





**SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL**  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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# CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Educator Well-Being Sample Training Agenda	8

## THE FIVE COMPETENCIES OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

### SELF-AWARENESS

Feelings	26
Character Strengths	38
Self-Confidence	55
Happiness	61
Growth Mindset	71

### SELF-MANAGEMENT

Resilience	84
Emotional Regulation	88
Impulse Control	98
Optimism	108
Goal Setting	120

### SOCIAL AWARENESS

Empathy	134
Respect for Others	142
Social Cue Awareness	150
Appreciating Diversity	159

### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Vulnerability	170
Active Listening	185
Communication Styles	192
Resisting Peer Pressure	199
Conflict Resolution	209
Resource Mapping	220

### RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Problem-Solving	230
Intent vs. Impact	240
Social Media Literacy	249

The Five Competencies of Social and Emotional Learning Matrix	258
Contributor Bios	259

# Introduction

**CASEL [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning] describes the skills associated with social-emotional learning as both “fundamental for life effectiveness” and “a framework for school improvement.”**

**Linda Darling-Hammond**

By Dr. Scott Taylor, Superintendent, Highland Park, NJ

Rates of teen depression have skyrocketed since 2011 as a result of increased use of smartphones. Troubling data emerged from two nationally representative surveys of US adolescents. These studies pointed to a rise in suicide deaths for those between the ages of 13 to 18 and linked these alarming statistics to the increased use of new electronic media.<sup>1</sup>

Building caring and strong interpersonal relationships is a necessity in this technology-charged world. Furthermore, to thrive in the 21st century, students need more than traditional academic learning. They must be adept at collaboration, communication and problem-solving, which are some of the skills developed through social and emotional learning and character development. Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more difficult to find people with these skills. The issue has been documented widely by those in the human

resources industry. More than 60% of employers say applicants lack communication and interpersonal skills.<sup>2</sup> LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner pointed out that interpersonal skills are the biggest gap employers see in candidates' skill base.<sup>3</sup>

The leading organization dedicated to the advancement of social emotional character development (SECD) in the United States, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), has amassed an abundance of quantitative data making clear that SECD increases prosocial behaviors, provides the psychological stability important for children's overall well-being, and enhances the work skills needed for success in the post-secondary world.<sup>4</sup> Fostering SECD in classrooms benefits educators as well. Teachers who have strong social skills are able to be more responsive to students' needs.<sup>5</sup> And paying attention to the social emotional needs of these educators is vital if they are to stay in the profession. Currently, 40–50% of teachers will leave the classroom within their first 5 years because of the toll taken by their stressful role.<sup>6</sup>

When implemented with fidelity, a strong social emotional character development program fosters psychological safety, greater emotional intelligence and enhanced self-determination, which creates a solid foundation to support both students and teachers. People who feel secure in their environment (psychological safety), have harnessed a great capacity to relate to others (emotional intelligence) and who are intrinsically motivated to succeed

<sup>1</sup> Twenge et al., “Increases in Depressive Symptoms.”

<sup>2</sup> White, “College Grads Can't Get Hired.”

<sup>3</sup> Umoh, “The CEO of LinkedIn.”

<sup>4</sup> Durlak et al., “Enhancing Social and Emotional Learning”; Taylor et al., “Promoting Positive Youth Development.”

<sup>5</sup> Collie et al., “Social and Emotional Competence.”

<sup>6</sup> Ingersoll, “Beginning Teacher Induction.”

(self-determination) have the skills and resiliency to confront challenges that previous generations in a predigital society did not encounter.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

There is extensive research showing the necessity for educators to create “safe spaces” if children are to thrive in their learning environments.<sup>7</sup> Schools that place a premium on fostering such safety will see the benefits by way of positive behaviors and academic growth.

Educators of all stripes have experienced how the distress that children come to school with gets in the way of functional social, emotional and cognitive development. The educator “in the trenches” can confirm what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) pointed out in its seminal study on growing up in today’s world: the majority of people experience at least one adverse childhood experience in their lifetime.<sup>8</sup> For kids who come to school having been emotionally or physically abused, who will welcome them if not the educators responsible for more than academic learning?

