



FINDING MY PASSION



A “PLUG AND PLAY”
ACTIVITY FOR YOUTH



FACILITATOR GUIDE

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Overview

This lesson, designed to supplement your school's or organization's programming with youth, will help you guide youth in discovering what they love to do and what gives them a sense of purpose. Youth will identify the opportunities and resources available in a variety of community settings (e.g., school, neighborhood, faith-based and community organizations) to become involved in healthy and meaningful activities (e.g., sports, clubs, school, government, music, art, internships, volunteer or mentoring opportunities). By identifying the internal and external assets they possess, youth will learn to use their strengths to create a future with positive outcomes. By participating in positive, goal-directed activities, youth will gain important skills (including leadership and problem-solving skills), foster positive relationships with peers and adults, and develop positive character traits. Participation in healthy, constructive activities may also lessen their chances of engaging in risky behaviors (youth.gov, 2020).

KEY TOPICS	AUDIENCE	LENGTH
Self-awareness, sense of purpose, support systems, developmental assets, constructive activities	Middle and high school youth	45 minutes of instructional time plus homework assignment and options for a separate activity for reflection with varying lengths
GOALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth will develop greater self-awareness and a sense of purpose.Youth will develop greater appreciation for the support systems that exist in their communities and strengthen their connection to adults and peers who support engagement in healthy, constructive activities.Youth will find and try a new constructive activity to occupy their time.Youth will become less likely to engage in unhealthy risk behaviors.		
KEY MESSAGES FOR YOUTH		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Getting involved in constructive activities that you care about can help you develop skills and confidence in yourself.Discovering what you are passionate about can help you discover who you are as an individual.Having interests and goals helps you know yourself better and helps you make the healthiest decisions for yourself and your future.Being part of a team that is working toward a goal can help you develop positive relationships with peers.Engaging in activities to help others will help you become more self-confident and selfless.		

Before You Start

To get ready to deliver this lesson, review this checklist and gather all the materials and technology you will need. Some activities will require advance preparation. Read the Facilitator Guide to familiarize yourself with each section.

Resource	How to Prepare	Where You Will Use this Resource
Laptop or tablet device		Entire Lesson
Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard		Entire Lesson
Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)		Entire Lesson
Finding My Passion Slide Deck	Download the resource and have it open and ready to present from your laptop, tablet, or other device.	Section 1, Part 1 Section 2, Part 1 Section 2, Part 2 Section 4, Options 2, 3, and 4
Find Your Passion Video Collage	Download the resource and have it open and ready to present from your laptop, tablet, or other device.	Section 1, Part 1
Finding My Passion Digital Planner	Download the resource and share it with students before the lesson. The Finding My Passion Digital Planner is a fillable pdf. Students can fill it out on their own laptops or tablets and save or print it. Alternatively, you can print copies before the lesson for each student to fill out with pen or pencil.	Section 1, Part 2 Section 2, Part 3 Section 3
Chalkboard, whiteboard, flip chart, or means to display results of brainstorming activity (e.g., shared Google Doc, Google Slides, Zoom's whiteboard feature)		Section 1, Part 1 Section 4, Option 3

Resource	How to Prepare	Where You Will Use this Resource
<p>Optional Brainstorming Method: Poll Everywhere free basic account</p>	<p>Poll Everywhere can be used to engage students in brainstorming activities. Poll Everywhere shows the results in real time, which increases student engagement.</p> <p>Sign up for a free Poll Everywhere account prior to the class discussion. The free version allows for creating a question and having participants type in responses in real time via the Web or via SMS text messages.</p> <p>If you choose to use Poll Everywhere for brainstorming, read these instructions to learn how to set up a poll first. Choose the poll type called “Word cloud, Q&A, or open-ended questions.” Choose “presenter session” for your response mode.</p>	<p>Section 1, Part 1 Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask students the question, “What words or phrases come to mind when you think of the phrase, ‘constructive activity?’”</p> <p>Section 2, Part 2 Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask students the questions, “What is one type of support that can help you with the activity you chose to participate in? How will it help you?”</p>
<p>Optional: Private Instagram Page for Class Reflections</p>	<p>Follow these instructions to create a personal Instagram account for the class. Students will also need an account to follow the page. Make sure the account is set to “private.”</p>	<p>Section 4, Option 4</p>
<p>40 Developmental Assets</p>	<p>This lesson is informed by the 40 Developmental Assets established by The Search Institute. The developmental assets are building blocks for healthy youth development. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with these assets before beginning the lesson (https://www.search-institute.org/downloadable/Ann-Arbor-Handout-2.pdf). Many of these building blocks (e.g., empowerment, constructive use of time, positive values, social competencies, positive identity) can be strengthened by participation in this lesson.</p>	<p>Entire Lesson</p>

