

## Addresses Personal Values, Attitudes, and Beliefs

**Description:** An effective health education curriculum fosters personal attitudes, values, and beliefs to support positive health behaviors. Attitudes are the way a person thinks and feels about something or someone, values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another, and beliefs are ideas that a person accepts or considers to be true.

An effective health education curriculum provides instructional strategies and learning experiences that motivate students to critically examine personal perspectives, thoughtfully consider new arguments to support health-promoting attitudes and values, and generate positive perceptions about protective behaviors and negative perceptions about risk behaviors. Students develop attitudes, values, and beliefs that support healthy behavior through experience and exposure to others modeling the health-enhancing attitudes, values, and beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

This characteristic is *not* values clarification (e.g., engaging students in a debate that focuses on whether marijuana should be legalized for recreational use); instead, it describes learning experiences that encourage students to critically think about how *their own* attitudes, values, and beliefs support the adoption of healthy behaviors.

It is important to establish and maintain a classroom climate in which the teacher and the students consistently model and endorse healthy attitudes, values, and beliefs. It is the teacher's role to be the "bridge builder" to help students to take the functional information learned and apply it to their lives and to foster new attitudes, values, and beliefs needed to adopt healthy behaviors.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool* (Atlanta, GA: CDC, 2021).



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**Directions:** Click on the grade-level icon below for examples of how to support this characteristic in a lesson.

Grades  
**K - 2**  
EXAMPLE



Grades  
**3 - 5**  
EXAMPLE



Grades  
**6 - 8**  
EXAMPLE



Grades  
**9 - 12**  
EXAMPLE



## Grades K–2 Examples

### Example 1

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Promoting Mental and Emotional Health, and the Healthy Behavior Outcome (HBO) for this lesson is *MEH-1: Express feelings in a healthy way* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. In this lesson, students learn about feelings, appropriate ways to express feelings, benefits of expressing feelings in healthy ways, and the potential consequences of not expressing feelings in healthy ways.
2. The teacher begins the lesson by showing the students a set of pictures of people who are happy, sad, and angry. The teacher asks the students the following questions:
  - a. Have you ever felt happy?
  - b. Have you ever felt sad?
  - c. Have you ever felt angry?
3. The teacher then explains that there are healthy and less healthy ways to say and show our feelings.
4. The teacher asks the students the following questions and asks a variety of students to share their answers:
  - a. What are some things that make you happy?
  - b. What are healthy ways to express happy feelings?
  - c. What are less healthy ways to express happy feelings?
  - d. What can happen if we express happy feelings in less healthy ways?
  - e. Why is it important to use healthy ways to express happy feelings?
5. The teacher repeats Step 4 for the feelings of sadness and anger.
6. The teacher ends the lesson by asking the students to meet with a partner and explain why it is important to express all feelings in healthy ways.



### Example 2

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Preventing Violence, and the HBO for this lesson is *V-3: Prevent bullying* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. The teacher asks students what they think the words “teasing” and “bullying” mean. The teacher calls on several students to share their answers aloud.
2. The teacher summarizes the students’ responses and explains:
  - a. Teasing is a form of communication between people. When done in a positive, healthy way, teasing can help people bond and build relationships.
  - b. Teasing is done when you are having fun and joking around with someone.
  - c. Teasing does not physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt another person.

3. The teacher asks the students the following questions:
  - a. Have you ever been teased?
  - b. How did it make you feel?
  - c. When is it ok to tease another person?
4. The teacher next explains:
  - a. Bullying is when someone is hurt by unwanted words or actions, usually more than once, and has a hard time stopping what is happening to them.
  - b. Bullying is different than teasing. Bullying is wrong because it is meant to hurt another person physically, emotionally, or mentally.
  - c. It is always wrong to bully others.
5. The teacher asks the students the following questions:
  - a. Have you ever been bullied?
  - b. How did it make you feel?
  - c. Why is bullying always wrong?
6. The teacher reads a story about bullying and why it is wrong to bully others.
7. The teacher concludes the lesson by asking a question:
  - a. Why is it important to not bully others?

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## Grades 3–5 Examples

### Example 1

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Promoting Mental and Emotional Health, and the HBO for this lesson is *MEH-8: Establish and maintain healthy relationships* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. The students have already learned about
  - a. Relationships in families, peer groups, schools, and communities,
  - b. Strategies for effectively communicating feelings to family members,
  - c. Examples of helping, being respectful of, and considering others, and
  - d. Cooperation.
2. To start this lesson, the teacher has the students work in small groups to complete two lists:
  - a. The qualities of healthy relationships with friends and family members
  - b. The benefits of healthy relationships
3. The students share their lists with the rest of the class.
4. Next, the students write about a healthy relationship that they have with a friend or family member, answering three questions:
  - a. What are reasons you think the relationship is healthy?
  - b. What are the benefits of this healthy relationship?
  - c. Why is this relationship important to you?
5. The teacher forms three- to four-person groups, and students share their responses with the group.
6. The teacher concludes the lesson by asking the students to explain why it is important to establish and maintain healthy relationships.



