This activity book includes shortened lessons from two health curriculums Maryland 4-H uses throughout the state—Up for the Challenge and Health Rocks! Feel free to use these in your clubs and let them inspire new ideas for health-related activities! If you are interested in a full copy of one or both of these curriculums, please let us know. Also, we would love to hear about new health activities you are incorporating into your clubs—inform us by contacting Suzannah Macleod at smacleo1@umd.edu.

Be A Stress Buster

(Retrieved from Health Rocks! Curriculum)

How youth react to stress and handle their stress can make a big difference in how they view life. Youth who are under stress are more likely to find it harder to feel positive about life, and their self-efficacy may become more negative. Lower self-efficacy may increase their tendency to engage in risky behaviors. Youth need to have ways to identify their stress and ways to handle that stress through positive behaviors.

Activity:

Supplies needed: Balloons (small) - two per participant, funnel (several if available), rice, cornmeal, or fine sand for filling balloons, newspaper, permanent markers

1. Explain that stress affects the body and emotions. Ask youth to think about how their reactions might affect others such as friends, family, classmates, etc.
2. Have participants share things that can cause stress in their lives (homework, chores, busy schedules, etc.) and make a list.
3. Explain there are many ways that are very simple and yet quite effective in reducing stress. One is a simple stress ball that can be squeezed when you are feeling stressed, anxious, or angry.
4. Divide into groups of two or three. Give each participant 2 balloons. The balloons need to be doubled so they can handle the stress put on them by the sand and force of being squeezed. You can relate the two balloons to the work students are doing right now to learn how to deal with stress. Just like having the reinforcement of two balloons to keep the sand from leaking, by knowing how to deal with stress they will be much more capable of handling stress.
5. Have groups take turns filling balloons with rice, cornmeal or sand. Be sure to fill over a newspaper to avoid a mess. The balloons should be filled until they comfortable fit into the hands. It should feel tight without being stretched too much. Tie the end of the balloon. Have each person mark their balloon with a permanent marker.
6. Ask participant what else they might use to manage stress (ex. Listening to music, reading a book, talking to friends, doing something fun, etc.)

Discuss:

1. How does it feel to hold the stress ball? Does it help you feel better? How?
2. When are some times in your life when you feel more stress than others? What could you do to lower stress during those times?
3. Do you think your stress level is higher, lower, or the same as your friends? Why?
4. How can you use what you learned to help others?
The Cycle of Addiction

(Retrieved from Health Rocks! Curriculum)

Tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use often begin at an early age. It usually starts as experimentation. This is a result of curiosity, family role models, peer pressure, media influences, plus other influences. Depending upon choices made by youth, this could be considered a beginning stage in the downward spiral of addiction. If youth continue to use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs for recreational or social use, they may find they are increasing the frequency of use.

As this continues, they may find that they need more of the substance to maintain the same sensation or result. This stage may be called tolerance. Their level of tolerance increases, which then increases the need for more. Addiction can rapidly occur at this time because the user needs more of the substance. This becomes the compulsive craving. The user is using the substance despite what the consequences may be, because they cannot stop. Addiction is for a long time and usually gets worse before getting better.

Activity:

Supplies needed: One large bag of potato chips (or other snack food such as chocolate or tortilla chips)

Give each participant one potato chip. Have them eat the chip. Explain that just one potato chip teases the taste buds and creates a sensation of want and leaves you wanting another chip. Though not a perfect example, this gives an idea of addiction. The chip can be compared to drugs. It is hard to stop after just one try.

Discuss:

1. How did it feel to stop after just one chip? How many of you would like another chip? Why?
2. How do cravings for potato chips differ from cravings for tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs?
3. How might your body react if stopped eating potato chips today? How might your body react if you stopped using tobacco, alcohol, or some other drug after you are addicted?
4. What are some symptoms you might experience? (ex. Restlessness, impatience, depression, headaches, sweating, etc.)
5. You can become addicted to many things. What other things might you become addicted to (ex. Chocolate, video games, texting, social media, candy, caffeine, etc.)
6. How is what you have just learned going to change how you might act if offered a beer or a cigarette?
The Importance of Good Hygiene

(Retrieved from Up for the Challenge Curriculum)

We know that the primary way in which bacteria get into your food is from your hands. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.