SECTION 1

What Excites and Inspires You?

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will understand that developmental assets are the “building blocks of healthy development that help young people become healthy, caring, and responsible.”
- Youth will define “constructive activities” and identify interests or activities that inspire them and help them develop valuable skills and qualities.
- Youth will research and document opportunities within their community—in their schools, neighborhoods, or in community-based or faith-based organizations—to engage in a healthy, constructive activity.
- Youth will explain how participating in constructive activities contributes to increased confidence and self-awareness and the development of healthy relationships and healthy decision-making skills.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Constructive activities

MATERIALS

- [Find Your Passion Video Collage](#)
- [Finding My Passion Slide Deck](#)
- [Finding My Passion Digital Planner](#)

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet device
- Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard
- Students’ school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)
- Poll Everywhere free account (optional)
- Chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart, or means to display results of brainstorming activity (e.g., shared Google Doc, Google Slides, Zoom’s whiteboard feature)

INTRODUCTION



SAY: This lesson is about getting involved in constructive activities that you care about. Discovering what you are passionate about can help you discover who you are as an individual and can help you be your best self. Young people who know who they are and where they are headed will make the healthiest decisions for themselves because they don’t want to let anything stand in the way of reaching their goals.

PART 1 | Defining “Constructive”—Class Discussion (12 minutes)

Stimulate students’ thinking about what constitutes a “constructive activity.”

1. Show the Find Your Passion Video Collage.



SAY: I’m going to show you a video of young people participating in a variety of constructive activities. As I play this video, think about what these activities have in common with each other. What adjectives describe them? How do they benefit the person participating in them? How do they benefit others? Make a list of words or phrases that come to mind.

Play the Find Your Passion Video Collage.

2. Guide students in creating a definition of the term, “constructive activities,” based on the video collage.



ASK: What words or phrases come to mind? Let’s make a list to help us come up with a definition.

Optional: Write students’ words or phrases on a flip chart, chalkboard, whiteboard, or shared screen.

Next, guide students toward thinking of additional aspects of the definition they may not have considered.

FACILITATOR TIP

Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask the question, “What words or phrases come to mind when you think of the phrase, “constructive activity?” See Before You Start on page 2 for instructions.



SAY: The word “constructive” is related to the word, “construct,” which means “to build.” When you participate in a constructive activity, you bring the building blocks of your talents, experience, and motivation. You also build or develop things by participating in something constructive.



ASK: What kinds of things are built or developed when you participate in constructive activities?

