

Being a Health Advocate



- I will advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Someone once said, “People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.” A health advocate is a person who “makes things happen.” This lesson includes steps to follow to be a health advocate. It explains how to get involved as a volunteer and how you can benefit from advocacy.

What You’ll Learn

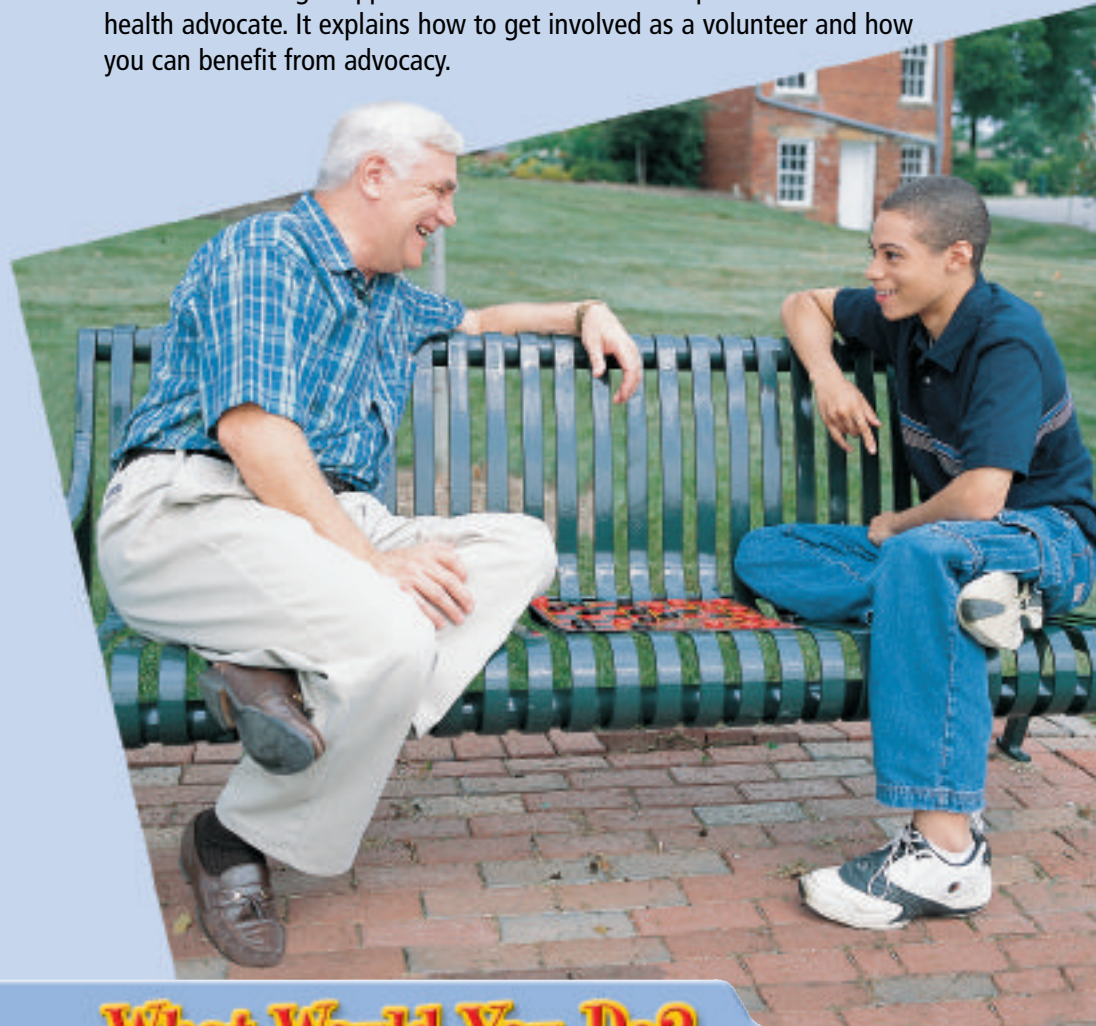
1. Identify four steps to follow to be a health advocate. (p. 65)
2. Explain eight steps that can be taken to get involved as a volunteer. (p. 66)
3. Discuss the benefits of being a volunteer. (p. 67)
4. Explain the healthy-helper syndrome. (p. 67)
5. List at least ten volunteer opportunities for teens. (p. 67)

Why It’s Important

Suppose everyone at your school became a health volunteer. Consider how these efforts might improve the quality of life in your community.

