SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Participant Workbook

Group Agreements

What are some rules the group needs in order to feel comfortable to share with one another?

TRAINING HANDOUT

Educator Stress Self-Assessment[23]

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I experience high stress daily throughout the school year.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My principal's leadership capabilities reduce my stress load.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My job demands, including high-stakes testing, student behavioral problems and difficult parents, are the main sources of my stress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am limited in my decision-making power and autonomy, and this creates stress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I struggle with my own social and emotional well-being, and it impacts my ability to nurture a healthy classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that my opinions do not matter at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am a student's primary source of support, it becomes emotionally taxing on me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I experience workplace bullying.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have poor mental health more than 10 days a month.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

[23] Gallup, *State of American Schools*, 2014, http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-american-schools-report.aspx; Pennsylvania State University, *Teacher Stress and Health: Effects on Teachers, Students, and Schools*, September 2016, https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf430428; American Federation of Teachers, 2017, 2017 *Educator Quality of Work Life Survey*, https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/2017_eqwl_survey_web.pdf; Mark T. Greenberg, Joshua L. Brown, and Rachel Abenavoli, "Teacher Stress and Health," Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, September 1, 2016, https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2016/07/teacher-stress-and-health.html.

TRAINING HANDOUT

Educator Stress Self-Assessment (Continued)

FACTS ABOUT EDUCATOR STRESS

→ Nearly half (46%) of educators report high daily stress during the school year. Educators are tied with nurses for the highest rate among all occupational groups.

→ A principal's leadership skills have been found to be a major factor in determining the climate, therefore the stress levels, of educators.

→ Job demands, including high-stakes testing, student behavioral problems and difficult parents are a main source of educator stress.

→ Work resources that limit an educator's sense of autonomy and decision-making power are a main source of educator stress.

→ An educator's capacity to manage their own social and emotional well-being and nurture a healthy classroom leads to high levels of stress.

→ Educators are less likely than any other professional group to report feeling that their opinions matter at work.

→ Being a student's primary source of support can be emotionally taxing on educators.

→ Educators experience workplace bullying at a much higher rate—more than three times higher—than other workers.

→ Educators report having poor mental health for 11 or more days a month, which is twice the rate of the general US workforce.

→ Educators in high-poverty schools with good, supportive working conditions are likely to stay.

The following methods have been proven to reduce stress and improve educator satisfaction. Check all that exist in your school:

○ Mentoring and induction programs for beginning educators can reduce stress, improve educator satisfaction and retention and improve student academic achievement.

○ Workplace wellness programs have been proven to reduce educator stress, healthcare costs and absenteeism.

○ Mindfulness/stress management programs have been proven to reduce educator stress, anxiety and depression while helping to develop coping and awareness skills.

○ Social emotional learning (SEL) programs that are implemented in schools create more positive educator engagement with students and help to reduce stress.

How to Promote SEL in Distance Learning

- **Self-Talk** – What are students telling themselves? Introduce them to the concept of self-talk which is the talk, both good and bad, that we hear inside our heads. Students should ask themselves, "Is what I am telling myself helpful?"

- **Examining Leadership** – Middle and high school educators can ask students to examine the qualities of current leaders. Who are some leaders in your community, your state, the country? What skills are good leaders portraying? What do you admire in a particular leader you have been seeing?

- **Reading to Students** – Elementary educators can read stories to their students using online meeting tools such as Google Hangouts or Zoom. Then use the stories to notice SEL skills in the characters. Some recommended books on resilience are:
  - *Bounce Back! A Book About Resilience* by Cheri J. Meiners
  - *The Adventures of Beekle the Unimaginary Friend* by Dan Santat
  - *The Hugging Tree: A Story about Resilience* by Jill Neimark

- **Rituals** – Keep school rituals alive! Continue with spirit weeks and morning announcements. Whatever your school does that is unique can be transformed to an online version. Get creative!