FACILITATOR TIP

Guide youth toward discovering that constructive activities help them

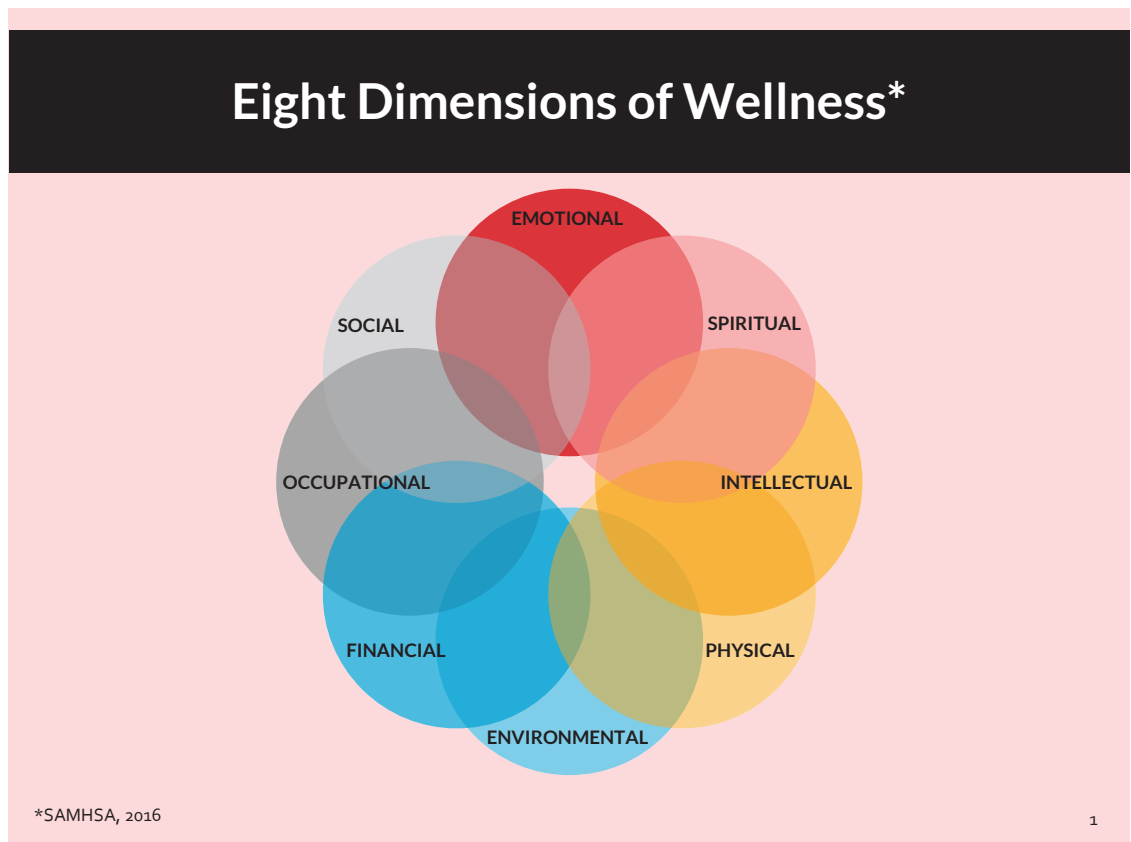
- **develop valuable skills** such as leadership skills, planning and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, athletic skills, and artistic skills;
- **develop positive values or qualities** such as caring, equality, integrity, honesty, and responsibility; and
- **produce something new or generate new ideas such as a song, drawing, poem, video, or new club.**

A constructive activity might bring about “improvement” or “growth.”



SAY: We’ve talked about how constructive activities contribute toward our personal development. One way to figure out if something is constructive is thinking about whether it contributes to one of the eight dimensions of wellness.

Show Slide #1 in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck (Eight Dimensions of Wellness).





SAY: Constructive activities generally contribute to our emotional, physical, occupational, financial, intellectual, social, environmental, or spiritual wellness.



ASK: Can you think of an example of a constructive activity that would fit in each of these categories? You can use an idea from the video if you want.

FACILITATOR TIP

If students can't think of an example for any of the categories, you can mention these as you go through the categories:

- **Emotional:** Helping a family member in need
- **Physical:** Playing a sport or working out at the gym
- **Occupational or financial:** Getting an internship or job
- **Intellectual:** Expressing creativity or creating art, like painting or writing poetry; learning a new language; learning a new software program or learning to code; reading; debate
- **Social:** Joining or starting a club at school or getting involved in a community-based organization
- **Environmental:** Participating in outdoor activities; decorating your room so it is pleasant to you
- **Spiritual:** Participating in a faith-based organization; creating a vision board that shows your values and sense of purpose; learning about belief systems that are different from your own; meditating or reflecting; appreciating the beauty of nature



SAY: Now, let's put it all together and come up with a common definition of “constructive activity.”

