle.

In the “Hug” circle, write the names of people with whom you have the closest relationships. Many people put only a few people in this circle. It might include your immediate family and a few friends. In the “Side Hug” circle, write the names of people who are also very close to you, but not as close as those in the “hug” circle. This may include more friends and other family members. You might even include a caregiver or support person with whom you are very close.

In the “Shake Hands” circle, write the names of people you know well, but who are not your closest friends or family. You’ll have more people in this circle, and you might include classmates, colleagues/co-workers, teammates, teachers and more. This circle may include types of touch that are hand to hand such as high fives, fist bumps, etc.

In the “Wave” circle, write the names of people you’re acquainted with but don’t know very well. This circle will have even more people and may include some community members you see often and know their names. This circle also includes types of affection that are not touch (peace fingers, head nod, salute, etc.).

The circle titled “Do Not Touch” includes the rest of the world (strangers, etc.). We do not need to talk to everyone we see on the street.

### Coach’s Notes

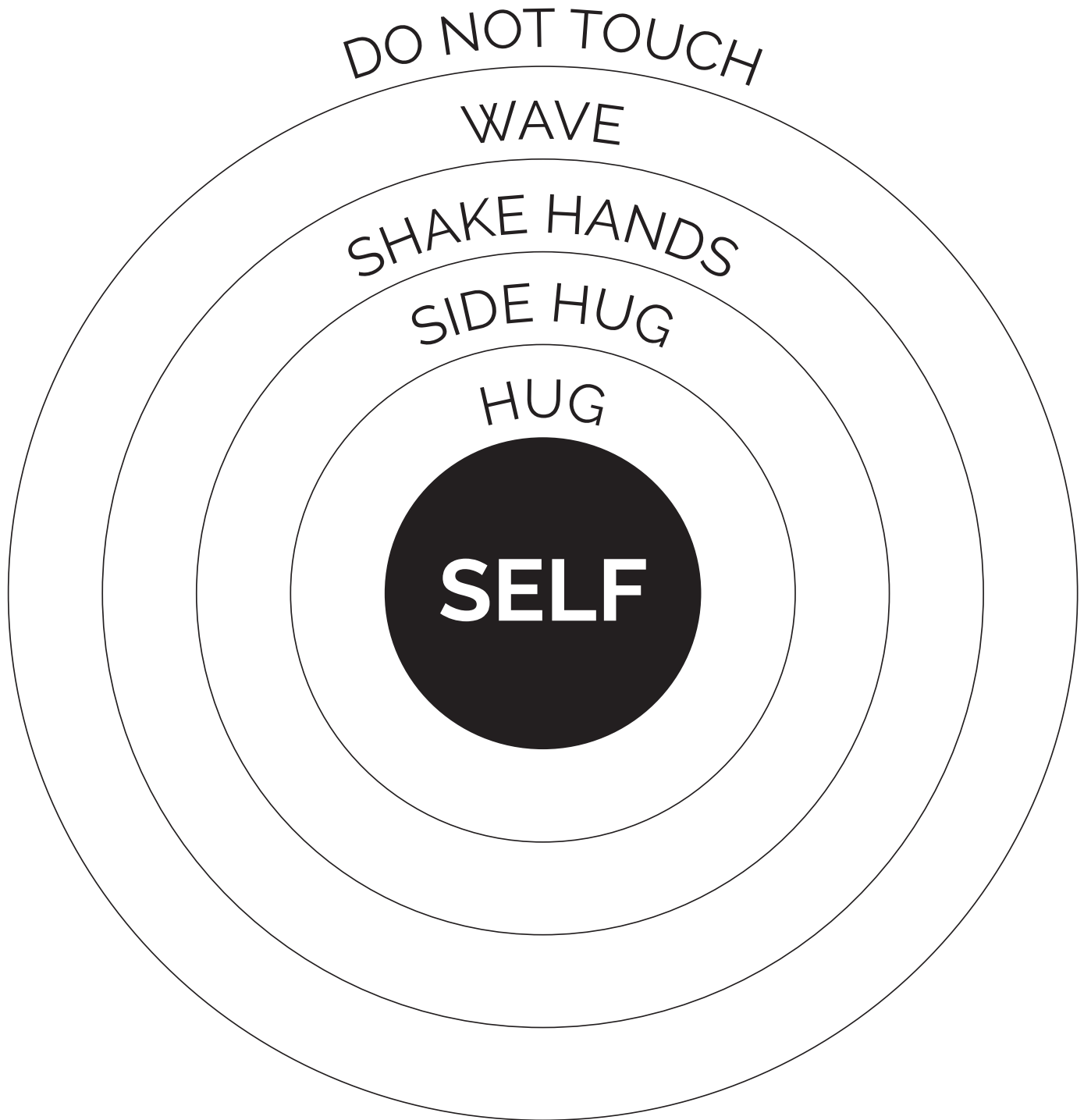
Remember that all people have different and unique relationships with others. Although it seems natural to include immediate family members like siblings and parents in the “Hug” circle, not all people are comfortable with this, and that’s okay. Encourage people to write the names they feel are appropriate for each type of relationship.