Transitioning kids from their challenging personal lives to welcoming classrooms that emphasize self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible

decision-making can stem the dangerous march toward what the CDC found is the result of unchecked trauma over time—risky behaviors, physical disease and death at an early age.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE CASE FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

To manage one’s emotions and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically is to live a life of great personal and professional success. Yes, general intelligence is a requisite for achievement, but without emotional intelligence, commonly referred to as EQ, one will not succeed.<sup>10</sup>

There is an organic connection between CASEL’s five competencies and EQ, and there is a plethora of classroom strategies to leverage these skills to cultivate high EQ. Educators can promote kids’ active listening to assist them in creating genuine two-way communication (relationships skills and social awareness). Encouraging students to build an emotional vocabulary will help them recognize their feelings (self-awareness) and allow them to effectively manage inappropriate or ill-timed behaviors (responsible decision-making).

It takes a concerted effort to foster EQ, since the current trend in education is to measure student achievement largely by one metric—academic performance. It behooves policymakers to heed the quantitative research data that show the correlation

<sup>7</sup> Liew, “Effortful Control.”

<sup>8</sup> Felitti et al., “Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction.”

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “About Adverse Childhood Experiences.”

<sup>10</sup> Goleman, “What Makes a Leader?”

of emotional intelligence and academic success.<sup>11</sup> Educators in the field must forge ahead despite the accountability movement and make EQ a focus of their work.

### CONSIDERING SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

People are, by nature, self-motivated; yet one's experiences and psychological needs can either impede or foster such motivation.<sup>12</sup>

Self-determination theory (SDT) makes the case for three needs that are required for promoting intrinsic motivation—competence, relatedness and autonomy.<sup>13</sup>

Socially and emotionally rich classrooms that focus on the five SEL competencies promote confidence (social awareness), breed students' sense of connectedness to others in the school (relationship building) and foster students' feeling of autonomy as a result of more effective self-management and a greater level of responsible decision-making.

The research on motivation should be leveraged to inform the path to building healthy school and classroom cultures and to understand SECD's natural alignment with SDT. Educators must forthrightly consider how the five competencies will accommodate students' three psychological needs and give them the tools they deserve to embrace learning as a wonderful part of their lives.

### IN SUMMARY

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation set out to provide educators with a set of concrete strategies to help them implement the five competencies CASEL prescribes as necessary for the development of strong SECD (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making). Skilled practitioners share their proven best practices in this *Social Emotional Character Development Guide*, which presents all of the necessary steps to be a successful SECD educator.

<sup>11</sup> Parker et al., "Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success."

<sup>12</sup> Tarbetsky et al., "Social and Emotional Learning."

<sup>13</sup> Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory."

