

Factors That Impact Driving

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS (NHES) 9-12

Standard 5: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on healthy behaviors.

- 5.12.2 Determine the value of applying a thoughtful decision-making process in health-related situations.
- 5.12.3 Justify when individual or collaborative decision-making is appropriate.
- 5.12.4 Generate alternatives to health-related issues or problems.

OBJECTIVES

Your teen driver education objective is to help students make appropriate driving decisions by first analyzing how various factors impact teen driver safety. Students will achieve this objective by:

- Explaining how speed affects teenage driving
- Determining the impact of environmental conditions on teenage driving behaviors
- Examining the effects of various mental and physical conditions on teenage driving behaviors
- Determining the reasons people “take chances” when driving

SPEEDING AND DRIVING

1. Have students list different speed limits they encounter while riding or driving in the car.
2. Ask students where they see lower speed limits (residential neighborhoods, etc.) versus where they have seen higher speed limits (highways).
3. Have students discuss the reasons for the variations in speed limits and ask them what might happen if there was just one speed limit, regardless of location.
4. Have students explain the importance of obeying speed limits and the dangers of not obeying speed limits.

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ACTIVITY 1:

1. Use masking tape to mark out a 4' x 4' square on the floor.
2. Have four (4) students position themselves on the square. (One student on each strip of tape)
3. Have students walk slowly around the square as you play music.
4. Tell students that when the music stops, they should immediately stop walking.
5. Stop the music.
6. Have students examine where they are in relation to one another. Because they were walking slowly, they should still have some distance between one another.
7. Have students begin walking around the square again. This time, tell students to walk briskly and to continue to increase their speed as they walk.
8. Again, play music as they walk.
9. Abruptly stop the music.
10. Ask students what they noticed this time. (Students will most likely be extremely close or bump into one another.)
11. Explain that when one is traveling at a high rate of speed, it is more difficult to stop abruptly and thus they are more likely to have an accident.

ENVIRONMENT AND DRIVING

1. Explain that in normal driving conditions (no extreme weather), it is important to adhere to the speed limit and keep a safe distance between cars.
2. Ask students how environmental conditions, such as poor weather, might impact driving.
3. Explain that when you are traveling at a high rate of speed it is more difficult to stop abruptly and they are more likely to have an accident.

ACTIVITY 2:

1. Have students brainstorm various environmental conditions that might impact driving. For example, frost/ice, sun glare, fog, night driving, and heavy rain.
2. Next to each condition listed, describe the ways in which they would need to adjust their driving to accommodate for the condition.

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DISPOSITIONS AND DRIVING

1. Ask students to explain why driving can be considered both a physical and mental activity.
2. Explain that safe driving means being mentally alert and physically alert.
3. Tell students that if we are not in optimal physical or mental condition, we put ourselves and others at risk.
4. Tell students that it is best for us to consider our physical and mental condition before we decide to drive.

ACTIVITY 3:

1. Create index cards that describe various physical and mental conditions of a group of drivers (Put each condition on a separate card):
 - Student who stayed up all night studying and is extremely tired
 - Girl who just broke up with her boyfriend and is crying uncontrollably
 - Angry parent who keeps turning around to yell at the kids in the back seat
 - Fearful, older driver who is driving well below the speed limit
 - Aggressive driver with road rage who yells at others on the road
 - A driver who is physically and mentally alert, obeys the rules of the road and is driving the posted speed limit (good driver)
 - A person who has lost glasses and is having a hard time seeing
 - A businessman who is extremely happy about a new promotion; he has the music blasting and is singing, dancing, and accelerating while driving
 - A driver suffering from a migraine headache who is having a hard time focusing and staying in his/her own lane
2. Distribute cards to selected students.
3. Tell students they must “drive” (walk) around the classroom, or in a designated area of the classroom, exhibiting the behaviors described on their card.
4. Have the good driver (see above) start. Then direct other students to join in as well.
5. Students who are not driving should watch carefully and try to determine the mental and/or physical conditions of the drivers. They should note how the drivers interact on the road and any potential dangers they witness.
6. After the allotted driving time, have the whole class discuss what they noticed.

RISKY DECISIONS AND DRIVING

1. Ask students to brainstorm some risky behaviors people engage in while driving.
2. Tell students that two risky behaviors that cause a lot of crashes are tailgating and driving while drowsy.
3. Discuss why people may “take chances” when driving.
4. Explain to students that risky behaviors can lead to accidents.

ACTIVITY 4:

1. Tell students that their school is starting a bumper sticker campaign to help teen drivers make better decisions.
2. Ask students to name some bumper stickers they remember seeing on cars. Have students discuss what makes these bumper stickers memorable.
3. Have students discuss the purpose(s) of bumper stickers. List the characteristics of “successful” bumper stickers.
4. Have students design bumper stickers to remind teen drivers, and others, not to take chances while driving.
5. Distribute markers and paper to students. Instruct them to design bumper stickers that focus on making better decisions and avoiding risky behavior.
6. Remind students to consider what phrases, images, and ideas might appeal to their desired audience.
7. Each student should try to create two (2) bumper stickers. Have each student choose two topics from different activities, 1–3. Alternatively, you could assign two topics to each student, so you can be sure to cover many of the topics.
8. After the allotted time, have students share their bumper stickers with their classmates.
9. The teacher may choose to post the bumper stickers around the classroom.

REFERENCES:

- [DMV: Common Driving Mistakes Teens Make](#)
- [DMV: Avoiding Auto Accidents](#)
- [CDC: Parents Are the Key to Safe Teen Drivers](#)
- [National Safety Council: These Lessons Will Make Your Teen a Better Driver](#)