PC 103 University Skills
Gathering Agenda for Week 08
Self-Advocacy

Gathering Purposes
- Review a scriptural example of resourcefulness
- What is self-advocacy and how can I advocate for myself?

Preparation
- For *face-to-face Gatherings*, arrive early to setup the room, prepare any visual aids, and greet students as they arrive.
- For *virtual Gatherings*, start the meeting early, share your screen with a message welcoming them to the gathering and letting them know you will start soon.
    - When the Gathering Agenda asks that students meet in small groups, use Breakout Rooms.
    - When the Gathering Agenda asks you to display things on "the board," you can use the whiteboard.

Document Preparation:
- For *face-to-face Gatherings*, print the scripture references at the bottom of this document and cut them out so each account is on one slip of paper.
- For *virtual Gatherings,* email all of the scripture references to everyone prior to the gathering.

Min.	Activities		Teaching Tips
Welcome and Devotional			
10	Welcome	Welcome, announcements, and housekeeping	
	Hymn or Thought, Prayer	Please sing one or two verses of a hymn. If you meet with a virtual gathering, the lead student or another student should be invited to share a brief spiritual thought. A volunteer will then give an opening prayer.	
	BYU-Pathway Worldwide Devotional	Students were asked to watch the BYU-Pathway Worldwide devotional this week, as contained in the course. They should have done this prior to the gathering. As a class discuss the devotional using the discussion questions provided in the course	Look up the questions in advance so you are ready.
Student Success Discussion			
15	Next Steps Reminder	Remind students to be working on the Next Steps portion of the course. This includes the application and graduation planning. See this week's module called "Next Steps" in the course.	
	Read and Discuss	Read about David Sorenson to see what he did to overcome the challenges he faced as he worked to complete a degree. Then discuss the questions that follow. Click here to share/read the article.	

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>If that doesn’t work, you can share the text below called, “Addictions and Blessings: Finding Faith Through Pathway Connect.

Discussion Questions:
What did David do during his first week of class to advocate for himself and his needs? What impact did that have on the outcome?
David said it was the spiritual aspects of learning that helped him, “I felt it made a huge impact on me. I’m the type of person that sometimes needs different aspects of learning to be able to understand and grasp concepts, and the program not only helped me academically, but it helped me spiritually. Every aspect of my life improved from the second I started the program.” What aspect of your life has been improved since beginning PathwayConnect?
David found confidence in himself and his life. “I knew that as long as I did my part, God would do His part to help; and I needed that. I needed a little bit of help from my Savior to push me in the right direction, something that I was never able to find by myself.” As you advocate for yourself, where have you seen the Lord add his help to your efforts?</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Student Skills Discussion</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td>Discuss

Write and Discuss</td><td>For one to two minutes, tell the class about one big thing you learned in this week’s Student Skills.

Invite a class member to read the following story.

“Following the devastating bombing of Dresden, Germany, in 1945, eight Relief Society sisters, two deacons, and two older brethren, sometimes aided by others, labored to remove heavy rubble and remodel part of an old army barracks for a meeting place. “We built new benches for the classrooms,” recalled Edith Schade Krause. “There was no way to buy curtains or drapes, so we took leftover rolls of newsprint which one of the sisters decorated with roses. She was a porcelain painter, and the paper drapes looked like they were made of silk.”
https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/06/paper-drapes-that-looked-like-silk?lang=eng

Invite the class to write their answers to the writing prompt below. Write for 60-90 seconds. Then discuss the questions that follow.</td><td>Come prepared to share your 1-2 minute introduction.

Make sure you give them time to think about the question.</td></tr>
</table>

		Writing Prompt: ● Think about a time you were faced with a challenge. What did you do to creatively find a solution to your problem? **Discussion Questions.** ● What did you write about? Why? ● How can you be resourceful when you are faced with challenges while on your academic path?	
	Group Activity	When Lehi and his family left Jerusalem, they faced many challenges. Today we will talk about some of the obstacles Nephi faced and how he was resourceful and did not give up. ● Split the class into 4 groups ● Give each group a set of scriptures ○ Nephi attempting to retrieve the brass plates 1 Nephi 3:19-27 ○ Nephi successfully retrieving the brass plates 1 Nephi 4:5-26 ○ Nephi and the broken bow 1 Nephi 16:17-32 ○ Nephi building a ship 1 Nephi 17:7-16 ● Give each group 5 minutes to read their scripture references and discuss ways in which Nephi was resourceful ● Bring the group back together and have each group choose a spokesperson ● Have each group share what they found about resourcefulness with the whole class	See “Physical Preparation” at the top of this document. See “Document Preparation” at the top of this document.
Student Skills Application			
15	Share	To be able to advocate or speak up for yourself you need to know what areas you might need help with. You can identify these areas by thinking about your strengths and weaknesses of being an online student. Pres. Dallin H. Oaks taught, “Don’t characterize or define yourself by some temporary quality. The only single quality that should characterize us is that we are a son or daughter of God.	You may read this section or put it into your own words.