- **Morning Meetings** – Each morning invite students to start their day by joining a brief meeting that focuses on one question each day. For ideas of questions to use, you can google "morning meeting questions" or use these to begin:
  - How do the choices you make impact others?
  - What can you do to support your family, your friends, your school, yourself?
  - What are some projects you can do in your spare time that can help the current situation? How does each project help?

- **Journaling** – Provide prompts for students to journal. It's helpful to use this process to work through feelings but can also be an interesting artifact for students to look back on in the future.

- **Daily Notes** – Create connection with students by sending daily notes to the class and choosing a few students each day to correspond with one-on-one.

- **Humor** – Connect with students by sharing humorous memes or stories from your own life. Modeling this behavior will allow students to feel comfortable to share their own stories and may open the door to deeper, more meaningful conversations.

- **Self-Regulation** – Share methods of meditation or breathing exercises with the students. Discuss which methods students use to self-regulate. Lead a discussion on why some methods work for some people and others don't. Create a class list of methods that students can refer to if needed.

Adapted from *How to Teach Social-Emotional Learning When Students Aren't in School*, Education Week, https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/03/30/how-to-teach-social-emotional-learning-when-students.html?cmp=eml-enl-eunews1-rm&M=59233310&U=2302030&UUID=11f332c609909a21912a89535f8346f7

TRAINING HANDOUT

The Benefits of SEL[24]

STUDENT BENEFITS

→ Better academic performance (11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement)

→ Lower anxiety, stress and depression

→ Better attitudes about themselves, others and school

→ More attentive/less hyperactive

→ Lower aggression

→ Higher-quality relationships

→ Increased prosocial behavior

EDUCATOR BENEFITS

→ Happier

→ More responsive and organized

→ Greater self-efficacy (an individual's belief in their innate ability to achieve goals)

→ Improved classroom climate

→ Increased student engagement

→ Lower rates of problem behaviors

→ Lower aggression among students

→ Higher-quality relationships

→ Increased prosocial behavior

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL SEL PROGRAM

→ Educator well-being first

→ Easy to implement

→ Sustainable

→ Comprehensive

→ Developmentally appropriate

→ Regular and ritualized

→ Form a common language

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24 University of Illinois at Chicago Social and Emotional Learning Research Group and CASEL, *The Benefits of School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Highlights from a Major New Report*, July 2010, https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/the-benefits-of-school-based-social-and-emotional-learning-programs.pdf; Stephanie Jones, Katharine Brush, Rebecca Bailey, Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Joseph McIntyre, Jennifer Kahn, Bryan Nelson, and Laura Stickle, *Navigating SEL From the Inside Out*, March 2017, https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf.

TRAINING HANDOUT

Motivational Factors for Learning

EXTERNAL MOTIVATION: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological Safety—"a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes," according to Amy Edmondson, professor at Harvard Business School.[22]

How do you build psychological safety?

■ **Model curiosity**—Ask a lot of questions.

■ **Be vulnerable**—Acknowledge that you do not always have the answer. You are weak sometimes.

■ **Create an atmosphere of growth mindset**—Mistakes are learning opportunities.

INTERNAL MOTIVATION: SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Edward Deci explains this theory as the basic needs people have to feel motivated and create an environment receptive to learning. Self-determination theory says the following elements are needed to intrinsically motivate students:

→ **Autonomy**—The need for control over our own lives. Example: Students need to feel that they have choices and are not being forced to do something.

→ **Competence**—The need to feel competent. The definition of competence is "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently." Example: Figure out where each student feels competent and encourage this area.

→ **Relatedness**—The need to belong and feel connected. Example: The teacher who greets their students each morning with a unique handshake for each student.

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22 Amy Edmondson, "Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace," May 4, 2014, TEDxHGSE video, 11:26, https://youtu.be/LhoLuui9gX8.

LESSON HANDOUT

Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life

Take some time to think of the happiness in your life. List the ways you are happy in the corresponding boxes below:

PLEASANT LIFE
The little things in life that make you happy. Examples: getting a good grade, having fun with friends, eating your favorite food.

GOOD LIFE
What you are good at (a skill) that makes you get lost in the moment and lose track of time; flow. Examples: playing a sport, art, writing.

