

LESSON 1: Let's Get Started!

This lesson is where all students start in the course. It introduces EmpowerU's mission and outlines the requirements of the program. The lesson also asks students to identify and reflect on their teams, support systems, and relationships. Students briefly reflect on and identify any areas of change they want to make in their life.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Students will understand the requirements of the course and the concept of investing time in themselves daily to build resilience. | Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making | 1.12.1 Predict how healthy behaviors can affect health status. |
| Students will identify their team (their community of friends and supports that they can lean on). | | 6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status. |
| Students will identify any changes they want to make in their life and/or any changes that people on their "team" want them to make. | | |

LESSON 2: My Values

In Lesson 2, students are asked to demonstrate understanding of a core value and be able to articulate their personal core values. Then, they work to develop strategies to live more in alignment with these values in different areas of their life.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Standards |
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| Identify core values and be able to articulate their personal core values. They will develop strategies to live more in alignment with these values in different areas of their life. | Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making | 2.12.8 Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors. |
| Analyze how aligned they are to their values in day-to-day life. | | 1.12.3 Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated. |
| Reflect on how to live more aligned with their values. | | |

LESSON 3: Using My Strengths

This lesson is about personal strengths. Students are asked to identify their personal strengths and reflect on how they can use those strengths to meet their goals. There is also a strengths assessment to help students identify personal core strengths.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Analyze past experiences and the strengths used to get through struggles. | Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making | 2.12.8 Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors. |
| Complete a strengths assessment to identify personal core strengths. | | |
| Reflect on how their strengths help them meet goals. | | |

LESSON 4: Taking Charge of My Goals

In this lesson, students learn the difference between an internal versus external locus of control and how that affects our ability to cope. They will identify and reflect on the type/degree of locus of control they have and evaluate how that helps or prevents them from achieving their goals. Then, students apply all that they've learned in the first three lessons to their personal lives and goals in a Starting Point Assessment. They then set goals in each of the four domains to work toward throughout the EmpowerU course.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Students will understand the concept of internal versus external locus of control and increase an awareness to what type/degree of locus of control they have in different wellness domains in order to build resilience. | Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making | 1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health. |
| Complete a comprehensive review within different wellness domains based upon the ASCA (academic/career, personal wellness, social/belonging, emotional/mental health) based upon Stages of Change (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1983) and gain insight into the areas that would be most helpful for them to begin personal change. | | 6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status. |
| Assimilate their reflections in each domain and based upon their review, set "smart" goals in four domains - personal wellness, emotional/mental health wellness, social wellness, and academic/career wellness to work toward throughout the EmpowerU lessons. | | 6.12.2 Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks. |

LESSON 5: Small Steps to Making Change

Lesson 5 builds upon the goal setting in Lesson 4 by introducing the concept of "small steps" as a way to make lasting, realistic change. In this lesson, students learn five specific habit change strategies and apply one of them to a habit they want to increase or decrease. Throughout the lesson, students apply that knowledge to their goal(s) from Lesson 4.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Explain why making small changes is sustainable. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Responsible Decision-Making | 7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health. |
| Identify different habit change strategies and develop an understanding of the unique habit change strategies that work best for them to eliminate or reduce unwanted behaviors. | | 7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others. |
| Apply a habit change strategy to the habit they either want to increase or decrease. | | 7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others. |
| Analyze how all strategies can help them better meet their goals. | | |

LESSON 6: The Power of My Thoughts

The next few lessons are focused on thoughts, specifically negative or ruminating worried thoughts and anxiety. Lesson 6 kickstarts that learning by focusing on the brain, specifically the power of thoughts and how they build. Students learn how thoughts can create emotions and chemical and physical change in their brains in both helpful and hurtful ways. They also learn about subconscious thoughts and how they build over time. More importantly, they learn that they can talk back to their hurtful subconscious thoughts using their Inner Coach. The lesson concludes with reflective questions asking students to identify their own helpful and hurtful subconscious thought patterns.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Explain the pathway of a thought. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. |
| Demonstrate understanding of the power of a thought and how it builds in the brain. They will understand how thoughts can create emotions and chemical and physical change in their brains in both helpful and hurtful ways. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. |
| Identify personal thought patterns and demonstrate understanding of how they can control their thoughts and emotions and identify practical strategies to create real, positive change within their brain structure. | | 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal. |

LESSON 7: Thinking Traps

This lesson is about Thinking Traps (persistent negative thoughts). Students continue to learn about negative subconscious thoughts and how they can distort thoughts and beliefs over time. They then examine a specific area of worry or anxiety that gets in their way of meeting goals and identify Thinking Traps that promote this worry. Finally, they practice using their Inner Coach to challenge their Thinking Trap(s).

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Understand how a negative subconscious distorts thoughts and beliefs over time. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. |
| Identify a specific area of worry or anxiety that gets in their way of meeting goals and identify Thinking Traps that promote this worry. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. |
| Examine personal Thinking Traps as a way to start increasing their Inner Coach to combat hurtful or worried thinking. | | 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal. |

LESSON 8: Thoughts and Emotions

This lesson builds upon the learning from Lessons 6 and 7, specifically focusing on the relationship between thoughts and emotions. In this lesson, students learn about the experience -> thought -> emotion -> action cycle. More importantly, students learn that they can control their thoughts and emotions using their Inner Coach.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Identify how emotions/fear response can take over the brain and cut off access to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) or logical thinking. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. |
| Demonstrate understanding of the difference between a thought, a feeling, and a fact. They will demonstrate understanding of the different ways that feelings develop from thoughts and how they can process them effectively. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. |
| Examine how using the Inner Coach to identify the emotion and talk back to it can keep personal control. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal. |

