

Session 5: Health Culture: Self

Learning Goals

Students will examine their health culture and survey their home environments to collect information about nutrition at home.

Materials

- Who Wants to Be Healthy? (see Resources)
- Health Culture Self Survey, copies (optional, see Resources)
- Home Health Practices, copies (optional, see Resources)
- Food and Exercise Logs (see Resources)

Warm Up

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Facilitator introduces today's theme, Health Culture, and spends a few minutes brainstorming with students the meaning of personal health culture. For the purposes of Building Healthy Communities, we will define personal health culture as the beliefs and practices that affect our health.

Who Wants to Be Healthy?—Divide the group into two teams. Each team should think of a team name. Then, assign numbers to each student. Each team should have a player #1, #2, #3, and so on, so that everyone is included. Flip a coin to see which team will begin the game. Player #1 from that team will be the first contestant. Read one question and all four possible answers to the group, but only Player #1 may answer. Teams gain a point with each correct answer, and each player will have one chance to ask their group for help before losing their turn. Each player may continue answering questions until answering incorrectly. When the first contestant misses a question, Player #1 from the second team will have a chance to play, and so on. The team that gains the highest number of points wins.

Debrief: Why Does This Matter?

Discuss students' responses to Who Wants to Be Healthy? Which questions seemed easy, and which were more difficult? What might students determine about their personal health culture based on their knowledge about health and fitness?

Work Out

Estimated Time: 35 minutes

Context: How Does This Impact Me and Others?

Students will examine their current health culture: systems, habits, and routines that influence their health. Then, students will explore how each of us creates our own positive health culture, practices that keep us healthy like eating well, exercising, and engaging community members in efforts to improve our overall health.



Activity: What Can I Do?

- Ask students to spend a few minutes filling in their Food and Exercise Logs (see Resources) for the week. It may be difficult for students to remember what they've eaten and how they've exercised, but encourage them to write down as much as they're able to remember. Remind students that logs will help them to track their patterns and see if there is a change in their habits over time. Have students take the Health Culture Self Survey (see Resources) and/or make their own surveys—see below.
- The first step to creating a positive health culture is to investigate our current culture. Divide students into groups of three or four, and ask each group to generate four questions to include in a survey that will measure our health culture. Ask each group to consider factors such as environment (only being around fast food restaurants), tradition/practice (eating a certain way because your family does), habits (eating in front of the television) and emotions (eating when you are happy, sad, or bored).
- Examples of students' survey questions may include a mini-checklist for students to take home that helps them record what kinds of foods are in their refrigerators, freezers and cabinets (i.e. what groups do foods belong in, are foods mostly fresh or boxed and canned, is there candy and soda at home, etc.). Surveys may also include questions about students' routines after school (i.e. do they walk home or ride the subway, do they generally play sports or watch TV, etc.) or questions about students' families and their approach to food (i.e. do families like to cook together, are foods mainly grilled, broiled or fried, how is food part of our family celebrations, etc.).
- Ask each small group to share its survey questions with the class.
- Record all survey questions on the board, or on a large piece of paper.
- As a large group, discuss all of the survey questions. What kind of information is most important to students' investigation of personal health culture? Which questions can be eliminated?
- Students create a complete survey to measure current health culture. Surveys should include between ten and twenty questions, with at least one question that corresponds with each of the four factors listed—environment, tradition/practice, habits, and emotion.
- Students will fill out surveys.
- Divide students into new small groups and ask them to discuss the results of their surveys. Were they surprised by the results? How will students improve their personal health culture, or continue to make positive progress? Discuss the Home Health Practices worksheet (see Resources). Students should take the worksheet home to fill out. This can be a great way to include family members as well.

Cool Down

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Reflection: What Is the Big Picture?

Share with the large group something that surprised you about your personal health culture.

Share with the large group one way that you have decided to improve your personal health culture.

Lesson Extensions

(Optional)

Home Health Continued—Discuss as a group the results of students' Home Health Practices worksheet. Which foods do we have the most of at home? Which foods do we have the least of? Are there any foods we have too much of at home? Invite students to create lists of favorite healthy foods from each food group. For example, the Grains list might include popcorn, brown rice, whole-grain cereal, etc. and the Meats & Beans list might include sunflower seeds, low-fat beef, fish, soy nuts (i.e. baked soy beans), etc. Students should create one "shopping list" for each food group, which can be laminated and tied together with yarn to create a booklet of healthy foods. This booklet can be used to help family members shop for healthy foods.

Online Surveys—Have students enter and record their survey responses in Survey Monkey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com>. Results can be easily charted. If using one computer for students to take survey, set preferences to allow multiple responses from the same computer.

