# **Chapter 7: Case Studies**

## **Recommendations for Quality Health Education Teaching**

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# 1. Consult reliable Canadian sources of health-related information.

Mr. Singh receives a call from a parent indicating that she has been reading up on the vaccine Gardasil*.* She wants Mr. Singh to know that under no circumstances will her son be receiving the vaccine, because she read that the vaccine has led to a number of fatalities.

1. How should Mr. Singh handle the conversation in this phone call?
2. How can the teacher go about addressing the concerns raised by the parent?
3. Where could Mr. Singh go to find trusted sources of information related to the Gardasil vaccine?
4. After the call with the parent, what steps would you suggest Mr. Singh take to handle this situation?

# 2. Think critically about sources of health-related information.

You are serving as a staff representative on the parent advisory council. Two of the parents on that council present a fundraising idea touted as health enhancing. The two parents proceed to share a variety of information pamphlets and a PowerPoint on a natural vegan product that has been “shown to kill all kinds of cancers” while helping with brain development. They are proposing that this product be sold to students during the school day as part of the healthy schools initiative and also be used as a school fundraising project. As a health education teacher, you have concerns.

1. What are your concerns?
2. How will you handle this situation in the council meeting?
3. After the meeting, who should you consult?
4. What can you do to carefully manage the relationships on the council while addressing your concerns?
5. In your roles as staff representative to the council and health education teacher, what is your responsibility to your students?

# 3. Engage parents as partners.

You are teaching at a wonderfully diverse elementary school in a suburb of a major metropolitan city. The community has many newcomer children and families, who add richness to your class and environment. As you begin planning next week’s health education lesson, you see that you will be teaching about healthy relationships and sexuality.

1. Discuss your views on whether you should engage parents ahead of the upcoming unit.
2. Describe how you might prepare the parents of your students for the coming week’s health education topic.
3. Describe how you might prepare your students for the coming week’s health education topic.
4. Considering the diversity of your students, what bearing do their family backgrounds have on your planning and teaching decisions?

# 4. Know and manage your biases and beliefs.

In recent months Mr. Gym has decided to make a significant change in his eating habits. Mr. Gym has been reading books on eating a vegan diet. Mr. Gym has attended cooking classes and a symposium on vegan eating, and he has watched documentaries celebrating the merits of eating this way. Mr. Gym is entering into a nutrition education unit with outcomes and expectations built solidly upon Canada Food Guide policy and recommendations. In his first class with students, he proceeds to spend 15 minutes espousing the benefits a vegan diet, and he impresses upon his students that they should consider this lifestyle too. Mr. Gym receives a call from a parent the next morning asking for a meeting to discuss his first nutrition education lesson.

1. What do you think the parent would like to discuss with Mr. Gym?
2. What message is Mr. Gym sending to students? Consider what a student might be thinking and feeling during this lesson.
3. What issues are present in this case?
4. Offer Mr. Gym suggestions that could help him resolve this situation.

# 5. Use a mindfulness approach.

You are a teacher in a small urban school that is composed mostly of students who were born in Canada. Both staff and students are always in a rush, and many complain that they feel as though there is not enough time in the day. In passing, a colleague has told you about an incident of student misunderstanding and mistreatment of a group of newcomer students. You have heard about mindfulness and want to use it to make your classroom (and possibly the whole school) feel less hectic and more accepting.

1. What steps would you plan to develop mindfulness in your own classroom?
2. What resources would you seek?
3. What strategies would you develop to implement your plan?
4. How would you involve and empower your students to take a leadership role to help you implement and promote mindfulness in your classroom and school? How about at home? How about in the community?

# 6. Manage student groupings.

In one of your health education classes, students are learning about spermatogenesis and the menstrual cycle. You can see that students are intrigued but a tad uneasy. In the lesson, you have included activities for students to discuss how these processes might affect a person physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally. At the points in the lesson where you want the students to work in groups, you tell them to find their own groups while you prepare for the next lesson activity.

1. What are the implications of this decision on students’ well-being?
2. What typically happens when we allow students to group themselves? Discuss why this might happen.
3. What is the relationship between student-directed groupings and a safe learning environment?
4. What could you do differently?
5. Discuss the relationship between grouping students and quality health education.

# 7. Help students take learning beyond the classroom.

Principal Farrah has asked you, the health education teacher, to consider how your colleagues could align health education with systemwide health and well-being strategies.

1. What education policies in your province or territory relate to school health and student well-being?
2. Choose a grade level. Then describe the potential alignment between health education outcomes in your province or territory and the curriculum for that grade level.
3. As a health education teacher, what can you do to further systemwide health initiatives?