

Lesson Nine:

From Start to Finish: Health Advocacy Projects

Objective

1. To develop, implement, and report on a health advocacy project.

Outcomes

1. Students will understand the project requirements, create groups, finalize health advocacy project ideas, plan logistics, and complete the *Health Advocacy Project*.

Activity

Students will participate in the following activity:

1. *Health Advocacy Projects*
 - a. Development
 - b. Implementation
 - c. Presentation

Activity 1: Health Advocacy Projects

Purpose

The purpose of the *Health Advocacy Projects* activity is to put into action the concepts taught and observations made during previous lessons. Ideally, the *Health Advocacy Projects* will serve as a springboard for students' participation in future advocacy projects, public service, and/or a public health career.

Required Materials

The *Health Advocacy Projects* activity requires the following materials (provided at the end of *Lesson Nine*):

1. *Health Advocacy Project Description and Requirements.*
2. *Health Advocacy Project Example.*
3. Packet of *Health Advocacy Project* worksheets for each student.
 - a. *Planning Your Health Advocacy Project—Worksheet A*
 - b. *Upstream Causes Flowchart—Worksheet B*
 - c. *Health Advocacy Project Task Chart—Worksheet C*
 - d. *Health Advocacy Project Calendar—Worksheet D*
4. *Health Advocacy Project: Presentation Guidelines.*
5. *Health Advocacy Project: Next Steps Guidelines.*
6. Additional materials may be required depending on students' projects.

Instructions

Follow the instructions below to implement the *Health Advocacy Projects* activity:

Handout 1

1. Using the *Health Advocacy Project Description and Requirements* **explain** the details of the Health Advocacy Projects to students.
2. Use the final asset/barrier list created in *Lesson Seven* and documents from past activities (e.g. PhotoVoice, asset mapping, community inventory) to **create** a comprehensive list of health-related issues facing the students' community. **Display** this list for the class.
3. From this list, **ask** each student to rank his/her top three issues to focus on for the health advocacy projects.
4. **Create** groups of four to six students based on students' health-related issue preferences. Try to assign students to their first choice; hopefully this division will balance naturally. If certain health-related issues are more popular than others, assign students to their second or third choices.

Handouts 2-5

5. **Use** *Health Advocacy Project Example, Worksheets A-D, Health Advocacy Project: Presentation Guidelines, and Health Advocacy Project: Next Steps Guidelines* to describe project requirements.
6. **Instruct** groups to begin their *Health Advocacy Projects*. This will include:
 - Reading the *Health Advocacy Project Example*
 - Brainstorming an advocacy project to improve their health issue at the individual, service, and/or activism levels of the advocacy continuum. Ideally, projects will include all three levels.
 - Completing the *Planning Your Health Advocacy Project, Upstream Causes Flowchart, Health Advocacy Project Task Chart, and Health Advocacy Project Calendar* worksheets.
 - Implementing the *Health Advocacy Project*, including conducting a volunteer activity (e.g., presenting a health workshop to other students and community groups, or collaborating with the local Park and Recreation Department to hold a city-wide park clean-up day).
 - Preparing and delivering a presentation to their class to describe what they have accomplished in their *Health Advocacy Project*, using *Presentation Guidelines*.
7. Students will follow the *Health Advocacy Project: Next Steps Guidelines* to develop a proposal that describes what next steps could be taken to increase awareness, sustain progress, and/or expand initial project ideas.

8. If possible, **arrange** for students to attend a school board or city council meeting to understand how proposals – similar to those that students might write – are reviewed. Often at such meetings, community members approach the podium during open sessions to voice their concerns and suggestions about an issue. Students may consider presenting their proposals at a school board or city council meeting.

NOTE: *Health Advocacy Projects* cannot be completed during one class period; project completion can span from a few weeks to an entire academic year. Determine a timeline amenable to your class, and consistently check in and mentor students throughout the process.

Health Advocacy Project Description and Requirements

Description

Working in small groups, you will combine 1) your observations of health-related issues and resources and policies within your community and 2) your knowledge of upstream causes of health and of health and social advocacy, to develop an advocacy project to improve the health of your community. Your project will use one or more of the levels of the advocacy continuum (individual, service, activism).

Examples of your project could include: 1) interviewing staff at the Department of Public Works and Mayor's Office to investigate what is being done to remove or restrict access to empty lots used by gangs, and sharing this information with classmates and community members (individual level), or 2) serving on a panel at a community event to testify about the impact of gang presence and violence in high school on student stress (service level), or 3) collaborating with the city's gang prevention task force to initiate city-wide curfews in parks, or to pass regulations that require student participation in enrichment programs to practice job skills as an alternative to joining a gang (activism level). Following the completion of your Health Advocacy Project, you may also think of next steps to further the impact of your work.