Key Terms

- health-advocacy skills
- health advocate
- volunteer
- volunteer center
- volunteer burnout
- beta-endorphins
- healthy-helper syndrome



What Would You Do?

Writing About Volunteering Suppose that you and your best friend are discussing volunteering. Your friend thinks that volunteer work and fun do not mix, but you are volunteering by helping an older adult once a week, and you and he really have a good time together. Write a paragraph in your health journal trying to convince your friend that volunteering is fun. Remember to include volunteer opportunities that include skills you already have or activities that already interest you.



Health TEKS covered by Lesson 7: 1A, 1I, 2C, 8A

CONTENTS

Health-Advocacy Skills



The process of supporting a cause is advocacy (AD vuh kuh see). Skills that are used to influence the health behavior and decisions of others and to advance specific health-related beliefs and concerns are known as *health-advocacy skills*. A *health advocate* is a person who uses skills to influence the health behavior and decisions of others for the advancement of health-related beliefs and concerns. There are steps you can follow to become a health advocate within your family, your school, in your community, or in the world.

How to Become a Health Advocate

1. Select a health-related concern.

Teens often select advocacy interests for which they may have a strong personal connection. Here are examples of two teens' advocacy selections. A drunk driver killed Miguel's best friend in an automobile accident. Miguel selects drunk driving as his health-related concern. Tonya's grandmother recently developed colon cancer. Tonya selects colon cancer as her health-related concern.

2. Gather reliable information. Advocates often volunteer to help or provide service for the group they are interested in. A *volunteer* is a person who provides a service without pay. For example, Miguel gathers data on traffic fatalities caused by teens that drink alcohol and drive. He contacts SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) to learn more about this organization. Tonya contacts the American Cancer Society to learn ways to reduce the risk of developing colon cancer.

3. Identify your purpose and target audience. The purpose of advocating for a health concern might be to educate people about a specific health

problem, to get laws passed, and/or to motivate others to advocate for a health-related cause. Miguel wants to influence teens not to drink and drive. This will reduce their risk of being in a fatal accident involving alcohol. Tonya wants to influence her family. She wants them to make healthful food choices to reduce their risk of colon cancer.

4. Develop a convincing and appropriate message. Focus on your purpose and target audience and prepare your message. Consider how you can have the most influence on others. Miguel joins SADD. Together with other members of SADD, he participates in a program to bring awareness to other teens. He helps make posters to display at school and writes announcements about the dangers of drinking and driving to be read on the school's public address system. Tonya learns about high-fiber, low-fat diets that help reduce the risk of colon cancer and shares this information with her family. Together, they modify some of the family's favorite recipes to accomplish this. These teens are health advocates.

Did You Know?

Volunteer According to the Bureau of Labor, 59 million people in the United States over the age of 16 volunteered for a variety of organizations in the period from September 2001 to September 2002.

Mini-Review

1. What is a health advocate?
2. List the steps to become a health advocate.





Volunteering

Volunteering your time and talent is a powerful way to improve the quality of life for you and others, whether you are doing something simple like boxing canned goods or something more demanding, such as planning an event to raise money. You derive many benefits when you volunteer. As a volunteer, you meet new people, develop new skills, and may add to your self-respect and health status. Are you ready to roll up your sleeves and get started? To be a successful volunteer, you need to plan and then act.

How to Be a Volunteer

Make the Connection

Time Management

For more information on managing your time, see page 551 in Lesson 51.

Assess your interests, skills, talents, and resources. List your interests, skills, and talents. Identify how much time you have to spend volunteering.

Identify organizations in your community that use or need volunteers. Ask your parents, guardian, or teachers, or look in the telephone directory for organizations that utilize volunteers. Call a volunteer center. A *volunteer center* is an organization that matches people with volunteer jobs.

Call or visit organizations or agencies for which you would like to volunteer. Obtain permission from a parent or guardian. Call the organization or agency for which you would like to volunteer and express your interest. Be prepared with questions. What does the organization or agency do? What tasks and responsibilities might you do as a volunteer?

Make final preparations. Obtain permission from a parent or guardian to volunteer. Discuss your schedule and the tasks you will perform, and arrange for transportation.

