

Honesty

Teacher Guide

athletes for hope champs

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CHAMPS is a program created by Athletes for Hope to inspire the next generation of youth to learn the importance of physical activity, mental health, and leadership from athlete role models.

Welcome!

The program's curriculum focuses on social-emotional learning by pairing interactive exercises with leadership lessons to promote physical and mental health. There are six units with each unit of the curriculum containing on-demand videos, a student workbook, and a teacher guide. Depending on availability, we also offer the opportunity for selected schools to have athlete virtual or in-person visits.

LEARN MORE

Curriculum Overview

athletes for hope champs

Our program is designed around the

CHAMPS

curriculum

C OURAGE
H ONESTY
A CCOUNTABILITY
M INDFULNESS
P OSITIVITY
S TRENGTH

	Mental Health Objective	**Leadership** Objective
Courage UNIT 1	Recognize courage is needed to understand and manage emotions	Recognize the benefits of overcoming fear
Honesty UNIT 2	Understand how to be truthful with how you are feeling and learn to share important information with trusted adults	Understand how to be truthful in what you say and do in your interactions with others
Accountability UNIT 3	Learn to take responsibility for the choices you make that can help you be at your best	Learn to take responsibility for how your words and actions affect others
Mindfulness UNIT 4	Learn skills and techniques to help you slow down and be present and aware of your thoughts and feelings	Learn to be aware of how others are feeling
Positivity UNIT 5	Foster a healthy mindset that looks at things in a productive way	Encourage the uplifting of others
Strength UNIT 6	Foster an understanding of resilience	Learn to lead despite adversity



athletes for hope champs	Mental Health Pillar	Leadership Pillar	Physical Activity Pillar
C OURAGE	Awareness of feelings and emotions	Be fearless	Begin a new sport or activity
H ONESTY	Ability to talk about emotions	Be truthful	New skills take time to develop into habits
A CCOUNTABILITY	Identify choices that lead to healthy habits	Be responsible	Consistency over time produces results
M INDFULNESS	Learn tools to regulate emotions	Be present	Embrace being in the moment
P OSITIVITY	Promote a positive mindset	Be positive	Positive self-talk helps you enjoy the process
S TRENGTH	Embrace healthy resilience	Be unstoppable	Adversity is an opportunity for growth
	Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It refers to how we think, feel, and act and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices.	The ability of an individual or multiple people to influence, guide and inspire others. Leaders set a good example and help others when they are in need.	Any activity that involves moving your body. It includes everyday activities, physically active play, and organized sports and exercise.



Honesty

Word of the Month

Definition

Being truthful in what you say and do.

Goals

- Create a safe place for students to be able to talk about all emotions, and help process negative feelings
- Teach students what it means to be truthful in all aspects of life
- When trying a new sport or activity, encourage students that new skills take time to develop into habits

Objectives

- Understand how to be truthful with how you are feeling and learning to share important information with trusted adults
- Understand how to be truthful in what you say and do in your interactions with others

Core Questions

- What is honesty?
- Why is being honest sometimes difficult?
- How do you show honesty with your mental health?
- When was the last time you tried something new? How did you feel?
- How do you show honesty in your class?
- How does honesty help you lead?

Program Structure

Week 1



Watch the Unit Video

Featuring Sadie McMullen and Chris Fogt from Team USA Bobseld and Skeleton!

Print out & distribute student workbooks

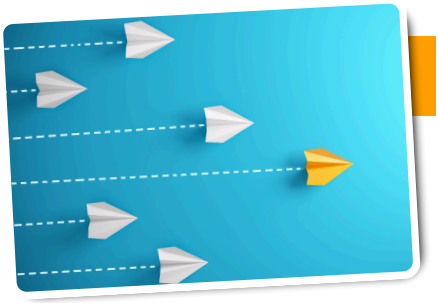
Week 2



Mental Health Lesson plan

Go through the Mental Health lesson plan in the student workbooks.

Week 3



Leadership Lesson plan

Go through the Leadership lesson plan in the student workbooks.

Week 4



Re-watch the Unit Video

Take a few minutes to review the month's word and invite students to share how they've applied it in their lives.

Re-watch the unit video to help reinforce the messaging, themes, and topics from the unit.

