

## Health Skill:

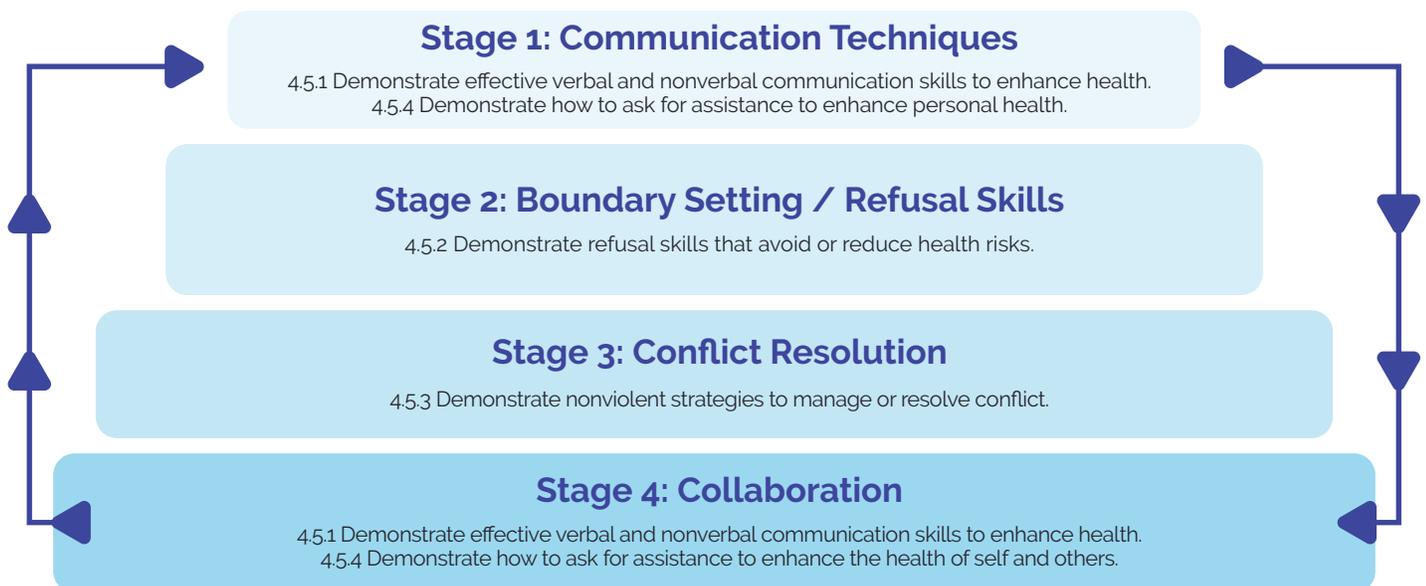
# Interpersonal Communication



## Background Information

The health skill, *Interpersonal Communication*, guides students to better understand, practice, and reflect on their interactions with others. By providing students with a safe space to practice strategies for healthy communication in school, students are more prepared to handle social situations throughout their life. The *Interpersonal Communication* health skill begins with practicing appropriate communication techniques, then explores healthy boundaries with strategies to uphold those boundaries, moving to examining the importance of productive conflict and conflict resolution, and ends with strategies to ensure effective collaboration. Each stage of *Interpersonal Communication* supports students to better understand themselves and their community, while working toward having more authentic, intentional communication with others.

The four stages of *Interpersonal Communication* are designed to support the growth of each student toward more complex levels of communication, beginning with the individual and ending with effective team work. The *Teaching Progression* for the four stages were developed in sequential order to ensure strategies build upon one another, leading to more inclusive, authentic, and collaborative teamwork. However, teachers can rearrange the stages as appropriate for their classroom.



### NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD (NHES) 4:

Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

*National Health Education Standard Rationale: Effective communication enhances personal, family, and community health. This standard focuses on how responsible individuals use verbal and non-verbal skills to develop and maintain healthy personal relationships. The ability to organize and to convey information and feelings is the basis for strengthening interpersonal interactions and reducing or avoiding conflict.*



## Grades 3-5 Framework

In grades 3-5, students learn a variety of strategies to effectively communicate in a variety of modes. The graphic below outlines the strategies learned in each stage, beginning with *Stage 1: Communication Techniques* and ending with *Stage 4: Collaboration*. Teachers should use the strategies listed as a starting point and add strategies to meet the needs of their students.



### Notes on Grade Level Progression

Activities, vocabulary, and language throughout the models are vertically aligned and build upon one another. If students require scaffolding refer to previous grade levels for additional ideas for activities and instruction that address gaps in student skills. For enrichment activities, look at higher grade levels in order to provide additional practice opportunities or for ideas on how to deepen understanding.