Insert Relationship Circle worksheet

\* Activity adapted from Sexuality for All Abilities, Mad Hatter Wellness, [www.sexualityforallabilities.com](http://www.sexualityforallabilities.com) and used with permission.



# RELATIONSHIP CIRCLE



\* Activity adapted from Sexuality for All Abilities, Mad Hatter Wellness, [www.sexualityforallabilities.com](http://www.sexualityforallabilities.com) and used with permission.

# Healthy Relationships

## Key Messages

Healthy relationships have a positive impact in our lives.  
Unhealthy relationships may have a negative impact.

## Background

We have many different types of relationships in our lives, and it's important to understand what makes a healthy relationship, as well as what makes an unhealthy relationship. Both healthy and unhealthy relationships can be with anyone in your life - family members, friends and romantic partners. Healthy relationships make you feel happy, fulfilled, good about yourself, and loved. Unhealthy relationships might make you feel sad, lonely, or bad about yourself. Many different behaviors contribute to both healthy and unhealthy relationships.

In a healthy relationship:

- You take turns making decisions.
- You respect each other through words and actions.
- You use kind and caring words.
- You both share thoughts and feelings even if you disagree.
- You both support and encourage each other.
- You communicate well.
- You can say no.

These are just some examples of behaviors that make healthy relationships. When you're in a healthy relationship, you're more likely to take care of yourself, have other healthy relationships, feel good about yourself, be confident making your own decisions, and have fun.

In an unhealthy relationship:

- You don't respect each other with words or actions.
- Decisions are unfairly made or one-sided.
- One person tries to control the other's actions.
- One or both of you criticize the other's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- You might feel worried when you disagree.
- You might feel pressured to do things you don't want to do.
- You don't communicate well.
- You may experience yelling or physical aggression during an argument.
- One person wants the other to keep secrets.

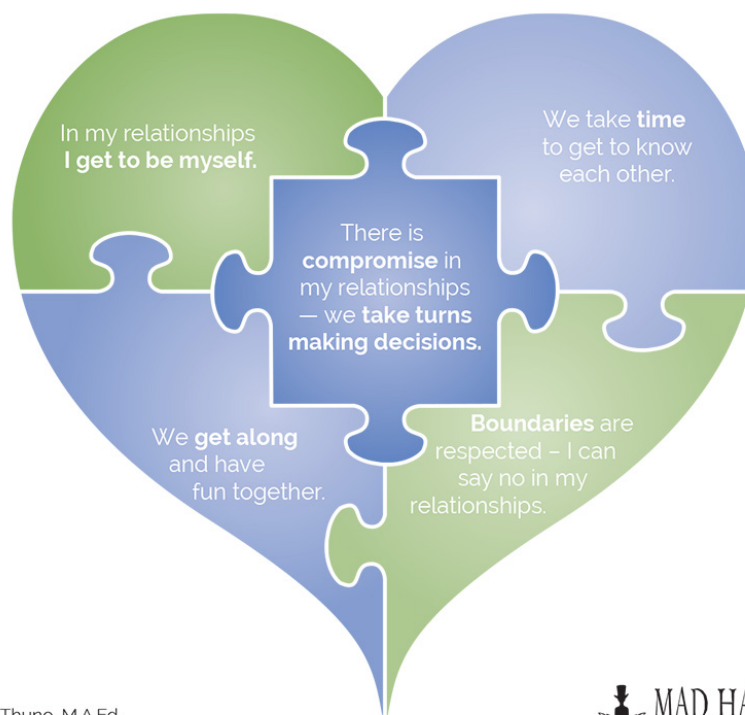
These are only a few examples of unhealthy behaviors in relationships. When you're in an unhealthy relationship with someone, you might feel sad frequently, have lower self-esteem, experience self-doubt, stop caring for yourself, and allow other relationships to suffer. If you're in an unhealthy relationship with a friend, family member or romantic partner, it's important to tell someone about it. Also consider asking how to create some boundaries for yourself.

# Healthy Relationships

When we're forming or participating in all the different relationships we have in our lives, it's important that we feel good about ourselves. Look for ways to have fun, learn about each other, and continue developing the relationship over time. One way to nourish relationships is to do activities that you enjoy together. You can try new activities together as well. It's important to stay positive and encourage each other throughout your time together.

Relationships are somewhat like puzzles. If one piece is missing, the puzzle isn't complete. Here are five pieces of a healthy relationship. If one piece is missing, the relationship may need some work to become a healthy relationship.

## THE HEART OF RELATIONSHIPS



**In my relationships I get to be myself.** I don't have to pretend to be someone else. The relationship is truthful and real.

**We take time to get to know each other.** The amount of time to get to know someone is different for all relationships.