Program Resources

CHAMPS LIVES

(30-45 min)

For each word of the month we will host a **virtual session with a high profile athlete**. Be on the lookup for emails regarding the dates throughout the month!

Wellbeing Corner

(30-45 min)

For each Word of the Month, we will host a **virtual session with a clinician and athlete** to discuss the mental health implications of the Word of the Month. Additional mental health resources, developed by our Wellbeing Team, are available on **pages 10–15** to provide you with further tools and support to extend these conversations with their students.



Honesty

Mental Health Lesson Plan

Honesty

Mental Health Objective



Definition

Being truthful in what you say and do (INTEGRITY)

Objective

Understanding how to be truthful with how you are feeling and learning to share important information with trusted adults

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Warm Up Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

5 MINUTES

Preparation

Break the students up in groups of 3-4 or whatever is appropriate for the classroom.

Rules of the Game

- Each student will take turns sharing three statements, two truth and one lie
- Then the other students will try and guess which one is the lie
- The student will reveal which one is the lie
- Then the others will take turns doing the same

Follow Up Questions

- How did it feel to lie to your friends?
- Was it easier to lie or be truthful?
- If you got tricked by your classmate how did that make you feel?

Physical Activity: Trashcan Knockout

5 MINUTES

Can also play normal Knockout if you have access to a basketball hoop

Objective

Eliminate other players by making a "basket" in the trashcan before the person behind you in line.

Materials Needed

- A trashcan or a large bin
- Two or more paper balls (crumpled paper)
- A group of players (minimum of 3)
- A designated shooting line (you can use tape or a piece of string to mark it)

Setup

- Place the trashcan or bin at one end of the play area.
- Mark a shooting line several feet away from the trashcan. Adjust the distance based on the age and skill level of the players.
- Have the players line up single file behind the shooting line. The first two players in line each hold a paper ball.

How to Play

- The first player in line (Player 1) throws their paper ball at the trashcan, aiming to get it inside. As soon as Player 1 throws, the second player (Player 2) can take their shot.
- If Player 1 makes the shot before Player 2, Player 1 retrieves their paper ball, passes it to the next person in line, and goes to the back of the line.
- If Player 1 misses, they must quickly retrieve their paper ball and attempt to make a basket from anywhere in the play area before Player 2 scores.
- If Player 2 makes their shot before Player 1, then Player 1 is "knocked out" and steps out of the game.
- Player 2 then passes their ball to the next player in line, and the game continues.
- The game goes on until there is only one player left, who is declared the winner.

Variations

- Distance Knockout: Move the shooting line further back as players get more skilled.
- Obstacle Knockout: Add obstacles or rules (like hopping on one foot) to make it more challenging and fun

Scenario Discussion

10 MINUTES

"Imagine you had a tough morning at home and are feeling down, making it hard to focus at school. Your teacher notices and asks how you're doing. What should you say?"

Follow Up Questions

- Does it make you feel better when you talk about your feelings with someone?
- Who else would you be comfortable talking about your feelings with?
- If someone wanted to talk to you about their feelings would you listen?

Takeaway

It's hard to be honest with yourself when it comes to your feelings. But, recognizing your feelings helps you communicate better with others and helps in all aspects of life.



Honesty

Wellbeing Corner

Quick Reference

Overall goal in six words: Notice. Ask. Listen. Support. Connect. Escalate.

The goal of this guide is not to diagnose but to help identify areas of concern, offer the appropriate support and provide resources. Below is an example of the Tier System of the guide.



TIER 1: NORMAL

Nervous before a game or a test. Shy at first. Upset after losing. A bad day that lifts. Normalize. Coach.



TIER 2: SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATION

A change you have noticed. Still coming to school, still playing, still with friends. Ask privately. Listen. Tell the parent or guardian what you noticed. Check back within a week.



TIER 3: REFER

Weeks, not days, or any real drop in school, friends, sleep, or play. Repeated stomachaches or headaches with no clear cause. Won't come to school, goes silent when called on, won't join in. Or they ask. School counselor plus parent or guardian; school nurse first for anything physical. Tell the child you are connecting them, and why.



TIER 4: IMMEDIATE

Any statement about wanting to die, not wanting to be here, or hurting themselves. Any disclosure of abuse or fear of an adult. Immediate danger. Crisis protocol now. Stay with them. Designated staff and mandated reporting. 988 (call, text, or 988lifeline.org) for you as the adult; 911 if immediate danger.