## Stage 4: Collaboration

People are often put into collaborative groups and need to be taught specific skills to have the most successful, effective teams. Effective collaboration skills can lead to more creative outcomes, increased content retention, higher self-esteem, and increased empathy. Also, students with effective collaboration skills are better prepared for future social situations and career opportunities. In *Stage 4: Collaboration*, students explore their personal contribution to teams, the impact of their actions, and specific skills to promote inclusion. Students also learn valuable strategies to hold teams accountable for quality work that accomplishes team goals. Throughout collaboration, students may get into conflict. Encourage students to use the conflict resolution strategies established in *Stage 2: Conflict Resolution* to address these conflicts and move forward to achieve team goals.

### The Steps:



**Step 1**  
Know My  
Responsibility



**Step 2**  
Include Others



**Step 3**  
Support  
My Team



**Step 4**  
Look Back & Learn

### Grades 3-5 Framework

In *Stage 4: Collaboration*, students in grades 3-5 practice strategies to be effective and supportive team members. Students examine their personal impact on a team in order to become aware of how their actions can help or hurt their team. Assigning jobs and responsibilities when students work in groups allows students to see how each person plays a pivotal role in contributing to the team's success. Because collaboration is intended to promote the sharing of diverse ideas, students should learn and practice strategies that allow everyone to be included, such as getting to know each other, making sure everyone gets to contribute, and creating team norms that create inclusion. Finally, students in grades 3-5 practice supporting their team's goal by identifying what needs to be accomplished, offering help to members of the team, and giving and receiving feedback.

Mastery of *Stage 4: Collaboration* for grades 3-5 means students are able to positively impact their team, include all members of their team by using a variety of strategies, support a common goal, and reflect on the team's progress.



## Stage 4: Collaboration

### The Steps:



#### Step 1: Know My Responsibility



**Step Overview:** Members of a team must know their role on the team to be a supportive and productive teammate. In Step 1, students define the characteristics of a supportive team member.

By analyzing the impact of the individual, students gain a better understanding of their personal power as a member of a team. After identifying actions that can help or hurt a team, students practice strategies to be a supportive, positive member of a team. By the end of this step, students analyze their performance on a team and reflect on how their actions can help or hurt a team.

#### Sub Skill(s):

- Describe a perfect teammate
- Explain impact of actions
- Know my job



#### Step 2: Include Others

**Step Overview:** When collaborating, it is important that all members of a team are included. Step 2 of *Stage 4: Collaboration* begins with students analyzing how individuals feel when they are included in a team and practice empathetic strategies for those who are excluded from a team. In order to

make sure all students are intentionally included in group or team work, students should use specific inclusion strategies and complete a task demonstrating the use of these strategies in a team.

#### Sub Skill(s):

- Explain why it is important to include others
- Learn about teammates
- Include all members
  - Facing all members of the team in a circle
  - Ensuring that everyone speaks at least once
  - Asking questions to get all team member's ideas
  - Assigning clear jobs for everyone (e.g. time keeper, note taker, leader)
  - Creating norms or team agreements



## Step 3: Support My Team

**Step Overview:** The ultimate goal of a team is to achieve agreed upon outcomes and goals. In this step, students learn strategies to aid their team in accomplishing their team goals by working to resolve conflict and providing feedback. Students practice handling difficult situations within teams to resolve conflict and build a stronger team. Students also learn strategies on giving appropriate feedback to hold team members accountable. These strategies are designed to allow students to be productive, positive team members that are able to push their team toward success in accomplishing a goal.

### Sub Skill(s):

- Identify team goal
- Offer help
- Resolve conflict
- Give & receive feedback
  - Asking if you can give feedback
  - Being specific
  - Saying how you feel using I-Statements
  - Asking for a specific solution



## Step 4: Look Back & Learn

**Step Overview:** Learning to reflect takes practice and intention. After working in a team, it is important to take time after the task is completed to ask important questions about the team's ability to complete the goal created at the beginning of the collaboration process. Each person should reflect about their personal contribution, their strengths, and their areas of growth. The final step of collaboration allows for students to reflect on their experience and success. Students use this reflection to improve work in the future to create more successful teams. Building time for students to reflect is crucial in developing metacognition, which supports health skills, *Self-Management and Advocacy for Self & Others*.

### Reflection Question(s):

- Did I know and understand my responsibilities? Why or why not?
- Did our team include everyone? Why or why not?
- Did our team experience any conflict? If so, how did we work through this conflict?
- What is something our team was really good at doing?
- What is something our team needs to improve?



## Teaching Tips

- Use team building games (see *Resource Bank* below for suggested activities) to provide practice opportunities for students to work on teams.
- Provide checklists of effective team behaviors for students to use to reflect during and after group work.
- Share the strategies from *Stage 4: Collaboration* with other school staff in order to reinforce language and promote collaborative work outside of the health education classroom.
- Implicitly teach *Stage 4: Collaboration* by designing learning activities around group work throughout the year.
- Review strategies from *Stage 1: Communication Techniques*, *Stage 2: Refusal Skills & Boundary Setting*, and *Stage 3: Conflict Resolution* to support students in collaboration.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.