

Educators will learn all concepts on TWO levels:

- 1) To use in support of all student SEL/mental health, and
- 2) Most importantly, to apply these concepts to their own wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION: Getting Started with EmpowerU

This lesson is where all educators start in the course. It introduces EmpowerU’s mission and outlines the requirements of the program. The lesson also asks educators to identify and reflect on their teams, support systems, and relationships.

Essential Learnings
Review EmpowerU’s mission and program design.
Learn EmpowerU’s core concepts and how they inform EmpowerU programs.
Review course logistics.

LESSON 1: You Are in Control

This is the first official EmpowerU lesson. It focuses on the concept of an internal versus external locus of control and how that affects our ability to cope. In this lesson, educators will identify and reflect on the type/degree of locus of control they have and evaluate how that helps or prevents them from achieving their goals.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Differentiate between an external versus internal locus of control.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making	1.12.2 Describe the interrelationships of emotional, intellectual, physical, and social health.
Identify if they have more of an internal or external locus of control.		
Evaluate how developing an internal locus of control could help them meet goals in this course and in life.		

LESSON 2: My Values

In Lesson 2, educators are asked to demonstrate understanding of a core value and be able to articulate their personal core values. Then, they work to develop strategies to live more in alignment with these values in different areas of their life.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Standards
Identify core values and be able to articulate their personal core values. They will develop strategies to live more in alignment with these values in different areas of their life.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making	2.12.8 Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors.
Analyze how aligned they are to their values in day-to-day life.		
Reflect on how to live more aligned with their values.		1.12.3 Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated.

LESSON 3: Using My Strengths

This lesson is about personal strengths. Educators are asked to identify their personal strengths and reflect on how they can use those strengths to meet their goals. There is also a strengths assessment to help educators identify personal core strengths.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Analyze past experiences and the strengths used to get through struggles.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making	2.12.8 Analyze the influence of personal values and beliefs on individual health practices and behaviors.
Complete a strengths assessment to identify personal core strengths.		
Reflect on how their strengths help them meet goals.		

LESSON 4: Where I Want to Make Change

In this lesson, educators apply all that they've learned in the first three lessons to their personal lives and goals in a Starting Point Assessment. Then, they set goals in each of the four domains to work toward throughout the EmpowerU course.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Complete a comprehensive review within different wellness domains based upon the ASCA (academic/career, personal wellness, social/belonging, emotional/mental health) based upon Stages of Change (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1983) and gain insight into the areas that would be most helpful for them to begin personal change.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making	6.12.1 Assess personal health practices and overall health status.
Assimilate their reflections in each domain and based upon their review, set “smart” goals in four domains - personal wellness, emotional/mental health wellness, social wellness, and academic/career wellness to work toward throughout the EmpowerU lessons.		6.12.2 Develop a plan to attain a personal health goal that addresses strengths, needs, and risks.

LESSON 5: Small Steps to Make Change

Lesson 5 builds upon the goal setting in Lesson 4 by introducing the concept of “small steps” as a way to make lasting, realistic change. In this lesson, educators learn about the Five Phases of Change. Educators are then asked to reflect on where to begin making a small, minor change to an unwanted habit in their life.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Name the Five Phases of Change and, more specifically, how to successfully walk through the stages to create movement and get “unstuck” in each of the four domains that they studied in Lesson 4 (academic, personal wellness, social, emotional).	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness	7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.

Explain why making small changes is sustainable.	Responsible Decision-Making	7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
Identify and reflect on where in their life they will begin making a minor change.		7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

LESSON 6: Expectations and Motivation

After learning about the logistics of changing habits in Lesson 5, Lesson 6 focuses on the other piece of goal-setting: motivation. In this lesson, educators learn about different types of expectation and motivation. Then, they take an assessment that provides insight into how they personally respond to expectations of themselves and expectations that others have of them. After taking this assessment, educators learn which motivational strategies would work best for them based on their personal response to expectations, and how they can use those strategies to meet their goals.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Describe inner and outer expectations.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Responsible Decision-Making	7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
Analyze how their dominant response to expectations will help increase motivation.		7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
Apply strategies for most successful change.		7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

LESSON 7: Habit Change Strategies

Lesson 7 continues the conversation surrounding habit change in Lessons 5 and 6 by introducing habit change strategies. This lesson discusses five specific habit change strategies and asks educators to apply one of them to a habit they want to increase or decrease. Throughout the lesson, educators identify strategies best suited for themselves based on their response to expectations and apply that knowledge to their goal(s) from Lesson 4.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Identify different habit change strategies and develop an understanding of the unique habit change strategies that work best for them to eliminate or reduce unwanted behaviors.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness	7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.