Set high expectations for yourself. Be on time, dress appropriately, follow rules and guidelines, and complete

assigned tasks in a timely manner. If you must be late or absent, tell your supervisor in advance.

If you do not find an organization or agency where you can serve as a volunteer, create and organize your own projects. Think of ways you can help in your community. Would supplies, transportation, or equipment be needed? Who will pay for those items? Write an action plan. Get the approval and support of your parents or guardian, teacher, principal, or other official if needed. Involve others as you plan your event.

Keep a log of your volunteer experiences. Include a description of the tasks you are doing and whether you like them or not. Discuss ways your experience benefits others. Discuss ways it is benefiting you. How would you improve this experience?

Avoid volunteer burnout. Be careful not to overdo or to take on responsibilities that are too much for you. *Volunteer burnout* is a loss of enthusiasm about volunteering that results from feeling overwhelmed. Watch out for signs of burnout, such as feeling stressed, bored, or tired.



Activity: Using Life Skills

Advocating for Health: Being a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who provides a service to others without pay. Volunteering isn't just good for your community; it's good for you, too. Being a volunteer contributes to self-respect, helps you learn new skills, gives you a chance to meet new people, and contributes to your health.

1 Select a health-related concern.
Read through the list at the bottom of this page for volunteering ideas. Select an activity from the list that appeals to you.

2 Gather reliable information.
Research an organization in your community that offers the opportunity to volunteer in the way you have chosen.

3 Identify your purpose and target audience.
In a small group, explain why you would be interested in advocating health in this particular way. How would this activity benefit others? How might it benefit you?

4 Develop a convincing and appropriate message. Based on your discussion and the ideas you have researched, create a poster that encourages others to become health advocates by volunteering.

Can Being a Volunteer Affect Your Health Status?

Effects of positive feelings There is some evidence that the positive feelings that come from doing good deeds help boost the effectiveness of the immune system. Acts of giving stimulate the brain to release beta-endorphins. **Beta-endorphins** are substances produced in the brain that create a feeling of well-being.

The **healthy-helper syndrome** is a state in which a person feels increased energy, relaxation, and improved mood as a result of giving service to others. Those volunteers who have the most face-to-face contact with those they help seem to experience the most health benefits.

▲ Because volunteering makes you feel good, it has a positive effect on your health status. Volunteers who work directly with other people get the most health benefits.



Volunteering Opportunities

There are any number of ways you can serve the needs of other people to the betterment of their mental, physical, or emotional health. Some of these are:

- Coach a sports team
- Tutor or read to children
- Teach reading
- Participate in walk-a-thons and fun-runs
- Serve food in a homeless shelter
- Perform chores for an elderly person or a person with a physical disability
- Clean up a vacant lot, roadway, or other area
- Collect food or clothing
- Form a teen coalition to counter tobacco and alcohol advertising in your community
- Help prepare and deliver meals
- Organize entertainment
- Organize drug- and alcohol-free activities
- Participate in a neighborhood or roadside cleanup
- Plant a garden or a tree

SPEAKING OUT

Teens Talk About Health

Sarah Tynon Volunteering

“Volunteering has opened my eyes to ways other people live.”

If Sarah Tynon is typical, it might be a good idea to put a warning label on all volunteer projects. It would say “Warning: Volunteering can be habit-forming. It also may cause feelings of satisfaction at knowing you’ve made a difference in other people’s lives.” Sarah explained why: “Doing a volunteer project is a great experience. Doing one seems to make you want to do more, just for the new experience.”

For the community At Sarah’s school, most of the volunteer projects are on the local level. “We have what we call Young Volunteers,” she explained. “We try to do different community-oriented things. One of the most fun things we do is make friendship baskets. They’re for an elementary school our school has adopted. We put candy, little toys, books, and other things in the baskets. We buy the things for the baskets by raising money throughout the year. The kids who receive the baskets always write back to us to thank us, and it’s a good feeling.”

Benefits all around What do people get out of a volunteer project like the friendship baskets? According to Sarah, “The big benefit of a program like this is knowing that you’ve made someone happy. There are a lot kids who haven’t had those things that are easy to take for granted.” Sarah put her finger on one of the key reasons that people volunteer. Those on the receiving end aren’t the only ones who get a benefit. “I’m doing it for the kids, but I’m also doing it for myself.” The payoff for volunteers like Sarah is the good feeling that comes from helping other people.

