

Session 8.1

(Re-) Introduction to Healthy Futures; Goals and Dreams; Healthy Relationships; and Emotional Needs

Session Overview:

1. (Re-) Introduce Healthy Futures.
2. (Re-) Introduce “The choices you make NOW will affect you LATER” slogan and incentive.
3. Establish and post the Group Rights and Responsibilities.
4. Explain and pass out the question cards.
5. Illustrate the importance of focusing on goals and dreams using the Yardstick Activity.
6. Use the Goals & Dreams handout to help participants identify their goals and dreams and what will make it easier or more difficult to achieve their goals and dreams.
7. Identify characteristics of healthy relationships and discuss how relationships can make it easier or harder to achieve their goals and dreams.
8. Review emotional needs and relate it to healthy relationships and choosing to delay sexual activity.
9. Wrap up session.
10. Explain and distribute Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 8.1: Goals and Dreams, Healthy Relationships, and Emotional Needs or Alternative Inclusive version.
11. Optional Unit: Success Sequence Session 8.1
12. Refer to inclusion guidelines provided by Healthy Futures. Remind teachers and facilitators that these guidelines should reflect local school district policy and are only guidelines. The guidelines can be adapted/expanded as required by local school district policies and procedures. Guidelines are provided by request to licensed users of Healthy Futures Nu-CULTURE.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand the ground rules that promote a safe and comfortable learning environment.
- Participants will identify their dreams in life and think practically about how to achieve them.
- Participants will understand the influence relationships have on their lives.
- Participants will understand that the choices they make can have positive or negative consequences.
- Participants will be invited to actively engage in class, which will result in positive consequences.
- Optional Unit: Success Sequence Session 8.1

Classroom Planning:

- Review Session 8.1 curriculum.
- Review the instructions for establishing Group Rights and Responsibilities.
- Make copies of handouts.
- Recruit school counselor or other mental health resource expert to assist with youth who request to opt out if they experience an acute trauma response from content.
- Gather the question cards and question bag.
- Optional Unit: Success Sequence Session 8.1

Materials Needed:

- Computer, projector, and speakers
- Jar of Now and Later Candy
- Yardstick
- Group Rights and Responsibilities Cards (8.1.2)
- Train Track Activity PowerPoint (8.1.7)
- Big 3 Review Video (Session 8.1)
- Handouts:
 - Goals and Dreams (Handout 8.1.4)
 - Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 8.1: Goals and Dreams, Healthy Relationships, and Emotional Needs or Alternative Inclusive version [Session 8.1 I](#).
- Calendar describing lesson content for the 8 sessions to share with participants and their parents/trusted adults.
- List of resources and options for youth who need alternative activities
- Please see Creating Safe Spaces Document in the introduction for more ideas/suggestions regarding a trauma informed approach.
- Optional Unit
 - [Optional Activity 8.1 Success Sequence](#)
 - [Success Sequence Video Session 8.1](#)
- Question cards
- Question bag

The Standards:

- See Appendix E for a list of state and national standards met in this session. Individual State Standards by Request.



“The choices you make NOW will affect you LATER”

Educator highlight: Introduce yourself and tell the participants about Healthy Futures and the Nu-CULTURE program. Discuss purpose and goals. Communicate to the participants the fact that you care about all of them, that they are all special, and you want to equip them to have the most opportunities in their future. Explain that many things happen during their teen years that they will have to respond to; they'll have choices to make that can have a big impact on their future. Mention that it can be difficult and complicated to go through this phase of life and we want to prepare them for it as much as possible. Also mention now that they are in 8th grade, they need to start preparing for high school and how to make informed and healthy decisions in that environment.

Educator states:

Good morning/afternoon! I'm _____ and this is my friend _____.

By a show of hands, who in here has ever heard of Healthy Futures? For those of you that haven't, we are an organization that goes to different middle schools and high schools to speak to teens like you about making good choices, especially choices about relationships. When we talk about relationships we mean people who you spend time with including family, friends, and people who may be “more than friends,” such as a boyfriend or girlfriend.