Requirements

1. From the list created by your class in *Lesson Seven*, choose a health issue facing your community that is meaningful to you.
2. Read the *Health Advocacy Project Example*. Pay close attention to the three levels of the advocacy continuum (individual, service, activism).
3. Complete the *Planning Your Health Advocacy Project*, *Upstream Causes Flow Chart*, *Health Advocacy Project Task Chart*, and *Health Advocacy Project Calendar Worksheets A-D* to describe and plan logistics of your project.
4. Seek support and participation from individuals, your school, and organizations in your community.
5. Implement your *Health Advocacy Project*.
6. When you finish your project, create a brief PowerPoint, posterboard, or video presentation describing your *Health Advocacy Project*, and be prepared to present your results to your classmates. See *Health Advocacy Project Presentation Guidelines* for additional details.

Health Advocacy Project Example

Health Issue:	High rates of obesity among teenagers.
Project Topic:	Enhance healthy eating options by creating a school vegetable garden.
Population:	Students and their families who have limited access to affordable healthy food options.
Community Assets:	<p>Empty land available on high school campus.</p> <p>Social cohesion—a strong sense of community among parents and residents.</p> <p>Nearby businesses from which to request donations for supplies (e.g., tools, seeds, hoses, wood).</p> <p>Community members willing to volunteer.</p> <p>Graduation requirement incentives—as part of high school graduation requirements students must complete community service hours; volunteering with the creation and maintenance of the garden would count toward these hours and therefore may encourage students to participate.</p>
Community Barriers:	<p>Low availability of fresh, affordable vegetables. No large-scale grocery stores, farmers’ markets, or community gardens.</p> <p>Abundance of fast food restaurants and convenience stores where students consume meals and purchase groceries. Most food is high in fat, calories, and sugar, and low in protein and other nutrients.</p> <p>Overburdened students and teachers who are inundated with academic and afterschool commitments and may not be able to volunteer for the project, especially for a sustained period of time.</p> <p>Struggling economy—when the economy is in a recession, businesses may be unwilling to donate money or supplies.</p> <p>The media and fast food restaurants promote foods that are high in fat, calories, and sugar.</p>

Individual:

1. Check out books from the library or search websites to learn more about healthy eating, risks of obesity, and gardening.
2. Present nutrition education workshops to elementary school-aged youth during a school assembly or health class.
 - a. Research nutrition and obesity prevention information on websites such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov) or American Heart Association (americanheart.org), nutrition books from the library, and through interviews with school nurses and health instructors.
 - b. Identify key facts and messages about nutrition and obesity prevention.
 - c. Develop a brief PowerPoint presentation and create interactive activities, such as modifying a high-fat menu to a low-fat menu or measuring accurate portion sizes.
 - d. Contact the principal of local elementary school. Offer to give a presentation about healthy eating in health or other classes. Follow up to schedule the session and take care of other logistics (e.g., where to meet, what audiovisual equipment will be available, etc.).
 - e. Give presentation.
 - f. Leave materials for next year's class to adapt.
3. Plant vegetables in your home yard and share produce with friends and neighbors.
 - a. Purchase vegetable seedlings from a nursery.
 - b. Plant seeds in your yard and continually water and fertilize.
 - c. Harvest produce and share with friends and neighbors.

Service:

1. Develop a school vegetable garden.
 - a. Schedule an appointment with your school principal to request permission to transform empty land on your high school campus into a vegetable garden.
 - b. Create a supply wish list and calculate a budget needed to launch the garden (e.g., rakes, shovels, vegetable seeds, wood for garden beds, hoses).
 - c. Write a donation request letter. Mail or deliver it to local hardware or gardening stores. Follow up with telephone calls and in-person visits.
 - d. Collect donations from local businesses.
 - e. Host a fundraiser, such as a healthy snack sale at a school event, to earn funds needed to begin project.
 - f. Recruit and train volunteers from high school and community (e.g., parents, retired residents, local business people) to participate in developing your school garden. As an incentive, request that your principal count these service hours towards students' graduation requirements.
 - g. Select a day for initial groundbreaking, planting, etc. and publicize to gain attention of classmates and the community.
 - h. Maintain the garden by rotating duties among volunteers and/or establishing a service club responsible for the garden.
 - i. Harvest vegetables.

- j. Sell vegetables at lunch, after school, and on weekends.
- k. Recruit volunteers to help create and print recipes for vegetables from the garden. Couple each customer's purchase with a relevant recipe in order to encourage healthy cooking at home.

