



Lesson Name: Analyzing Influences and the Power of Words

Unit Name & Lesson #: Power Through Empowerment: Lesson 2

Grade Level: 6-8

Lesson Length: 50 minutes *(This lesson may need to be implemented over two class periods or adjusted to fit your class time.)*

Before beginning, teachers should offer accommodations specifically mentioned in a student's IEP to support their ability to participate in the lesson. change to: A sample list of common accommodations and modifications to aid you in selecting appropriate supports for students can be found in the educational material resources.

National Standards & Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education:

Standard 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Lesson Objective(s):

Students will be able to analyze influences on their own behaviors.

Students will be able to describe and reflect on how outside messages can influence health behaviors.

Essential Question (related to objective):

How do messages influence someone's ability to make healthy choices?

Equipment Needed:

- Pictures of stick figures (print out one for each student)
- Tape/glue sticks

Thought of the Day

Kind words do not cost much.
Yet they accomplish much.
— Blaise Pascal

Lesson Overview:

Teachers will model the skill of analyzing influences as well as giving students the opportunity to practice the skill themselves. Teachers will have students engage in an activity to help them visualize how negative and positive messages can have an effect on someone emotionally and influence health behaviors.

Instant Activity

Time (minutes)

5

Cues:

- Identify the influence
- Analyze the influence
- Examine the influence
- Consider an action plan

Activity Progression:

After students take their seats, ask them to write down the skill cues for analyzing influences from the previous class. Encourage students to write down any terms, questions, or concepts that they remember, even if they can't remember the skill cues exactly. This process can help with retention of material when students are encouraged to recall what they remember even if it isn't completely correct.

(Activity from *Lesson Planning for Skills-Based Health Education*, SHAPE America, p. 76)

Review the skill cues as a class.

Identify the influence

Analyze the influence

How do I know it is influencing me?

What messages am I receiving from this influence?

Is this a positive or a negative influence?

How much is this influencing my thoughts, values, beliefs or actions?

Examine factors and impact

How are other factors interacting with this influence?

How might these factors affect my thoughts, values, beliefs and behavior choices?

Consider an action plan.

Do I need to do anything about this influence?

What is the best plan of action for handling this influence in my life?

(Skill cues image from *Lesson Planning for Skills-Based Health Education*, SHAPE America, p. 65)

Learning Activity 1

Modeling the Skill Cues:
Web of Influences

Time (minutes)
5

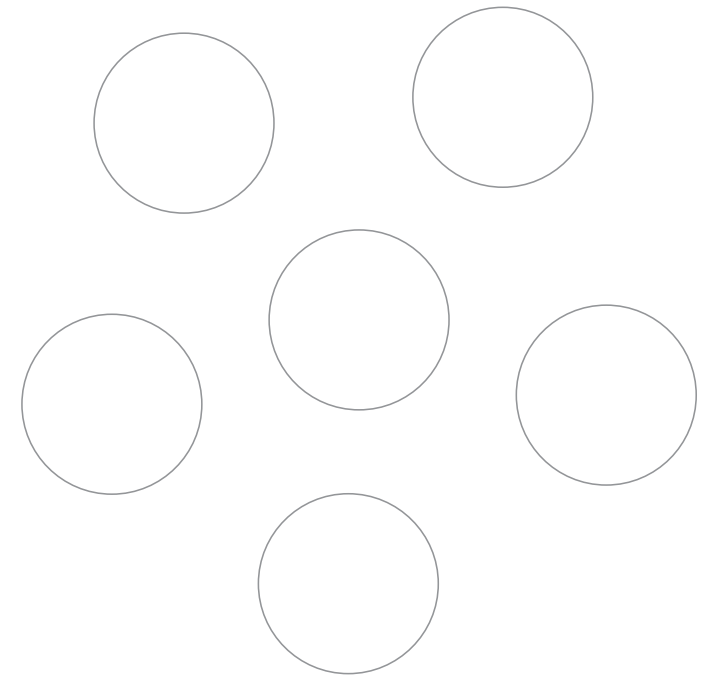
Checks for Understanding:

- How are different influences connected?

Activity Progression:

Walk students through the skill cues of analyzing influences. Be sure to allow students to give input for each of the steps.

1. Draw a circle in the middle of the board. Ask the class to pick a health-related behavior they do or don't engage in. It can be healthy or unhealthy. For this example, we will use "not using drugs."
2. Draw smaller circles around the circle, and write all the people or things that influence your behavior (the influences can be positive or negative). Try to come up with three to five influences. Examples: parents, spiritual (consider your district's policies before choosing this as an example), social media, friends.
3. Identify, by including a "+" or "-" sign, whether the influences are positive or negative. Keep in mind that an influence might be positive and negative depending on the situation.
4. Have students guide you to draw lines from the behavior to the influences. Students will decide on a system of their choice to indicate the strength of each influence on the behavior (e.g., different colors, types of lines, symbols, etc.). For example, a double line means a stronger influence than a single line while a dotted line is the least influential.
5. After you have drawn all the lines from student responses, have students come up with messages they receive from their strongest influences about this behavior. Tell students to keep in mind that the message may not always be easy to recognize and might not be something that is told directly to you. For example:
 - Spiritual – A higher power will judge me.
 - Social media – Everyone uses drugs to have a good time.
 - Parents – They would be disappointed or get mad at me; I could get grounded; They won't trust me.
 - Friends – Some friends use drugs and it doesn't hurt them and they have fun; Some friends don't use drugs at all and they are still fun.
6. Have students look at the web you have created, ask them if they think there are any other connections that exist between the influences. For example, is there a connection between the influence of media and your peers? Represent these connections between the influences with lines.