You are all 8th graders and you have a lot of choices you're going to be making now and in the future. We are here to talk about your choices and how the choices you make now will influence your life and your future. This is especially true with your choices in relationships.

Healthy Futures is not here to tell you what to do, we are here to share some information with you to help you make healthy choices in your lives. We want to let you know that the choices you make now will impact your future.

Educator highlight: The following activity is an optional activity educators can use to get the participants energized and focused at the beginning of the presentation.

Educator states:

This is something that we want you to remember:

Educator 1 - A healthy choice helps develop a healthy
Educator 1 - A healthy mind helps develop a healthy
Educator 1 - A healthy lifestyle helps develop a healthy

Educator 2 - Mind!
Educator 2 - Lifestyle!
Educator 2 - Future!

Notes:



Notes:**Educator states:**

Choices are really important and the choices you make now are important to your future. That's why we bring this jar of candy with us to help illustrate that point.

Do you know the message to this candy?

[The choices you make NOW, will affect you LATER!]

Exactly. The choices you make now will definitely affect you later. If you have this message figured out, you have an important part of life figured out.

At Healthy Futures, we like to do a drill to help teens remember this message. Whenever I say "The choices you make..." you shout out NOW. Then I shout, "will affect you..." and you shout out LATER!

Let's try it. Notice that I say yell, okay. We want you to be loud. Your teacher said it's okay for us to get a little loud. Are you ready?

The choices you make...NOW will affect you...LATER!

The lessons we teach over the next eight days are interactive so we will be doing that drill together frequently. It's important that you really understand that the choices you make now will definitely affect you later.

We'll be leaving this jar of Now and Laters out every time we meet to remind you of this drill. The choices you make now to participate and listen will determine whether or not your class can have them later.



Notes:

Educator highlight: Post the Group Rights and Responsibilities cards. Begin by explaining why it is important to discuss Group Rights and Responsibilities and explain each of the points. Next, ask the participants if there are any other suggestions they have to add to the list. Acknowledge and affirm each suggestion. It is important that participants take ownership of this list so that they can take responsibility for their behavior.

Educator states:

In order for us to have a fun time together we need to set up some classroom guidelines. This way everyone gets a chance to participate and have a good time. We call these our “Group Rights and Responsibilities” and they will be our rules for our class.

[Hold up Group Rights and Responsibilities cards and have participants repeat each right after you.]

You have the right:

1. **To be heard** - No talking while others are talking.
2. **To express your opinion** - To share your own point of view.
3. **To ask any questions** - No question is too stupid or silly.

[Mention the question cards as a place for asking questions. Do not pass them out yet.]

4. **To be respected** - Respect others as you want them to respect you.
5. **To confidentiality and privacy** - Personal information or situations shared here shouldn't be shared outside of this class.

Are there any other rules/responsibilities you want to add in order to feel more comfortable sharing information and participating in the discussions?

Ok, now that we have discussed how this will be a safe environment, we want to tell you about the question cards. Each of you should have received a question card in your folder. Does everyone have one?

[Hold up a question card and let them know where this should be located in their folder.]

The question bag is available for any participant who does not feel comfortable asking their question in front of the whole class. You can use your question card for this purpose. On the card you should include your initials (unless you would like to remain anonymous), your class section, and school name. The Healthy Futures staff will check these every day and address your questions or concerns during our time together.



Notes:

Educator states:

By a show of hands, who wants to be successful in life? Did you know that success begins with your choice? Success begins with your choice. Failure also begins with your choice.

To get things started, can I get a volunteer to come up here?

[Ask their name.]

_____ (Volunteer's name) I want you to try and balance this yardstick vertically (up and down) in the palm of your hand. Keep your palm flat and try to do it as long as you can. You can walk around a little bit in this area to try and keep it balanced. There's one condition though: you have to look at the bottom of the yardstick, where it touches your palm. You can't look up, left, or right. Got it? Where are your eyes going to be?

[The bottom of the yardstick.]

Alright, give it a try.

[Give the participant a few tries to balance it this way.]

That didn't work out too well, so we're going to have _____ [Volunteer's name] try it again. This time, keep your eyes on the top of the yardstick and try to balance it as long as you can. Remember to keep your palm flat.

