

Reconnecting Youth and CAST Curriculum Aligned with National Health Education Standards

The *Reconnecting Youth* (RY) and *Coping and Support Training* (CAST) Curriculum have been aligned with the National Health Education Standards (NHES), as a means of further integrating these prevention programs into schools, nationwide.

The National Health Education Standards (NHES) are written expectations for what students should know and be able to do by grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 to promote personal, family, and community health. The standards provide a framework for curriculum development and selection, instruction, and student assessment in health education.

From **CDC's School Health Education Resources**
<<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/standards/index.htm>>

Below you will find the Standards and Performance Indicators for Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12, with denotation of alignment with either RY or CAST or both.

Standards and Performance Indicators

Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Performance Indicators for Standard 1

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
1.8.1	Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.		
1.8.2	Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health in adolescence.	X	X
1.8.3	Analyze how the environment affects personal health.		
1.8.4	Describe how family history can affect personal health.		
1.8.5	Describe ways to reduce or prevent injuries and other adolescent health problems.		
1.8.6	Explain how appropriate health care can promote personal health.	X	X
1.8.7	Describe the benefits of and barriers to practicing healthy behaviors.	X	X
1.8.8	Examine the likelihood of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.	X	X
1.8.9	Examine the potential seriousness of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.		
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
1.12.1	Predict how healthy behaviors can affect health status.		
1.12.2	Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.	X	X
1.12.3	Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated.		
1.12.4	Analyze how genetics and family history can impact personal health.		
1.12.5	Propose ways to reduce or prevent injuries and health problems.	X	X
1.12.6	Analyze the relationship between access to health care and health status.		
1.12.7	Compare and contrast the benefits of and barriers to practicing a variety of healthy behaviors.	X	X

1.12.8	Analyze personal susceptibility to injury, illness, or death if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.		
1.12.9	Analyze the potential severity of injury or illness if engaging in unhealthy behaviors.		

Standard 2:

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

Performance Indicators for Standard 2

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
2.8.1	Examine how the family influences the health of adolescents.	X	
2.8.2	Describe the influence of culture on health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.	X	
2.8.3	Describe how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.	X	X
2.8.4	Analyze how the school and community can affect personal health practices and behaviors.	X	X
2.8.5	Analyze how messages from media influence health behaviors.		
2.8.6	Analyze the influence of technology on personal and family health.		
2.8.7	Explain how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.	X	
2.8.8	Explain the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors.	X	
2.8.9	Describe how some health risk behaviors can influence the likelihood of engaging in unhealthy behaviors.	X	X
2.8.10	Explain how school and public health policies can influence health promotion and disease prevention.		
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
2.12.1	Analyze how the family influences the health of individuals.	X	
2.12.2	Analyze how the culture supports and challenges health beliefs, practices, and behaviors.	X	
2.12.3	Analyze how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.	X	X
2.12.4	Evaluate how the school and community can affect personal health practice and behaviors.	X	X
2.12.5	Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.		
2.12.6	Evaluate the impact of technology on personal, family, and community health.		
2.12.7	Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.	X	
2.12.8	Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors.	X	X
2.12.9	Analyze how some health risk behaviors can influence the likelihood of engaging in unhealthy behaviors.	X	X
2.12.10	Analyze how public health policies and government regulations can influence health promotion and disease prevention.		

Standard 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.

Performance Indicators for Standard 3

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
3.8.1	Analyze the validity of health information, products, and services.		
3.8.2	Access valid health information from home, school, and community.	X	
3.8.3	Determine the accessibility of products that enhance health.		
3.8.4	Describe situations that may require professional health services.	X	X
3.8.5	Locate valid and reliable health products and services.	X	X
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
3.12.1	Evaluate the validity of health information, products, and services.		
3.12.2	Use resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.	X	
3.12.3	Determine the accessibility of products and services that enhance health.		
3.12.4	Determine when professional health services may be required.	X	X
3.12.5	Access valid and reliable health products and services.	X	X

Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

Performance Indicators for Standard 4

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
4.8.1	Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.	X	X
4.8.2	Demonstrate refusal and negotiation skills that avoid or reduce health risks.	X	X
4.8.3	Demonstrate effective conflict management or resolution strategies.	X	X
4.8.4	Demonstrate how to ask for assistance to enhance the health of self and others.	X	X
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
4.12.1	Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.	X	X
4.12.2	Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.	X	X
4.12.3	Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.	X	X
4.12.4	Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.	X	X

Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Performance Indicators for Standard 5

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
5.8.1	Identify circumstances that can help or hinder healthy decision making.	X	X
5.8.2	Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process.	X	X
5.8.3	Distinguish when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.	X	X
5.8.4	Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy alternatives to health-related issues or problems.	X	X
5.8.5	Predict the potential short-term impact of each alternative on self and others.	X	X
5.8.6	Choose healthy alternatives over unhealthy alternatives when making a decision.	X	X
5.8.7	Analyze the outcomes of a health-related decision.	X	X
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
5.12.1	Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.	X	X
5.12.2	Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.	X	X
5.12.3	Justify when individual or collaborative decision making is appropriate.	X	X
5.12.4	Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems.	X	X
5.12.5	Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of each alternative on self and others.	X	X
5.12.6	Defend the healthy choice when making decisions.	X	X
5.12.7	Evaluate the effectiveness of health-related decisions.	X	X

Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Performance Indicators for Standard 6

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
6.8.1	Assess personal health practices.	X	X
6.8.2	Develop a goal to adopt, maintain, or improve a personal health practice.	X	X
6.8.3	Apply strategies and skills needed to attain a personal health goal.	X	X
6.8.4	Describe how personal health goals can vary with changing abilities, priorities, and responsibilities.	X	X
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
6.12.1	Assess personal health practices and overall health status.	X	X
6.12.2	Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.	X	X
6.12.3	Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.	X	X
6.12.4	Formulate an effective long-term personal health plan.	X	X

Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Performance Indicators for Standard 7

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
7.8.1	Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.	X	X
7.8.2	Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.	X	X
7.8.3	Demonstrate behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.	X	X
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
7.12.1	Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.	X	X
7.12.2	Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.	X	X
7.12.3	Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.	X	X

Standard 8: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Performance Indicators for Standard 8

Grades 6-8		RY	CAST
8.8.1	State a health-enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.		
8.8.2	Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.	X	X
8.8.3	Work cooperatively to advocate for healthy individuals, families, and schools.	X	X
8.8.4	Identify ways in which health messages and communication techniques can be altered for different audiences.		
Grades 9-12		RY	CAST
8.12.1	Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.	X	X
8.12.2	Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.	X	X
8.12.3	Work cooperatively as an advocate for improving personal, family, and community health.	X	X
8.12.4	Adapt health messages and communication techniques to a specific target audience.		

Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum

Today's state-of-the-art health education curricula reflect the growing body of research that emphasizes teaching functional health information (essential concepts); shaping personal values that support healthy behaviors; shaping group norms that value a healthy lifestyle; and developing the essential health skills necessary to adopt, practice, and maintain health-enhancing behaviors. Less effective curricula often overemphasize teaching scientific facts and increasing student knowledge.

From **CDC's School Health Education Resources (SHER)**
<<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/characteristics/index.htm>>

The CDC's SHER reviewed effective programs and curricula and input from experts in the field of health education and have identified the following characteristics of effective health education curricula¹⁻¹², all of which are incorporated into the Reconnecting Youth and CAST prevention programs!

- a. **Focuses on clear health goals and related behavioral outcomes.** Curricula have clear health-related goals and behavioral outcomes that are directly related to these goals. Instructional strategies and learning experiences are directly related to the behavioral outcomes.
- b. **Is research-based and theory-driven.** Instructional strategies and learning experiences build on theoretical approaches (for example, social cognitive theory and social inoculation theory) that have effectively influenced health-related behaviors among youth. The most promising curricula go beyond the cognitive level and address health determinants, social factors, attitudes, values, norms, and skills shown to influence specific health-related behaviors.
- c. **Addresses individual values and group norms that support health-enhancing behaviors.** Instructional strategies and learning experiences help students accurately assess the level of risk-taking behavior among their peers (for example, how many of their peers use illegal drugs), correct misperceptions of peer and social norms, and reinforce health-enhancing values and beliefs.
- d. **Focuses on increasing personal perceptions of risk and harmfulness of engaging in specific health risk behaviors and reinforcing protective factors.** Curricula provide opportunities for students to assess their vulnerability to health problems, actual risk of engaging in harmful health behaviors, and exposure to unhealthy situations. Curricula also provide opportunities for students to validate health enhancing beliefs, intentions, and behaviors.
- e. **Addresses social pressures and influences.** Curricula provide opportunities for students to address personal and social pressures to engage in risky behaviors, such as media influence, peer pressure, and social barriers.
- f. **Builds personal competence, social competence, and self efficacy by addressing skills.** Curricula build essential skills including communication, refusal, assessing accuracy of information, decision-making, planning and goal-setting, self-control, and self-management, that enable students to build personal confidence and ability to deal with social pressures and avoid or reduce risk behaviors. For each skill, students are guided through a series of developmental steps:
 1. Discussing the importance of the skill, its relevance, and relationship to other learned skills.
 2. Presenting steps for developing the skill.
 3. Modeling the skill.
 4. Practicing and rehearsing the skill using real-life scenarios.
 5. Providing feedback and reinforcement.

