

Viruses, Health Conditions and the Role of Vaccinations

Activity

Resource: Vaccination Talks Toolkit

Grade(s): 11 12

Division(s): Senior

What Is It All About?

This activity allows senior participants to explore emerging local and global health issues such as infectious diseases and their impact on the health of individuals and communities. Participants consider strategies and behaviours they might adopt to maintain their health in situations when transmission of infection may be a concern for themselves or others.

Curriculum Connections

1, C1, C2, C3

Why Do It?

Providing participants with the opportunity to engage in discussions about emergent health topics and available health interventions such as vaccinations allows them to think ahead and make informed decisions about health issues that may impact their present and long-term health.

How Do We Do It?

- Use a **Graffiti** strategy for participants to explore current issues and concerns about infectious diseases (e.g., common cold, flu, measles, HIV, strep throat, COVID-19, hepatitis) that might impact the health of individuals and communities, locally, nationally and globally, and determine effective strategies to address health concerns for themselves and others (e.g., available vaccinations, washing/sanitizing hands, isolating when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, clean common touch surfaces regularly). Divide participants into groups of 3-4 and provide each group with access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool). Have the group write the phrase: Infectious Diseases, Health Conditions and the Role of Vaccinations, in the middle of their Graffiti.
- Post the following statement and questions to engage participants in small group discussions:

The global pandemic has resulted in limited travel, limits on large public gatherings, and physical distancing. While global viruses continue to circulate, individuals and communities are returning to 'normal' activities with less attention to following public health safety measures to reduce the spread of transmissible infections. The reduction in adopting health safety measures may impact individual health with potential long-term health issues.

 1. How might reducing attention to public health measures result in the further spread of infectious diseases that have been eradicated or controlled through such measures?
 2. How might the continued spread of infectious diseases impact an individual's health?
 3. What role might vaccinations have as one choice for maintaining personal health and community well-being? Why might this choice not be available to some individuals?
 4. What behaviours and strategies might people your age/in your grade adopt to maintain personal health in situations where there is a risk of transmissible infection while still engaging in school, social or community activities, including making informed decisions about available vaccinations?
- Provide groups with sufficient time to complete their Graffiti, then invite groups to share some or all of their responses with the larger group.
- Use the group sharing to create a visual anchor chart of identified behaviours and strategies young people might use to maintain personal health in situations that may pose a health risk (e.g., thinking

and planning before acting, making evidence-informed decisions, following Public Health protocols and interventions, including vaccination if available, using refusal and assertiveness skills, supporting peers with their decision).

- Use an **Exit Card** strategy and the class-generated anchor chart of behaviours and strategies for participants to identify strategies and behaviours they might adopt to maintain their health in situations where infection transmission may concern them or others.

What Else Do We Need?

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool) for the Graffiti strategy and anchor chart
- Space for activity
- Exit Card (if required)

How Do We Get Creative?

Consider collaborating with other teachers to create cross-curricular learning opportunities (e.g., explore the science behind vaccines or the history of global disease emergence and consequences to the populations; make connections to Specialist High Skills Majors for participants to connect their learning.