

Lesson Seven:

Leveraging Community Assets and Overcoming Barriers

Objectives

1. To review *PhotoVoice*, *Asset Mapping*, and *Community Inventory* activities (from *Lesson Six*) to prepare for *Lesson Seven* activities.
2. To compile a list of assets and barriers to health identified in *PhotoVoice*, *Asset Mapping*, and *Community Inventory* activities (from *Lesson Six*).
3. To brainstorm advocacy solutions that address health issues identified during *PhotoVoice*, *Asset Mapping*, and *Community Inventory* activities (from *Lesson Six*).

Outcomes

1. Students will understand that communities have both assets and barriers to health.
2. Students will understand that they can help leverage assets and reduce/remove barriers to optimize the health of the community.

Activities

Students will participate in the following three activities:

1. *Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory* (from *Lesson Six*)
2. *Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health*
3. *Social Advocacy Brainstorm*

Activity 1: Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory

Purpose

The purpose of the *Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory* activity is for students to share their photographs, asset maps, and community inventories from *Lesson Six*, and to reflect on their experiences.

Required Materials

The *Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory* activity requires the following materials:

1. Photographs, completed asset maps, and/or completed *Community Inventory Worksheets*

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory* activity:

1. **Divide** students into small groups. To allow students to compare assets and barriers across communities, ensure that each group represents a combination of the communities visited. It is not necessary to balance the number of students who completed PhotoVoice, asset mapping, or community inventories per group.

According to the method they used (i.e., PhotoVoice, asset mapping, or community inventory), **instruct** students to answer the corresponding prompts and share responses with their group members. In other words, students who completed PhotoVoice will respond to questions in Section “a,” students who completed asset maps will respond to questions in Section “b,” and students who completed community inventories will respond to questions in Section “c” following.

- a. PhotoVoice

The SHOWED¹ method is a standard set of probes used to engage PhotoVoice participants in reflection, with the goal of eliciting responses to *what*, *so what*, and *now what*. Below is an adapted version of the five common questions used:

- What do you see in the photograph? What is visually straightforward or obvious? What assets or barriers to health can you identify?
- What is really happening in the photograph? In the photograph, what assets or barriers to health are not obvious?
- How does this photograph relate to our lives? What does this photograph mean to you and why did you choose it?
- Why does this asset or barrier to health exist? What upstream causes have led to the situation in the photograph?
- How can this photograph educate others about upstream causes of health?
- What can you do to address the assets and barriers identified in the photograph, especially as related to social advocacy?

- b. Asset Mapping

- Describe the neighborhood you visited.
- Discuss 1-2 assets to health that you identified. How are the assets positively serving or impacting the community?
- Discuss 1-2 barriers to health that you identified. What upstream causes may have created the barriers?

1 Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior, 24*(3), 369-387.

- How can your map and experience documenting community assets and barriers help address upstream causes of health?
 - What social advocacy efforts could you implement to improve the health of your community?
- c. Community Inventory
- Describe the results of your *Community Inventory Worksheet*.
 - Did you find both assets and barriers to health? Which places or items listed on the Community Inventory can be both an asset and a barrier to health, and why?
 - What was most surprising about your experience?
 - Did you encounter challenges completing the *Community Inventory*? If so, how did you overcome these challenges?
 - How can the results of the *Community Inventory* and your experience documenting assets and barriers in the community help to address upstream causes of health?
 - What social advocacy efforts could you implement to improve the health of your community?
2. **Tell** students to keep any notes from their small group discussion for the next activity.

Activity 2: Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health

Purpose

The purpose of the *Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health* activity is to list those resources (goods and services) and policies that serve as assets and/or barriers to health discovered in the *PhotoVoice*, *Asset Mapping*, and *Community Inventory* activities. These will be used to inform students' health and social advocacy projects.

Required Materials

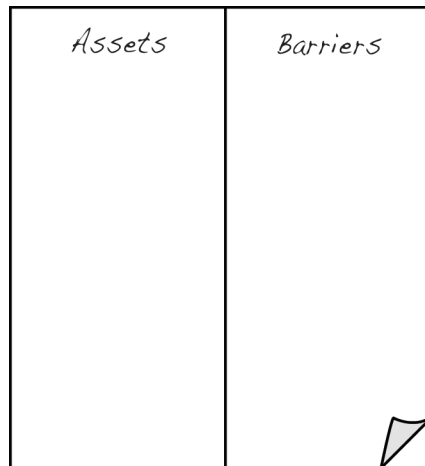
The *Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health* requires the following materials:

1. Photographs, completed asset maps, completed *Community Inventories* (from *Lesson Six*).
2. Notes from previous activity (*Results from PhotoVoice, Asset Mapping, and Community Inventory*).
3. Chart paper.
4. Markers.

