



uBEATS Teacher's Guide:

A Middle Schooler's Guide to Choices: Alcohol and Drug Prevention Skills

This teacher guide is a supplementary text to support the use of the uBEATS “A Middle Schooler's Guide to Choices: Alcohol and Drug Prevention Skills” module for grades 6-8.

To help students develop the knowledge necessary for an incredible future in health care, we created UNMC Building Excellence in Academics Through STEM (uBEATS), an online health science resource for Nebraska students.

UNMC uBEATS modules are short (15 minutes or less), interactive online health science modules to supplement curriculum taught in grades 6 – 12. These do not replace curriculum, but they are a supplement for teachers and students incorporating evidence-based information and UNMC expert guided material. Each module is chunked into sections with formative and summative assessments with immediate feedback provided.

Tips on how to utilize uBEATS modules:

- Internet access is required to view uBEATS modules.
 - For those who have access to one-to-one technology, modules can be used in or outside of the classroom as a topic introduction, extension, or review. For classrooms without individual student devices, modules can be used in whole group instruction. Formative assessment questions can use the teacher's preferred call-and-response method and summative assessment questions can be displayed on the board and answered individually by students or printed and distributed to students after viewing the module.

Objectives

- Identify healthy self-esteem.
- Compare healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Identify and role-play skills to refuse the use of alcohol and other drugs.

Introduction

In school, we face choices every day. Some choices are small and don't have a big impact on your overall life. Choices such as what to wear to school, which route you take to get to your class, or what snack to have at lunch. Other choices we make can have a big impact on our future. Choices such as which people you become friends with, which after-school activities you participate in, and whether or not you participate in risky behaviors such as using drugs, vapes, nicotine, or alcohol.

It's important to learn about what factors influence how you make decisions. Specifically, your self-esteem and the relationships you have with others. In this module, we will learn about how positive self-esteem and healthy relationships can help guide you to making safe choices when it comes to alcohol and other drug use.

Prior Knowledge

Before beginning this module, the teacher should understand the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) featuring [Three-Dimensional Learning](#).

Dimension 3: Disciplinary Core Ideas—Life Sciences. [A Framework for K-12 Science Education](#)

An organism's ability to sense and respond to its environment enhances its chance of surviving and reproducing. Animals have external and internal sensory receptors that detect different kinds of information, and they use internal mechanisms for processing and storing it. Each receptor can respond to different inputs (electromagnetic, mechanical, chemical), some receptors respond by transmitting impulses that travel along nerve cells. In complex organisms, most such inputs travel to the brain, which is divided into several distinct regions and circuits that serve primary roles, in particular functions such as visual perception, auditory perception, interpretation of perceptual information, guidance of motor movement, and decision making. In addition, some of the brain's circuits give rise to emotions and store memories. Brain function also involves multiple interactions between the various regions to form an integrated sense of self and the surrounding world.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2012. A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/13165>.

Science and Engineering Practices [NGSS](#)

8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Crosscutting Concepts [NGSS](#)

2. Cause and effect
6. Structure and function
7. Stability and change

Key Terms/Vocabulary

Self-esteem, healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships, addiction, substance use disorder (SUD), alcohol, nicotine, e-cigarettes, vapes, marijuana, opioids, depressants, prefrontal cortex, limbic system, dopamine, forecasting, risks, rewards, negative consequences, avoidance, refusal, exit.

Science Standards

2024 Nebraska College and Career Ready Science Standards [Nebraska Science Standards](#)

- SC.HSP.6.5 Gather, analyze, and communicate evidence of the relationship between the structures and physiological processes of the nervous system.

National Consortium for Health Science Education [NCHSE](#)

- Foundation Standard 9: Health Maintenance Practices
 - 9.1.1. Promote self-care behaviors of health and wellness: relationships; stress management.
 - 9.1.2. Examine various aspects of mental health: anxiety; depression; substance abuse.

Extensions of the lesson

To help students become more familiar with the Key Terms of this module, the teacher can use the vocabulary list for a classroom Word Wall or integrate the vocabulary into review sessions.

Encourage students to check current events for the latest news involving drug and alcohol addiction.

As student misconceptions become apparent, the teacher may need to reinforce these concepts:

- Self-esteem refers to a person's own sense of value, respect, and acceptance of themselves. Personality, life experiences, age, the reaction of others, and comparing yourself to others can all impact a person's self-esteem, which can change from day-to-day, or even moment-to-moment, based on your feelings or situations that may have happened. It is important to have high self-esteem, especially when it comes to making decisions.
- Healthy relationships are built on being honest and trustworthy, but unhealthy relationships are based on lying and tricking others.
- Saying "no" is an important part of a healthy relationship. In an unhealthy relationship, it might feel like we can't say no.
- Most adults who qualify for having a substance use disorder began using substances when they were teenagers or young adults.
- The best way to avoid addiction is to never start using substances in the first place. Not using substances is also the best way to stay healthy and let your brain develop properly.
- These are helpful strategies to avoid using substances:
 - Forecasting means thinking about what could happen in the future and considering the possible risks and rewards.
 - Avoidance means staying away from situations that could potentially be dangerous or risky.
 - Refusing means expressing that you are choosing not to engage in a dangerous activity.
 - Exiting means leaving the dangerous activity.

Enrichment

- For classroom activities, take a look at the Middle School substance abuse program [Choose to Refuse!](#) offered by the **State of Massachusetts**.
- Activities for building self-esteem are suggested by **TEACH.COM** [6 Self-Esteem Building Activities for Middle School Students](#).
- Another source for self-esteem activities is **Teach Educator's** [6 Activities to Boost Self-Esteem in Middle School Students](#).
- **Very Special Tales.com** gives ideas for [30 Fun Decision-Making Activities and Games for Kids](#).
- **Teaching Expertise.com** offers a variety of activities for promoting healthy relationships: [20 Relationship Building Activities for Kids](#).

- Search online for videos promoting healthy relationships. For example, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** has a series [Teens Talk Relationships](#).
- Explore the many resources presented by the **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** on their site for [Overdose Prevention](#).
- Visit the website of the **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** to learn about [Cannabis Health Effects](#).
- See a teen's message to peers and parents: **TED Talk** [The Domino Effect: Youth and Substance Abuse](#).