Use the words and phrases identified by the students to guide them through the process of writing a definition of “constructive activity.” Post it where students can see it for the rest of the lesson (e.g., chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart page, Google Doc, or other shared screen such as a Zoom whiteboard).

FACILITATOR TIP

These words might be used to guide the students toward a class definition: effective, positive, practical, productive, healthy, useful, valuable, improvement, growth, wellness, build, skills, qualities

3. Ask students to reflect on a time they engaged in a “constructive activity.”

As they reflect, refer them back to the class definition to ensure that their activity is constructive. Have them discuss the answer to these questions with a partner in person or in a virtual breakout room. Walk around the room or join breakout rooms to listen to students’ insights.



- ASK:**
- What were you doing and why do you consider that activity constructive?
 - What words come to mind when you think about how you felt engaging in the activity?

FACILITATOR TIP

Some examples that students could note include feeling joyful, hopeful, proud, inspired, happy, grateful, peaceful, satisfied, challenged, empowered, thrilled, or confident.

- What skills or qualities did you gain from participating in this activity? How can developing these skills or qualities contribute to your future success?
- How might engaging in these activities help you make healthy choices and avoid taking unhealthy risks when it comes to things like alcohol, drugs, or sexual activity?

FACILITATOR TIP

Guide youth toward this response or volunteer it.

“The more time you spend participating in constructive activities, the more you contribute to your future success. When you see yourself striving for and reaching your goals, you will be less willing to risk your future by taking risks when it comes to things like sex, drugs, or alcohol. For example, think about how getting pregnant or being involved in a pregnancy might affect a teen’s plans for college. Think about a teen who gets in a car crash because they were driving under the influence of alcohol. How could that affect their future?”

4. Close out the activity by sharing highlights of what you heard students say.

PART 2 | Exploring My Interests—Brainstorming Session (15 minutes)

Help students discover opportunities for participating in a constructive activity of particular interest to them.

1. Divide the class into groups based on interests.

Students can be in small groups in person or in virtual breakout rooms. Invite students to provide input on the categories and allow them to choose the category that interests them. You may also offer them the following ideas for categories:

- Leadership, volunteer programs in the community, or school-based community service programs
- Academic clubs (debate team, school newspaper)
- Sports or other physical activities
- Science, technology, engineering, or math
- Language-based activities like writing, poetry, or foreign languages
- Music, fine arts, or performing arts
- Jobs or internships

2. Have each student complete the Finding My Passion Digital Planner – Step 1: Exploring My Interests section.

Students should work individually to fill in the blanks in their planners about two potential activities they are interested in. Encourage students to use the internet for research and share information and ideas with group members to assist each other in their research.

FACILITATOR TIP: How to Help Students Find Resources for Their Activities

Try these Google search terms:

“Interest X” classes offered; Volunteer opportunities in “Interest Y”

Try these online platforms offering a variety of courses:

Coursera, Skillshare, Khan Academy

Check out your school’s online student services/academic advising page or school club fairs.

3. Assist students in their research.

Circulate among the students (either in classroom groups or within virtual breakout rooms) and provide additional suggestions based on your knowledge of the school's and community's resources.

4. Have students prioritize one activity they would like to engage in.

Stress the following:

- a. This activity should be accessible (students should have connections to a mentor or some access to resources in the community).
- b. Students will be reporting back on progress made.

5. Have each student briefly share their proposed activity with the class and answer the following question:



ASK: For each student, ask

“What skills or positive qualities do think you will gain by participating in this activity?”

SECTION 2

Making Connections. Mapping My Support Network.

OBJECTIVES

- Youth will be able to define the term “support network.”
- Youth will identify mentors and other sources of support who will help them get involved in the activity they identified in Section 1.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Support network

MATERIALS

- [Finding My Passion Digital Planner](#)
- [Finding My Passion Slide Deck](#)

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet device
- Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard
- Students’ school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)
- Poll Everywhere free account (optional)
- Chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart or means to display results of brainstorming activity (e.g., shared Google Doc, Zoom’s whiteboard feature)

PART 1 | Reflecting on Our Needs— Group Exercise (3 minutes)

1. Read the following scenario and have teens share how each of the people below might provide support to Katarina:



SAY: Katarina has recognized a need in her school for an afterschool club dedicated to poetry and spoken word because a number of students from her English class have expressed interest and have a talent for poetry or spoken word.