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health* activity:

1. **Divide** students into small groups, according to the communities visited (if possible).
2. **Distribute** chart paper and markers to each group, and instruct students to divide paper into two columns, titled Assets and Barriers.



- a. Using results and students' recall from the *PhotoVoice*, *Asset Mapping*, and *Community Inventory* activities, students will list all possible assets and barriers to health found in the community that they visited.
 - b. Once finished, each group will share results out loud. Groups will share additional unique assets and barriers (those not mentioned by previous groups), until one final list is compiled. Instructor or student scribe will record answers on a separate chart paper. Keep this class list for future use in *Lesson Eight* activity, *Health Advocacy Projects*.
3. During the next activity, students will **brainstorm** social advocacy projects that address the assets and barriers identified from the collective class list. Health and social advocacy projects may leverage resources and policies that promote health (assets) or remove resources and policies that harm health (barriers), all in an attempt to improve a specific health issue. For example:

What is the barrier you identified?

Lack of traffic signage at busy intersection near school campus. Many students walk, bicycle, or skateboard to school and are at risk for injury when cars do not see them or stop to let them cross the street.

What will you do to address it, including what resources will you need?

Photograph the intersection and record testimonials from students who describe the dangers of their daily commute to and from school. Conduct research about traffic safety (e.g., statistics) and about other social advocacy efforts that have been used to address traffic safety in other communities. Collaborate with school administrators and present this information to the city's engineering and public works department. Request that a Student Crossing sign be erected.

What health issue are you addressing?

Physical injury.

Activity 3: Social Advocacy Brainstorm

Purpose

The purpose of the *Social Advocacy Brainstorm* activity is to demonstrate how a group of individuals can unite through advocacy efforts to create change in their community and how essential collaboration is to this effort.

Required Materials

The *Social Advocacy Brainstorm* activity requires the following materials:

1. Ball of yarn or string.
2. Comprehensive list of assets and barriers developed in *Activity 2: Compilation of Assets and Barriers to Health*.

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Social Advocacy Brainstorm* activity.

1. **Instruct** students to form one large circle facing each other.
2. **Choose** one resource (goods and services) or policy that was considered a barrier from the collective class list from the previous activity (*Compilation of Assets and Barriers*)
3. **Explain** that one student will start by holding the ball of yarn and describing a social advocacy effort that addresses the chosen barrier. Then, still holding one end of the yarn, he/she will pass the yarn ball to another student who will either suggest an action that builds on the idea proposed or brainstorm a new social advocacy effort. Students will continue passing (and holding onto one end of) the yarn ball to other classmates who will either augment any social advocacy idea that has been stated or contribute their own new ideas. Encourage students to think of their answers as the ball is being passed. While students participate in the activity, record social advocacy ideas on chart paper.

For example:

- a. If the community barrier is the unkempt condition of a park, a student may first suggest recruiting friends to dedicate a Saturday to cleaning and gardening. To support this specific strategy, another student may suggest that he/she would write to local hardware stores to request donations like paint and rakes to help the Saturday clean-up. Or, a student may suggest his/her own idea, such as collecting signatures for a petition or testifying at a local city council meeting to request city funds to maintain the park.
 - b. Students may leverage ideas from the Assets List in *Lesson Seven, Activity 1*. Encourage students to think of projects that start from within the community, and use existing positive assets, such as such as parent volunteers and local resources, to make the community healthier instead of relying on outside help.
 - c. Once a student voices his/her ideas, he/she will pass the ball of yarn, still holding onto the end of it, to a new student (not immediately to his/her left or right) who will either expand upon any previously mentioned idea, or contribute a new idea until every member of the class has participated. By the end of the activity students will be connected to each other by the ball of yarn.
4. If brainstorming advocacy ideas for one barrier is challenging for a large group, **add** a second barrier to foster more lively participation.



Read

5. **Emphasize** the following conclusion (and transition) to students:

It is possible for small ideas and individual people to be connected to a larger problem and to make a difference. The circle of students connected by string symbolizes how students and community members can work together to contribute their collective ideas in an effort to create change, known as social advocacy. The process of local people—those without official titles or positions in government—working together to improve their community, or addressing issues which they are passionate about, is a form of advocacy, often referred to as community organizing or grassroots movements.

In the remaining curriculum lessons, students will choose a topic of interest and begin health and social advocacy projects.



Q&A

6. **Facilitate** a discussion using the questions below:

- a. What did you observe? What did you learn?
- b. Were your suggestions feasible; why or why not? If the suggestions were not feasible, what resources would be needed for them to become more practical?
- c. How helpful or important is it to use existing assets within the community to reduce barriers (instead of starting from scratch or seeking resources from outsiders)?
- d. What types of people and/or organizations could you enlist to help (e.g., elected officials, local business people, school administrators, service clubs)?

