

Safety in Numbers

Activity

Resource:

Engaging Students in Healthy Living through Drama

Grade(s): 11 12

What is it all about?

Use a Placemat activity to support students in sharing their ideas about factors that influence behaviours and strategies for making safer choices to prevent injury, risk factors associated with substance use and addictions, sources of support, and skills and resources to maintain personal health while becoming independent. Students express their understanding through an original artistic performance. This activity may be used during or at the end of a unit of learning.

Curriculum Connections

Grade 11: C1.2, C3.3

Grade 12: C2.5

How is it done?

- Have students work in small groups of 3–4.
- Provide each group with a Placemat template, or a simple piece of blank paper that can be divided into equal sections based on the number of members in the group. Have students put a square or circle in the centre of their Placemat or page.

- Provide each group with a question related to the concepts to be explored. Examples taken from The 2015 Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Health and Physical Education [Revised] include: “What might influence someone to engage in behaviour that involves a risk of harm to themselves or others?” or “What are some things that can help you make safer decisions?”; “Why is it important to get help to deal with problems related to substance use or addictive behaviours?”; and “While living on your own, you may still need emotional support and advice to help you deal with any difficulties that develop. What do you need to know in order to determine what kind of support you will need?”.
- Have each group member write their ideas to the guiding question in an assigned section of their group’s Placemat and then share their personal responses with their group.
- When all group members have shared their responses, members write the most common or frequently occurring responses in the centre square or circle. This is the consensus position for the group.
- Have each group create a short and memorable phrase like one used in advertising (that is, a slogan) that they feel captures the essence of their consensus position.
- Have each group create a Tableau performance piece that demonstrates their consensus position and delivers a message that could be used in a positive way to meet the needs of a youth audience.
- Have students perform their Tableau for the class or record their work to share with their peers or another chosen audience.
- Facilitate a group debriefing session where students can reflect on what they learned, their and others’ reaction to the work of their peers, and what the group as a whole can take away from the activity to support the well-being of both self and others.

What may be needed?

- A blank Placemat template (or a blank piece of paper) for each group
- Time and space for students to create their performance pieces

Opportunities for assessment

- Observe small group conversations to assess students’ application of critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

- Use groups' analysis skills in finding consensus and making connections to the various factors that influence youth health and healthy decision making.
- Have students complete a self-assessment of their ability to use their problem solving, decision making, and communication skills to reach consensus and create their Tableau.

Ideas for Extension

Have students use their slogan and performance tool for a social media campaign in their school or community that is aimed at youth health.

Educator notes

- Encourage students to pay attention to non-verbal cues (for example, posture, tone of voice) during the group collaboration phase.
- Encourage students to reflect on why people may not always choose the best course of action (for example, maintain unhealthy eating habits, make poor dietary choices, succumb to peer pressure).
- Encourage students to reflect on their own boundaries and how they may apply new skills to their own lives.
- Moderate the post-performance discussion, ensuring class feedback remains constructive, correcting any misinformation presented in the scene, answering any questions that may arise, and referring to relevant resources as needed.
- If any potentially offensive or problematic content comes up in a performance, do not react in a disciplinary manner, but correct it.
- Acknowledge humour as a useful tool that for strengthening memory, building confidence, and increasing self-efficacy that also helps to combat stigma and diffuse awkwardness.