**There is compromise in my relationships - we take turns making decisions.** There is a shared power in the relationship.

**We get along and have fun together.** We have things in common. Arguments are brief and end respectfully.

**Boundaries are respected - I can say no in my relationships.** If I say no, the other person doesn't get upset with me.

# Healthy Relationships

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: LOVE IS...

### TIME

**30-40 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Large paper  
Markers or colored pencils  
Pen/pencils  
Scissors

#### Activity Description

Draw a big heart in the middle of the large paper.

On the inside of the heart, write feelings you have when you're with someone with whom you enjoy a healthy relationship. Be creative. Think of as many good feelings you have when you are around them as you can.

On the outside of the heart, write down the feelings you may have if you're in an unhealthy relationship. Discuss the differences between how you feel when you're in an unhealthy relationship and in a healthy relationship.

*(Optional)* Cut out the heart with the positive feelings on it as a reminder of what healthy relationships look like.

#### Coach's Notes

A fun variation on this activity is to use old magazines to make a collage of the feelings instead of writing the words. Another variation is to enlarge the "Heart of Relationships" and use that as the background for the collage. Glue the cut-out words and pictures on top of each category/puzzle piece.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: THINGS IN COMMON

### TIME

**30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Paper  
Pen/pencil

#### Activity Description

This activity can be done with partners.

Each partner, on their own paper, should draw a line down the center of the page, making two columns.

On the left side of the paper, write down hobbies or activities that you love to do.

When both partners are finished, compare your lists.

On the right side of the paper, make a list of things you have in common.

Brainstorm new ways you can do these activities together. Examples:

- If you both like baseball, schedule a time to play catch.
- Do you like to walk or run? Find new places or routes to go together.
- Do you both like reading? Find new libraries and bookshops where you can browse through your favorites and discuss them.

Finally, go out and do an activity together.

#### Coach's Notes

This activity can combine with the physical activity part of the SOfit session. Have participants choose physical activities that they enjoy doing and choose one of those to do during your physical activity session.

# Social Skills in My Relationships

## Key Messages

I can have healthy relationships when I have healthy social skills.  
Healthy social skills include positive communication with others.  
Respect for yourself and others is important in having healthy social skills

## Background

Having a healthy lifestyle is much more than eating well and exercising often; it's also about the relationships you have with others. Healthy interactions with the people in your life - parents, siblings, colleagues, and community members around you - are an important part of your daily health. There are many ways to make sure you have healthy relationships with those around you. These include respect for yourself and others.

## Respect Yourself

It's important to show respect for yourself, in order to show respect for others. Some ways you show respect to yourself are:

- Have confidence and high self-esteem.
- Stand up for yourself. This means "telling your truth" when necessary in a kind way. If you are being bullied or are uncomfortable in a situation, it's important to say what you're feeling. It's most important to tell your truth when you're hurt, angry, or sad about something.
- Take care of your body and mind.
- Take care of your physical health through exercise and fitness. This shows your body and mind that you care about you.
- Take time for yourself. This might mean saying no sometimes. If you have many obligations or feel as though you need time to yourself, it's okay to say no to activities. It's very important to care for your emotional health and take time for yourself if you need it.
- Listen to yourself. When making decisions about activities or relationships, take time to inventory your feelings. Often, if you look inside, you will already have answers to questions you may have about relationships or situations.
- Respect your own space. Personal space is different for everyone. If you feel as though someone is invading your space, it's okay to step back or ask the other person to respect your space.

## Respect Others

- Be patient. Not everyone thinks, acts, or does things the same way. There is usually a reason for this, and sometimes we have to be patient with others.
- Respect the things around you. One way we show respect is to respect the things and property around us. Respect all things and spaces as if they were your own to care for.
- Build strong relationships through communication.

# Social Skills in My Relationships

## Communication Is Key

### Active listening:

- Use understanding and empathy when listening.
- Turn your body, head, and ears towards others when listening.
- Give nonverbal cues that you are listening, such as nodding your head, making eye contact, or using your body to indicate a response (shrugging your shoulders, etc.).

### Engaging in communication with others:

- Approach others with positive communication. ("How are you?" "How was your day?" "I hope you're doing well.")
- Ask questions and actively listen to responses.
- When you ask a question, wait to speak until the other person has responded.
- Ask other relevant follow-up questions.

### Resolving Conflict

- Use self-awareness to understand when you're feeling angry, sad, frustrated, negative, or upset.
- Use active listening skills to show that you're understanding the other person.
- Use deep-breathing and positive language when talking to others about your opinions.
- Try to understand the other point of view. There's always more than one perspective on any situation.
- Apologizing for - and forgiving - negative language and actions is also important to move forward to more positive resolutions now and in the future.
- Cooperation is one form of conflict resolution. Sometimes this means both individuals or both groups in a conflict have to give up something they want. If you can find a way to agree on a positive outcome for both, this is a great way to positively resolve a conflict.