Proper Handwashing

1. Wet hands with warm running water prior to reaching for soap, either in bar or liquid form.
2. Rub hands together to make lather, do this away from running water, so the lather isn’t washed away. Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers and under nails. Continue washing for 20 seconds. Sing Happy Birthday twice to count 20 seconds in a fun way.
3. Rinse hands well under warm running water.
4. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel or air dryer.
5. Note that alcohol-based hand sanitizers, gels or antibacterial wipes are not a substitute for properly washing hands and should only be used when soap and water are not available.

Hygiene Related Activities

Activity 1—Germ Jars:

Set up five plastic containers filled with jelly beans (germ jars) to illustrate the 2-hour food safety rule for perishables. The miniature jelly beans represent germs. The five containers need these quantities of jelly beans: 5, 20, 80, 320, and 1280. Instead of counting the jelly beans for each one, use a measuring cup to estimate the number of jelly beans being placed into a container. Do this by counting the number that fit into a 1/4 cup measure. Use that number to estimate the quantities. Have a discussion about proper handwashing and how bacteria multiplies quickly over a 2-hour period. According to the USDA 2-hour rule “No perishables should be left at room temperature for more than two hours. The jar with 5 jelly beans is the starting point. Every 15-20 minutes the number of bacteria doubles. At 0 minutes there are 5 bacteria; and at 90 minutes, 320 bacteria. After two hours there are 1,280 bacteria.

Activity 2—Handwashing Challenge:

You will need GlitterBug Lotion or powder and a black light for this activity. You can purchase them at www.brevis.com.
1. Put a pearl-sized drop of glow lotion or powder on youth’s hands.
2. View hands under the black light.
3. Have group wash their hands.
4. Have them check their hands under the black light to see how thoroughly they have washed. Any areas that are still “glowing” illustrate an area that needs to be washed more thoroughly.

*Note: Dry hands and calluses absorb some of the lotion so even after washing well you may see some “glowing.”

Keeping it All Together

(Retrieved from Health Rocks! Curriculum)

Welcome to the “Century of Stress.” The “information Age” is really just a new age of anxiety for many. Youth have to balance school, chores, friends, family, church, music lessons, sports, and other interests that are special to them. This all has to fit into a 24-hour day. Today’s younger youth are pushed to the limit with too much to do in too little time. When our lives are out of control, we feel stress and one of the ways to handle stress is tobacco, alcohol and/or drugs—even though they will only increase stress.

Activity: ***Find out if anyone in the group has a latex allergy prior to the start of this activity. If so, they may need to sit out this activity or act as a recorder.

Supplies needed: 1 larger round balloon for each group of 3-5 participants, 2-4 round 9” balloons per participant, 2 magic markers per group, timer or watch with second hand.

1. Have participants share some of the activities and responsibilities they have. These might include school, chores, church, sports, etc. Make a list. Discuss how youth may have lots of activities and responsibilities, plus all the new technology and information make youth feel they are constantly running a race and never getting to the end.
2. Give each participant 2 to 4 smaller balloons. Have them blow up all of the balloons and tie them closed.
3. With a magic marker, have participants write their activities and responsibilities on the balloons. More than one activity/responsibility may be written on each balloon.
4. Divide participants into groups of 3-5. Give each group one large balloon. On the large balloon, have each participant write the name of a tobacco, alcohol, or drug that is harmful.
5. When participants have added the name of a tobacco, alcohol, or drug to the large balloon, set it aside. Then have each participant select one of his or her balloons. Using one balloon per participant, have them hit the balloon with their hands and keep it in the air for 30 seconds. The group must work together to keep the balloons in the air. If a balloon hits the ground, they must pick it up and start again. Have them keep track of how many times the balloons hit the ground during the 30-second time period. Record the number for each group on the chalkboard or flipchart.
6. After each group has completed the first 30 seconds, have them add a second balloon for each participant. Again they will keep track how many times the balloons hit the ground during the 30-second time period. If the group can easily handle two balloons per participant, add a third and even a fourth balloon per participant.
7. When groups have added all of the small balloons, have them add the balloon marked with the name of a tobacco, alcohol, or drug. Explain that they must keep this large balloon in the air at all costs, even if one of the other balloons starts to hit the floor. No one may hit this large balloon two times in a row AND at least 2 other people must hit this large balloon before the first person may hit it again. Have groups track how many times the smaller balloons hit the ground during the 30 seconds.