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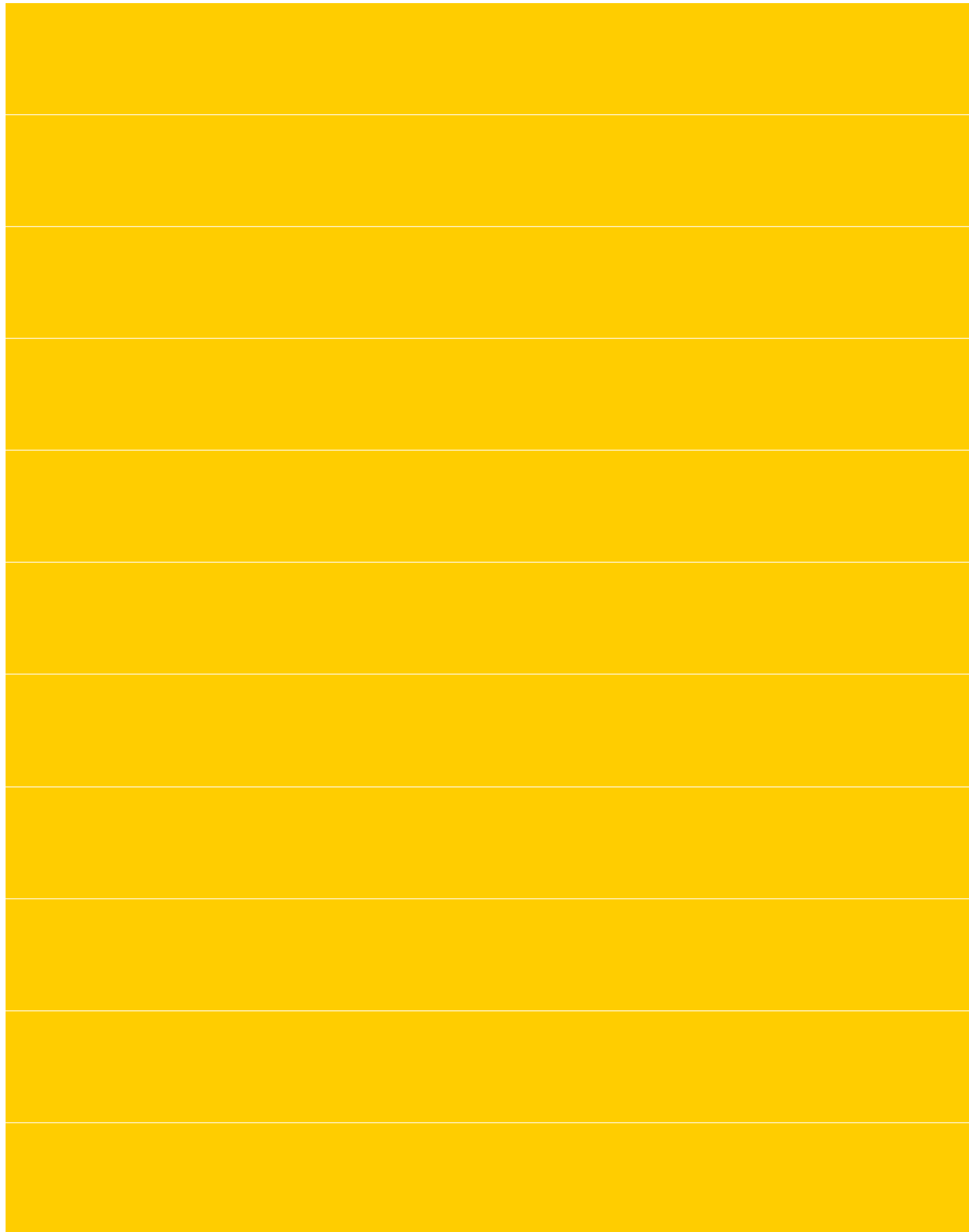
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**EDUCATOR  
WELL-BEING  
SAMPLE  
TRAINING  
AGENDA**

# 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

- Develop group agreements.  
Ask participants to generate a list of agreements for the day. Ask them to think of some rules they need in order to feel comfortable sharing with each other. Some agreements to include might be “oops/ouch” (“ouch” is emotionally stepping on someone’s toes, and “oops” is the apology), “one mic” and “time is a factor.”
- Introduce culture of encouragement.
  - Howl Cards—Give each person three Howl Cards. Throughout the day, when you hear something that resonates with you in some way, give that person a Howl Card.
- Review the agenda for the training to set expectations.

## 2 What is SEL? (15 minutes)

- What is SEL?
  - “Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.”<sup>14</sup>
  - Show a video that describes and highlights the benefits of SEL, such as Edutopia’s “5 Keys to Successful Social and Emotional Learning” (<https://youtu.be/DqNn9qWoO1M>; 6:02).
- What does an environment look like when implementing SEL?
  - Habits—Research has shown that programs are effective when they provide repeated opportunities to practice new skills and behaviors, both within the program structure and in real-life situations. For example,

Howl Cards are used regularly to model and support a culture of encouragement.

- Growth Mindset/Strengths-Based Approach—The 24 identified character strengths can encourage a strengths-based environment rather than a deficiency-based environment. This can be done through encouragement of not having learned a skill YET.
- Modeling—Modeling SEL skills in the classroom promotes SEL learning and student engagement.<sup>15</sup>

- What is SECD?  
SECD “encompasses the enhancement of school-wide climate, infusion of core ethical values into the curriculum, and teaching strategies that are designed to assist young people develop positive character traits, relationships and behaviors that result in a nurturing environment for students. SECD is designed to create a climate where youth feel safe and are ready to learn. Successful infusion of SECD results in positive behaviors, increased academic success and caring communities.”<sup>16</sup>

- Share and review *The Benefits of SEL* handout.

## 3 Motivational Factors for Learning (10 minutes)

- External (Environmental) Motivational Factor: Psychological Safety—Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson defines psychological safety as “the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”<sup>17</sup> This creates an environment where students feel safe to learn.

<sup>14</sup> “What is SEL?” Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), accessed March 25, 2019, <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Weissberg, “Why Social and Emotional Learning Is Essential for Students,” Edutopia, February 26, 2016, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/why-sel-essential-for-students-weissberg-durlak-domitrovich-gullotta>.