MEANINGFUL LIFE
Using what you are good at to help others. Examples: cooking a meal for a soup kitchen, writing for a school newspaper, volunteering at a preschool.

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON HANDOUT

How to Be Empathetic

Directions: Using the guidelines and examples of empathetic questions, have a conversation with your partner. The pair share questions can be used as a jumping-off point for the conversation.

GUIDELINES

1   Actively listen.

→ Block out all surrounding noise and distractions.

→ Directly face the person you are listening to, and listen with your whole body.

→ Be attentive, and display good posture.

→ Make eye contact.

2   Listen without judgment.

3   Do not offer advice or try to fix any problems.

4   Do not think or worry about what you will say next.

5   Be curious and ask questions that are open-ended.

6   Even if you have not had the same experience, imagine what it must feel like.[48]

EXAMPLES OF EMPATHETIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

1   Tell me more.

2   How are you impacted by that?

3   How do you feel?

4   What difficulties are you having?

5   What do you enjoy about that?

6   What have you learned about yourself?

7   How did you overcome that?

PAIR SHARE QUESTIONS

1   Share who you live with and how you feel about them.

2   Share a time that you felt a strong feeling.

3   Share a challenge you have had in your life.

NOTE

You might think in your mind, I cannot imagine experiencing that, as your partner shares their story. If you are having difficulty putting yourself in your partner's shoes, focus on the values that you have in common and the feelings that you can relate to, to help you "feel with" your classmate.

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[48] Adapted from Elliot D. Cohen, "How to Be Empathetic," *Psychology Today*, May 17, 2015, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-would-aristotle-do/201505/how-be-empathetic.

LESSON HANDOUT

Problem Dissector

Use the space to break down the group's proposed problem. Add additional clouds to address questions that could help you understand the root of the problem. Remember, this is a judgement-free space. Your problem is solvable!

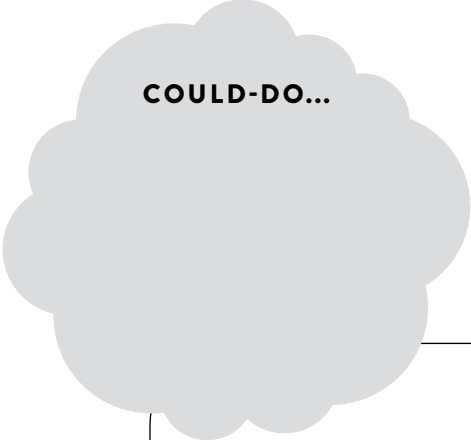**HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?**
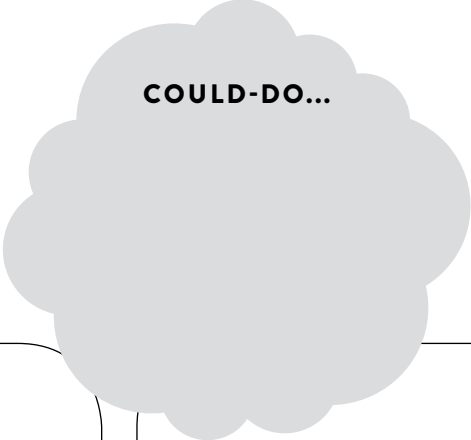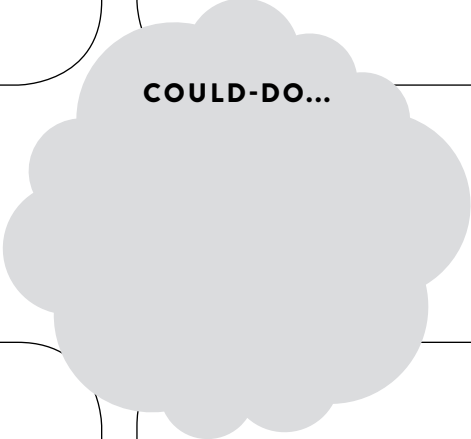
WHAT LED UP TO THIS?
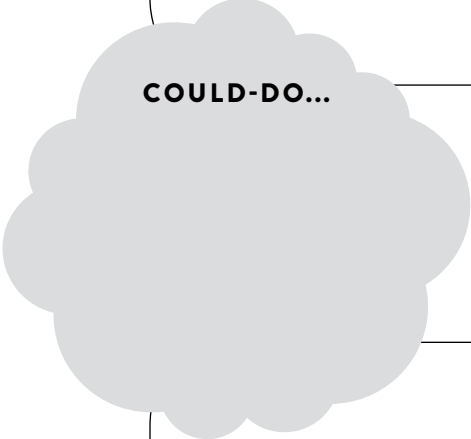
PROBLEM

WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME AND ENVIRONMENT?

WERE THERE AVOIDABLE FACTORS AND ELEMENTS?

LESSON HANDOUT

Problem Solver

COULD-DO...

COULD-DO...

ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

COULD-DO...

COULD-DO...

ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

CONTENTS

THE FIVE COMPETENCIES OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Social Emotional Character Development
SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA

6-hour training
(includes 1-hour lunch)

MATERIALS NEEDED
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Index cards
- Howl Cards
  (enough for each participant to have three)
- Small sticky notes
- Rolls of tape
- *Social Emotional Character Development Guide*
  (a copy for each participant)
- Pre-charted five SEL competencies
  (hung on wall)
- Pre-charted *What's the Question?*
  five questions on chart paper

HANDOUTS NEEDED
- Howl Cards template
- *The Benefits of SEL* handout
- *Motivational Factors for Learning* handout
- *Curiosity Tracker* handout
- *Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life* handout
  (use Middle/High *Happiness* handout)
- *Educator Stress Self-Assessment* handout
- *Emotional Regulation 5-2-5* handout
- *How to Be Empathetic* handout
  (use Middle/High *Empathy* handout)

1 **Welcome and Introductions
(40 minutes)**

→ Share goals.
- To model and highlight the importance of psychological safety when creating a positive school climate
- To stress the positive implications of educator well-being for the school environment
- To introduce participants to the structure of the *SECD Guide* and model some lessons

→ Start with the What's the Question? icebreaker. Create five groups. Give each group a sheet of chart paper with one of the following five answers at the top of each paper. Each group needs to think of as many questions as possible that could generate the answer given. For example, if the group receives the word "purple," these might be some possible questions: What is my favorite color? What is one color in the rainbow? or What color is my shirt? Allow 5 minutes for the groups to generate questions, and then have each share their questions with the larger group. Have each group post their questions on the walls of the room.

Answers:
- Creating a safe space
- Teacher well-being
- Vulnerability
- Modeling for students
- Habits in the classroom

> Keep talking about problems, and they will only increase.

Haresh Sippy

Responsibility

Caring

Problem-Solving

BACKGROUND

Problems do not have to be roadblocks or obstacles in students' lives. Research indicates that children with strong problem-solving competently negotiate social conflict,[56] perform better in school[57] and are developing "soft" skills vital for future employment.[58] When teens lack problem-solving skills, they are at greater risk for depression and other mental health issues.[59]

Encouraging students to embrace problems as opportunities will hone their critical thinking skills, which can diminish classroom frustrations. Problem-solving is a critical life skill and will enable students of all ages to handle daily challenges, be resilient and develop strategies to draw upon as they grow.

[56] Susan Newman, "Why Teaching Kids to Solve Problems Can Reduce Bullying," *Psychology Today*, February 26, 2018, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/singletons/201802/why-teaching-kids-solve-problems-can-reduce-bullying.

[57] Janet English, "How to Encourage Creative Problem-Solving: The Finnish Model," *Global Learning, Education Week*, June 21, 2018, https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global_learning/2018/06/how_to_encourage_problem_solving_and_creativity_skills.html?r=1795387251.

[58] Rose Kennedy, "7 Soft Skills You Need If You Want to Land a Great Job This Year," *AJC*, January 3, 2019, https://www.ajc.com/business/employment/soft-skills-you-need-you-want-land-great-job-this-year/2T8oYe3dnQxU0zgzQh2rJO/.

