



Empowerment Through Advocacy

During the Empowerment Through Advocacy mini-lessons, students will learn the connection between empowerment and the skill of advocacy. Students will practice recognizing their strengths to build self-confidence as well as create their own advocacy message. The key message is it takes confidence to stand up for your health and the health of others.

Lesson Name: I Am Empowered

Unit Name: Empowerment Through Advocacy

Grade Level: 9-12

Lesson Length: 15 minutes

Before beginning, teachers should offer accommodations specifically mentioned in a student's IEP to support their ability to participate in the lesson. A sample list of common accommodations and modifications to aid you in selecting appropriate supports for students can be found under "Additional Resources" [here](#).

Lesson Objective(s):

Students will be able to explain how self-confidence affects health-related decisions.

Students will demonstrate a variety of health practices and behaviors (e.g., creating "I am" statements) that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Students will practice a Mindful Minute or Better Breathing for 60 seconds as a tool for managing stress and other complex emotions.

Essential Question (related to objective):

How does self-confidence affect my health-related decisions?

National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education:

Standard 3: The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

- S3.H14 Stress management

National Health Education Standards & Performance Indicators:

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

- 1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.

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

- 7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of health practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.

Equipment Needed:

- [How am I feeling?](#) Daily check-In poster
- Empowerment skills poster
- [Self-awareness skills](#) poster
- Optional: ["I am" coloring sheet](#)

CASEL Core SEL Competency:

Self-awareness

- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence

Lesson Overview:

Teachers will guide students through a discussion around confidence, internal voice, and how it affects a person's health-related decisions. Students will create "I am" statements as encouraging reminders to speak kindly to themselves.

Some parts of the activity may be sensitive for students to talk about based on their own experiences. Teachers should consider talking with a school counselor to discuss strategies in the event a student were to become triggered.

Definitions:

Empowerment

The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

Self-awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

Activity Progression:

To start the mini-lesson, have students check in using the "How am I feeling?" daily check-in poster.

Example script: "Before we get into today's mini-lesson, I would like you to do a check-in by placing a sticky note next to the heart you feel best describes how you're feeling right now. Write your name on the back if you want me to check in with you. At the end of class, I will ask you again how you are feeling."

In a synchronous setting (i.e. live virtual session), have students check in using emojis, GIFs, pictures or choosing their own feeling and typing it in the chat box. Additionally, students can use an annotate feature to make a mark next to the heart students feel best describes how they are feeling. Allow students to private chat their check-in to you if they don't feel comfortable sharing it in the chat box with the entire class.

Discuss the definition of empowerment. Explain to students that empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Tell students that we will be learning about how our confidence can affect our health-related decisions.

Example script: "Tell me in your own words what you think the word empowerment means."
[Allow for students to answer. If synchronous, allow students to use the chat box as well.]

Good, we are on the right track! Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. When we are more confident and stronger, we can make healthier choices because we feel secure in who we are as a person. It doesn't mean we won't make mistakes, but we are more likely to avoid risky behaviors.

Today we are going to discuss our internal voice and how it can affect how we make health-related decisions. We will also create 'I am' statements."

Ask students if they agree or disagree and begin a discussion.

Agree or Disagree: You will make better decisions the more you value yourself.

Explain that the voice they hear the most is their own.

Example script: "Who do you hear most in your head? Probably yourself. Most of us are always having an internal conversation with ourselves. This is our internal voice. I want you to imagine how a child might feel if someone like a parent, caregiver, or a friend was constantly putting them down or talking negatively to them."

Discuss the following questions/scenarios:

Give an example of a parent or caregiver or friend who is constantly saying negative things to a child. (e.g., "You are a pain," "You're stupid," "You will never be anything")

How will that child feel about him or herself?

What if the parent/caregiver/friend is nurturing, loving, and positive? (e.g., "You are great," "I love you," "You will do better next time") How will the child feel about himself or herself?

Are you nurturing, loving and positive to yourself?

What does your internal voice say to you?

