Introduction

The California School Health Centers Association (CSHC) upholds the belief that children and youth are the primary stakeholders in school-based health care. The organization works to ensure that youth voice is present in both the school health setting, as well as local, state, and national policy arenas. This curriculum provides tools, activities, and resources that support youth-led advocacy, collective youth organizing, and policy mobilization planning.

1 2007-2009 Youth Board member George Chacon at 2009 School Health Day at the Capitol, Sacramento, CA

The guide draws from practice-based modules and refers to community organizing and youth development theoretical frameworks. Youth leaders and adult allies are encouraged to apply the curriculum, use its supplemental resources, and modify the material per the needs and expectations of the group.

Who We Are: The California School Health Centers Association

The California School Health Centers Association is the statewide organization leading the movement to put health care where kids are—in schools. Our mission is to promote the health and academic success of children and youth by increasing access to the high quality health care and support services provided by school health centers. CSHC pursues this mission by advocating for public policies that support school health centers; building support among policymakers, community leaders, parents and students; and providing technical support to new and existing school health centers.

CSHC Youth Programs

In 2007, CSHC formed the Youth Board, a group of young people from across California committed to the advancement of school-based health care. In its formative years, the Youth Board worked in the areas of policy advocacy, technical assistance, and youth engagement. Now, the Youth Board supports the CSHC Youth to Youth (Y2Y) Network that connects high school-aged school health advocates to the broader school health movement in California. In addition to the Y2Y program, Youth Board members continue to perform advocacy actions and deliver technical assistance to youth and adults on youth engagement.

Curriculum Abbreviations and Symbols

G Full group discussion
S Small group (3-4 people) discussion
P Paired discussion

*Chart-writing should be done at every opportunity to create group memory and recognize all participation as group contributions

Establishing the Context for Action

Analyzing the Older and Bigger Picture

Formidable policy advocacy pays respect to the older and bigger picture. In an effort to recognize the connections between his/her/ourstories and current advocacy work, you should facilitate youth discussions on what *past* situations have led to *present* advocacy actions. Depending on the nature of the discussion, you can go as far back as 20th century health care policy to as recent as the 2010 Affordable Care Act, or as broadly as international health to as local as your school campus.

"What brings you here?"
G ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 10 MINUTES

The root of this activity is illustrating to youth *what's in it for them*. After you facilitate this connection, young can see how many of their experiences are related to or products of the older and bigger picture.

- **Explain** the importance of putting policy action in the context of young people's experiences.

- **Ask** youth to answer the following questions as a group:
  - Why are you involved in this program/project/activity?
  - What keeps you involved?
  - Why is this program/project/activity important to you?

- **Draw** the connection between their answers to the policy action at hand
  - For example: If youth will be speaking with a legislator to advocate for a local health bill, why is this bill important to *them* (not just the legislator) and their previous answers? How will this bill affect their program/project/activity?

- **Map** out, visually and verbally, how this policy action has the potential to affect their current experience and the experiences of others

Policy Advocacy Basics

12009 School Health Day at the Capitol: Youth advocates and adult allies, Sacramento, CA

Policy Advocacy Primer
G ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 15 MINUTES

- **Review** the following informational sheet with your youth (originally tailored for middle school-aged youth).

- **Ask** youth to consider *policy* and *advocacy* in their experience:
    o What policies exist around you?
    o What policies are helpful in your community?
    o What policies would you change?
    o Have you ever advocated for something? For example, a friend to run for student office? A later curfew? A bigger allowance?
    o Have you ever advocated in your community?
    o For what *policies* would you *advocate*?

- **Emphasize** the strength of youth-led policy advocacy.
    o Have a youth leader speak on their policy advocacy experience
    o Site instances of youth-led movements from the past and present with strong attention to school health examples

Policy Advocacy and YOU!

What's a policy?

A **policy** is a *plan of action* created, adopted, or put into practice by an individual, group, or government body.

> For example: "My youth leadership team has a collective **policy** about event planning. First, we share our ideas and then, we discuss and vote on what we should do for the event. Finally, we assign roles and responsibilities equally amongst ourselves."

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is *active support* for an idea, cause, or belief. Individuals and organizations *advocate* for what is important to them and their communities.

> For example: "My neighborhood council **advocates** for more public parks because our community values physical activity, safety, and family recreation."

So then, what's policy advocacy?

Policy advocacy is an effort to support, change, or put into action a new or existing policy.

> For example: "We are all involved in **policy advocacy**. We want a better future for our communities by advocating and supporting local policies that support our health, education, and success as youth leaders."

As a youth leader, what can I do?

Youth are the most important individuals when it comes to young people's health, education, and complete wellness because youth have first-hand knowledge of what's affecting them.

That means *you* are important in policy advocacy because you are a leader amongst your peers, on your campuses, and in your communities. *You* can organize a movement for positive, sustainable change.

MUTTS by Patrick McDonnell

POWER TO THE PEEPLES!

www.humanecalifornia.org

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The Communications Front

Non-Violent Communications Activity
Adapted from EastSide Arts Alliance, Oakland, CA
GP ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

- **Review** the following worksheet as a group.