[59] Emily Becker-Weidman, Rachel H. Jacobs, Mark A. Reinecke, Susan G. Silva, and John S. March, "Social Problem-Solving among Adolescents Treated for Depression," *Behavior Research and Therapy* 48, no. 1 (January 2010): 11–18, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2009.08.006.

	SCHOOL	Middle/High
	OBJECTIVE	Students will identify problem-solving stages and create action maps to analyze the causes of potential problems and evaluate possible solutions.
	MATERIALS	• AV equipment to show a video • *Problem Dissector* handout (a copy for each student) • *Problem Solver* handout (a copy for each student)

Procedures

1. Show the video "Stuck on an Escalator—Take Action" (https://youtu.be/VrSUe_m19FY; 2:29).

2. Direct pairs of students to identify the following:

   → The problem presented in the video
   → The emotional reactions of the people
   → The actions taken
   → Another course of action to solve the problem

3. Ask the students why they think the people on the escalator did not do anything to solve their problem. How is this situation similar to what happens in real life?

4. Introduce the general steps of problem-solving. Explain that problems are an opportunity to learn.

   → Stay calm.
   → Identify the problem.
   → Identify possible could-dos.
   → Assign advantages and disadvantages to each could-do.
   → Choose a solution.

5. Explain to the students that before working towards a solution, it is helpful to think about why the problem happened. This can help bring clarity to the problem-solving.

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Procedures (continued)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Do you think students are afraid of facing problems? Why or why not?

2 How might we encourage each other to embrace problems as a positive instead of as a negative?

3 Why do you think calming down is such a key part of problem-solving?

4 Why is it important to dissect your problem before trying to solve it? (If you do not take time to dissect a problem beforehand, it can become overwhelming, reoccurring or bigger than it actually is.)

5 Can you use this strategy in other areas of your life? As an athlete? As a student? With friends? Explain.

6 One of the top skills employers look for when hiring is problem-solving. Why do you think problem solvers are sought after as desirable employees?

6 Share a time when you had a problem. Use the problem-solving strategy as a guide to share your experience. Highlight each step as you share your story.

7 Divide students into small groups, and distribute the *Problem Dissector* handout to each group. Review the questions on the handout:

→ How did this happen?

→ What led up to this?

→ What is the time frame and environment?

→ Were there avoidable factors or elements?

8 Direct the students to propose a problem (whether real or imagined) that a teenager might face. Suggestions include habitually waking up late for school, using a parent's equipment without permission and breaking it or facing pressure from a study group to cheat on an exam.

9 Inform the students that this process is free of judgment. There are no wrong answers.

10 After groups complete the *Problem Dissector* handout, distribute the *Problem Solver* handout to each group. Have groups brainstorm solutions or could-dos and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each possible solution. Instruct groups to commit to a specific course of action.

11 Once completed, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

Putting into Practice

HABITS

✓ At the end of each day, have the students anticipate a problem they may encounter (homework will take a while, waking up too late in the morning) and encourage them to use the *Problem Dissector* and/or *Problem Solver* handouts to tackle the potential problem (clear homework space of distractions, go to sleep earlier).

✓ Take a current events issue, and call for a class summit to solve the problem using the *Problem Dissector* and/or *Problem Solver* handouts.