[Give the participant a few tries to balance it this way.]

Alright, give _____ [Volunteer's name] a hand!

Now every time Healthy Futures does an activity, it is an illustration of a point we are trying to make. For those of you watching your classmate, can one of you tell me what we had him/her do?

[Balance the yardstick on his/her hand.]

There were two places I had _____ [Volunteer's name] focus on. Where were they?

[The bottom and the top of the yardstick.]

Which spot made it easier to balance the yardstick?

[Focusing on the top of the yardstick.]



Notes:**Educator states:**

Here's the illustration: In life, if you focus on the top, which represents your goals and your dreams, it will be easier to balance the things in your life and make it easier to reach your goals and dreams.

Your classmate had a hard time balancing the yardstick by focusing on the bottom. The same is true in life. If you focus on the bottom, which represents your everyday problems/issues/drama it will make life a lot more difficult. For example, if you have trouble at home, at school, or with a boyfriend or girlfriend and that is all you focus on, it will be hard to balance those things with your future goals and dreams. This is why we encourage you to stay focused on top: Your goals and dreams. There's an important quote that I want you to hear: "Obstacles are the things that I see when I take my eyes off my goals."

If you're not focusing on your goals and dreams, what do you think you're focusing on?

[Problems, drama.]

If you're not focusing on success, what might happen?

[You may get distracted and fail to achieve your goals and dreams.]

That's something to think about. Everyone faces challenges, problems, and drama. It is your choice to either focus on those challenges or focus on overcoming those challenges to achieve your goals and dreams.



Notes:**Educator states:**

In your folder is a handout that says Goals and Dreams at the top. On the top of the handout you will see a list of things that you might want for your future. These are just some suggestions that we frequently hear from teens like you, you may have a different goal or dream not listed.

[Pass out Goals and Dreams (Handout 8.1.4) and name some of the choices listed on the handout.]

We are going to be talking about your goals and dreams: Where you want to go in life and what you want to achieve. To help us think about this, we want you to check off three or four things that you think would be important to you in the future. Take some time to do that now.

Great! Now, let's get specific. Under that list you will see empty space. I am going to give you directions as to how to fill this out.

- Put your name at the bottom right of the handout.
- At the top, write words or phrases that describe your goals and dreams in life. What do you want to be doing as an adult? Where do you want to be? Who do you want to be sharing your life with?
- At the bottom, write things you can choose to do now that will help you achieve your goal.
- In the middle, write the things that you can do during high school or college years that will help you achieve your goal.

Educator highlight: Be prepared to prompt participants by giving them a few examples of goals and what things can be done along the way to reach them. For example, if a participant wants to be a singer, they may want to take voice lessons now, choose to be in a singing group in high school, and go to a college that specializes in music. While participants are working on their handouts, circulate around the class, give encouragement, and answer questions. This activity is not intended to be a long discussion, rather a quick activity to help participants think about their futures and how choices they make impact that future.

Sometimes when you talk about your goals and dreams they may seem unattainable, or people in your life may not be supportive. It's important to stay focused on your goals and dreams and never let anyone else's opinion become your reality. You have the dream. You make the choices that will help you achieve your dream.

[Ask participants to share their goals and dreams.]



Notes:

Educator states:

Next, we are going to discuss some things that will help you achieve your goals and dreams and obstacles that might stand in your way.

[Educator draws grid on board that has Easier on one side and Harder on the other.]

Easier	Harder
Making healthy choices	Making unhealthy choices (using alcohol, drugs)
Choosing healthy relationships	Choosing unhealthy relationships
Getting an education	Dropping out of school
Studying, succeeding in school	Getting in trouble, fights, gangs
Practice your hobby or craft	Having a child at a young age
Staying out of trouble	

We are going to talk about some things that can make it easier for you to achieve your goals and dreams and some things that can make it harder.

Let's talk about the easier side first. With your hand raised, what is one thing that can make it easier to achieve your goals and dreams?

[Briefly discuss what participants bring up on list, making sure that you mention items that are on the list above, if they were not mentioned.]