LESSON 9: Disrupting a Negative Cycle

In this lesson, students learn how to stop a hurtful thought in low and high stress situations, recruiting different strategies for each situation. They will demonstrate mastery of a comprehensive CBT approach to change ingrained distorted thoughts into more realistic and encouraging thoughts through intentional personal practice.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Demonstrate the hand model and "Flip Your Lid." | Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. |
| Examine how to disrupt a negative cycle when emotions are big. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. |
| Identify strategies to disrupt negative cycles by demonstrating knowledge on how to stop a hurtful thought in low and high stress situations, recruiting different strategies for each situation. | | 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal. |

LESSON 10: Thinking Realistically

Lesson 10 focuses on using realistic thinking as a tool to disrupt negative, hurtful subconscious thought patterns. Students learn how to eliminate or reduce persistent negative thoughts by replacing them with positive, realistic thoughts.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Examine ways to change hurtful subconscious thought patterns. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making. |
| Demonstrate the ability to utilize realistic thinking (Three Cs) as a strategy to change hurtful thoughts into realistic thoughts that can help. | | 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations. |
| | | 6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal. |

LESSON 11: Noticing and Managing Stress

This lesson is all about stress, specifically its physiological and psychological effects. Students will learn what causes stress and what can happen if we let it build up over time (leave it unattended).

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Demonstrate understanding about what causes stress and the physiological and psychological effects of stress. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems |
| Analyze how stress triggers a range of emotions. | | 4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult. |
| Describe the unhealthy effects of unattended stress. | | |

LESSON 12: Processing Difficult Emotions

In this lesson, students learn to identify and process difficult emotions and uncontrollable stressors (things that causes the most stress but cannot be changed) using a four-step model. They then identify their biggest uncontrollable stressor and practice processing it using the four steps.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Identify personal triggers for stress/anxiety in their own life and categorize them into controllable stressors and importance of outcome. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems |
| Learn to process your emotions in a healthy way. | | 4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult. |

LESSON 13: Befriend Myself First

The last few lessons are focused on social connection and friendship. Lesson 13 kickstarts that learning by having students practice using their Inner Coach to increase their confidence in who they are.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Students will understand how confidence in who they are as a person and a friend is the first step in building relationships and analyze their current level of confidence. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health |
| Students will learn how to ward off distorted negative thinking, especially about others' thoughts, through a deeper sense of self. | | 4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks. |
| | | 4.12.3 Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others. |

LESSON 14: Belonging vs. Fitting In

In this lesson, students learn about the difference between belonging and fitting in. Students are asked to discern between relationships with true belonging versus relationships where they are just fitting in. They learn about the difference between changing their values to fit in and changing small behaviors to connect with people at all levels, especially at the beginning of relationships. Finally, students reflect on where they feel personal belonging in their relationships and friendships.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Assess where they feel valued and included for who they are. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health |
| Develop the ability to discern between relationships with true belonging versus relationships where they are just fitting in and will demonstrate understanding of areas of their life where they want to foster more belonging. | | 4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks. |
| Examine how feeling a sense of belonging is an important piece of community. | | 4.12.3 Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others. |

LESSON 15: Creating Community

This lesson introduces the levels of friendship, emphasizing the importance of creating connections with people at all levels (Acquaintances, Circumstantial Friends, Close Friends, Best Friends). Students will use this framework to examine their own personal friendships and supports, helping to guide steps forward in their relationships. This lesson specifically focuses on the first two levels – Acquaintances and Circumstantial friendships – and the value of those connections.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Examine personal friendships and supports. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others. |
| Determine the value of acquaintances and circumstantial friends and supports. | | 8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message. |
| Apply understanding of personal criteria to increase intentional reflections for what they value in a relationship as people move through the levels, again using this to increase their Inner Coach to accept people at different levels. | | |

LESSON 16: Meaningful Connections

Lesson 16 centers on the last two levels of friendship: Close and Best Friends. In this lesson, students reflect on the qualities that they value in a close or best friend and identify appropriate behaviors to build connection in friendships, including safe disclosure and reasonable expectations of self and others. They then apply this knowledge to their own social circle, identifying relationships and supports that are at this closest level of friendship.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Assess the attributes that are important to them in a close or best friend. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others. |
| Analyze the changes they can make to move to the next level of friendship, including safe disclosure and reasonable expectations of self and others. | | 8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message. |
| | | 8.12.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices. |
| | | 4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health |

LESSON 17: Final Wrap-Up

This course concludes with a final wrap-up lesson. Students complete a Next Point Assessment (similar to the Starting Point Assessment from Lesson 4), a comprehensive review of different wellness domains based upon the ASCA (academic/career, personal wellness, social/belonging, emotional/mental health). After completing the Next Point Assessment, they reflect on their growth throughout the course, gaining insight into their improvements based on the Stages of Change model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). Then, they identify strategies to use after the course is complete.

| Essential Learnings | CASEL Competencies | National Health Education Standards |
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| Take a Next Point Assessment similar to the Starting Point Assessment taken at the beginning of the course. | Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making | 1.12.2 The student will analyze the interrelationships of mental, emotional, social, and physical health throughout life. |
| Compare the Next Point Assessment to the Starting Point Assessment to determine what they want to work on after this course is complete. | | 7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health. |

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| <p>Identify strategies based on learning from this course to help be successful in meeting a goal(s) after the course is complete. This will be shared with the student's school counselor and family member to help hold the student accountable going forward.</p> | | <p>7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others</p> |
| <p>Finish by completing a course survey.</p> | | <p>7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.</p> |