Advocacy:

1. Promote your school vegetable garden across your high school campus and other schools in the district.
 - a. Speak with health instructors from elementary, middle, and/or high schools. Invite their students to visit the garden as part of a school health-related field trip about nutrition.
 - b. Promote healthy eating and the school garden by posting educational information in the cafeteria, at assemblies, or in a school newsletter, and by raffling produce; if possible align these events with national health events such as Heart Healthy February.
2. Propose that your school vegetable garden be expanded to other schools in your district.
 - a. Meet with your principal and health instructors to gain their support.
 - b. Create a tip sheet based on your experience starting a school vegetable garden and provide this as a resource to schools trying to start their own gardens.
 - c. Describe your experience and provide your tip sheet to principals, health instructors, and administrators during district-wide meetings.
 - d. Contact a local newspaper to ask if their reporters will write an article about your school garden.
 - e. Invite elected officials to visit the garden.
 - f. Suggest that every school start a garden and that students participate in the garden as part of each school's wellness curriculum.
 - g. Collaborate with those who determine curriculum content to ensure that the garden is integrated into lesson planning every year.

Worksheet A

Planning Your Health Advocacy Project

What is a health issue facing your community?

Level of Advocacy: Individual

Who is your audience? **Who** will benefit from your project? **Who** else will you involve (e.g., community members)?

Describe your health advocacy project. **What** steps will you take to accomplish your health advocacy project? **What** assets (including resources and policies) will support it and can be utilized during your project? **What** barriers (including resources and policies) will you face and how might they hinder you from accomplishing your project?

Where will you implement your project?

When will you implement your project?

Describe **why** this issue is important to you and **how** your health advocacy project will help enhance the health of your community.

Level of Advocacy: Service

Who is your audience? **Who** will benefit from your project? **Who** else will you involve (e.g., community members)?

Describe your health advocacy project. **What** steps will you take to accomplish your health advocacy project? **What** assets (including resources and policies) will support it and can be utilized during your project? **What** barriers (including resources and policies) will you face and how might they hinder you from accomplishing your project?

Where will you implement your project?

When will you implement your project?

Describe **why** this issue is important to you and **how** your health advocacy project will help enhance the health of your community.

Level of Advocacy: Activism

Who is your audience? **Who** will benefit from your project? **Who** else will you involve (e.g., community members)?

Describe your health advocacy project. **What** steps will you take to accomplish your health advocacy project? **What** assets (including resources and policies) will support it and can be utilized during your project? **What** barriers (including resources and policies) will you face and how might they hinder you from accomplishing your project?

Where will you implement your project?

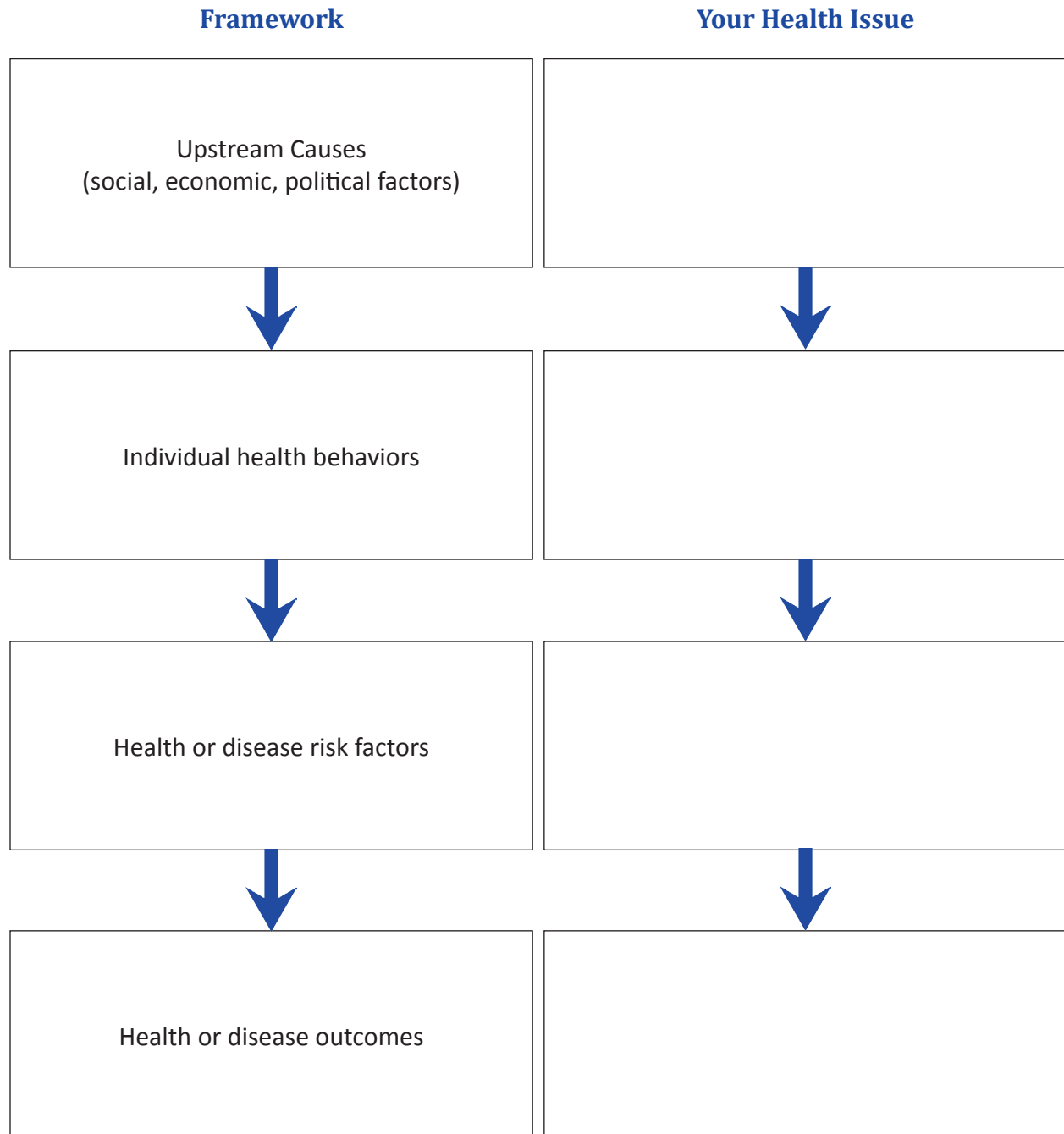
When will you implement your project?