### Example 2

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Promoting an Alcohol- and Other Drug-Free Lifestyle, and the HBO for this lesson is *AOD-1: Use prescription and over-the-counter medications correctly* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)). The specific focus of this lesson is medication safety.

1. The students have already learned definitions and examples of
  - a. Over-the-counter and prescription drugs,
  - b. The benefits of medications when used correctly,
  - c. How to use medications correctly (e.g., get help from a trusted adult, carefully follow directions, take correct amounts at the right times, use only when needed),

- d. The potential risks associated with inappropriate use of over-the-counter and prescription drugs, and
  - e. The importance of not sharing medications.
2. The teacher reinforces that it is important to always use medications correctly by getting help from a trusted adult, carefully following directions, and using medications only when needed.
  3. The teacher shows a video related to medication safety (e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1M21HNpx05w>) that shows children the students' age using medication safety and expressing the beliefs that it is always important to have help from a trusted adult, carefully follow directions, and use medications only when needed.
  4. The teacher concludes the lesson by having the students describe how to use medications correctly and explain why it is also important for them to always have help from a trusted adult when using medications.

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## Grades 6–8 Examples

### Example 1

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Mental and Emotional Health, and the HBO for the lesson is *MEH-4: Prevent and manage emotional stress and anxiety in healthy ways* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. Students have already learned strategies for preventing and managing stress. For this activity, students will select two strategies to practice and incorporate into their personal wellness plans.
2. Once students have selected the strategies of interest, they will practice those strategies for a week and keep a daily journal of the following:
  - a. How often strategies were practiced
  - b. How they felt before and after
  - c. If the strategies helped to relieve stress
  - d. Why practicing stress management techniques is important
3. Students will reflect on how this experience has affected the way they perceive stress and their abilities to control the way they respond to stressful situations (e.g., test taking, disagreements, peer pressure).
4. Students will incorporate at least one strategy into daily practice as reflected in their personal wellness plans that are submitted to the teacher.

### Example 2

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Safety, and the HBOs for the lesson are *S-3: Use safety equipment appropriately and correctly* and *S-4: Apply safety rules and procedures to avoid risky behaviors and injury* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. After students have learned about protective equipment needed for sports and recreational activities, students internalize the importance of wearing helmets while riding a bike or participating in other activities such as skateboarding.
2. Students work with a partner to respond to the following questions:
  - a. What are the benefits of wearing a safety helmet?
  - b. What is your personal level of risk of not wearing a safety helmet?
  - c. What are the potential consequences for not wearing a safety helmet?
  - d. What are potential barriers (or reasons for not wearing a helmet) that you or your peers might face?
  - e. For each barrier you wrote down, think of one solution or strategy you could use to overcome that barrier.
3. Students write a reflection in their personal wellness plans about what they have learned; their perception of personal risk; how the lesson's content may influence their values, attitudes, and beliefs; and what their intentions are for using safety helmets and following safety rules in the future.
4. These intentions will be incorporated into their personal wellness plans and shared with the teacher.



## Grades 9–12 Examples

### Example 1

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Tobacco Prevention, and the HBO for the lesson is *T-1: Avoid using (or experimenting with) any form of tobacco* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. The students have already learned about the negative consequences of experimenting with or using any forms of tobacco and the benefits of being tobacco free.
2. The teacher asks students to meet with their shoulder partner and brainstorm the meaning of these words: “attitudes,” “values,” and “beliefs.” The teacher calls on several students to share their definitions out loud.
3. The teacher shares the following definitions with the students, comparing students’ answers with the definitions they are sharing.
  - a. Attitudes are the way you think and feel about something or someone.
  - b. Values are individual beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another.
  - c. Beliefs are something that are accepted or considered to be true.
4. The teacher explains when individuals practice a health-enhancing behavior, they typically have healthy attitudes, values, and beliefs toward that behavior.
5. The teacher then divides students into small groups and asks them to go to a designated piece of chart paper hanging on the wall. Students brainstorm healthy attitudes, values, and beliefs a person would have if they avoided using any form of tobacco.
6. After each group finishes completing their list, the teacher calls on each group to share two examples for each word.
7. The teacher asks students to complete the following questions.
  - a. What are two healthy attitudes that would most help young people avoid using any form of tobacco?
  - b. What are two healthy values that would most help young people avoid using any form of tobacco?
  - c. What are two healthy beliefs that would most help young people avoid using any form of tobacco?
8. The teacher calls on volunteers to share their answers.

A person who avoids using any form of tobacco would have the following attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Attitudes —

Values —

Beliefs —





## Example 2

For this example, the unit that is being taught is Physical Activity, and the HBO for the lesson is *PA-1: Engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day* ([HECAT Appendix 3](#)).

1. Students have already learned about the benefits of participating in vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day.
2. The teacher asks students to create an online poster (e.g., PowerPoint, Canva, Prezi) of physical activities they enjoy and the personal benefits they get when they participate in physical activity.
3. After students have a draft of their online posters, students are placed in small groups to share their posters. Group members are encouraged to share at least one thing they like about the poster and one way it could be improved.
4. Students work individually to improve their posters based on peer feedback from their group.
5. Students present their posters to the entire class.



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