Skills for Building Health

Guide to Reading

- **Building Vocabulary**
  - Each term below relates to a health skill. Write down each term. As you read the lesson, define each of the skills related to the term.
  - reliable (p. 11)
  - stress (p. 13)
  - stress management (p. 13)
  - interpersonal communication (p. 15)
  - refusal skills (p. 16)
  - conflict (p. 16)
  - conflict-resolution skills (p. 16)
  - advocacy (p. 17)

- **Focusing on the Main Ideas**
  - In this lesson you will be able to
  - **identify** ten basic skills that you need for good overall health.
  - **explain** why these skills are important.
  - **describe** how to use these skills for total health and wellness.
  - **apply** the health skill of advocacy to encourage teens to be physically active.

- **Reading Strategy**
  - **Classifying** Create a chart like the one shown here. As you read the lesson, list the health skills in the left column. In the right column, write ways in which each skill will benefit your health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health skill</th>
<th>Ways this skill will benefit my health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing information</td>
<td>Will allow me to make informed choices about my health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing Healthful Behaviors</td>
<td>Will allow me to stay well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quick Write

Write a short paragraph describing a health decision that you made recently.

Learning Health Skills

Just as you learn sports, math, reading, and other kinds of skills, you can learn skills for taking care of your health. **Figure 1.3** lists ten different health skills that will be covered in detail in the following chapters. You will have the opportunity to practice each of these skills, and practicing them will help you master them. Using these skills will improve your health and overall wellness.

Accessing Information

A world of information is at your fingertips. Just pick up a newspaper or magazine. Turn on your television, radio, or computer. You can always learn more about whatever you are interested in. To make good choices for your health, you need good sources of information. You also need strong research skills.
Ten Building Blocks for Total Health

These ten skills will help you build lifelong health and wellness. Which part of the health triangle do you think communication skills benefit the most?

Sources of Information

Where can you find all this information? You can use resources from the home, school, and community to get valid health information. Your first source should be your parents, guardians, or other adults you trust. You can also use library resources.

You can find more facts about health and health-enhancing products or services through media sources such as television, radio, and the Internet. TV and radio interviews with health professionals can give you information about current scientific studies related to health. The Internet has up-to-the-minute information from government agencies, universities, and health care providers. Web sites that end in .gov and .edu are often the most reliable sites.

Getting health information is important, but so is analyzing whether that health information is valid, or reliable. Reliable means that the source is trustworthy and dependable. Try to learn something about the person or organization providing the information. For example, is the author of a health article an expert on the subject? Does he or she name scientific studies or other sources for the facts? To make sure the information is correct, try to find other books or articles that agree or disagree with the author.

Academic Vocabulary

expert (EK spert) (noun) a person who has a lot of knowledge in a specific subject. Ms. Mendoza asked her neighbor to speak to our class because he is a fitness expert.
Making good decisions about your health begins with finding valid health information. **Name two online sources that you can use to get valid health information.**

If you are doing research on the Internet, check who owns or operates each Web site that you are using. Is the owner or operator a university, hospital, or government office? Find out who wrote the information for the site. Check out the author just as you would for a print article. If you are not sure whether the source is trustworthy, check with the librarian.

**Reading Check** **Define** What does **reliable** mean?

**Self-Management**

When you were younger, your parents and other adults decided what was best for your health. Now that you are older, you make many of these decisions for yourself. You take care of your personal health. You have a say in what you eat and when you sleep. You are developing your self-management skills. Two key self-management skills are practicing healthful behaviors and managing stress.

**Practicing Healthful Behaviors**

When you practice healthful behaviors, you start seeing benefits quickly. These benefits last as you grow and change. Exercise regularly, and your heart and muscles grow stronger. Eat healthful foods and drink plenty of water, and your body works more effectively. Get a good night's sleep, and you wake up with more energy. Practicing healthful behaviors can help you learn new skills, meet challenges, and enjoy life. Practicing positive health behaviors can also prevent injury, illness, disease, and other health problems.
Stress Management

Rashid was a good baseball player. When he played for fun with friends, he could hit, catch, and run the bases well. Before league games, however; Rashid often felt worried. He did not want to make a mistake. His worrying gave him a headache. His stomach got so upset he could hardly eat. These things made him play poorly. Rashid was showing signs of stress, the body's response to real or imagined dangers and other life events.

You will always have positive and negative stress in your life. Positive stress can be helpful. It can help you focus and take action. For example, you might study hard for a test so you will do well.

At times, however, stress can make you feel unsure of yourself. It can keep you from taking action or trying new things. This kind of stress is not helpful, as Rashid's story shows. This negative stress can hurt your physical health by making it hard to sleep or making your head or stomach hurt.

Stress is part of daily life. Learning strategies for dealing with stress is an important self-management skill. Stress management means identifying sources of stress and learning how to handle them in ways that promote good mental/ emotional health.

Define What does stress mean?
Analyzing Influences

Jonathan needed basketball shoes. He had finally saved enough money to buy a new pair. He did not want to waste his money, so he researched different brands. He wanted shoes that would fit well and last a long time. Jonathan found two brands that might work for him. He had seen ads on television for one of the brands featuring a major basketball star. The other brand was of high quality, but no sports star was promoting them. They cost less than the other brand and they were just as good. Even so, Jonathan’s friends told him to buy the shoes worn by the star in the commercial.