# Social Skills in My Relationships

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATION GAME \*

### TIME

**30 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description

Draw the following chart on a whiteboard or poster paper. Write down the first situation and leave the dialogue boxes empty. Tell participants they are going to learn some skills that will help them communicate more clearly with friends, family, and people in their lives.

Ask individuals to imagine that a friend comes up and remarks, “Joe won’t let me join the kickball game.” Then go through the different ways to respond, starting with “Restate” and ending with “Encourage” or “Empathize,” as in the example below. After showing the first two situations, ask the group to come up with responses for the last scenario.

Situation	Restate	Reflect Feelings	Ask Questions	Share Your Experience	Encourage or Empathize
Joe won’t let me join the kickball game.	He said you can’t play?	You look mad. You sound frustrated.	When did he say that? Who was there? Did anyone stick up for you?	Tony did that to me on Tuesday.	That is so annoying!
Mary told Frank that I like him!	She told Frank?	You sound upset.	How do you know she told him? What did you say to her?	I’ve had girls do that to me. I was really mad.	I’m sorry she did that. I know you didn’t want anyone to tell.
My mom won’t let me go to the party.					

After completing the third scenario, divide the participants into two groups. Ask two volunteers from Group 1 to come to the front of the room. Write a new situation in the next row of the chart and tell the participants they will have three minutes to keep a conversation going using the different communication skills. Each time they use one of the skills, put a check under that skill. Each check is worth a point. If the two people get stuck, they can ask for help from others on their team.

Then have two individuals from Group 2 do the same. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins.

It’s best to go two or three rounds before declaring a winner, so everyone will have more time to practice.

After playing the game in groups, have participants divide into pairs and practice together for 2-3 minutes. It helps to give them a subject, such as “Tell about a time when you were really scared.”

### Coach’s Notes

This game can also be done in one large group without making it a competition. It may be helpful to practice in pairs before playing as a game.

# Social Skills in My Relationships

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CONVERSATION

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**None**

### Activity Description

This activity offers practice in active listening and speaking in a conversation. Participants will try three different ways to have a conversation and show active speaking and listening.

Put individuals into pairs to practice. Go through the activity twice so both people can practice being the speaker and the listener.

**Scenario 1:** The speaker describes something that he or she likes to do during free time at home. The listener will only use “passive” listening, meaning the speaker cannot ask questions, talk in any way, or encourage the speaker (even through nonverbal signals, such as nodding).

**Scenario 2:** The speaker will describe one of the most exciting things he or she has ever done. The listener will give both verbal and nonverbal signals that he or she is listening. This can include making eye contact, nodding, using encouraging words, smiling and more.

**Scenario 3:** The speaker will make and finish the statement, “My favorite sport to play is \_\_\_\_.” The listener will ask questions that expand the conversation and invite the speaker to say more.

### Coach's Notes

One possible variation is to use prewritten conversation starters or topics. Picture prompts can also be a fun variation and may assist with comprehension.



# Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

## Key Messages

A boundary is a line that others cannot cross unless I say it's okay.  
My boundaries might be different from another person's boundaries.  
I need to respect my boundaries.  
I need to respect other people's boundaries and ask before touching another person.  
I can say no to touch or behavior that makes me feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

## Background

We have many different relationships in our lives. The type of relationship we have with a person helps us to know what kind of touch is okay and appropriate. We use different types of touch with the different people in our lives. Not all family members receive the same type of touch. Not all friends receive the same type of touch.

A boundary is a line that marks the limit of an area. Our boundary is defined as a line that others cannot cross unless we say it's okay. We're not allowed to cross into another person's boundary unless that person says it's okay. Boundaries will be different for different people, and it's important that we respect other people's boundaries and ask before touching them. We don't know what other people's boundaries are before asking.

We have warning signals in our body that let us know when something doesn't feel comfortable or something is wrong. Everyone has a different signal in his or her body. Examples of signals in our body include: feeling uncomfortable in the stomach, body is shaky, breathing is fast, heart or chest hurts, body is sweaty, and more. Sometimes these feelings can be confusing, because they might be similar to how we feel when we have a crush on someone. It is important to think about the feelings we have in our bodies so that we know when something is uncomfortable or wrong.

# Safe and Appropriate Boundaries

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: PERSONAL SPACE \*

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**None**

### Activity Description

Ask two volunteers to come to the front of the room. Have them stand about 10-12 feet apart, facing each other.

Ask Partner 1 to begin walking toward Partner 2. As Partner 1 nears, Partner 2 raises a hand to show the boundary of his or her personal space.

Now ask Partner 2 to walk toward Partner 1 and see if that person's personal boundary is the same or different.

Try this with several other pairs, noticing the difference in individuals' needs for personal space.

Discussion questions may include:

What are some things that can affect a person's need for personal space? Examples of answers: how well they know each other, personal hygiene, how a person feels that day, height, family and culture, profession or occupation.