(Activity from *Lesson Planning for Skills-Based Health Education*, SHAPE America, p. 78)

Learning Activity 2

Web of Influences

Time (minutes)

10

Checks for Understanding:

- How do personal influences affect your own health-related behaviors?
- How can influences affect health-related decisions in relationships?

Activity Progression:

Have students repeat steps 1 to 6 above but use a behavior of their choice.

Then, have students do the activity again with the health behavior of being friends with someone who mistreats them.

After completing this activity, have students write a short statement about:

- How reflecting on personal influences has helped them learn more about themselves, (or not, if they don't feel that it did).
- How influences can affect decisions in relationships.

Learning Activity 3

Analyzing the Power of Words

Time (minutes)
25

Checks for Understanding:

- How do outside messages influence health-related behaviors?

Activity Progression:

Print out copies of a stick figure and hand one to each student. Instruct the students that this person's name is "Sam" and s/he is having a tough day, but they must rip the paper (girl/boy) with each of the following comments:

- Sam's mom says, "You are so lazy and slow this morning ... well, actually every day!" Students will now rip a piece of paper from the picture.
- Sam's sister says, "You are wearing that today??? You don't look good in that shirt." Students will rip another piece of paper from the picture.
- Sam's friend says, "You really shouldn't be invited to the party Friday. Just kidding!" Students will rip another piece of paper from the picture.
- Sam's teacher says, "I don't know what's going on, but you need to get it together or you're not going to pass this class." Students rip another piece of paper from the picture.

Ask the students to tell you how Sam now looks. Potential responses:

- Awful
- Not together
- Like they are hurting
- Wounded

Guide students through the discussion to understand that although words don't physically tear in real life, they can tear us emotionally. So, tearing Sam is a metaphor.

Tell students it's time to put Sam back together with the power of positive words. For each positive comment, students should put back one piece of the torn paper.

- Sam's mom says, "I love you" and gives her/him a hug.
- Sam's sister says, "You look so cute today."
- Sam's friend says, "I'm so glad you are coming to the party with me Friday. You are fun to hang out with."
- Sam's teacher says, "You have been working hard in this class. You have perseverance!"

Ask the students to tell you how Sam looks now. Potential responses:

- Better than she/he did before
- Scarred

Quote the thought of the day: "Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much." Have students reflect on the quote and share their thoughts in relation to the activity.

Example script:

"Let's look at the thought of the day: 'Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much.' Thinking about the activity we just completed and the thought of the day, how do you think those negative messages Sam heard can influence his/her choices around health-related behaviors?" [Allow students to respond]

Guide students through a discussion about how influences from family and friends and their messages can affect how someone feels about themselves and their ability to make healthy choices in the future.

Closure

Time (minutes)

5

Activity Progression:

Review the day's lesson.

Ask students to identify the skill cues for analyzing influences.

Have them write a 5-7 sentence reflection about how the power of words, or influences of others, can affect a person's ability to make healthy choices.

Closure

Time (minutes)

10

Activity Progression:

Review the definition for empowerment.

State the Thought of the Day: “The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud.”

– Coco Chanel

Ask students if they agree or disagree. Why or why not?

Allow students to think for a moment on the Thought of the Day.

After a couple of minutes, have one student stand on one side of the room if they agree and have another student stand on the opposite side if they disagree. Try to have the two students have polar opposite positions.

Have the rest of the class stand in a line between the two students based on how much they agree with each position. Students can discuss among themselves why they feel the way they do. Students should talk with other students who feel the way they do.

Next, choose a student from each cluster to summarize the group’s position. Students are allowed to change their mind once they hear a group’s position and can move to another group if they choose.

Emphasize to students how being empowered is about being stronger and more confident and making better choices, especially in friendships and relationships.

Example script:

“Being empowered is about being stronger and more confident and make better choices, especially in friendships and relationships. One way to do that is being able to understand how influences can affect our choices.”

“Once you get better at analyzing your influences and how they affect you, you can better stick to your own personal beliefs and values, making it easier to make healthier choices. Middle school may be tough for some, but you have the skills to get through it and make healthy choices! And remember, I’m always here to talk through anything with you if you need help, if you want to vent, or if you just want someone to talk to.”

- **Empowerment** is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights.

Checks for Understanding:

- How does being empowered allow me to make healthier choices?

Thought of the Day

**The most courageous act
is still to think for yourself.
Aloud.— Coco Chanel**

Grades 6-8