- **Emphasize** the following the communications basics:
  o Messages should be clear and concise.
  o You should craft and deliver your message in a way that is meaningful to its *primary* and *secondary audiences* (more on tailoring your message to follow).
  o The most powerful messages can be unspoken. Pause, breathe, and thoroughly consider what you are saying.

- **Instruct** youth to fill out the worksheet individually.

- **Pair** youth and have them share their messages
  o Request that youth completely face each other or sit directly in front of one another
  o Depending on individuals' comfort levels, ask participants to make *one point of contact* (e.g. holding hands, pressing palms, hands on shoulders, toes touching) and hold stable eye contact as they deliver their messages. This will create more genuine listening.
  o Ask youth to reflect on their paired sharing:
    ▪ How did it feel to speak your message?
    ▪ How did it feel to hear another's message?
    ▪ Did eye contact or touch change the way you gave/received the message?

- **Ask** youth if they would like to share their message with the larger group.

- **Ask** youth to consider the following questions after they complete the activity and apply it to their future advocacy work:
  o What conditions are affecting me and my peers?
  o What policies are affecting my health and the health of my community?
  o How do we bring social justice and policy advocacy together?
  o How can we build alliances and partnerships to make *systemic change*?

Policy Advocacy and ME!

This activity is adapted from EastSide Arts Alliance (Oakland, CA) and its non-violent communications unit. In policy advocacy, we must channel our passion for systemic change by communicating that which is important to us in the clearest and most genuine way.

Take a moment and fill in the spaces below. Remember to think deeply about your answers.

My name is _____.

I'm from _____ (neighborhood/town), and I go to _____ (school).

When I see/hear _____ in my community,

I feel _____ because _____.

In my community, we have/need _____.

Will you _____?

For example:

My name is Daniel Yim.

I'm from San Francisco, and I went to Balboa High School.

When I see students who lack health services in my community,

I feel concerned because they deserve access to health resources.

In my community, we need more health services.

Will you help make this possible?

Crafting (Y)Our Message
GSP ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 20 MINUTES

At the end of this activity, youth should be able to deliver a short individual and group message pertaining to their school-based health center or program/activity/project and policy objective.

- **Instruct** youth to take two minutes to write down one-sentence answers to the following questions and have youth share their answers with a partner. This will be repeated three times for these three questions:
    o What is the importance of school-based health centers or your program/activity/project?
    o Why are school-based health centers or your program/activity/project important to you?
    o Why should others care about school-based health centers or youth program/activity/project?

- **Request** youth to consolidate their three sentences and read their messages to the whole group.

- **Practice** delivery and provide input on the strengths of the message.

- **As a group**, identify where there are similarities in the messages and how they can combine the messages to support their policy objective.

Tailoring the Message for Different Audiences
GSP ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 30 MINUTES

Messages—whether spoken, seen, or acted—should be crafted with their audience(s) in mind. The *primary audience* is for whom the message is intentionally created. The primary audience should be able to understand your message clearly and respond/react/connect meaningfully to its purpose.

The *secondary audience* may see or hear your message; however, it is not the main recipient of your message. Nevertheless, the secondary audience should be able to infer from and understand the importance of your message.

Therefore, while your primary audience should be your message's focus, your message shouldn't be so esoteric or obscure that others cannot understand its significance.

- **As a group**, discuss the different audiences with whom youth might interact in their advocacy work. Examples include:
    o Community stakeholders
    o Legislators and policymakers
    o School administration

- School faculty
- Parents
- Health care providers
- Young people

- **Ask** youth to discuss the following questions:
  - Do you speak to your parent or caregiver any different than when you speak to your best friend or partner?
  - How do your tone, message, and mannerisms change?
  - How might you change your approach/message when speaking with a legislator versus your friend?
  - (Depending on the focus of your policy objective) For whom are we targeting our message?

- **In four small groups**, assign the audience for which the groups are tailoring their message. The groups include:
  - Parents
  - School administration and teachers
  - Friends and other youth
  - Legislators

- **Building** on the Creating (Y)Our message activity, have youth tailor their group message to fit their primary audience. Ask them to consider:
  - When thinking about members of your primary audience, what do you think is important to them? In other words, what biases do they have?
  - Given their values and experiences, how should you change your message so it is understandable to and meaningful for them? For example, your school-based health center or program/project/activity might be more meaningful to a school administrator if they knew that it would boost test scores or school attendance.

- **Practice** delivering the four messages and have the whole group infer which audience each group had. Ask what verbal cues or mannerisms helped them infer which audience a group had.

- **Provide** positive feedback and comments for any future improvement.

Using Different Media for Messaging
GS ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 30 MINUTES
with accompanying presentation

Strategies for Advocacy
GS ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 75 MINUTES
with accompanying presentation

Group Asset Assessment
G ACTIVITY | SUGGESTED TIME: 10 MINUTES

Assessments | Evaluations | Next Steps

Resources and Tools

California Center for Civic Participation
www.californiacenter.org

California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness (CANFIT)
www.canfit.org

EastSide Arts Alliance
www.eastsideartsalliance.com

Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC)
www.sparcmurals.org

Community Network for Youth Development
www.cnyd.org

National Assembly for School-Based Health Care: Web-based youth engagement toolkit
[projected launch: fall 2011]