



Middle School Coordinated Health (6-8)

School Counselor Participation Plan

The school counselor at each campus is encouraged to visit the classrooms using the Healthy and Wise Middle School Coordinated Health Program to provide additional information on some of the units featured topics. *Coordinated resources are included for districts that are using the SPARK Middle School PE Program.

Suggested Middle School Units and Lessons for School Counselor Participation Include:

Unit 1 (Personal Fitness)

- Playing Sports

There are numerous social and mental health benefits that are associated with children and adolescents playing team sports. The opportunities for kids to gain self-confidence, self-esteem, and supportive peer relationships are numerous among school sports programs. Plan to visit the PE classes during this Healthy and Wise lesson to help emphasize all the benefits associated with playing sports. Help students find a sport that interests them, and use SPARK “Information for Parents” (Extra/Extra pg. 29) to encourage parental support for youth sports activities. Help teachers include students with disabilities in school sports or physical education class. Use SPARK ideas for inclusion (Building a Physical Education Foundation, pgs. 18-31). Remember, counselors can greatly influence a student’s health behaviors.

Unit 2 (Nutrition and Health)

- Breaking Bad Food Habits

Changing health behaviors can be difficult for some students. Visit the health and PE classes during this Healthy and Wise lesson to offer additional strategies that can be helpful when trying to change behaviors or break habits. Help students understand why recognizing their habits can be an important first step. Encourage them to use realistic strategies to break their bad food habits or other habits that may be affecting their health. Utilize the SPARK suggestions for eating more healthy foods (Extra/Extra pg. 29).

Unit 3 (Body Systems)

- The Importance of Diet and Exercise

Support this Healthy and Wise lesson by visiting the health and PE classrooms and offering more facts and statistics on the increase in childhood and adolescent obesity. Reinforce the health conditions associated with being overweight and obese, and guide students thinking towards improving their physical activity levels and eating behaviors. During parent conferences, utilize the SPARK “13 Ways Parents Can Help Children Be More Physically Active” resource (Extra/Extra pg. 30). Eating disorders are addressed during this Healthy and Wise unit. Visit with your campus staff to identify any students that might be exhibiting signs of an eating disorder. Counsel with students individually and refer students to appropriate health professionals.

Unit 4 (Growth and Development)

- Physical Changes during Growth and Development
- Growing Up - Emotional and Social Changes during Puberty
- Are You a Responsible Teenager
- Nutrition and Exercise during Adolescence

Counselors have many opportunities to participate in this Healthy and Wise unit. Give teachers additional instructional ideas and offer to actually teach or reinforce one of the lessons. With the school nurse, plan to visit with girls and boys separately to discuss the physical changes associated with puberty. Emphasize the importance of physical activity (exercise) and good nutrition during this growth period. Reinforce the opportunities available during school and after school. Responsible teenagers should exhibit self-control. Discuss the concept of “responsible” and “self-control” with students. Encourage students to give examples or representations of each. Use the SPARK suggestions “Maintaining Appropriate Behavior in Physical Education Classes” (Building Physical Education Foundation, pg. 13) to help encourage appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior during school related physical activities.

Unit 5 – (Avoidance of High Risk Behaviors)

- Tobacco and Your Health
- Alcohol and Drug Prevention
- Supplements and Scams
- You Can Make Healthy Choices – Abstinence Approach
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Choosing Abstinence
- Abuse, Neglect, and Domestic Violence
- Relationships

Support as many of this unit’s lessons as possible. Help identify students that might fall in a high-risk category for any of the behaviors addressed in the Healthy and Wise lessons. Visit the classes this month to support the Healthy and Wise lesson that presents the facts and health dangers associated with

anabolic steroids. Help support this lesson by giving real accounts of how anabolic steroids can affect an athlete's health. Discuss the legal aspects associated with steroid use. Help reinforce natural ways to increase muscle and strength by using Healthy and Wise strength training exercises in the Strength, Conditioning, and Wellness program. This Healthy and Wise unit will give the counselor numerous opportunities to address specific health concerns that some students might be experiencing. Make sure students know the school, district, or community resources available to them if they are experiencing any form of neglect or abuse. If necessary, schedule individual counseling sessions to give at-risk students guidance and support. Include the SPARK "Vision for Healthy Schools" (Building Physical Education Foundation, pgs. 2-3) to help support school policies for some of the high risk behaviors taught during this Healthy and Wise unit.

Unit 6 – (Using Health Information and the Influence of Media and Technology)

- Influence of Media and Technology on Health

Visit the classes during this lesson to discuss how media can influence behaviors. Ask students to give examples and facilitate a discussion. Present "real world" examples if possible and help students understand the difference between being informed and being influenced.

Unit 7 – (Environmental and Social Factors Affecting Health)

- Environmental (and Social) Factors Related to Exercise

Take this opportunity to promote the social aspects related to physical activity and exercise. Encourage students to workout together and to plan physical activities rather than dining out as social events. Help staff and students find physical activity options indoors during inclement weather. Use SPARK "Weather Extremes and Sun Safety Tips" (Building Physical Education Foundation, pgs. 32-33) to offer additional suggestions and tips to staff and students.

Unit 8 – (Safety)

- Preventing Accidents
- A Safe and Healthy School Environment

Make sure all students and staff know what to do if an emergency occurs during school hours. Visit with students during this Healthy and Wise unit about the steps taken at your campus to ensure the safety and health of students and staff. Give specific examples and provide students opportunities to practice safety drills (fire drills, code blue drills, etc.). Include the SPARK "Vision for Healthy Schools" (Building Physical Education Foundation, pgs. 2-3) in your healthy school environment initiatives.

Unit 9 – Social and Mental Health

- Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure
- The Benefits of Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Mental health concepts and related topics are addressed in this Healthy and Wise unit. Let teachers know if you have additional resources or instructional strategies that would be helpful for teaching this unit. Make sure students know the campus and district resources available to them if they are having a difficult time dealing with peer pressure or experiencing a bout of depression. Utilize the SPARK “Teaching Social Skills” (Building a Physical Education Foundation, pg. 16) to help reinforce this Healthy and Wise unit. Help students understand the correlation between physical health and mental health. Once again, emphasize the SPARK “Vision for Healthy Schools” (Building Physical Education Foundation, pgs. 2-3) as you try to promote and support the emotional and social benefits of healthy lifestyle choices.