Educator highlight: Be prepared to prompt participants by giving them a few examples what might make it easier or harder to achieve their goals and dreams. An example for a goal that requires a college degree (e.g., nurse, doctor, engineer, teacher, etc.) might be: "It could be true that having a college education can make it easier to achieve your goals and dreams. In order to get to college, what is it that you have to complete?" [High school.] "And in order to pass high school, what do you have to do now?" [Pass 8th grade.] "What is it that you need to do now to pass 8th grade?" [Attend school, do homework, study, get good grades.]

So, we see that making good choices and choosing positive relationships can help you achieve your goals and dreams.

What about the HARDER side? With your hand raised, what is one thing that can make it harder to achieve your goals and dreams?

[Briefly discuss the topics participants bring up, making sure the items listed above were mentioned.]



Notes:**Educator states:**

As we just discussed, relationships are really important in reaching our goals and dreams. Who we spend time with - family, friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, etc. - influence our choices. We want people in our lives that can help us make good choices and achieve our goals and dreams.

Who remembers the qualities of good friends we described in 6th and 7th grade?

[Respectful, fun, kind, loyal, helpful, trustworthy, honest, responsible, good listener, good role model.]

And who gets to choose what kind of friends you have?

[We do.]

This extends to the people you choose to be “more than friends” with, or to date. And remember what we said earlier? The people you spend time with can make it easier or harder to make good decisions and achieve your goals and dreams.

* For quality improvement purposes, Activity 8.1.5 Healthy Relationships discussion replaced an abstinence worksheet and illustration. Abstinence review moved to Activity 8.2.6.



Notes:**Educator states:**

Many of you identified a specific relationship as your goal or dream or certain people in your life who will help support you on your journey to achieving your goals and dreams. Maybe you wanted to be with a special someone or you wanted to be able to share certain areas of success with your friends and family. Relationships are important. Why? Because relationships are the way that we meet the emotional needs we talked about in 6th and 7th grade. We talked about how we all have emotional needs and it is through those relationships that we have - with our friends, family, someone who is more than a friend - that we get these emotional needs met.

Does anyone remember what those emotional needs are from 7th grade?

[Give time for answers. If they don't remember, list a few - acceptance and love; relationships, companionship, intimacy; and safety and security.]

Great! We need people in our lives to help us meet these emotional needs to be happy and healthy people.

Sometimes, when teens aren't getting their emotional needs met they may turn to sexual activity, thinking it will fulfill these needs. At Healthy Futures, we believe the healthiest choice for teens is to delay sexual activity until a faithful lifelong relationship and in 6th and 7th grade we mentioned the three risks associated with early sexual activity. Can we get a volunteer to remind everyone what those risks are?

[Pregnancy/Fathering a child, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and emotional heartache.]

Right. These are all risks of sexual activity. We will talk more about these topics throughout our eight sessions together.



[Begin by playing the Train Track Activity PowerPoint.]

Educator states:

Now, we're going to do another activity. What are these lines illustrating in the PowerPoint?

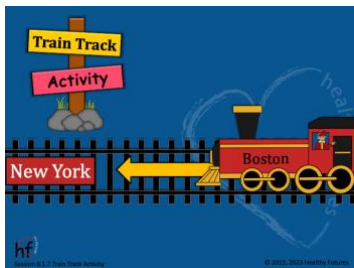
[A train track.]

Right! Let's say this train is leaving _____ (name of the city where you are teaching) and headed to _____ (New York City or other major city).

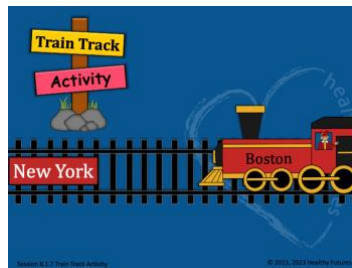
[Type the current city name next to the train and destination at the top of the track.]

What is the fastest way for this train to get to its destination?

[In a straight line, directly up, etc.]



[Slide 1]



[Slide 2]

[Advance slide to show arrow from the city name toward the destination.]

But what happens if the train gets derailed (e.g., gets off track)?

[Advance slide to show train off track.]