- **The difference between Tier 1 and Tier 3 is not how big the feeling looks. It is what it is costing.** A child who cries before the game and then plays is Tier 1. A calm-looking child who has quietly stopped talking in class is Tier 3.
- **Two weeks is a pattern guide, not a waiting period.** If something worries you today, act today.
- **Children this age show distress in the body and in behavior before words.** Stomachaches, headaches, clinginess, tears out of proportion, a slide back to more childish behavior, poor sleep. Physical complaints go to the school nurse first.
- **Take "I wish I was dead" seriously every time, even from a nine-year-old, even if it sounds dramatic.** Stay calm, stay with the child, follow your crisis protocol. You are not the one who decides whether they meant it.
- **Three things never to do:** diagnose; comment on a child's body, weight, or eating (including praise); promise to keep a secret you cannot keep.

How to Use this Supplement

Each CHAMPS teacher guide gives you the lessons, athlete videos, games, and scenario discussions. This supplement adds the mental health context, so that when a child says or does something unexpected during a lesson, you know what you are looking at and what to do next. It does not replace or change any CHAMPS content.

One page per CHAMPS value, each with the same four sections: a key statistic, questions you can actually use, sports mental health clinical points tied to that unit's own activities, and when to connect a child to support.

Your role is critical. You are not being asked to diagnose but in many ways you are the first line. The International Olympic Committee built two separate tools for diagnosis: one for clinicians to assess, and one for coaches, families, and teammates to recognize. You are doing the recognition job, which is vital. You see these children more hours a week than almost any other adult, and that is your advantage.

Sourcing conventions. CHAMPS anchor means content from the Athletes for Hope CHAMPS teacher guides. Sports mental health addition means clinical context added from CDC and HRSA child health surveillance, IOC and sport consensus, and peer-reviewed research. Every figure is listed with its source at the end.

On the numbers. National data on children's mental health is usually parent-reported and covers ages 3 to 17. Wherever an ages 6 to 11 figure exists, that is the one used. When a figure comes from older students, it is labeled as such and should be read as a general direction, not an exact count for this age group. Sources and years are listed on the last page.

Honesty

CHAMPS Anchor

- **Mental health objective:** be truthful about how you are feeling and share important information with trusted adults.
- **Leadership objective:** be truthful in what you say and do.
- **Activities:** Two Truths and a Lie, Trashcan Knockout, Shipwreck, Infection Tag.

Key Stat

Feeling connected to an adult at school is one of the strongest protective factors we can measure. In national data, students who feel close to people at school have lower rates of every mental health and suicide risk indicator studied. For a child this age, that trusted adult is often you.

Source: Verlenden et al., MMWR Suppl 2024 (school connectedness, YRBS 2023; high school data, read as directional for elementary students).

The whole point of teaching a child to tell a trusted adult is that one day a real disclosure will land on one. This unit is training children to come to you. This page is about being ready when one does.

Questions to Ask

"What is the difference between a surprise and a secret?"
(A surprise is happy and ends. A secret a grown-up tells you to keep forever is one you should tell someone about.)

"If something happened that made you scared or sad, who are two grown-ups you could tell?"

"Has telling the truth ever been hard but turned out to be the right thing?"

Sports Mental Health Clinical Points

Sports mental health addition

- **Two Truths and a Lie is a game. Do not let it teach that hiding feelings is a skill.** The follow-up question "was it easier to lie or be truthful?" is your opening. Connect it to feelings: "I'm fine" is sometimes a fib we tell about how we feel, and a trusted adult is who you tell the real version to. Kids this age are already good at "I'm fine."

- **The Honesty scenario is the exact moment this unit trains for.** "Your teacher notices and asks how you're doing. What should you say?" When a child actually answers that truthfully, in the hallway or after class, treat it as a win. Do not rush it. Do not fix it. Do not look alarmed. "I'm really glad you told me. Let's talk about it" is the whole response. How you react in the first minute teaches the class whether honesty about feelings is safe.

- **A child keeping a secret is not the same as a child lying.** A child hiding something about an adult, about home, or about being hurt may be frightened or may have been told to keep quiet. Make the surprise-versus-secret difference clear so children have words to break a harmful secret. A disclosure of abuse or of being unsafe is a mandated report. Follow your district process without investigating first.

