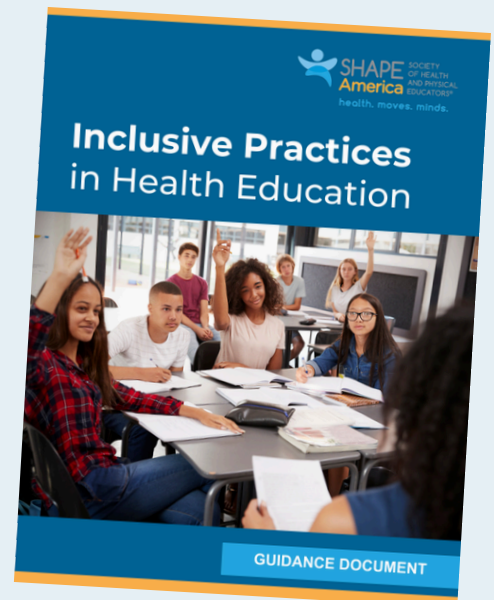


# Inclusive Practices in Health Education

This SHAPE America guidance document includes recommended actions and skills-based standards examples for creating a welcoming, affirming and inclusive learning environment in health education. The document covers six key areas: Cultural Competency and Responsiveness, Accessibility, Language Considerations, Safe Environments, Community Connections, and Advocacy.



## Guidance Document Highlights

### Why Inclusive Practices Matter in Health Education

- Inclusive practices promote equity, belonging and psychological safety.
- Inclusive practices ensure that all students — regardless of identity, background or ability — can access meaningful and relevant health learning.
- Inclusive classrooms support student well-being, engagement and long-term health outcomes.

### Key Areas of Guidance for Health Educators

- Curriculum & Instruction: Design lessons and select materials that reflect diverse perspectives and lived experiences.
- Language & Representation: Use inclusive language in discussions of gender, relationships, families and health behaviors (e.g., free from bias, non-stigmatizing and person first).
- Student Identity: Respect and affirm student identities related to race, culture, ability, gender and more.
- Classroom Climate: Establish norms that prioritize respect, inclusion and participation for all. Students feel empowered, with multiple ways to engage in learning.
- Adaptation & Access: Provide accommodations and differentiation to ensure every student can engage and succeed.

### How Health Educators Can Use This Guidance Document

- Reflect on current teaching practices and classroom climate through an inclusivity lens.
- Revisit units and lessons to ensure diverse representation and affirming language.
- Partner with colleagues to embed inclusive norms across the school community.
- Use the guidance document as a foundation for curriculum review and lesson planning.
- Advocate for policies and supports that align with inclusive health education.

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