

How to Plan a Health Fair

Purposes

- Have fun!
 - Connect with the greater student population-- fairs allow us to introduce ourselves to them in a fun, informal, supportive environment
 - Spread awareness of SBC services
 - Increase patient enrollment
 - Show students that we support their health and autonomy
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Time Commitment for Site Fair Planner

- Expect to spend a few hours a month planning for the couple of months leading up to the fair.
 - Expect to spend at least 5 hours a week for a month before and a month after the fair.
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Activities

- Create activities based on popular games such as Taboo, Headbands, Guess Who?, etc.
- Aim for a range of approaches that includes informative, interactive, discussion-based, visual, and kinetic aspects.
- Explore topics beyond what would be covered in Health class.
- Of course, avoid shaming! For example, do not focus heavily on “dangers” or “negative outcomes”. Instead, allow students to simply engage with teen health topics.
- Get student input to help develop activities.
- Only use these activities at Fairs! Do not distribute these for use at lunch tables or classroom activities beyond the Fair. It is important that students are not already familiar and bored with the activities when they arrive at the Fair. They must remain exclusive. This also means to only use a couple already created outreach materials.
- Create an instruction sheet for the activity. Include the goals, any materials needed, the gameplay or activity process, and any discussion questions to ask. The day of the Fair, this instruction sheet can be put on the table of the activity so staff can easily switch between tables and learn new activities. It is also important to document activities for sustainability, so the next Fair can repeat the activity (or not).
- For half a class period, plan for at least 12 activities. It is better to over plan and have students run out of time than not have enough activities that leaves students with extra time.
- For an entire class period, plan for at least 16 activities.

- Create a handout for students to respond to as they interact with the Fair. This handout helps keep them engaged. Have teachers collect the handout and use as participation credit for further legitimacy.
 - Create signs for each activity so they are clearly marked. Try to place activities in the same order as listed on the student handout so they are easy to find.
 - Count how many SBC tri-fold display boards you will need for your activities. Ask SBC staff at other clinics to bring boards as needed.
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Length of time

- Choose either classes split between the first and second halves of the period, or choose that each class stays for the entire period.
 - With 12 activity tables and half a class period (about 25 minutes), most students were able to visit most tables. Students told teachers they wanted more time at the Fair. Some students finished early and didn't have anything else to do; this probably happened during the classes that the teacher let stay for the entire period (since the Fair was designed to entertain for only half the period).
 - Plan for about 2 minutes at each activity. Some will take more time; some will take less time.
 - Teachers asked for more time at the Fair. Teachers & students asked for more activities. Running more activities will require more planning and more staff to run the Fair, and student helpers will be necessary.
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Look & Feel

- This should look fun! Buy decorations like balloons (non-latex preferably because of possible latex allergies), tablecloths, streamers, large confetti, etc. A banner could be made.
 - Play some appropriate music. A staff member could take careful watch of a bluetooth speaker playing "Today's Hits" Pandora playlist (an edited, generally appropriate option), for example. A cheaper, less risky option is to bring a portable radio.
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Students

- Involve students as much as you are able to help design and run the Fair.
 - This will require reaching out to student groups and individuals, confirming dates and periods, getting teacher permissions slips, training students on running a few activities, and following up with them to remind them of their commitment.
 - It will add more time to the planning process, but student input will likely make the Fair more student friendly.
 - Be careful to coach students on appropriate behavior; they must be positive and not shaming, like the adults.

- Reach out to THE Council members at your school, or ask to attend a THE Council meeting to discuss as a group.
 - Connect with clinic patient advocates .
 - Approach relevant after school clubs.
 - For example, for a sex ed fair: GSA, Feminism Club, Peer Educators, etc.
 - For a mental health fair: Silver Ribbon Club, NAMI, etc.
 - Other student groups of interest: Health Careers, Student Council, National Honors Society, cultural groups, etc.
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Staff

- One Clinic staff at the school site should be the main Fair Planner. They will coordinate all planning & execution of the Fair. It is advised that they delegate tasks as needed to other site staff members; but one person must oversee all planning.
 - Invite staff who are particularly friendly. A positive attitude is necessary!
 - Aim for as many Clinic staff from that site as possible; it is advisable to close the clinic that day. This way, students can make connections with their own Clinic staff.
 - Invite at least 1 staff member for each activity, plus 1 Coordinator, plus 2 floating staff to allow for breaks. If you are using students to run activities, still plan to have 1 staff member for most or all of activities, since obstacles may come up for students.
 - It is not recommended to use school staff as a substitute for Clinic staff or students to run the activities. This would prevent us from making connections, and school staff will likely have different perspectives on teen health.
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Feedback