What are nonverbal cues that you notice as people are approaching the boundary? Examples of answers: laughing, turning the face away, leaning way back, blushing, and so on.

### Coach's Notes

Option can be to have group in two lines, facing each other. Have one line walk toward the other until each participant comes to the boundary of another's personal space. Notice the differences in people. Alter the lines and repeat.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: UNWANTED TOUCH

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description

Ask participants: What can we say or do if we don't like the type of touch or affection from another person?

Write responses on the whiteboard or poster paper. Examples of responses may include: "I don't like that," "I'm not comfortable with that," walk or move away, turn away.

In partners, practice using words and the body to let someone know that you don't like the type of touch.

### Coach's Notes

Sometimes it can be confusing if the role play includes inappropriate touch. Encourage participants to role play appropriate touch only.

# Different People, Different Personalities

## Key Messages

There are many different personality types.

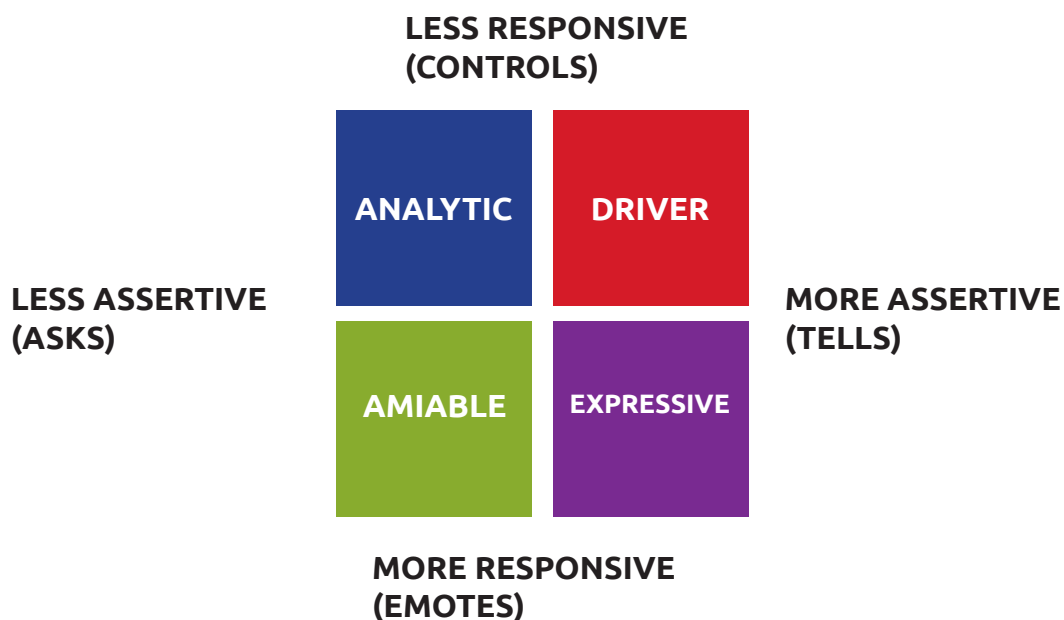
People express themselves differently depending on their personality type.

## Background

There are many different studies about personality types, and there are different factors that play a role in what someone's personality is like. One personality type indicator frequently used by employers is called the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator. It's named after two psychology researchers. The Myers-Briggs inventory includes sixteen different personality types and is an extensive and comprehensive test. Another pair of researchers, Merrill and Reid, simplified the Myers-Briggs list into four basic types: **Driver**, **Amiable**, **Expressive**, and **Analytical**.

The Merrill-Reid model uses two main measurements to determine the core personality type. **Assertiveness** is the degree of forcefulness or directiveness used when communicating with others and making requests. More assertive people often tell others what they want and make demands, rather than asking. Less assertive people often ask, rather than demand, or sometimes they say nothing at all. **Responsiveness** refers to the amount of emotion with which people respond to others. More responsive people often react with high levels of emotion. They can be seen as either empathetic or sometimes as out of control of their emotions. Less responsive people generally react with less emotion and are often more guarded or less empathetic.

Looking at Responsiveness and Assertiveness and the interaction of those two dimensions, we can create a grid with the four main personality types. Everyone is on a continuum, and no style is better than another. These descriptions are just another way to understand the way people interact with each other.



# Different People, Different Personalities

**Analytical** personalities are both *less* responsive and *less* assertive. These people are often:

- Task-oriented instead of people-oriented.
- Prudent, structured, and organized.
- Objective, evaluative, and problem-solving.
- Organized and structured.
- Independent in that they prefer working alone rather than in groups.
- Cautious in making decisions.
- Critical or pessimistic in nature.
- Sometimes overly critical or unresponsive.
- Drawn to structure and routine, fearing change and uncertainty.

**Amiable** personalities are *less* assertive and *more* responsive. These people are often:

- People-oriented or sociable.
- Friendly and relatable.
- Good listeners and good at teamwork.
- In search of respect and approval.
- Slow decision-makers.
- Followers rather than leaders.
- Uncomfortable with conflict and risk-taking.
- Fearful of change and uncertainty.
- Steady, hard workers.
- Averse to conflict and sometimes “soft-spoken.”
- Able to blend into any situation.