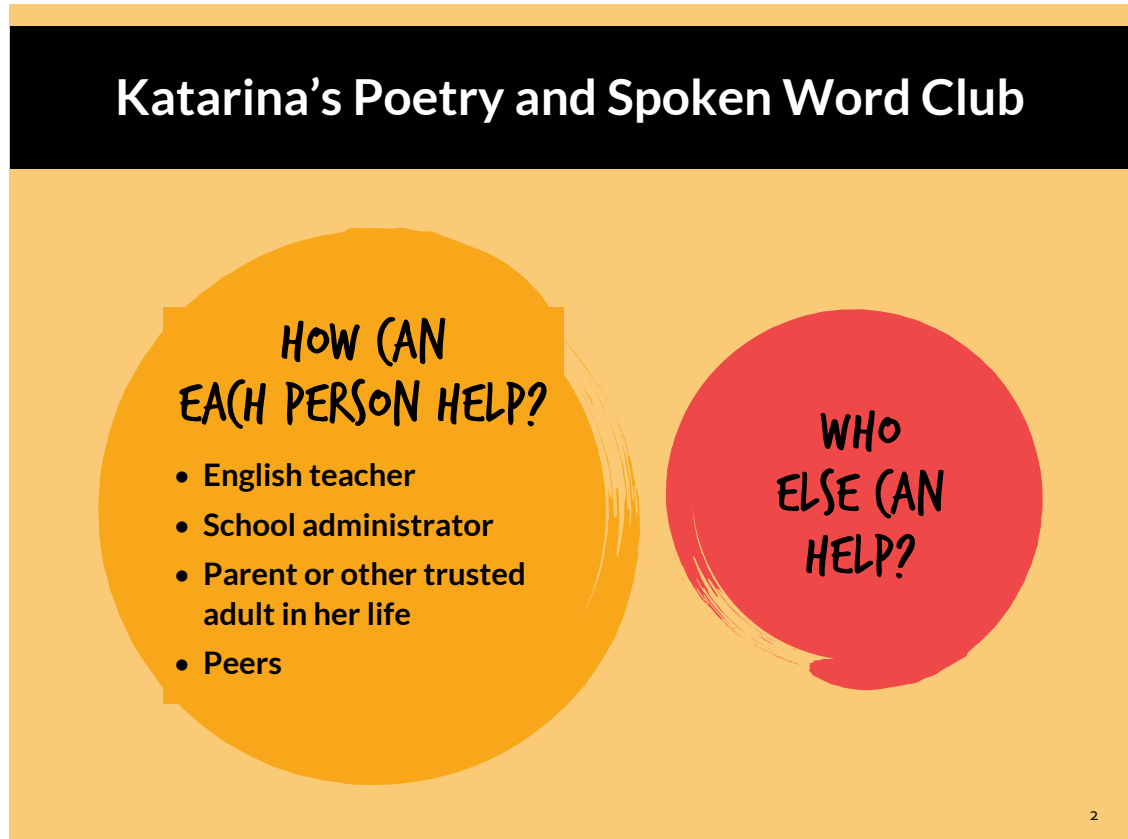
She is also looking for leadership opportunities and to find a creative outlet for herself.

She realizes that starting a poetry club would be a great idea! However, she has never started a club before. She's not really sure where to begin.



ASK: How might these people support her in starting a poetry club?

2. Show slide #2 in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck (Katarina’s Poetry and Spoken Word Club).



ASK: Who else could support her?



SAY: As you can see, in order to set goals and achieve them, we all need others to support us. For this reason, today you will be creating an action plan to get involved with an activity that interests you, and you will name some people in your lives who can support you. These people are part of your “support network.”

