



# Health Education Today



# The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "15 Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum."

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/characteristics/index.htm>

## **Health Education Today's *High School Health Curriculum* meets all 15 C.D.C. expectations:**

1. Focuses on clear health goals and related behavioral outcomes. Each lesson in Health Education Today's (HET's) *High School Health Curriculum* begins with a header that includes outcomes such as lesson standards met, content and protective behavioral skills learning targets, and assessments for the day's activities. The *High School Health Curriculum* is based on the C.D.C.'s National Health Standards, as well as the Washington State Standards for Health Education.
2. Research-based and theory-driven. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* employs educational strategies proven to address the causes of unhealthy teen behaviors and to nurture the skills needed to implement healthy ones. Examples of research-based materials in the *High School Health Curriculum* include trending nutrition information from "Harvard Health," and the latest substance prevention lessons from "Stanford Medicine." Statistics from the "Healthy Youth Survey" data and analysis from the "National Institute of Health" and the "National Institute on Drug Abuse," and obesity maps, statistics, and videos "The Center for Disease and Prevention" are included. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* also uses websites like <https://www.heart.org>, and <https://health.gov> to name a few.
3. Addresses individual values, attitudes, and beliefs. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* uses numerous surveys across many topics to help students identify individual values, choices, and beliefs. Some examples are the "Personal Values Survey," "Eating Disorders Survey," "Aggression Survey," "Am I Eating Healthy?" Survey," "Depression Survey," "Sexual Assault Survey," and "Multiple Intelligences Survey."
4. Addresses individual and group norms that support health-enhancing behaviors. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* provides instructional strategies and learning experiences to help students accurately assess the level of risk-taking behavior among their peers. For example, the "Healthy Youth Survey" statistics are used to show how many of their peers use illegal drugs. The curriculum shows students misperceptions of peer and social norms and then follows up with realistic ways for teens to choose health-enhancing behaviors.
5. Focuses on reinforcing protective factors and increasing awareness of personal risk and the harmfulness of engaging in unhealthy practices and behaviors. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* daily learning targets include both a content and a protective behavioral skill for each daily lesson. For instance, personal safety is a focus in the Drug Unit as students take a "Risk Factors for Drug Addiction Survey" which helps them assess any risk factors in their own lives. The "Empathy Unit" focuses on "Protective Factors" in reference to choosing violent behaviors. These are a few examples of promoting protective factors.

6. Addresses social pressures and influences. This goal is one of HET's *High School Health Curriculum's* greatest emphasis for teens and it is promoted daily in posted learning targets. Learning target topics are based on "Being above teen pressures." For example, unit targets include: "Being Above the Past: By overcoming hardships and taking stock of yourself and how you can respond in a positive way"; and "Being Above Mental and Emotional Problems: By problem-solving and/or seeking professional help if needed"; and "Being Above the Danger: By thinking through consequences, standing up to peer pressure and choosing the healthy way." Additionally, "Learning Target Exit Sheets" are included for students to reflect on the daily target and how it might impact their own circumstances.

7. Builds personal competence, social competence, and self-efficacy by teaching skills. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* includes essential skill-building for teens in every unit. Here are a few examples: Teens practice "Saying No" refusal skills in the Alcohol Unit, analyze poor decision-making skills in the Dangerous Decisions Unit, assess accuracy of information in the Tobacco Unit "Ad Appeal" activity, goal-setting in the "Eating Healthy for Life Survey and Doodle Art," and work on building confidence with the Conflict Resolution "Assertiveness Survey" and follow-up "Confidence" videos and "Thumbprint Art" activities.

8. Provides functional health knowledge that is basic, accurate, and directly contributes to health-promoting decisions and behaviors. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* provides content knowledge so that students gain the ability to demonstrate the skills of assessing risk, clarifying attitudes and beliefs, correcting misperceptions about social norms, identifying ways to avoid or minimize risky situations, examining internal and external influences, make behaviorally relevant decisions, and build personal and social competence. Content and skill-building include videos, true story articles, surveys, assessments, online activities, art projects, homework, role-plays, partner activities, share outs, presentations, goal-setting, and parent-Teen homework.

9. Uses strategies designed to personalize information and engage students. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* uses relevant activities to help teens identify with the topics and personalize the information. Some favorite teen activities in this curriculum include "How Celebrities Overcame Hardships Articles," "Food Label Scavenger Hunt Around the Room," and "Cultural Diversity Ice-Cream Cartons Art".

10. Provides age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate information, learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* provides lessons that are appropriate for high school students. These lessons meet students where they are in their teen lives. Topics are relevant and include: mental health issues, depression and suicide, abuse, healthy eating, disordered eating, sexuality, media literacy, peer pressures, drug use, dating suggestions, healthy relationships, parent-teen communication, expectations, sexual decisions, empathy, cultural diversity, as well as many more impacting topics.

11. Incorporates learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials that are culturally inclusive. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* is free of cultural bias and promotes inclusivity. All race, ethnicity, age, physical and mental ability, appearance and religion are valued and promoted in this program. In particular, the three-week "Cultural Diversity Unit" empowers teens with the knowledge and understanding to identity and to overcome bias, stereotypes, prejudices, and racism; and thus enables a celebration of their own place in the world. The "Empathy Unit" also covers empathy, stereotypes, the power of words, bullying, self-esteem, risk and protective factors, values and more impacting and inclusive teen topics.

12. Provides adequate time for instruction and learning. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* is a 55-minutes per class, overarching full semester program. The curriculum includes additional lessons, totaling an additional full second semester of teaching.

13. Provides opportunities to reinforce skills and positive health behaviors. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* provides daily opportunities for teens to learn and practice life skills and healthy behaviors. Some student-centered, hands-on examples include: "First Aid Scenarios Group Re-Enactments," "Communicable Diseases Card Game," "Tobacco Habits Survey and Goal-Setting," "Sexual Peer Pressures Flip Charts," "How Marijuana Hurt Me Card Game," and "What I Learned in Health Board Game."

14. Provides opportunities to make positive connections with influential others. HET's *High School Health Curriculum* showcases influential role-models in which teens can identify with and look up to. In reinforcing health promoting norms, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors, HET's activities include "Celebrities Who Overcame Hardships in Positive Ways," "Monday Morning Motivation" videos of actors and influencers with healthy messages, true story articles and videos, as well as many other celebrity true stories of overcoming hardships, resisting peer pressures, and choosing non-violence to resolve conflicts.

15. Includes teacher information and plans for professional development that enhances effectiveness of instruction and student learning. Together Health Education Today's creators are certified in "Secondary Health Education," "K-12 Physical Education," "3-8 Multiple Subjects," and "4-12 Language Arts." They have a combined "Masters of Education in Instructional Technology" a "Masters of Education in Multiple Subjects," and a "National Board Certification in Health." They also have years of classroom and gym experience and are knowledgeable, competent and confident with Health topics and teaching strategies. Health Education Today's creators professional experience span from "Athletic Director," "Department Head," "School Administrator" coaches, committee members, and community outreach. Professional development and staying on top of education tech sites, norms, trends, and current technologies is a top priority.