**Driver** personalities are *more* assertive and *less* responsive. These people are often:

- Not so worried about other people’s reactions.
- Results-driven and pragmatic.
- Efficient and focused on tasks.
- Sometimes impatient and insensitive or inconsiderate.
- Take-charge leaders.
- Careful planners.
- Very decisive.
- Competitive.
- Independent.
- Direct, quick communicators (“get to the point”).

# Different People, Different Personalities

**Expressive** personalities are both *more* assertive and *more* responsive. These people are often:

- Creative and intuitive.
- Outgoing and enthusiastic.
- Spontaneous and fun-loving.
- Great at teamwork.
- Persuasive and motivating.
- Seeking to be heard and acknowledged.
- Fearful of being ignored or rejected.
- Impatient with routine.
- Focused on the “big picture” rather than the details.
- Prone to overgeneralize or exaggerate.
- Articulate and quick.
- Sometimes poor listeners.
- Prone to distract or get distracted.
- Sometimes impractical and impatient.

Of course, within these personalities there is a continuum and many other factors. Each of us tends to express one of these personality types dominantly, and that affects the way we communicate and work in groups. Even if the dominant personalities of two people conflict, knowing about personality types can help them to communicate effectively, understand each other, and operate better as a team. Reflecting on tendencies, habits, and preferences helps us figure out what dominant personality type we are. This leads to understanding how to adapt to others.

# Different People, Different Personalities

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: ARCHETYPE GAME \*

### TIME

**10-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Music or drum**

### Activity Description

Participants spread out around the room, each standing tall.

On a slow count of four, they grow into a statue that represents a specific archetype or character, such as a king or queen. See list below for examples of different archetypes.

With music playing (or drum sounding), ask participants to move the way their archetype or character would move. When you say “Freeze” or the music/drum stops, all participants stop and stand tall. Start over with a different archetype.

Participants must give each other space when they are moving around the room. No touching, running, or talking is allowed. If an individual breaks the rules, he or she must sit out for one archetype before rejoining the game.

Discussion after the game can include questions such as:

- Which archetype was easy or natural for you?
- Which archetype was uncomfortable to act out?
- Did you have an archetype that was your favorite? Which one?
- When do we need to use each archetype in our life and when might one be dangerous? (e.g., Kind and Friendly around friends and family - careful when around strangers)
- When might an archetype get us into trouble? (e.g., The Trickster, when interviewing for a job or when company comes over for dinner).

### Some Archetypes

- *The Trickster* - the sneaky self
- *The Warrior* - the fierce self
- *Prince or Princess* - the self connected with a sense of pride and elegance
- *Wise King or Queen* - the self who steps into responsibility or leadership
- *Monster* - the scary self
- *Angel* - the kind and giving self
- *The Content One* - the self who feels satisfied with who we are and our own personal gifts
- *Kind and Friendly One* - the social self
- *Bear or the Hermit in the Cave* - the self that takes time to be alone
- *Peaceful One* - the quiet, contemplative self
- *Clown* - the silly self
- *Courageous Explorer* - the self who faces adversity

### Coach's Notes

If someone is having a difficult time participating, he or she can be the one to control the music or play the drum.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

## Key Messages

I will identify my strength and think about ways I can use it to help in my life.  
I have a trusted person in my life I can talk to if I'm involved in bullying or cyberbullying.  
I can say no with my body and my words to anything that makes me feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

## Background

Bullying has come into the spotlight as a serious societal issue in the last few years. Although bullying has existed for a long time, advancing technology and higher exposure to violence through TV and videogames have given bullying and cyberbullying a newly predominant role. Bullying is characterized by unwanted, aggressive, repetitive behavior that illustrates a power imbalance between two people. If someone is mean once or even twice, this does not necessarily constitute bullying. Consistent repetition of the behavior, intent, and a power imbalance (physical, social or emotional) exist in a bullying relationship. There are different ways bullying is carried out including

- Verbal bullying - using spoken or written words. Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate comments and threatening to cause harm are all included in verbal bullying.
- Social or relational bullying - using someone's relationships or reputation to bully. Telling others not to be friends with someone, leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, mimicking unkindly, and embarrassing someone in public on purpose are included in social bullying.
- Physical bullying - using the body to harm others. Hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking someone's things or breaking them, and rude hand gestures are all included in physical bullying.
- Cyberbullying - bullying using the internet. Cyberbullying can include all of the above, but with the addition of the internet - especially social media - or the phone (both calls and texts).

Under no circumstances is bullying okay. Bullying and cyberbullying can have profound impacts on someone's life. They can wreak havoc on self-esteem, trigger high amounts of stress, and cause extreme social isolation. All these factors combined create a lasting trauma that impacts both the body and the brain. Repetitive harmful negative speech, repetitive physical harm, repetitive isolation or rumor-spreading, and repetitive attacks via cyberspace are all forms of bullying that are intolerable.

# Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

If someone is being bullied, including yourself, it's important to take these steps:

- Save any evidence. In cyberbullying, it's easy to save evidence on a computer, smartphone or tablet. Additionally, anyone that witnessed the bullying or cyberbullying can assist in providing evidence. Taking this evidence to a trusted adult will help to solve the problem.
- Block someone who is cyberbullying. Blocking someone on social media takes the simple click of a few buttons or prompts. Although we can't always literally block real life people, it is possible to completely ignore what they are saying or doing to bully and tell a trusted adult immediately.
- Practice positive self-esteem and self-image to gain courage to stand up against bullying. Whether one is being bullied or is a bystander, it's important to find the courage to stand up against bullying - it could even save a life.
- Send appropriate messages, posts, pictures and links via cell phones and the internet. While it's tempting to send something that seems funny, it's not always funny to the person receiving the message. A good rule of thumb to follow when sending messages, posts, pictures or links to someone is to ask, "Would I want my mom, dad, employer, teacher or coach to see this?" If the answer to that question is "no," then it's not appropriate to send to anyone.

## Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is social pressure on an individual member, or a couple of members, from a peer group. Peer pressure can be both positive and negative. Positive peer pressure can be good by stimulating interest in new experiences, extracurriculars, books, music, or developing new skills. On the other hand, peer pressure can potentially have a negative impact on one's life. Peers can also sometimes encourage each other to make poor decisions, such as encouragement to cheat, steal, smoke, use drugs or alcohol, and other risky behaviors.

People often give in to peer pressure when they want to fit in with their peers or avoid feeling left out. Sometimes wanting to be liked can tempt people to make decisions they might not make if they were on their own. Making poor decisions can cause stress or other negative feelings about oneself and can have long-term negative effects. Making poor decisions as a result of peer pressure can cause low self-esteem, adoption of dangerous habits, damage to relationships with family and friends, shame, and depression.

There are two different types of peer pressure to be aware of. Direct Peer Pressure can be as simple as someone, or a group of people, directly telling others what to do. Indirect Peer Pressure is a less obvious form of peer pressure. Wanting to be liked or spending time with a particular group might lead one to engage in behaviors that the group engage in together.

### **Here are a few ways to handle peer pressure:**

Say no to negative peer pressure. When being pressured to make poor decisions or engage in risky behaviors, it's absolutely okay to say no.

Value constructive common interests. Constructive shared hobbies are a great way to spend time with friends, without feeling pressured to make bad choices.

Leave the situation if it's risky or uncomfortable. It's important to feel safe and comfortable in order to avoid stress. If a situation is risky or uncomfortable, leaving is absolutely okay and encouraged.

Finding a strong voice, being honest, and having a high self-esteem will help anyone to avoid negative peer pressure.



# Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: STRONG VOICE\*

### TIME

**10-15 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Copies of “Strong Voice” worksheet  
for all participants**

**Pen/pencil**

**Optional- quiet music**

### Activity Description

Sitting in chairs, allow participants to close their eyes. Take a few breaths together as a group to turn awareness inside.

Slowly read the sentences from the “Strong Voice” worksheet, pausing long enough for individuals to process the ideas that come into their minds.

After reading, ask participants to open their eyes and write down their answers on the worksheet. This should be done without talking.

Allow participants to share their responses with their partner or the whole group.

### Coach's Notes

Participants can work with their partner if they need assistance with writing. Discuss how strength can be used when one is angry. Give role models such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who used his anger and strength together for positive change. Discuss how strength can be used in negative ways and how we can keep this from happening.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# Bullying, Cyberbullying and Peer Pressure

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: HARASSMENT PREVENTION\*

### TIME

**10-20 minutes**

### MATERIALS

**Whiteboard or poster paper  
Markers**

### Activity Description

Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room and slowly chase you. As the individual is chasing you, laugh and tease and say “stop” in a playful way.

Ask participants why this didn’t work very well. They know that it is because the person being chased was giving a double message.

Write this on the board:

#### **Double Message**

- My language said, “Stop.”
- My body language said, “Keep going, I’m having fun.”

Ask participants which message they believe. Most will say they believe the body.

Discuss double messages that people sometimes send. Then go over the following steps for addressing harassment. After explaining the steps, have two volunteers practice chasing each other (slowly) and demonstrate the process of sticking up for oneself. Steps to stopping harassment:

- In a kind way, tell the person to stop.
- Say it again. This time, ground your feet, use your strong voice, and say the person’s name.
- Give a warning - for example, “I’m going to tell someone,” or “I’m going to walk away.” Ask the group what else they can say.
- Tell someone or follow through with the warning.
- You may have to do this many times before a person will stop the harassing behavior. Keep trying, and believe in yourself.