		That fact transcends all other characteristics, including race, occupation, physical characteristics, honors, or even religious affiliation." https://www.lds.org/new-era/2013/06/how-to-define-yourself?lang=eng&_r=1 Keep that in mind as you think about your weaknesses and even your strengths. Your Heavenly Father knows you and he can "make weak things become strong."	
	Ponder	1. Ask the students to take out a piece of paper 2. Create 2 columns on the page. One titled "Strengths" and one titled "Weaknesses" 3. Ask the class to take 5 minutes to identify at least 3 strengths and 3 weaknesses when it comes to their roles as an online student. (This could be a specific subject, a skill, learning a new language, a habit, ability, etc.) 4. After 5 minutes, invite the students to look at their list and brainstorm ideas for where they can search for resources or look for opportunities to advocate for their success in coming weeks. 5. If desired, you can ask students to share resources they have found to be helpful.	Encourage the students to search for resources on the BYU-Idaho website using the tools you learned in the University Success Tip this week.
	Discuss	1. Why is it important to identify your strengths and weaknesses to help you succeed as an online student? 2. What can you do to use your strengths to help other students in your online courses? 3. How does your knowledge of your divine nature help you understand your strengths and weaknesses?	Discuss as many of the questions as you have time for. If your time is limited discuss the questions you feel prompted to talk about.
	Testimony, Invitation and Prayer	Bear a 30-90 second testimony of the importance of being resourceful and advocating for your own academic success. Invite the members of the class to identify one area in which they struggle and pray for specific guidance on how to advocate for help in this area. End with a prayer by invitation.	

ADDICTIONS AND BLESSINGS: FINDING FAITH THROUGH PATHWAYCONNECT
One priesthood blessing changed David's life for good.

When David Sorensen was first introduced to PathwayConnect, he thought there was no way the program could be for him. "I have a history of alcoholism," David said. "I was not an active member of the Church, and I was making a lot of mistakes in my life."

Struggling with alcohol addiction, smoking, and immorality for much of his life, David's lifestyle made it easy to leave the Church and lose his faith. He'd also previously dropped out of two different colleges

with only a handful of credits, so completing college — let alone being able to attend a Church school — seemed impossible.

Then came PathwayConnect. Thanks to his mother, who encouraged him to consider PathwayConnect as a way to jump-start his education, David enrolled, seeing the program as his “best shot at a good future.”

Hope

From his very first gathering, David felt a desire to become better and grow closer to God, but he knew his addictions were holding him back. “Having an addiction is a spiritual disease,” David said, “and it needs to be combated spiritually.” So that’s what he did.

During his first week at PathwayConnect, David asked Elder Purles, a Church-service missionary in Sandy, Utah, for a blessing to help him overcome his challenges. The following week, David received that blessing, which he states “altered my life in a huge way.”

“It was a very powerful, spiritual experience for me — one that I think I will remember for the rest of my life,” David said. “It turned things around for me; I was able to quit smoking and drinking immediately.”

Because PathwayConnect doesn’t require students to get an ecclesiastical endorsement (a statement from a bishop regarding a student’s commitment to live by gospel standards, which all Church-owned schools require), David was able to benefit from the temporal and spiritual blessings PathwayConnect provides.

“If I would have needed the ecclesiastical endorsement before I started the program,” David said, “I don’t know that I would have been able to even attempt to participate in the program. I probably would never have even started.”

Change of Heart

Since David’s first week in PathwayConnect, when he received that priesthood blessing, he hasn’t returned to his former lifestyle. He felt the Holy Spirit during his classes and knew he wanted that feeling to last. The support and environment he found in PathwayConnect made him feel at home and comfortable. David said he felt peace and confidence that he could achieve his goals along with strength and a willingness to make changes quickly. Faith was back in his life.

For David, the spiritual components of PathwayConnect were what he needed to change. “I felt it made a huge impact on me. I’m the type of person that sometimes needs different aspects of learning to be able

to understand and grasp concepts, and the program not only helped me academically, but it helped me spiritually. Every aspect of my life improved from the second I started the program."

Humility

Weekly PathwayConnect gatherings also provided the strength David needed to return to church and spiritual activity. Learning of the challenges his other classmates faced helped David find the humility to open up about his own challenges and become the man he always wanted to be.

"At first, I tried to keep my personal issues secret and to myself — I didn't necessarily want anyone else to find out what my personal life looked like," David said. "But very quickly, I realized that my classmates weren't all that different than I was. Everybody came from a different background. There were people that I felt were in similar situations that I was in. It made me really feel at home, like I didn't have to worry about being judged."

Because David found a safe place in his gatherings, he was able to humbly take a closer look at his life and come to another realization — he didn't want a wife who would accept him with all of his addictions. He wanted to be "spiritually attractive" for his future wife.

On Valentine's Day 2014, David married his sweetheart, Lauren, and they now have a two-year-old son named Roman.

"My wife and son are fantastic," David said. "Roman is a beautiful, happy, smart child. He just learned how to say 'no,' and it is adorable. And we just found out we have our second child on the way!"

Return

David credits PathwayConnect for reestablishing his connection with God and strengthening his faith. "It was huge for me to be able to learn by the Spirit," David said. "It helped open up a door to the Church that had been closed for a long time."

Because of PathwayConnect and the blessings of fully living the gospel, David found confidence in himself and his life. "I knew that as long as I did my part, God would do His part to help; and I needed that. I needed a little bit of help from my Savior to push me in the right direction, something that I was never able to find by myself."

David made PathwayConnect more than an academic endeavor: It became a spiritual journey that resulted in a spiritual rescue.

See below for the scripture references

Nephi attempting to retrieve the brass plates
1 Nephi 3:19-27

Nephi successfully retrieving the brass plates
1 Nephi 4:5-26

Nephi and the broken bow
1 Nephi 16:17-32

Nephi building a ship
1 Nephi 17:7-16