PART 2 | What Is a “Support Network,” and How Can It Help Me?— Class Discussion (5 minutes)

1. Explain to students what a “support network” is and what it can do for them.



SAY: A support network is composed of:

- Trusted people in your lives who can help you reach your goals and gain valuable skills and qualities.
- People who provide support in the form of problem-solving assistance, information or advice, material resources, practical help, or emotional support.

2. Present slide #3 (Examples of Support) in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck.

Examples of Support

<p>Problem Solving Assistance</p> <p>Example: Someone helps you explore the pros and cons of getting a bus pass to be able to get to the place where you will participate in your activity.</p>	<p>Material Resources</p> <p>Example: Someone loans you a piece of equipment you need for your chosen activity.</p>	
<p>Information or Advice</p> <p>Example: Someone gives you information about community support groups, educational activities, or activity groups where you can meet other young people with similar interests.</p>	<p>Emotional Support</p> <p>Example: Someone listens to you when you are discouraged, encourages you to keep trying, and reminds you that you have what it takes to be successful.</p>	
		<p>Practical Help</p> <p>Example: Someone helps you practice your interview skills so you can land an internship you want.</p>

3

3. Engage students in a quick brainstorming session to consider how a support network could help them engage in their priority activity.



ASK: What is one type of support that can help you with the activity you chose to participate in? How will it help you?

FACILITATOR TIP

Use Poll Everywhere as an optional brainstorming method to ask the questions, “What is one type of support that can help you with the activity you chose to participate in? How will it help you?”

See Before You Start on page 2 for instructions.

PART 3 | Mapping My Support Network – Individual Brainstorming (5 minutes)



SAY: Now, you will each use your Finding My Passion Digital Planner to map your support network.

Guide students as they work through the class activity in the **Finding My Passion Digital Planner, Step 2—Mapping My Support Network**. Students reflect on who in their network can help them get involved in the activities they researched in Section 1.

SECTION 3

Putting My Plans into Action (5 minutes plus homework assignment)

OBJECTIVES

- Students will prioritize one constructive activity and create an action plan to get involved in the activity.
- As a homework assignment, students will implement the first step in their action plan toward getting involved in the activity.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Action plan

MATERIALS

[Finding My Passion Digital Planner](#)

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- Laptop or tablet (if conducting a virtual class session)
- Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones (optional)

1. Students will use the Finding My Passion Digital Planner, Step 3—Putting My Plans into Action to help them create an action plan to get involved in the activity they chose.



SAY: Before attempting to reach a goal, it is helpful to plan out action steps. Now you will create an action plan to start participating in the activity you selected. Action plans help you break down a task or activity into smaller steps. Please use the information you've gathered to fill out Step 3 in your Finding My Passion Digital Planner. Please let me know if you have any questions as you fill out your action plans.

2. After students fill out their action plans:



SAY: For homework, please share your plan with an adult you trust, like your parent or guardian, a relative, or other adult you trust. Then, you should take the first step in your plan.

3. Give students a deadline by which to share their action plan with a trusted adult and take their first step.

4. Follow up with students to offer advice for getting involved in the activity of their choice.

If any students have identified activities that seem impractical or undefined, suggest ways they can create smaller action steps that are more reachable or more concrete.

SECTION 4

Reflection

(time requirement for this follow-up activity varies by format option)

OBJECTIVES

Students will share reflections on the steps they have taken to participate in a new constructive activity. By doing so, they will learn from each other about the benefits gained as well as potential facilitators and strategies for overcoming any potential barriers to engaging in constructive activities.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

- Reflection
- Challenges
- Goals

MATERIALS

- **Options 1-4:** [Finding My Passion Digital Planner](#) (for reference)
- **Options 2-4:** [Finding My Passion Slide Deck](#)

TECHNOLOGY/TOOLS

- **Option 1:**
 - Tables and/or poster board for in-person demonstrations
 - PowerPoint or Google Slides for students to make slides for virtual presentation
 - Projector or shared screen using videoconferencing platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard for virtual presentation
- **Option 3:**
 - Laptop or tablet device
 - Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones
 - Shared Google Doc or Google Slides
- **Option 4:**
 - Laptop or tablet device
 - Students' school or personal laptops, tablets, or mobile phones
 - Private Instagram Page (see instructions in Before You Start on page 2)

Choose one of the following four options for student reflection on engagement in their chosen activities.