<sup>16</sup> New Jersey Department of Education (website), Keeping Our Kids Safe, Healthy & In School, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/sandp/character/>.

<sup>17</sup> Amy Edmondson, “Team Up, Fail Well, Learn Fast,” Ewout Boogaard, accessed April 30, 2019, <http://strongminded.nl/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Teaming-Amy-Edmondson.pdf>.

- Distribute *Motivational Factors for Learning* handout.

How do you build psychological safety?

- a. Create an atmosphere of growth mindset—Mistakes are learning opportunities.
- b. Be vulnerable—Acknowledge that you do not always have the answer. You are weak sometimes.
- c. Model curiosity—Ask a lot of questions.

→ Internal Motivational Factor: Self-Determination Theory—Edward Deci explains this theory as people’s basic needs to feel motivated and to create an environment receptive to learning. Self-determination theory says the following 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. Show the video “Teacher Has Personalized Handshakes with Every Single One of His Students” (<https://youtu.be/I0jgcyfC2r8>; 1:11). Or just greet them by name and smile.

#### 4 Curiosity Tracker (10 minutes)

→ Find a partner and answer question 1 of the *Curiosity Tracker* handout: What does your partner do to make students feel safe in their space (classroom, office, etc.)?

#### BREAK (10 minutes)

#### 5 Happiness (Self-Awareness) (40 minutes)

##### NOTE

This was adapted from *Authentic Happiness and Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* by Martin E. P. Seligman.

→ Share the following facts about happiness:

- Major events, such as being fired or winning the lottery, lose their impact on happiness levels in less than three months.
- Wealth has a surprisingly low correlation with happiness levels. Rich people are, on average, only slightly happier than poor people.
- Physical attractiveness, which can bring advantages, does not have much effect on happiness.
- Objective physical health, perhaps most valuable of all resources, is barely correlated with happiness.

→ Distribute the *Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life* handout. Review the following information:

*Happiness = 50% biology + 10% life conditions + 40% intentional activities (voluntary activity or choices).*

**50% Biology**—There are certain biological traits that cause people’s happiness levels to be inherently higher or lower. These traits account for roughly 50% of your happiness levels and remain pretty constant throughout life.

**10% Life Conditions**—These are the circumstances that happen to you and include many factors, such as where you live, age, gender, religion, income, ethnicity or race, in addition to personal history or life events, including trauma, health status or history of injury. Research has found that although these circumstances can fluctuate, people are extremely adaptable, and after a positive or negative circumstantial change, people tend to adapt back to their starting point.

- There are exceptional life conditions that can have a significant impact on happiness, such as a major trauma like a child dying or being the caregiver to a family member with Alzheimer's. These life circumstances can decrease happiness long term.

**40% Intentional Activities**—The intentional activities that you choose to act on can change your happiness. Examples: exercising regularly, being kind to others, reframing situations in a more positive light, being grateful, providing forgiveness, striving for personal goals, devoting effort to meaningful causes.

- Commitment to and repetition of intentional positive daily actions increase happiness.
- Consistent change to the routine keeps intentional activities fresh.

#### → The Three Dimensions of Happiness

**The Pleasant Life** offers momentary happiness. It consists of having as many positive emotions as you can, and learning the skills that amplify them. This is the Hollywood or Facebook view of happiness—eating the best foods and having the best vacations.

**The Good Life** is about knowing what your strengths are and then using them to be in flow. Flow happens when you are completely in the moment. The more you deploy your greatest strengths, the more you can be in flow. Flow is an important contributor to creativity and well-being.

**The Meaningful Life** is knowing your best strengths and being able to use them in service to others. Examples: impacting students, saving whales, becoming involved in local politics, involvement in a deep religious practice.

- Have participants fill out the *Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life* handout and answer the following questions in pairs or small groups:
- Was it easy or difficult to identify happiness in your life? Explain.

- What can you do to increase happiness in any area (pleasant, good, meaningful) that is lacking?
- What are some limitations to what you can do to be happy? Come up with some ways to overcome those limitations.

## 6 Educator Well-Being (20 minutes)

- Distribute the *Educator Stress Self-Assessment* handout
- Have participants fill out the handout individually.
- Have participants review “Facts About Educator Stress” on the handout and answer the following questions in small groups:
- What is your initial reaction to the facts?
  - What do you currently do to help your own well-being?