Jonathan had to decide whether the more expensive shoes were worth buying. What might have affected his decision? First, he saw an ad for shoes that featured a basketball star. He also listened to his friends’ opinions. Finally, Jonathan thought about which shoes he liked best.

Your decisions have to do with more than just knowing facts. They also have to do with your own values and beliefs. The opinions of your friends and family members, your culture, and messages from the media also affect your decisions. Understanding what influences you will help you make responsible choices in the future.

Reading Check Describe What influences affect your decisions?

- Decisions that affect your health are often connected to personal taste: your likes and dislikes. What information do you use to decide whether a food is healthful for you?
Health Skills Activity

Advocacy

A Physical Fitness Campaign
You and some friends want to help teens in your community understand that physical activity benefits health. How can you influence your peers to make the positive choice of participating in regular physical activity? You have an idea: Make a comic strip showing that physical activity is healthy and fun.

With a Group
Create a comic strip that encourages teens to be physically active on a regular basis. Follow these steps:
1. Create a story line.
2. Develop characters. The characters can be people, talking objects like baseballs, or anything else that you can imagine.
3. As a group, discuss how to make your comic strip convincing and engaging.
4. Divide jobs, such as drawing and writing dialogue, among group members.
5. Present your completed comic strip to the rest of the class.

Communication Skills

How many people did you communicate with today? Did you tell someone how you were feeling? Did you listen to someone tell you about a new idea? Did you smile at a friend? Did someone smile at you? Your relationships with others depend on good communication skills. You must be able to speak well and listen carefully, too. Speaking skills help you express your ideas and feelings in healthful ways. Listening skills let you understand the messages other people send you. These skills are part of interpersonal communication, the sharing of thoughts and feelings with other people. Two of the most important communication skills are saying no when others want you to do something unhealthy and settling conflicts peacefully. By using these skills, you can handle difficult situations safely and fairly.

Communication skills involve more than speaking and listening. You send messages through the words you choose and how you say them, through your facial expressions, and even through your posture. When you communicate effectively, you can prevent misunderstandings. You can also support others when they need it.
Refusal Skills

When you stand up for a decision you make, you also need to stand up for the values and beliefs behind that decision. This is especially true when you choose to avoid potentially harmful situations. **Refusal skills**, ways to say no effectively, are a great tool to use when you need to avoid behavior that is unhealthy, unsafe, or goes against your values and beliefs. Here are some ways to say no effectively:

- **Say no.** "No, I can’t go with you today."
- **Tell why not.** "I would be breaking a promise."
- **Offer other ideas.** "What about tomorrow?"
- **Promptly leave** if you need to.

To say no effectively to behavior that you don’t want to take part in, use the right body language and tone. For example, direct eye contact, a serious facial expression, and a firm but not angry tone of voice will communicate your message clearly.

Conflict-Resolution Skills

People have different wants, needs, and ways of looking at things. Sometimes this causes a **conflict**, or a disagreement between people with opposing viewpoints, interests, or needs. Conflict is a normal part of life. Dealing with conflict is an important part of social health. It takes good **conflict-resolution skills**. This means having the ability to end a disagreement or keep it from becoming a larger conflict.

People often disagree over how to spend time, spend money, or share resources. Here are some conflict-resolution tips:

- Take a time-out to let everyone calm down.
- Allow each person to tell his or her side of the story.
- Let each person ask questions of the other.
- Keep thinking of creative ways to resolve the conflict.

**Reading Check** Identify What are refusal skills?

**Decision Making and Goal Setting**

The path to good health begins with good choices. These include the choice to eat nutritious foods and get enough sleep. Chapter 2 explains how to use the steps of the decision-making
process to take responsibility for your physical, mental/emotional, and social health.

Learning how to set realistic goals is another step towards health and well-being. Maybe you want to run in a big race. Maybe you want to sharpen your skills in a sport so you can try out for the school team. In Chapter 2, you will find information that will help you develop your goal-setting skills.

**Advocacy**

You might know of unsafe or unhealthy conditions in your school or neighborhood. For example, each day you might pass a busy street corner without a stop sign. You might think that it’s dangerous. When you care about an issue that could harm people’s health, you work to improve it. Working to bring about a change involves the skill of advocacy. **Advocacy is taking action in support of a cause.** Advocates may write letters to newspaper editors to call for change. They may also collect signatures from people who support a cause and send the signatures to local government leaders.

**Reading Check** Explain What is advocacy?

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**Lesson 2 Review**

**After You Read**

*Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.*

**What I Learned**

1. **Vocabulary** Define *interpersonal communication.*
2. **Identify** Give two examples of self-management skills.
3. **Distinguish** What is the difference between stress and conflict?
4. **Give Examples** Name two activities that would allow you to be an advocate.

**Thinking Critically**

5. **Analyze** Why is it important to develop skills for finding reliable information?
6. **Describe** Name two refusal skills that can help you say no to activities that could harm your health.

**Applying Health Skills**

7. **Accessing Information** List three sources you could use to find valid information about nutrition. Explain why you think each source is or is not valid.