Option 1 (synchronous learning): Activity showcase (2-3 minutes per student, depending on time available)

Arrange an additional class period to showcase what students have been working on since they started participating in the activity of their choice. Depending on the variety of activities to be presented, students may present a product they've created at a table, create a trifold poster describing their experience, or even demonstrate their activity by performing for the class (e.g., singing, playing an instrument, reciting poetry or spoken word, acting out a short scene from a play).

Considerations for the showcase:

- The showcase can be as simple or involved as you and your students want it to be. It could include just the class or could include parents and caregivers, mentors, teachers, or other students.
- If you are inviting parents or community members, choose a time and location that is convenient for those whom you will invite.
- Consider having your students take part in the planning and creation of the event (e.g., you may ask students to help advertise the event if you are inviting others to join).
- If you are conducting your class virtually, you could adapt the showcase for a virtual presentation. For example, students could take turns presenting a PowerPoint slide or Google Slide about their activity or they could each share a short video of themselves engaging in their activity (taken on their cell phones).

FACILITATOR TIP

If you will meet with your class again, either in-person or virtually, you may want to choose Option 1 or Option 2.

Option 2 (synchronous learning): In-Person Reflection Speed Round (20 minutes)

If your class is taking place in person, post each question from the **Reflection Questions on Slide #4 in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck** on a sheet of paper at different locations around the room. Have students pair up with a partner, and send one pair to each location to discuss the reflection questions. Have students switch to a new partner after 2 minutes and answer a different question until each student has answered all questions.

Option 3 (asynchronous learning): Digital Class Poster (15 minutes)

Each student should share a photo reflecting their engagement in the activity on a shared Google Doc, Google Slides, or other shared document by a deadline you set. It should be captioned with a short paragraph explanation responding to the **Reflection Questions on Slide #4 in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck**.

Each student should post at least one supportive comment on someone else’s submission. Encourage students to continue posting and commenting on each other’s submissions as the year continues. You can periodically request that students give you updates on their progress by posting throughout the year. You might also consider creative ways to use the classroom poster to build camaraderie among students and incorporate it in other class assignments.

Option 4 (asynchronous learning): Class Instagram Page (15 minutes)

Before presenting this activity, you will have created a private Instagram page for the class to share reflections. See Before You Begin on page 2 for instructions. Each student should share a photo reflecting their engagement in the activity by a deadline you set. It should be captioned with a short paragraph explanation responding to the **Reflection Questions on Slide #4 in the Finding My Passion Slide Deck**.

Each student should post at least one supportive comment on someone else’s post. Encourage students to continue posting and commenting on each other’s posts as the year continues. You can periodically request that students give you updates on their progress by posting throughout the year. You might also consider creative ways to use the classroom page to build camaraderie among students and incorporate the page in other class assignments.

Finding My Passion – Reflection Questions

- Which activity did you choose to engage in and why?
- What was the best part of participating in this activity?
- What was one challenge you faced while trying to get involved?
How did you overcome that challenge?
- What skills or positive values or qualities have you gained by participating?
Examples of skills: leadership skills, planning and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, athletic skills, artistic skills
Examples of positive values or qualities: caring, equality, integrity, honesty, responsibility
- What support did you get from your support network?
What additional support could help you continue to grow in this activity?
- What, if anything, did you produce by participating?
Examples of things that could be produced: a song, drawing, poem, video, new club
- How might participation in this activity help you achieve your future goals?
- How do you think participation in this activity could help you make the healthiest decisions and avoid taking unhealthy risks when it comes to things like alcohol, drugs or sexual activity?

4

References and Additional Resources

REFERENCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2016). Creating a healthier life: A step-by-step guide to wellness. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf>

youth.gov (2020). Positive youth development. Retrieved from <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/effectiveness-positive-youth-development-programs>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Positive Youth Development

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/positive-youth-development>

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

40 Developmental Assets

<https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/>



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