



CDC Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool Alignment with REAL Essentials

HECAT Targets

1. Establish and Maintain Healthy Relationships

REAL Essentials Advance Alignment

The REAL Essentials curriculum utilizes the whole person approach teaching about personal relationships from a physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and financial dimension of health. It teaches the science of healthy relationship development identifying qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships. The program teaches effective communication and conflict resolution skills as well as the prevention of assault, coercion, and intimate partner violence. REAL Essentials also directs students regarding consent laws and boundary setting. Topics are age appropriate and scientifically accurate. The content focuses on clear health goals (e.g. the prevention of STD/HIV and/or pregnancy), instruction and skills regarding specific behaviors leading to healthy relationship development.

Aligned Activities

- My Whole Self (p.19)
- Personality Styles (p. 27)
- Basic Needs of the Heart (p. 39)
- How Do You Feel Loved? (p. 45)
- Effective Communication & Barriers to It (p. 99)
- Communicating Effectively/Resolving Conflict (p. 113)
- Friendship, Dating and Love (p. 131)
- What Love Looks Like (p. 147)
- Foundations of a Healthy Relationship (p. 155)
- Relationship Red Flags (p. 163)
- Preventing Sexual Assault (p. 169)
- Communicating Consent (p. 175)

2. Be Sexually Abstinent

REAL Essentials lessons help students explore their attitudes, beliefs and values in a safe, affirming climate of learning and discovery. Lessons outline and highlight the value of delaying sexual activity as an optimal strategy for adolescents to achieve health and future life success. REAL Essential teaches toward the positive, rather than away from the negative. Additionally, REAL Essentials programming has:

- Defined desired outcomes
- Associated risky behavior with known risk factors
- Content that is relevant and familiar to students
- Information that is innovative and compelling, often surprising, engaging and captivating students which realigns their values and beliefs towards sexual risk avoidance.

- Are you Enough? (p. 53)
- Personal Strengths (p. 23)
- Discovering my Passion and Purpose (p. 71)
- Love vs Infatuation (p. 149)
- Not I (p. 197)
- Appointment with Love (p. 153)
- The Meaning of Sex (p. 335)
- The Media's Influence (p. 185)
- Influence of Drugs and Alcohol (p. 199)
- Strong Bonds (p. 339)
- Boundaries are Your Friend (p. 223)
- Setting Boundaries Early (p. 225)
- Peer Pressure Pull Down (p. 215)
- Peer Pressure Suck an Egg (p. 217)

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3. Engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV infection

Self-efficacy is the capacity to demonstrate self-respect and practice self-protective behaviors, even in difficult situations. REAL Essentials curriculum helps students recognize their personal worth, their gifts, talents, and their passion and purpose, thus improving critical thinking, communication, conflict resolution, and refusal skills. Elements of the REAL Essentials lessons include building social, emotional, and cognitive competence. The ability to establish and maintain personal boundaries is part of the competency to avoid sexual activity, whether that means resisting sexual coercion or avoiding sexually charged situations. A particularly efficacious approach to build personal competencies is a positive youth development framework, where youth are engaged in interpersonal skill-building, social engagement, taught healthy relationship skills, given a safe space, and given positive norms and expectations. REAL Essentials accomplishes this through helping students and parents discover their assets and resiliency factors utilizing the positive youth development work of the late Dr. Peter Benson at the Search Institute. The ability to establish and maintain personal boundaries, ask for what they need, and communicate feelings, are all part of the competencies that are taught in the REAL Essentials curriculum.

- Healthy People Ask (p. 103)
- Emotional Needs (p. 49)
- Communicating Feelings (p. 109)
- Communication and Resolving Conflict (p. 113)
- Navigating Differences (p. 75)
- Feelings vs. Behavior Train (p. 107)
- Life Plan (p. 233)
- Making Healthy Decisions (p. 251)
- Overcoming Potential Obstacles (p. 255)
- Rise Above Risk (p. 261)
- My Commitments (p. 387)
- Refusal Skills (p. 267)
- Asset Assessment (p. 57)
- Ideas for Building Assets (p. 63)
- Relationship Red Flags (p. 163)
- Break-up Skills (p. 167)
- Preventing Sexual Assault (p. 169)
- Bullying and Violence (p. 179)

4. Engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce unintended pregnancy

Intentions are important precursors to both positive and negative behaviors. The degree to which they affect behavior depends on three primary factors: the strength of the intentions, the skills of the person to follow their intentions, and the social supports they possess. REAL Essentials lessons help students learn the skills to make their behavioral intentions clear and concrete to others. REAL Essentials explores what it means to be committed to something. Those commitments of healthy decision making, and self-regulation are strengthened as the curriculum explores a personal understanding of the risks of teen sex and delaying sexual activity. Goal setting and future vision plays a powerful role in motivating healthy adolescent decisions. REAL Essentials lessons create an opportunity for students to identify viable, attractive options for their future and relationships. Students who hope to find a life-partner and someday marry will understand the data for building a framework to support healthy commitments. REAL Essentials targets future goals and opportunities throughout the curriculum. The “success sequence” is highlighted as an important part of sexual risk avoidance. Creating a new life script for high risk youth who have experienced generational poverty is a strategy to break this cycle.