Apply a habit change strategy to the habit they either want to increase or decrease.	Responsible Decision-Making	7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
Analyze how all strategies can help them better meet their goals.		7.12.3 Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others.

LESSON 8: The Power of My Thoughts

The next few lessons are focused on thoughts, specifically negative or ruminating worried thoughts and anxiety. Lesson 8 kickstarts that learning by focusing on the brain, specifically the power of thoughts and how they build. Educators learn how thoughts can create emotions and chemical and physical change in their brains in both helpful and hurtful ways. They also learn about subconscious thoughts and how they build over time. More importantly, they learn that they can talk back to their hurtful subconscious thoughts using their Inner Coach. The lesson concludes with reflective questions asking educators to identify their own helpful and hurtful subconscious thought patterns.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Explain the pathway of a thought.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
Demonstrate understanding of the power of a thought and how it builds in the brain. They will understand how thoughts can create emotions and chemical and physical change in their brains in both helpful and hurtful ways.		5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.
Identify personal thought patterns and demonstrate understanding of how they can control their thoughts and emotions and identify practical strategies to create real, positive change within their brain structure.		6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.

LESSON 9: Thinking Traps

This lesson is about Thinking Traps (persistent negative thoughts). Educators continue to learn about negative subconscious thoughts and how they can distort thoughts and beliefs over time. They then examine a specific area of worry or anxiety that gets in their way of meeting goals and identify Thinking Traps that promote this worry. Finally, they practice using their Inner Coach to challenge their Thinking Trap(s).

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Understand how a negative subconscious distorts thoughts and beliefs over time.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills	5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.

Identify a specific area of worry or anxiety that gets in their way of meeting goals and identify Thinking Traps that promote this worry.	Responsible Decision-Making	5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.
Examine personal Thinking Traps as a way to start increasing their Inner Coach to combat hurtful or worried thinking.		6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.

LESSON 10: Thoughts and Emotions

This lesson builds upon the learning from Lessons 8 and 9, specifically focusing on the relationship between thoughts and emotions. In this lesson, educators learn about the experience -> thought -> emotion -> action cycle. More importantly, educators learn that they can control their thoughts and emotions using their Inner Coach.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Identify how emotions/fear response can take over the brain and cut off access to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) or logical thinking.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
Demonstrate understanding of the difference between a thought, a feeling, and a fact. They will demonstrate understanding of the different ways that feelings develop from thoughts and how they can process them effectively.		5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.
Examine how using the Inner Coach to identify the emotion and talk back to it can keep personal control.		6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.

LESSON 11: Disrupting a Negative Cycle

In this lesson, educators learn how to stop a hurtful thought in low and high stress situations, recruiting different strategies for each situation. They will demonstrate mastery of a comprehensive CBT approach to change ingrained distorted thoughts into more realistic and encouraging thoughts through intentional personal practice.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Demonstrate the hand model and “Flip Your Lid.”	Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
Examine how to disrupt a negative cycle when emotions are big.		5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful

		decision-making process in health-related situations.
Identify strategies to disrupt negative cycles by demonstrating knowledge on how to stop a hurtful thought in low and high stress situations, recruiting different strategies for each situation.		6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.

LESSON 12: Thinking Realistically

Lesson 12 focuses on using realistic thinking as a tool to disrupt negative, hurtful subconscious thought patterns. Educators learn how to eliminate or reduce persistent negative thoughts by replacing them with positive, realistic thoughts.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Examine ways to change hurtful subconscious thought patterns.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	5.12.1 Examine barriers that can hinder healthy decision making.
		5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.
Demonstrate the ability to utilize realistic thinking (Three Cs) as a strategy to change hurtful thoughts into realistic thoughts that can help.		6.12.3 Implement strategies and monitor progress in achieving a personal health goal.

LESSON 13: What is Stress?

This lesson is all about stress, specifically its physiological and psychological effects. Educators will learn what causes stress and what can happen if we let it build up over time (leave it unattended).

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding about what causes stress and the physiological and psychological effects of stress.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems
Analyze how stress triggers a range of emotions.		4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use

Describe the unhealthy effects of unattended stress.		when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult.
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LESSON 14: Pause and Check In

Lesson 14 builds on the previous lesson and dives deeper into the stress response. In this lesson, educators will learn how to recognize stress building and, more importantly, what they can do to manage it.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Explain the importance of recognizing early responses to stress.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems
Identify their own early responses to stress building.		4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult.
Examine personal levels of stress		

LESSON 15: Strategies to Manage Stress

This lesson focuses on providing educators with the tools they need to manage their stress levels every day. Educators will not only learn multiple different stress management strategies, but they will also identify specific ones that work for them and determine when and where they could use them.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Demonstrate an understanding of proactive and reactive stress management strategies.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems
Identify personal current level of participation in these strategies.		4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult.
Determine when to use strategies in relation to levels of stress.		