Describe **why** this issue is important to you and **how** your health advocacy project will help enhance the health of your community.

Worksheet B

Upstream Causes Flowchart

Complete the chart below to describe the upstream causes pathway of the health issue you selected.



Worksheet C

Health Advocacy Project: Task Chart

Complete the following chart, describing **what** tasks need to take place to accomplish your health advocacy project, **who** will be responsible for leading each task, and the date **when** the task will be completed.

	Task to be Completed	Student(s) to Complete Task	Date to be Completed
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Worksheet D

Health Advocacy Project: Calendar

Complete the following calendar by filling in appropriate dates and listing which tasks will be completed on what day and by whom. It may be helpful to first choose the date of the final project and work backwards. Projects may extend beyond one month in which case duplicate monthly calendars will be needed. For each important date, remember to include who is doing what and when as listed on Worksheet C.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Health Advocacy Project: Presentation Guidelines

Instructions

You will develop and share a brief PowerPoint, posterboard, or video presentation for your class (and other students, teachers, school administrators, community members, or family invited by your instructor) describing the following key points (each of which should be a separate slide/section):

NOTE: Include photographs and quotations whenever possible.

1. What health issue are you addressing? Why is this issue important to you?
2. How does this issue affect you and your community? How will your project enhance the health of your community?
3. Explain the details of your health advocacy project, distinguishing actions related to each level of the advocacy continuum (i.e., individual, service, activism).
 - a. What did you develop and implement?
 - b. Who was your priority population? With whom did you collaborate?
 - c. What are your results?
 - d. How does your project impact the health of the community?
4. Describe three aspects of your project that were most successful.
5. Describe three aspects of your project that you found most challenging or that you would do differently next time.
6. Suggest how your classmates, school, and/or community can become involved in this issue to further improve the health of your community.

Be sure to list all references used, such as literature, websites, or interviews.

Health Advocacy Project: Next Steps Guidelines

Instructions

It is important to consider what other steps can be taken to increase awareness about, sustain progress for, and/or expand your initial health advocacy project. This is especially true if it was not feasible to accomplish each level of the advocacy continuum (i.e., individual, service, advocacy) in the time allotted, particularly those levels that require policy change. Thus, you will now draft a proposal that explains how you could accomplish the remaining levels of the advocacy continuum, if resources were available. This type of proposal could be presented at an open session at a school board or city council meeting, when council members or school administrators hear ideas from, and often act upon, suggestions from the school and community.

Your proposal that recommends next steps should address the following main points:

1. What health issue are you addressing? Why is this issue important to you? How does this issue affect your community?
2. Briefly explain what you accomplished in your health advocacy project (e.g., volunteer activity corresponding to service level: starting a vegetable garden at your school).
3. Suggest what additional resources (e.g., time, personnel, and financial) and action are needed to further your work to best enhance the health of the community. Suggest how the school board or city council can assist in this effort (e.g., policy level at the activism level: expanding the school garden concept to other schools in your district and incorporating healthy eating at school and school events as part of the schools' wellness policies).
4. How will your proposed health advocacy project benefit the health of your community?