Variety: the spice of volunteering Sarah has worked on many different kinds of volunteer projects. “A few years back, we went to a little ravine near our school. There’s usually a lot of trash down there, so our group goes and cleans it up.” Sarah made an important point about volunteering. “Even if you don’t have that much time to give, there are always small things that don’t require a huge time commitment.” Another plus according to Sarah is that anyone can volunteer. “The volunteer projects I work on don’t require any special skills at all. All it really takes is the will to do it.”

Toward the future “Volunteering has opened my eyes to ways other people live,” Sarah concluded. “It’s made me realize I want to work with people, so I think I might be a teacher. I think that’s a good way to help people improve their lives. But I know I’ll want to continue volunteering throughout my life. I’ll just make the time for it.”



Journaling Activity

Think about a volunteer project you’ve worked on. Do you agree with Sarah that volunteers can get as much out of a project as the people they are helping? Why or why not?



7 STUDY GUIDE

beta-endorphins
health-advocate
skills
health advocate
healthy-helper
syndrome
volunteer
volunteer burnout
volunteer center



Key Terms Review

Complete the fill-in-the-blank statements with the lesson Key Terms on the left. Do not write in this book.

1. You use _____ when you make a poster about avoiding secondhand smoke.
2. You are a(n) _____ when you do errands for an elderly neighbor.
3. Someone at a(n) _____ can match your skills with volunteer opportunities.
4. The increased energy you get from being a volunteer is called _____.
5. When you perform acts of kindness, such as helping a neighbor do yard work, _____ give you a feeling of well-being.
6. You are a(n) _____ when you make a “No Smoking” sign to display in your home.
7. If you take on too many volunteer responsibilities, that take up too much of your time, you might get _____.

Recalling the Facts

8. What is the meaning of “select your target audience”?
9. What are eight steps that help you get involved as a volunteer?
10. How might your health status improve if you develop the healthy-helper syndrome?
11. What are the symptoms of volunteer burnout?
12. How are beta-endorphins healthful?
13. Why might a person who delivers mail in a hospital exhibit healthy-helper syndrome?
14. List three things that you might keep track of in a volunteer log.
15. What three questions might you ask a health agency before you volunteer with them?
16. Why might active volunteers seem to have fewer infections?
17. Why is a health advocate “a person who makes things happen”?
18. Why is “show up on time” important to a group for which you volunteer?

Critical Thinking

19. Why would teens advocate for a group for which they have strong emotional ties?
20. How might reading to a child advance his or her health?
21. Explain why many high schools have volunteer service as a requirement for graduation.
22. What are the benefits of keeping a log of your volunteer activities?

Activities

Responsible Decision Making

27. **Role-Play** Suppose you volunteer a few hours each Saturday at a children’s hospital. Your friend invites you to a sports game that is during the hours you volunteer. Pair up with a classmate and role-play this scenario. Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

Real-Life Applications

23. What steps would you follow to be a health advocate?
24. List five types of tasks you might do as a volunteer for a health organization.
25. List five organizations in your community that depend upon volunteers.
26. If your community does not have a volunteer center, write out a plan for organizing one.

Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. **Be an Advocate** Select a health agency that helps prevent a specific disease or condition through education. Contact this agency for information about ways to reduce the risk of the disease or condition. Select a target group and prepare a convincing and appropriate message.

🔑 Key Terms Review

Match the following Key Terms with the correct definition. Do not write in this book.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. beta-endorphins (p. 67) | e. health status (p. 6) | i. random event (p. 10) |
| b. habits (p. 27) | f. media (p. 35) | j. restitution (p. 62) |
| c. health advocate (p. 65) | g. media literacy (p. 36) | k. volunteer (p. 65) |
| d. health-care provider (p. 17) | h. peer pressure (p. 45) | l. wrong decision (p. 62) |

- substances produced in the brain that create a feeling of well-being
- trained licensed professional who performs services that maintain or restore people's health
- skills in recognizing and evaluating the messages in media
- various forms of mass communication
- person who provides service without pay
- making up for any loss, damage, or harm you caused
- an incident over which a person has little or no control
- fixed behaviors that you use automatically
- person who uses skills to influence health behaviors and decisions of others
- sum total of the positive and negative influences on a person's health and well-being