## 7 Curiosity Tracker (10 minutes)

- Find a partner and answer question 2 on the *Curiosity Tracker* handout: What is your partner's assessment of teacher well-being in their school?

## 8 Emotional Regulation (Self-Management) (30 minutes)

- Explain that being aware of your emotions and regulating them can be difficult, especially when something is upsetting. Explain that everyone has feelings and there is absolutely nothing wrong about the way you might feel at any time. It is what a person *does* with the feelings that makes the difference. This is called self-regulation.
- Explain the difference between stress and anxiety.
- Stress is caused by external factors and is a reaction to a problem. Stress can sometimes be positive, such as when it becomes a motivator in finishing work. Stress ends

when the problem ends.

- Anxiety is a person's reaction to stress and is internal. The National Institutes of Health define it as "stress that continues after the stressor is gone."<sup>18</sup> Anxiety includes excessive unease, worry or fear. It is always negative because it continues even after the stressor is gone.

- Clarify the difference by using the following example:

Stress is when you are late for school and you are in a panic, stressing out and sweating, having heart palpitations because you worry that you will be reprimanded. You arrive at school on time and you begin to feel a bit better. Your internal temperature regulates and you are able to let it go and focus. Anxiety is when you feel all that, but after arriving at school, you still feel worried and panicked. You worry about tomorrow and the day after. You have trouble sleeping at night because you fear being late the next day and, even if you do everything to make sure you are on time, you are still worrying uncontrollably about being late.

- Define self-regulation as the ability to manage your emotions and behavior appropriately in any given situation.

- Benefits of self-regulation:

- Resist being very emotional in difficult circumstances
- Calm down when you get upset
- Adjust to change
- Handle frustration without yelling
- Recognize the feelings you have
- Develop skill sets so you do not become overwhelmed
- Know emotions are contagious

- Share the following quote and ask for an explanation of how this quote supports teaching the skill of self-regulation.

- According to clinical psychologist Matthew Rouse, "[If] a child is able to 'outsource' self-regulation, then that's something that might develop as a habit."<sup>19</sup>

- Explain the difference between intent and impact. The intent is to help the child, but the impact is that child does not learn how to manage their own emotions.

- Share which methods you use when you are working to self-regulate. Share any obstacles you experience when trying to calm yourself.

- Ask what participants do when they are feeling particularly emotional and need to calm themselves. Possible answers: take a walk, listen to music, count to 10, think happy thoughts, read a book. Make a list of responses on chart paper, and hang in the room. Title the list "Self-Regulation Techniques."

- Use some or all of the following questions to lead a large group conversation:

- Why might some of these methods work for one person but not another?
- Which methods work the best for you and why?
- What obstacles have you experienced while trying to self-regulate?

- Share the *Emotional Regulation* handout. Review the "Importance of Practicing Self Care" section of the handout.

- Introduce the 5-2-5 method as one way to help regulate emotions if feeling especially emotional.

- Breathe in for 5 seconds.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Breathe out for 5 seconds.

- Ask the group to brainstorm possible uses of the 5-2-5 method in their personal lives or in their jobs.

<sup>18</sup> "Stress and Your Health," National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, quoted in Gabrielle Moss, "4 Ways To Tell The Difference Between Stress & Anxiety," Bustle, January 18, 2016, <https://www.bustle.com/articles/136328-4-ways-to-tell-the-difference-between-stress-anxiety>.

<sup>19</sup> "How Can We Help Kids With Self-Regulation?," Child Mind Institute, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation>.

## LUNCH (60 minutes)

### 9 Empathy (Social Awareness) (30 minutes)

- Explain that you will be talking about the concept of empathy. Empathy is a skill that can be developed. We are all born with the ability to empathize with others, but it requires practice and a willingness to really try and see things from another perspective to effectively empathize with others.
- Show the video “Brené Brown on Empathy” (<https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369Jw>; 2:53).
- Refer to definitions of empathy and sympathy.
  - Empathy is the ability to understand other people’s feelings and perspectives, because you can imagine yourself in their shoes. When expressing empathy, you *feel with* someone.
  - Sympathy is feeling bad for someone, or pitying them, but not imagining what they must feel like. When expressing sympathy, you *feel for* someone.
- Having empathy is demonstrated and practiced when there are differences between people and the differences are accepted without judgment. This means that the listener *does not agree or disagree* with what they are hearing. They practice active listening and work to remove their own ideas and conceptions about the other person’s experience.
- Distribute the *How to be Empathetic* handout. Review “Guidelines” and “Examples of Empathetic Questions and Statements.”
- Have the participants partner with a person and answer the “Pair Share Questions” on the *How to Be Empathetic* handout. While

they listen to one another, they should use the “Guidelines” on the handout. They should also ask one another empathetic questions.