Discuss:
1. How hard was it to keep the large balloon marked with the name of a tobacco, alcohol, or a drug in the air?
2. How can we compare our lives to keeping the activity and responsibility balloons in the air?
3. How can we compare the addition of the large balloon to tobacco, alcohol, or drug use?
It's Risky Business

(Retrieved from Health Rocks! Curriculum)

Risk taking is very natural to youth. They take some risks in order to grow, try new ideas or experiment with new roles. However, youth can get into trouble with risk taking when they disregard future consequences. An example is choosing to smoke or drink, ignoring the long-term health consequences.

Ask participants to brainstorm short-term and long-term risks/consequences of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. On a chalkboard or flipchart write two lists....Short-Term Risks (ex. Shortness of breath, frequent colds, headaches, bad breath, etc.) and Long-Term Risks (ex. Cancers, heart problems, stroke, loss of money, etc.).

Activity:

***Make sure your organization/site is ok with using cigarettes as a demonstration in this activity. It is recommended to do this activity outside. Adults only should access and handle the cigarettes. Adults should also be the ones to use the matches or lighter. USE WITH CAUTION around participants.

Supplies needed: plastic soda bottle (clear, 2 liter if possible), cigarette, clay or putty, matches or lighter.

1. take a plastic soda bottle with a top. Mold clay or putty around the cigarette and fit tightly into the bottle’s opening with the filter end inside the bottle. Make sure there is a tight seal.
2. Light the cigarette. Squeeze the bottle 25 times. Explain that this is imitating someone smoking. Try to keep squeezes as uniform as possible.
3. Smoke should be filling the bottle. Explain this is what goes into the lungs of a smoker.
4. When you have squeezed it 25 times, put out the cigarette and let the bottle sit for about 20 minutes. Have participants see what is in the bottom of the bottle (dark residue similar to what builds up in the lungs of smokers).

Discuss:

1. What does this show you about cigarette smoking?
2. What do you think happens after smoking an entire pack of cigarettes?
3. What would the soda bottle look like after a year of smoking a pack a day?
4. In your opinion, is using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs worth the short-term risks? Is using them worth the long-term risk?

MyPlate

(Retrieved from Up for the Challenge Curriculum)

My plate is the consumer icon that replaces MyPyramid. It is based on the USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Guidelines are designed to help Americans choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives and reduce the risks of chronic disease.

Activities using MyPlate

1. Explain the 5 main food groups and ask participants what kinds of healthy foods make up each of the groups (ex. grapes—fruit, etc.)
2. Hand out blank paper plates to individuals or small groups and ask them to draw how much of each food group should be consumed in one meal on their plates.
3. Discuss the proper amount of each food group that should be consumed in one day.

Activity 1—Now We’re Cookin’ MyPlate Kabobs Recipe:

Follow this recipe to make an example of a balanced meal.

You will need:

Cutting Board
Knife
Large Serving Platter
Wood Skewer

Ingredients:

Cubed Ham or Turkey
Cubed low-fat cheese
Cubed Pineapple
Cherry Tomatoes
Other Fruit, Vegetables or Meats, Cubed
Whole Wheat Pretzel Sticks (can substitute whole wheat crackers)

Directions:

To make a MyPlate Kabob, take a pretzel stick and place different kinds of food on it as if it were a skewer. Food examples: cubes of ham/turkey (protein), cheese (dairy), pineapple (fruits), and cherry tomatoes (vegetables). You may need pre-cut holes in the food cubes with wood or metal skewers. Or, simply use the wooden skewers instead of pretzel sticks, then serve with whole grain crackers and call them MyPlate snacks.
Let's Try Black Bean and Corn Salsa