- **Take "I wish I was dead" seriously, even from a nine-year-old.** Children this age do say it, sometimes dramatically, sometimes quietly. It is never something to ignore, joke about, or treat as attention-seeking. Stay calm, stay with the child, and follow your school's crisis protocol every time. You are not the one who decides whether they meant it.

- **Bullying is an honesty issue.** Bullying starts in elementary school and peaks in 6th grade. The good news for these grades: younger children are the most likely to tell an adult, and that willingness drops every year after. A child who is being bullied often hides it out of shame or fear of making it worse. Watch for a child who suddenly avoids recess, the bus, or a particular group, or whose belongings go missing. Ask privately, believe them, and follow your school's bullying policy.

- **Protect the child who tells you about a friend.** Kids tattle constantly, and buried in that noise is the occasional report that matters ("she said she wants to run away"). Thank them, act on it, and do not make them the messenger. Do not promise the friend will not find out.

When to Connect to Support



TIER 1: NORMAL

Not wanting to answer a personal question in a group game. A small fib in Two Truths and a Lie. Wanting privacy after a hard morning.



TIER 2: SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATION

A child who says "I'm fine" but is not acting fine, and is still doing okay in class. Say what you noticed, then wait. Kids fill silence more honestly than they answer questions. Check back.



TIER 3: REFER

A pattern of hiding paired with any change in mood, eating, or play. Signs of bullying. Any concern a classmate raises about a child. Repeated physical complaints with no clear cause (nurse first). School counselor plus parent or guardian.



TIER 4: IMMEDIATE

Any disclosure of abuse, of being unsafe, or of wanting to die or not be here, including one relayed by a classmate. Crisis protocol and designated staff now; mandated reporting per district policy. 988 (call, text, or 988lifeline.org) for you as the adult; 911 if immediate danger.

Source List

Athletes for Hope CHAMPS materials

- Athletes for Hope. CHAMPS Program. https://www.athletesforhope.org/afh-champs-program-2/
- Athletes for Hope. CHAMPS Teacher Guides, Units 1 to 6: Courage, Honesty, Accountability, Mindfulness, Positivity, Strength (Word of the Month, Mental Health Lesson Plan, Leadership Lesson Plan).

National data on children's mental health

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health (National Survey of Children's Health, 2021-2023). https://www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/data-research/index.html
- Bitsko RH, Claussen AH, Lichstein J, et al. Mental Health Surveillance Among Children, United States, 2013-2019. MMWR Suppl. 2022;71(2):1-42. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7102a1.htm
- Diggs DT, Olfson M. National Trends in Clinically Recognized Anxiety Among U.S. Children and Adolescents. Acad Pediatr. Published online June 24, 2026. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2026.103357
- Heffernan ME, Macy ML. Trends in Mental and Physical Health Among Youths. JAMA Pediatr. Published online April 21, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.0556
- Danielson ML, Claussen AH, Bitsko RH, et al. ADHD Prevalence Among U.S. Children and Adolescents in 2022: Diagnosis, Severity, Co-Occurring Disorders, and Treatment. J Clin Child Adolesc Psychol. 2024;53(3):343-360.
- Ghandour RM, Sherman LJ, Vladutiu CJ, et al. Prevalence and Treatment of Depression, Anxiety, and Conduct Problems in US Children. J Pediatr. 2019;206:256-267. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30322701/

Sleep, physical activity, adversity, and protective factors

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Sleep: How Much Sleep Do I Need? (American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommendations by age). https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Activity Guidelines for School-Aged Children and Adolescents (Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd ed.). https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-education/guidelines/index.html
- Verlenden JV, Fodeman A, Wilkins N, et al. Mental Health and Suicide Risk Among High School Students and Protective Factors: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2023. MMWR Suppl. 2024;73(4):79-86. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/pdfs/su7304a9-H.pdf
- Swedo EA, et al. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Health Conditions and Risk Behaviors Among High School Students: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2023. MMWR Suppl. 2024;73(4). https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/pdfs/su7304a5-H.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Adverse Childhood Experiences. https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html

Bullying

- StopBullying.gov (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Facts About Bullying (National Center for Education Statistics School Crime Supplement 2021-22; YRBS 2023). https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/facts
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Bullying. https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/about/about-bullying.html