- g. **Provides functional health knowledge that is basic, accurate, and directly contributes to health-promoting decisions and behaviors.** Curricula provide accurate, reliable, and credible information for usable purposes so that students can assess risk, correct misperceptions about social norms, identify ways to avoid or minimize risky situations, examine internal and external influences, make behaviorally-relevant decisions, and build personal and social competence. A curriculum that provides information for the sole purpose of improving knowledge of factual information is incomplete and inadequate.
- h. **Uses strategies designed to personalize information and engage students.** Curricula include instructional strategies and learning experiences that are student-centered, interactive, and experiential (for example, group discussions, cooperative learning, problem solving, role playing, and peer-led activities). Learning experiences correspond with students' cognitive and emotional development, help them personalize information, and maintain their interest and motivation while accommodating diverse capabilities and learning styles. Instructional strategies and learning experiences include methods for
1. Addressing key health-related concepts.
 2. Encouraging creative expression.
 3. Sharing personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions.
 4. Developing critical thinking skills.
- i. **Provides age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate information, learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials.** Curricula address students' needs, interests, concerns, developmental and emotional maturity levels, experiences, and current knowledge and skill levels. Learning is relevant and applicable to students' daily lives. Concepts and skills are covered in a logical sequence.
- j. **Incorporates learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials that are culturally inclusive.** Curricular materials are free of culturally biased information, but also include information, activities, and examples that are inclusive of diverse cultures and lifestyles (such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, physical/mental ability, and appearance). Strategies promote values, attitudes, and behaviors that acknowledge the cultural diversity of students; optimize relevance to students from multiple cultures in the school community; strengthen students' skills necessary to engage in intercultural interactions; and build on the cultural resources of families and communities.
- k. **Provides adequate time for instruction and learning.** Curricula provide enough time to promote understanding of key health concepts and practice skills. Affecting change requires an intensive and sustained effort. Short-term or "one shot" curricula, such as a few hours at one grade level, are generally insufficient to support the adoption and maintenance of healthy behaviors.
- l. **Provides opportunities to reinforce skills and positive health behaviors.** Curricula build on previously learned concepts and skills and provide opportunities to reinforce health-promoting skills across health content areas and grade levels. This could include incorporating more than one practice application of a skill, adding "skill booster" sessions at subsequent grade levels, or integrating skill application opportunities in other academic areas. Curricula that address age-appropriate determinants of behavior across grade levels and reinforce and build on learning are more likely to achieve longer-lasting results.
- m. **Provides opportunities to make positive connections with influential others.** Curricula link students to other influential persons who affirm and reinforce health-promoting norms, beliefs, and behaviors. Instructional strategies build on protective factors that promote healthy behaviors and enable students to avoid or reduce health risk behaviors by engaging peers, parents, families, and other positive adult role models in student learning.
- n. **Includes teacher information and plans for professional development and training that enhance effectiveness of instruction and student learning.** Curricula are implemented by teachers who have a personal interest in promoting positive health behaviors, believe in what they are teaching, are knowledgeable about the curriculum content, and are comfortable and skilled in implementing expected instructional strategies. Ongoing professional development and training is critical for helping teachers implement a new curriculum or implement strategies that require new skills in teaching or assessment.

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