**You will need:**
- Cutting board
- Cutting knife
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Measuring spoons

**Ingredients:**
- 1/3 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- Lime juice
- 2 ears corn (1 1/2 cups frozen corn)
- 2 cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

**Directions:** Husk corn, combine all ingredients in a bowl. Stir, cover and chill. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

Breakfast Banana Dogs

**You will need:**
- Cutting board
- Sharp knife
- Measuring cups/spoons

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- Whole grain hot dog bun
- Banana
- 1 tablespoon raisins

**Optional:** whole grain cereal

**Directions:** Spread peanut butter on a whole grain hot dog bun. Add banana and sprinkle with raisins. Instead of using a hotdog bun you may spread a banana with peanut butter and roll it in whole grain cereal or a whole wheat tortilla.

Homemade Sports Drink

**You will need:**
- 1 gallon container
- Liquid measuring cups/spoons
- Mixing spoons
- Can opener

**Ingredients:**
- 1 6-oz can frozen concentrate orange juice (follow instructions on can)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- Water

**Directions:** Mix all ingredients, adding enough water to equal one gallon. Refrigerate and use as a refreshment in the coming week.

Toaster Oven Pizza

**You will need:**
- Cutting board
- Cutting knife
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Toaster oven or regular oven
- Cheese grater
- Pizza pan or cookie sheets

**Ingredients for each pizza:**
- 2 tablespoons pizza or spaghetti sauce
- 1/2 whole whate English muffin
- Assorted veggies—sweet peppers, mushrooms, broccoli, onions, black olives, etc.
- 2 tablespoons shredded cheese

**Directions:** Split English muffin and share the other half with a friend. Spread pizza sauce on muffin half. Top with assorted veggies of your choice. Sprinkle with cheese. Place in toaster oven and bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Enjoy! Makes one serving

Take a Deep Breath

*(Retrieved from Health Rocks! Curriculum)*

When faced with the choice of using or not using drugs, youth tend to disregard future costs or consequences. It’s important to make youth aware that there are serious short-term and long-term effects from using tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Just as knowing that not all of their peers use drugs youth need to have the facts about what drugs will do to them not only now, but in the future.

**Activity:**

Supplies needed: enough extra-wide, regular sized, and coffee stirrer sized straws for everyone participating.

1. Give everyone an extra-wide straw and have participants sit down and pinch their nose closed so that no air can escape. Have them put the wide straw in their mouth and try to breathe through it for one minute. Have them record how long they were able to breathe through the wide straw.
2. Have participants replace the wide straw with a regular straw. Have them keep their nostrils pinched and try to breathe through the regular straw for one minute. Have them record how long they were able to breathe through the straw.
3. Have participants do the same thing, but this time with the straw type coffee stirrer. Make sure they keep their nostrils pinched and have them try to breathe through the stirrer for one minute. Have them record how long they were able to breathe through the stirrer.
4. Wait a few minutes and try the activity again with each of the straws, but while walking around the room or doing an activity.

**Discuss:**

1. How much more difficult is it to breathe when you are doing a simple activity like walking?
2. What is it like to breathe through the different straws? Which straw made it easier to breathe and why do you think it was easier?
3. Explain that when you smoke, your lung capacity gets smaller and it’s like breathing through the regular straw. Based on that, how do you think smoking would affect daily activities?
4. When you are a life-long smoker, it’s like breathing through the straw-type stirrer. Every breathe is a struggle.
Cooperative Play Activities

**Activity 1—Mine Field**
The object of the Mine Field game is to have blindfolded children make their way through a “minefield” with only verbal directions from their partner.

Draw a large (20’x40’) outline of a rectangle with tape or chalk. This rectangle becomes the “minefield.” Ask the youth to set up “mines” inside the minefield. The mines are 30-50 small soft objects such as bean-bags, food models, rolled up socks, etc. Have the youth divide into pairs and stand at opposite ends of the rectangle. One partner in each pair is blindfolded while the other partner gives directions. The youth giving directions calls out simple verbal instructions to the blindfolded partner, guiding him or her through the minefield. If the blindfolded partner touches a mine, he or she is out of the game. Repeat this activity allowing the other partner to be blindfolded and guided through the minefield.