[Slide 3]

* For quality improvement purposes, Activity 8.1.7 Train Track added to enhance student's understanding of the consequences of their decisions.

Notes:

Notes:

Educator states:

If the train gets derailed, can it still get to its destination?

[Yes.]

Will the train get there on time?

[No.]

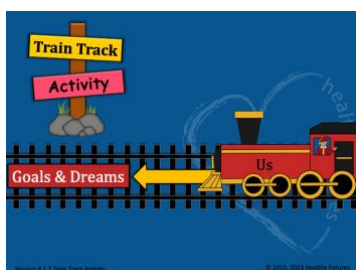
Will the passengers be frustrated?

[Yes.]

What has to happen for the train to get to its destination?

[Get back on track.]

[Advance slide from the derailed train back to the track.]



[Slide 4]

The same thing can happen in our lives. Let's think of _____ (name of the city where you are teaching) as us.

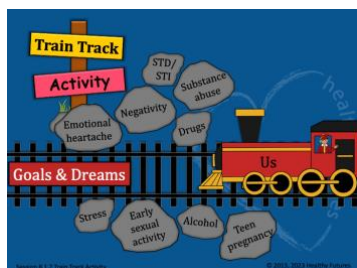
[Write us next to city name.]

And let's think of our train's destination as our goals and dreams.

[Advance slide to goals and dreams next to the destination at the top of the train track.]

What is the best way for us to achieve our goals and dreams?

[In a straight line, directly up, etc.]



[Slide 5]

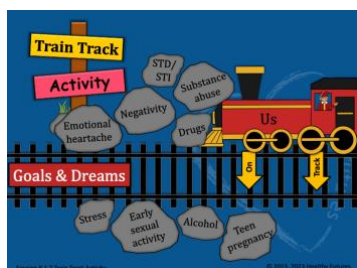
Educator states:

Yes. So we know the best way for us to achieve our goals and dreams is to stay on track and stay focused. But we also know there are things that can get us off track in life. What are some things that can happen in life that could get us off track and distract us from our goals and dreams?

[Drugs, alcohol, negativity, early sexual activity, teen pregnancy, STD/STI, emotional heartache, stress, substance abuse, etc.]

Right. Many of these things can distract us from our goals and dreams and derail us from our path. Sometimes we hear about negative relationships that can get you off track. If someone makes a decision and gets off track, does that mean they can't achieve their goals and dreams?

[No.]



[Slide 6]

What do they have to do?

[Get back on track.]

Notes:

Notes:**Educator states:**

As we discussed earlier, Healthy Futures activities always have a meaning. The meaning behind this activity is when you get off track, you have two choices. You can choose to stay off track and potentially go even further off track, or you can choose to get back on track and continue to focus on your goals and dreams. But that is your choice.

These are the types of decisions you have to make in life. Obstacles are going to come along but it is your choice how you deal with them. For example, if you choose to become sexually active at a young age, it can definitely get you off track and make it a lot harder to achieve your goals and dreams. It is a decision you have to make. At Healthy Futures we believe the healthiest lifestyle for teenagers is to delay sexual activity. But it all comes down to your choice.

And...The choices you make...NOW will affect you...LATER!



Notes:**Educator states:**

So today we talked about the importance of focusing on your goals and dreams and how your choices in relationships can either help you or make it harder to get there. We talked about how it really begins with a choice.

At the end of each session together, we are going to show you a video to review the three main points we covered.

The Big 3:

- You need to stay focused on your goals and dreams if you are going to be successful.
- Choices have consequences. There are three risks associated with sex: pregnancy/fathering a child, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and emotional heartache. Choosing to delay sexual activity will help you stay focused on your goals and dreams.
- The people you spend time with influence your decisions and your ability to achieve your goals and dreams. Choose to spend time with people that meet your needs in a healthy way.

Let's practice our Healthy Futures saying together. The choices you make...NOW will affect you...LATER!

[Pass out Parent/Trusted Adult Connection Form Session 8.1: Goals and Dreams, Healthy Relationships, and Emotional Needs or Alternative Inclusive version [Session 8.1 I.](#)]