- Steps of Physical Intimacy (p. 357)
- The Measure of My Commitment (p. 277)
- Freedoms to Enjoy When You Say Yes to Healthy Relationships p. 369)
- Success Sequencing (p. 239)
- Hopes and Dreams (p. 237)
- Future Orientation (p. 231)
- Life Plan (p. 233)
- Obstacles to Success: Fact or Fiction (p. 205)
- Good Date / Bad Date (p. 139)
- Create a Date (p. 141)
- Asset Assessment (p. 57)
- Ideas for Building Assets (p. 63)
- Setting Boundaries Early (p. 225)
- Discovering Your Passion and Purpose (p. 71)
- Creating My Life Plan; the Road to Success (p. 243)
- Overcoming Potential Obstacles (p. 255)
- Dreaming of the Future (p. 301)
- Marriage, It's Good Stuff (p. 307)
- Parent Permission Slip
- Where are your boundaries? (p. 227)
- Connect at Home Assignments Throughout

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5. Avoid pressuring others to engage in sexual behaviors

Teenagers who date early, often, and steadily are more likely to have earlier sexual encounters. In addition, participating in unsupervised activities, and dating older partners, are consistently associated with higher rates of drug and alcohol use, sexual activity and dating violence. Substance use is a noted risk factor, and activities targeting both these issues should include promotion of social and emotional competence, parenting skills training, parent engagement, and family support. REAL Essentials lessons acknowledge the role of high-risk situations that place teens in vulnerable situations, identifies these situations, promotes insights for students, and addresses how to mitigate these factors. Teens who have been sexually active then become more aware of vulnerable situations and develop personal strategies to avoid these opportunities. REAL Essentials utilizes "Connect at Home" lessons throughout the curriculum to engage parents and trusted adults. Building parental support, engaging adolescents in the community, and the availability of shared and safe activities are important protective factors.

- What Else Influences Me? (p.219)
- Boundaries are Your Friend (p. 223)
- Setting Boundaries Early (p. 225)
- Peer Pressure Pull Down (p. 215)
- Peer Pressure Suck an Egg (p. 217)
- Relationship Red Flags (p.163)
- Preventing Sexual Assault (p.169)
- Communicating Consent (p.175)

6. Support others to avoid or reduce sexual risk behaviors

Adolescents are influenced by peers. Many decisions and behaviors may be determined by their perception of the activities of their friends, their understanding of socially accepted conduct, and their desire to conform to perceived social norms. Positive peer norms can provide support for teens to avoid health-risk behaviors. Social media bombards adolescents with sexual images and messages. This may lead adolescents to believe their peer group is more sexually active or more approving of having sex than the data supports. If teens believe this about their peer group, they are more likely to be sexually active themselves. REAL Essentials lessons equip adolescents to have discussions with peers about sex being more than a physical act and effecting whole person health. REAL Essential lessons help students improve their awareness of positive and negative peer pressure, including media depictions of high-risk behavior. By helping young people become media savvy and learn the way marketing and advertising works, REAL Essential lessons help build media literacy. REAL Essentials lessons encourage students to be free thinkers and build their skill set to be confident and push back against peer pressure to be involved in high-risk behaviors.

- The Media's Influence (p. 187)
- Internet and Texting (p. 193)
- The Influence of Drugs and Alcohol (p. 199)
- Pornography: Fact or Fiction? (p. 209)
- Peer Pressure Pulldown (p. 215)
- Peer Pressure Suck an Egg (p. 217)
- Setting Boundaries Early (p. 223)
- Boundaries are Your Friend (p. 221)
- Where are Your Boundaries? (p. 227)

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7. Treat others with courtesy and respect

REAL Essential was developed with all humans in mind. All humans need to be loved, affirmed, connected, honored and cherished. All humans need belonging, respect, dignity, worth and social supports. This curriculum sets up a system of safety and trauma informed teaching strategies by training the trainer how to norm the classroom ensuring that all students will engage and participate in activities that are relevant to their young lives with inclusivity, dignity and respect.

- Basic Needs of the Heart (p.39)
- Emotional Needs (p.49)
- Are You Enough? (p.53)
- Discovering Your Passion and Purpose (p.71)
- Additionally, throughout the curriculum, embedded in many activities, character lessons are taught. Students are encouraged to name the character trait outlined and operationalize what that character trait looks like in everyday situations.

8. Use appropriate health services to promote sexual health

REAL Essentials promotes optimal wellness and whole person health. Parents and or trusted adults are the key to assisting young people make the healthiest decisions regarding health services. Students are encouraged to allow an adult to assist them in making the healthiest choice and to refer them to health services as needed.

- HIV/ FACT Or Fiction? (p.375)
- A Positive Test (p.379)
- After several activities in the curriculum, REAL Essentials utilizes an encouraging approach for those who have engaged in sexual activity to get tested and start over with new skills. "One does what they know and when they know better, they do better." Maya Angelo