Have the youth brainstorm to generate a list of things they could do to become better listeners, communicators, and team players. Allow children to repeat the minefield activity with a new partner and apply some of these new ideas.

**Activity 2—Memory Ball Toss**
Ask youth to form a circle. Whisper a simple message into the ear of one. Have them then whisper the message to the next youth in the circle. That youth then whispers the message to the next, and so on. Have the last youth reveal the message. Discuss what happened if the original message was not the same as the message the last person received. How might a mistake in passing the messages affect teamwork?

**Activity 3—Pass the Hula-Hoop**
Have youth line up holding hands with the person next to them. This can be done with two lines of youth lined up and facing each other. Start at one end and put the hula-hoop over the head of the first youth. Have that youth wiggle the hula-hoop any way possible to the next person, and so on down the line. The hula-hoop can be passed over their heads, under their legs and across linked arms, but youth must keep their arms linked. Once the hula-hoop gets to the end, have them pass it back to the beginning in the same way.

Let’s Play Outside Activities

**Activity 1—The Use Your Imagination Game**
Set out an assortment of play equipment that might be available at home such as balls, jump ropes, and hula-hoops. Divide youth into groups of 4-6. Tell them that they are going to become inventors and create a game. Have each group pick at least three pieces of play equipment from the choices available. Instruct each group to spend five to seven minutes designing a game. Ask them to give their game a fun name. There are only three rules:
- Each game should last at least 10 minutes
- Each member of the group should be an active participant
- The three pieces of equipment must be incorporated into the game

Allow each group a few minutes to practice their activity. After this, have each group tell the name of their game, provide a demonstration, and teach it to the whole group. If there is time, let all the youth try out the games.

**Activity 2—Frisbee Golf**
Identify 10 “holes” that will make up your Frisbee golf course. A “hole” can be a piece of paper, a chair, a tree, etc. labeled with a number from 1-10 on it. Decide the par for each hole. Divide youth into teams and designate a scorekeeper for each. The object is to hit the holes with the Frisbee. The throw for the first hole is taken from a designated starting spot. The winner is the individual or team with the lowest score, which will be the fewest overall throws used to hit their holes.

Stress to the youth that the form they use to throw the Frisbee is not important; the goal is hitting the target. Whatever method of throwing that gets the Frisbee to the target is acceptable. This way, those youth who are not skilled at Frisbee throwing will feel less intimidated. It also adds a fun factor to the game because some unskilled youth will be successful using unusual throwing methods to hit the holes.

**Activity 3—Pass the Hula-Hoop**
Have youth line up holding hands with the person next to them. This can be done with two lines of youth lined up and facing each other. Start at one end and put the hula-hoop over the head of the first youth. Have that youth wiggle the hula-hoop any way possible to the next person, and so on down the line. The hula-hoop can be passed over their heads, under their legs and across linked arms, but youth must keep their arms linked. Once the hula-hoop gets to the end, have them pass it back to the beginning in the same way.

You will encounter many different kinds of people throughout your life. It is important that you learn to work cooperatively with others. Part of working cooperatively is having good listening skills.

Have youth stand in a circle. Whisper a simple message into the ear of one. Have them then whisper the message to the next youth in the circle. That youth then whispers the message to the next, and so on. Have the last youth reveal the message. Discuss what happened if the original message was not the same as the message the last person received. How might a mistake in passing the messages affect teamwork?

Cooperative Play
(Retrieved from Up for the Challenge Curriculum)

Let’s Play Outside
(Retrieved from Up for the Challenge Curriculum)
**Keeping Track of Your Progress!**

Here at Maryland 4-H, we want to see the success you have made in reaching out to your club members and communities! We are asking you to keep track of what activities you are doing each month at meetings and in your communities and how many people you are reaching. We will be in contact with you throughout the year to get your feedback!

Use the below chart to keep track of your numbers! We would also love to hear about new activities you have come up with or success stories you have!

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