### Coach’s Notes

This activity may be helpful to do in combination with the “Strong Voice” activity.

\* Activity adapted from Yoga Calm for Children, [www.yogacalm.org](http://www.yogacalm.org) and used with permission.

# STRONG VOICE WORKSHEET

Can you find the strong voice inside of you?

---

Where do you feel the strong voice in your body?

---

Is the voice high or low?

---

Is the voice loud or soft?

---

Does the voice make you think of someone?

---

What does the voice say?

---

What can you do to find your strong voice when you are angry or afraid?

---

When do you need your strong voice?

---

Draw a picture of yourself feeling strong on the back of this page.

# Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

## Key Messages

- The internet can be helpful and provide us with a lot of information.
- We need to be careful about who and what to trust on the internet.
- We need to be careful about what we post online in order to stay professional.

## Background

As technology advances, people use the internet more and more. Many people use the internet to find out information about others, including new friends, potential employees, people associated with businesses, and more. Not many people realize that the new company they are interviewing with may be going to the internet for information about them, particularly their social lives. A person's association with another person or with an organization may be of interest to companies or individuals attempting to learn about them. This includes checking social media sites where pictures of them might be posted. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram catalogue daily activities through posts, status updates, social events and pictures. That's why it's so important to keep an online presence professional - not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of anyone associated with you.

Remember, when a person is associated with an organization, such as Special Olympics, he or she is representing that organization. When people post things that are inappropriate, they are not only risking their own reputation, but the organization's reputation as well.

Everyone has what's called a "digital footprint." What is posted on social media and on the internet leaves traces behind forever. Often potential employers will look back at those digital footprints. This means that once information is out there in cyberspace, it stays there. Before something gets sent or posted, it's important that people consider the consequences. The potential audience is much larger than a person might think. Before putting a post or e-mail out there, consider what others might think of the content. If the content is questionable, everyone who is involved should give consent, or permission, before it gets sent into cyberspace.

While controlling images on the internet is important, it's even more important to stay safe from cybercrime. Cybercrime includes hackers searching for personal and financial information, as well as other crimes that are potentially even more dangerous.

# Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

## **Don't:**

Post unprofessional or inappropriate pictures.

Post statuses or tweets with inappropriate language, poor work habits, or criticisms of your employer.

Post status updates about everything you do - too much information can put you in a vulnerable position.

Post or share references to illegal drugs, guns, or alcohol.

Post or share sexual or discriminatory posts.

Share passwords or usernames.

Share other personal information, or respond to e-mails or other messages that inquire about personal information (Social Security number, bank account number, birth date, telephone number, or information about your family, school, work, or where you live).

Reply to or click on messages or links from strangers asking for information.

Send pictures of yourself, your home or anywhere else you frequently go.

Chat or e-mail with a stranger who makes you feel scared or uncomfortable.

Meet in person with a stranger you met online. No matter how long you chat with someone online, that person is still considered a stranger. People on the internet are not always honest about who they really are.

## **Do:**

Post positive content that will make a good impression and create a positive digital footprint.

Be kind and respectful to others. Think of the internet as an extension of the world. Treat people on the internet or social media the same way you would treat them in person.

Use privacy settings for passwords and social media.

Make sure that websites you are shopping on are secure. They will have "https" in the web address and will also have a logo that looks like a lock.

Some games or apps that access your location services (GPS) can tell the wrong strangers where you are or where you are going. Make sure your location settings are private.

Be aware of the mood you are in when posting social media content.

Tell a trusted adult if a stranger contacts you through social media, e-mail, or another messaging service or website.

Tell someone if you feel uncomfortable about anything happening on the internet.

# Internet and Social Media: Safety and Perception

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: GOOGLE YOURSELF!

### TIME

**30-45 minutes**

### MATERIALS

Internet Access  
Internet-capable device (smartphone, tablet, computer, etc.)

### Activity Description

Begin by entering your name into the Google search bar.

- See what comes up at first.
- Then, search your name in Google with other terms added, including risk words such as “address,” “e-mail address,” usernames for sites you use, your phone numbers, etc.
- Repeat the search process on other search engines, as well as sites that are designed to find people (whitepages.com, peoplefinder.com, etc.).
- Discuss. What did you search for? What did you find? How do you feel about what you found?
- Check privacy settings for any social media sites used, as well as e-mail and any other site that might contain personal information.

### Coach's Notes

Bullying and cyberbullying are the focus of another lesson. They are certainly part of online safety. If you have time, teach these lessons together. Individuals may need help checking privacy settings, since the privacy setting is not always the same, or obvious, on every site. You can also show the videos Four Reasons to Care About Your Digital Footprint ([https://youtu.be/Ro\\_LLrg8rGg](https://youtu.be/Ro_LLrg8rGg)) and NS Teens - Friend or Fake? ([https://youtu.be/Nb1zAY\\_cc8o](https://youtu.be/Nb1zAY_cc8o)) on [www.smores.com](http://www.smores.com).



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