Mindfulness evidence and recognition tools

- Kuyken W, Ball S, Crane C, et al. Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of universal school-based mindfulness training compared with normal school provision (the MYRIAD cluster randomised controlled trial). Evid Based Ment Health. 2022;25(3):99-109. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35820992/
- Gouttebarge V, Bindra A, Blauwet C, et al. International Olympic Committee Sport Mental Health Assessment Tool 1 (SMHAT-1) and Sport Mental Health Recognition Tool 1 (SMHRT-1). Br J Sports Med. 2021;55(1):30-37. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32948518/

If a child is in crisis (keep these numbers handy)

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988, or chat at https://988lifeline.org. Free, confidential, 24/7. Available to you as the adult calling about a child. Press 2 or text in Spanish; ASL available at 988lifeline.org/ASL.
- Crisis Text Line. Text HOME to 741741 to reach a trained crisis counselor, 24/7.
- Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline. Call or text 1-800-422-4453. Available 24/7 with counselors and interpreters if you need help deciding whether to report.
- Your state's child abuse reporting number and your school's crisis protocol come first. Keep them written next to this page.

For reporting, planning, and going deeper

- Child Welfare Information Gateway (HHS Children's Bureau). Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect. https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/manda/ (state-by-state search: https://acf.gov/cb/law-regulation/state-statutes-search)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders (2023). https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/mental-health-action-guide/index.html
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Resources for educators on trauma and child stress. https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Facts for Families (plain-language guides on specific conditions, free). https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/

All sources and links were checked in September 2026. Where a figure comes from a survey of older students, that is stated on the page where it appears.

This supplement supports the CHAMPS curriculum. It is educational material for teachers and does not constitute clinical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Teachers should follow their own school or district policies on crisis response, mandated reporting, and family notification, which take precedence over any guidance here.



Honesty

Leadership Lesson Plan

Honesty

Leadership Objective



Definition

Being truthful in what you say and do (INTEGRITY)

Objective

Understanding how to be truthful in what you say and do in your interactions with others.

Warm Up Activity: Shipwreck

5 MINUTES

A game where one partner must trust the other to guide him or her through a maze of shipwrecks and rocks. A great ice-breaker and team building exercise! Equipment can be very random, from large items such as chairs to small items like bean bags, whatever you have!

Game Description

Navigate the shipwreck and rocks blindfolded with the help of your partner.

Game Rules

Scatter random equipment throughout the playing area. Students need to work with partners, one partner wears a blind fold and the other acting as the guide. The object of the game is for the partner wearing the blind fold to be guided through the 'shipwreck' without walking into any objects, listening only the voice commands of their partner. Guides can only use the words forward, backwards, left, and right, and stop. If the partner with the blind-fold walks into an object the guide performs a quick fitness exercise and then they switch roles and start over. Ask at the end which was harder-leading or listening to instructions?

Physical Activity: Infection Tag

5 MINUTES

Starting the Game

One player is chosen to be "It" or the "Infected" at the beginning of the game.

Objective

The goal of the "It" player is to tag other players, spreading the "infection."

Tagging

When a player is tagged, they become infected and join the original "It" in tagging the remaining players.

Winning

The game ends when all players have been tagged and are infected. There's no specific "winner," but the challenge is to see who can last the longest without being tagged.

The excitement comes from the ever-growing number of "It" players, making it harder to avoid being tagged as the game progresses!

Scenario Discussion

10 MINUTES

"You're in a group project at school and realize you've made a mistake in your section. Feeling nervous and unsure about admitting it to your classmates, how can you be a leader and demonstrate honesty in this situation?"

Discuss the scenario with the class and decide what the students would do.

Follow Up Questions

- If you were on the other side of this scenario would you want one of your partners to admit to the mistake?
- Would you feel better after you admit to the mistake?
- How can admitting to the mistake help you build confidence to address tough situations in the future?

Takeaway

- Honesty can be difficult sometimes, but good leaders are honest when it comes to what's best for their team.



Get Involved.
Be Inspired.

We want to hear from you!

About Athletes for Hope

Educating athletes on their potential to make a positive impact on the world, connecting them with the causes they care about & inspiring others to do the same.

Any Questions? Want to schedule a visit?

Reach out to **Kendra Coleman** at kcoleman@athletesforhope.org

athletes for hope champs

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