LESSON 16: Processing Difficult Emotions

In this lesson, educators learn to identify and process difficult emotions and uncontrollable stressors (things that causes the most stress but cannot be changed) using a four-step model. They then identify their biggest uncontrollable stressor and practice processing it using the four steps.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Identify personal triggers for stress/anxiety in their own life and categorize them into controllable stressors and importance of outcome.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	1.22. The student will analyze the impact of personal health behaviors on the functioning of body systems
Learn to process your emotions in a healthy way.		4.1. The student will evaluate different strategies to use when making decisions related to the health needs and risks of young adult.

LESSON 17: Belonging

The last few lessons are focused on social connection. Lesson 17 kickstarts that learning by asking educators to reflect on where they feel personal belonging in their relationships and friendships. Educators are asked to discern between relationships with true belonging versus relationships where they are just fitting in. They learn about the difference between changing their values to fit in and changing small behaviors to connect with people at all levels, especially at the beginning of relationships.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Assess where they feel valued and included for who they are.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health
Develop the ability to discern between relationships with true belonging versus relationships where they are just fitting in and will demonstrate understanding of areas of their life where they want to foster more belonging.		4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
Examine how feeling a sense of belonging is an important piece of community.		4.12.3 Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

LESSON 18: Creating Community

This lesson introduces the levels of friendship, emphasizing the importance of creating connections with people at all levels (Acquaintances, Circumstantial Friends, Close Friends, Best Friends). Educators will use this framework to examine their own personal friendships and supports, helping to guide steps forward in their relationships. This lesson specifically focuses on the first two levels - Acquaintances and Circumstantial friendships – and the value of those connections.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Examine personal friendships and supports.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.
Determine the value of acquaintances and circumstantial friends and supports.		8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.
Apply understanding of personal criteria to increase intentional reflections for what they value in a relationship as people move through the levels, again using this to increase their Inner Coach to accept people at different levels.		

LESSON 19: Meaningful Connections

Lesson 19 centers on the last two levels of friendship: Close and Best Friends. In this lesson, educators reflect on the qualities that they value in a close or best friend and identify appropriate behaviors to build connection in friendships, including safe disclosure and reasonable expectations of self and others. They then apply this knowledge to their own social circle, identifying relationships and supports that are at this closest level of friendship.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Assess the attributes that are important to them in a close or best friend.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.
Analyze the changes they can make to move to the next level of friendship, including safe disclosure and reasonable expectations of self and others.		8.12.1 Utilize accurate peer and societal norms to formulate a health-enhancing message.
		8.12.2 Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
		4.12.1 Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health

LESSON 20: Friendship Changes

The lessons on friendship conclude with Lesson 20, which is about friendship change and transition. In this lesson, educators learn more about friendship changes and strategies to deal with friendship changes throughout their lives.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Reflect on the various ways in which friendships change and why.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	4.12.2 Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
Learn strategies to help cope with friendship changes.		4.12.3 Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.
		4.12.4 Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.

COURSE FINAL: Final Wrap-Up

This course concludes with a final wrap-up lesson. Educators complete a Next Point Assessment (similar to the Starting Point Assessment from Lesson 4), a comprehensive review of different wellness domains based upon the ASCA (academic/career, personal wellness, social/belonging, emotional/mental health). After completing the Next Point Assessment, they reflect on their growth throughout the course, gaining insight into their improvements based on the Stages of Change model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). Then, they identify strategies to use after the course is complete.

Essential Learnings	CASEL Competencies	National Health Education Standards
Take a Next Point Assessment similar to the Starting Point Assessment taken at the beginning of the course.	Self-Awareness Self-Management Social Awareness Relationship Skills Responsible Decision-Making	1.12.2 The student will analyze the interrelationships of mental, emotional, social, and physical health throughout life.
Compare the Next Point Assessment to the Starting Point Assessment to determine what they want to work on after this course is complete.		7.12.1 Analyze the role of individual responsibility for enhancing health.
Identify strategies based on learning from this course to help be successful in meeting a goal/s after the course is complete.		7.12.2 Demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors that will maintain or improve the health of self and others.
Finish by completing a course survey.		