✓ With every task, be a cheerleader for your students. Teach them the benefits of solving problems and usefulness of this lifelong skill. Help them to not fear problems.
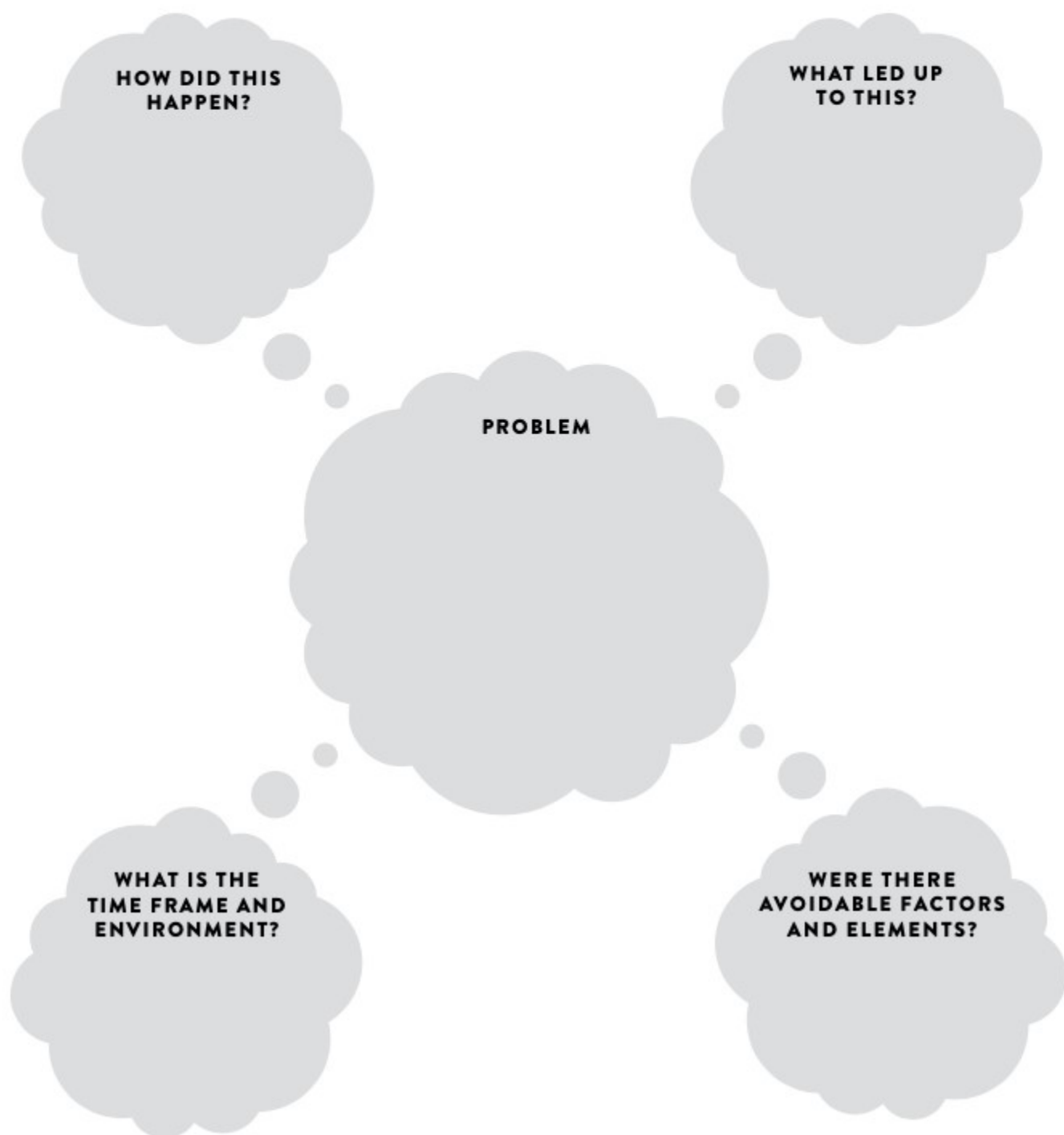
JOURNAL PROMPT

Think of a time when you were completely overwhelmed. What was happening in your life at the time? What strategies did you use to gain control of the problem? Were you able to successfully implement those strategies when other problems arose? What do you wish you could have done differently? How did you feel after successfully working through the challenge?

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON HANDOUT

Problem Dissector

Use the space to break down the group's proposed problem. Add additional clouds to address questions that could help you understand the root of the problem. Remember, this is a judgement-free space. Your problem is solvable!

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

WHAT LED UP TO THIS?

PROBLEM

WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME AND ENVIRONMENT?

WERE THERE AVOIDABLE FACTORS AND ELEMENTS?

LESSON HANDOUT

Problem Solver

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