Recalling the Facts

- What are three points on the Health Behavior Triangle? (Lesson 1)
- What is the difference between a risk behavior and a healthful behavior? (Lesson 1)
- What questions might you ask to evaluate health-related information? (Lesson 2)
- What is included in a health behavior contract? (Lesson 3)
- What six questions might you ask to determine the influence of watching a particular TV program? (Lesson 4)
- What is the difference between positive peer pressure and negative peer pressure? (Lesson 5)
- What are four kinds of active listening? (Lesson 5)
- What are conflict-resolution skills you can use to settle disagreements? (Lesson 5)
- What are six questions used to evaluate the outcome of a decision you made? (Lesson 6)
- What are eight steps to take to become a volunteer? (Lesson 7)

Critical Thinking

- How can random events affect health status? (Lesson 1)
- How might the Wellness Scale be used to evaluate health status? (Lesson 1)
- What can you do if you have purchased a defective health product? (Lesson 2)
- What actions might you take after using a health behavior inventory? (Lesson 3)
- When would you use a health behavior contract? (Lesson 3)
- Why do companies pay athletes to wear their logos when they are competing in sports events on TV? (Lesson 4)
- Why is it important to develop media literacy? (Lesson 4)
- When would mediation be used? (Lesson 5)
- How can changes in life expectancy affect health? (Lesson 6)
- How might being a volunteer improve health status? (Lesson 7)





Health Literacy Activities



What Do You Know?

Critical Thinking Keep a journal for one week. List the decisions you made that week. Analyze your decision-making style for each situation. When did you use each style and why? How might you improve on your decision-making style? Set a health goal and write a plan to make this improvement.



Connection to Language Arts

Effective Communication Prepare a 3-minute story for the evening newscast about the ten factors that affect health status. Make a written or printed copy of your story. Present it to classmates.



Family Involvement

Responsible Citizenship Ask an adult in your family to share a situation in which he or she was pressured by peers and resisted that pressure. Show him or her the resistance skills on page 47 in Lesson 5 and ask which ones he or she finds most effective.



Group Project

Self-Directed Learning Suppose that you have read two articles about the same health issue in two different sources. Which is the more accurate report? Explain how you would determine accuracy. Present your analysis to the class. Give them a list of guidelines they can use.



Investigating Health Careers

Problem Solving Find a mentor who works in a health career that interests you. A mentor is a responsible person who guides another person. Ask your mentor about volunteer opportunities that you can participate in to learn more about the health career. Make an action plan that identifies tasks you will perform and the amount of time you will spend investigating and volunteering in that area. Visit tx.healthmh.com/volunteering for more information.



Reading and Writing TAKS: 1:7F, 3:7E, 3:7G, 3:12B, 4:1C, 4:2C, 5:2C, 5:3A, 5:3B, 5:3C, 6:2C

Reading & Writing

Standardized Test Practice

Read the following selection and answer the questions that follow.

For people seeking information about health issues, the Internet is like a “good news, bad news” joke. The good news is that the Internet offers a great deal of health information. The bad news is that it’s hard to tell if the information is of any value. Experts suggest several rules for making sure what you find on-line is good advice, not bad medicine. Use common sense. Information that sounds too good to be true probably is. Make sure that the source of the information is trustworthy. Government agencies, universities, medical associations, and hospitals generally are reliable. Check the timeliness of the data. Lastly, get a second opinion before you act on something you see on the Internet. Your family doctor is always a good place to start.

Multiple Choice

- According to this paragraph, which of these statements is true?
 - All information on the Internet is 100 percent reliable.
 - All Web sites are kept up-to-date.
 - Hospitals are usually not trustworthy sources.
 - It’s a good idea to apply common sense to internet claims.
- Why is old and outdated information a problem?
 - People will avoid getting a second opinion.
 - Experts are not in agreement as to how careful people need to be about information they find on-line.
 - Actions based on outdated health information can lead to serious medical consequences.
 - Universities will become untrustworthy.

Open-Ended

- Think of a health-related issue you would like to know more about. Write a paragraph describing the steps you would take, using the Internet, to learn more about it.



tx.healthmh.com/standardized_test_practice