Students do not have to answer this question out loud but should answer this question to themselves. If your students keep a writing journal, have them respond in their journals. Give some of the following as potential thoughts people might think about themselves:

- I'm smart.
- I'm stupid.
- I have good ideas.
- I don't have anything to contribute.
- I'm a good friend.
- Nobody likes me.
- I'm attractive.
- I'm ugly.

Example script: “We are taught at a young age to be kind to each other, but what about being kind to ourselves? If we are the ones constantly talking negatively, saying put downs and not encouraging ourselves, how could that affect our health-related decisions? [Give time for students to respond.] Right, someone who doesn't have confidence or doesn't feel good about themselves might be more likely to make poor health-related choices.

Everyone has good qualities, and not so good ones too, but today we are going to take some time to recognize our strengths. Recognizing our strengths is a part of being self-aware. When we are self-aware, we are able to recognize our emotions, thoughts and values and can identify how they affect our behaviors. For this lesson we are focusing on how our thoughts (or our internal voice) can affect our behaviors.

I want us to take a few minutes for each of us to think about our strengths. What are you good at? Is there a quality or trait you are proud of? I want us to focus on personality or character traits.”

Give students some time to write down five of their strengths. Provide some examples:

- Do you help your parent/caregiver around the house or help take care of siblings? You could put down you're helpful, cooperative, responsible, or reliable.
- Do your friends ask you for help? Maybe you could say you're good at giving advice or caring, a good listener, or a good friend.
- Do you like to decorate your room, create art, try new clothing or hairstyles? Maybe you're creative, a risk taker or not afraid to be different.
- Maybe you like challenges and are a problem solver.
- Maybe you are good at cheering people up or making others laugh.
- Maybe you're good at being organized and neat.

Give each student a piece of construction paper. Provide crayons, colored pencils, markers, stickers, and any other art supplies. Have them write in the middle of their paper “I am.” Around the “I am” they should add their five strengths. They can decorate, color or write the strengths however they want. Tell them to make it as elaborate or simple as they want because it will hang somewhere where they can see it regularly. Students can choose to post it somewhere in the classroom where they can see it or somewhere else where they will see it regularly (e.g. locker, bathroom mirror, bedroom).

Other connections to make with this activity:

- The benefits of recognizing strengths on self-esteem and our emotional wellness.
- Talk about the effects of positive affirmations or positive self-talk.

Alternately, in a virtual setting, have students create “I am” Zoom virtual backgrounds using Canva. Allow students to create their own virtual background with their strengths. They can then use the Zoom virtual background during class or other classes. Have students explain why they chose their strengths and why they chose to design their background the way they did. The Zoom virtual background should represent them.

End the activity by asking students how a person's self-confidence or self-esteem potentially affects their health-related decisions.

Example script: “We started class talking about empowerment. What does empowerment mean again? Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's own life. We also talked about our internal voice and how that can affect our confidence and how we feel about ourselves. Let's connect empowerment with health-related decisions. How does a person's confidence affect their health-related decisions? [Allow the class to discuss answers.]

Those were great responses. I hope today moving forward we all can do a better job talking positively to ourselves. We ALL have great strengths within us. Over the next few mini-lessons, we will also be talking about advocacy – how we can advocate for ourselves and others. Advocating takes confidence, feeling empowered to advocate for your health or the health of others.”

End the class with a Mindful Minute or Better Breathing.

At the end of class have students check in with themselves again. You can allow students to change their sticky note if they want to. Explain to students that physical activity is another way to enhance our mood. Have students use the “How am I feeling?” daily check-in poster during each class to begin learning to be self-aware by identifying their current state.

Modifications/Differentiation:

- Allow students to write their responses on a small piece of paper and place it in a basket. Pull from the basket and share anonymous responses.
- Paraphrase questions or only provide a few questions at a time.
- If students are uncomfortable with the discussion, allow the class to engage in Better Breathing or a Mindful Minute and move on to the next part of the activity around “I am” statements. In a synchronous setting, allow students to turn their camera off.
- Allow students to sit with their eyes open or walk around the room quietly during a Mindful Minute.

Checks for Understanding:

- How can creating “I am” statements be beneficial to our health?
- How can talking negatively or positively to ourselves all the time affect our confidence?
- How does self-confidence affect our health-related decisions?