- Collect feedback from student attendees, associated teachers, and Fair staff.
 - Survey students; talk with teachers and Fair staff.
 - Use this feedback to plan future Fairs.
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Accommodations

- Include a majority (or all) of activities that are inclusive to students with limited English or reading skills.
- Consider the accessibility of any student handouts as well.
- Connect with Health teachers to learn what accommodations we can make.
- Consider involving school translators and multilingual SBC staff.
- Consider accommodations for Fair staff as well-- provide snacks, water, a place to rest, and responses to any other physical needs.

Fair/Carnival theme

- It may or may not be helpful to include a raffle ticket component to the Fair. Students may engage less with the activity if their main motivation is to win a ticket. Or, they may be more excited to participate if there is an incentive.
- Another option is to add more activities with challenges, such as condom races and guess how many condoms. A few activities could have a prize component instead of all activities earning raffle tickets.
- Check with school administration to see what items may be given out, if any.
- Condoms will likely not be allowed, and there is still value in learning about how to use condoms and where to get them (the clinic) even without having condoms to take home.
- Students asked for snacks, candy, condoms, etc. Keep in mind the location of the Fair. If it is in the Gym, no food or drink is allowed. Engineers will likely not want to clean wrappers from another location either; you must pick up afterwards if food is given. Keep possible student allergies in mind.

Partner organizations

- It may be helpful to invite outside organizations to table at the event. This can help connect students to the greater community.
- There is a process for organizations to be Community Partners with MPS. It is easiest to only proceed with organizations who are already on the list. Otherwise, you will have to research the approval process.

Timeline

3 months before:

- Set date of fair with health teachers in accordance with their curriculum.
- Confirm date with school administration, engineers, and anyone else who might use the Fair location space.
- Invite Fair staff members.
- Contact any outside organizations you want to bring; start district approval process if needed.
- Contact any organizations from whom you'd like materials to distribute.
- Ask students to help run activities. Create draft schedule based on classes they can miss.

2 months before:

- Ask engineers for any set up help.
- Check in with students; confirm date.
 - Give permission slip for them to give to teachers and return to SBC.

1 month before:

- Meet with students after school or during lunch to review the activities and let them choose their preferences. Coach them for their top choices.
- Order printed copies of all handouts/surveys/etc that teachers and students will need.
- Order Fair Kit from downtown. Review and make any updates as needed.
- Confirm all Fair staff members.
- Gather a set up crew of at least 5 people for the morning of.
- Remind health teachers of date.

2 weeks before:

- Confirm set up help with engineers.
- Remind student helpers of event and their time commitment.
- Send email to all Fair staff as a reminder:
 - Date, time, and place of event
 - Food
 - Pace of the day
 - How many classes/students to expect

1 week before:

- Distribute handouts/surveys/etc to teachers for them to give to students.
- Remind student helpers of event and their time commitment.
- Do final review of Fair Kit.
- Send email to all Fair staff with more details:
 - Date, time, and location
 - How many students/classes to expect
 - Parking, building entrance, check in, etc.
 - How to get to the Fair location within the school
 - Where staff can keep their valuables
 - Food/stacks/water
 - Plan of activities & beginning staff assignments to each activity
 - Plan for taking breaks
 - Set up crew
 - Matching shirts request
 - Your contact information if anything comes up

Day of:

- Remind student helpers of event and their time commitment.
- Set up gym in morning. Give the team at least 45 minutes to set up.

- Gather as a group to discuss any last minute logistics (parking, bathrooms, breaks, etc.). Get the group excited!

1 week after:

- Distribute any awards to students (i.e. give SBC swag basket to closest guess for how many condoms).
- Send thank you note to teachers, engineers, and all Fair staff.
- Order any printed materials such as brochures to replenish kit as needed.

1 month after:

- Compile and summarize all student survey feedback.
- Meet with teachers to elicit their feedback, then compile and summarize.
- Connect with Fair staff to elicit their feedback, then compile and summarize.
- Share feedback with greater SBC staff & teachers.
- Make any updates to the Fair Kit in response to Fair feedback.
- Return the Fair Kit to downtown.