- Use the following questions to lead a large group discussion:
  - What was that activity like for you?
  - How was this activity for you as the speaker?
  - What was it like to be the listener? How hard was it to not agree or disagree with what your partner was saying?

### 10 CURIOSITY TRACKER (10 minutes)

- Define emotional intelligence (EQ) as, according to Peter Salovey and John Mayer, “the ability to monitor one’s own and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.”<sup>20</sup>
- Find a new partner and answer question 3 on the *Curiosity Tracker* handout: List some ways that showing empathy can enhance EQ. (Answer: Empathy is typically associated with EQ because it relates to an individual connecting their personal experiences with those of others.)

### 11 Vulnerability (Relationship Skills) (45 minutes)

- Share the following definition of vulnerability:
  - Vulnerability is having the courage to share who you are even if other people might not accept you. When you share who you are, you take risks that can create closer relationships.

<sup>20</sup> Kalpana Srivastava, “Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Effectiveness,” *Industrial Psychiatry Journal* 22, no. 2 (July–December 2013): 97–99, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4103%2F0972-6748.132912>.



**NOTE**

Share that vulnerability is not simply oversharing information or telling a personal story for ulterior motives (e.g., posting your whole life on social media or deciding to tell a personal story so that people feel sorry for you or so you can get what you want).

- Ask the educators to write the following prompt on the front of an index card, “I feel vulnerable when...” Explain that you will collect the index cards when they are done.
- Model the task, and share a vulnerability with the room using the same prompt.
- Allow time for educators to think of their vulnerability and write it on their cards.
- Collect the completed index cards, shuffle them and redistribute. Have educators read their anonymous card aloud to the room.
- Have educators hang their index card (using a piece of tape) somewhere in the room.
- Have the group walk around and read the cards. Give the educators three sticky notes to place on the index cards that speak to them the most.
- When everyone has completed the task, read the index cards with the most sticky notes aloud. Next, go around and read the ones with no sticky notes.

→ Have the participants pair share the following questions.

- What are your initial reactions to what you read during the gallery walk?
- How did it feel having to share your own vulnerability?

→ Have a large group conversation using some or all of the following questions:

- How do the index cards and sticky notes emphasize that everyone experiences vulnerability?
- What is the value of sharing your vulnerability even if you did not get sticky notes? (getting it out, informing others the vulnerability exists, others may also share in vulnerability but had no more sticky notes left)
- Is feeling vulnerable “normal?”
- Who is deserving of our vulnerability? Who is not deserving of our vulnerability?
- What is trust?
- How do you know when you can trust someone?
- What do you need to do to be a trustworthy person?
- When you have taken a risk by being vulnerable in the past, was the outcome good or bad? What happened?
- How does being vulnerable and taking risks create closer relationships?
- How does peer pressure impact our ability to be vulnerable?

<sup>21</sup> Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, Alison B. Dymnicki, Rebecca C. Taylor, and Kriston B. Schellinger, “The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions,” *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (January/February 2011): 405–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>; Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, and Molly Pachan, “A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 45, no. 3–4 (June 2010): 294–309, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6>; J. David Hawkins, Brian H. Smith, and Richard F. Catalano, “Social Development and Social and Emotional Learning,” in *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?*, eds. Joseph E. Zins, Roger P. Weissberg, Margaret C. Wang, and Herbert J. Walberg (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 135–50).



## **12 Implementation of SECD Guide in Classrooms (15 minutes)**

- Explain that lessons in the guide will introduce concepts and skills, but the habits suggested at the end of each lesson will reinforce skills and are the meat of the guide. Habits are small acts that create big change.
- Research has shown that effective programs provide repeated opportunities to practice new skills and behaviors both within the program structure and in real-life situations.<sup>21</sup>
- Educators must model everything they ask students to do. This creates psychological safety.
- The guide is designed for educators to pick and choose what they feel their classroom needs to be more successful. It is not meant to be used from page 1 through to the end. It is designed for authenticity...for teachers to have autonomy and be able to choose what they feel is important to infuse into their classroom culture.
- Allow educators time to flip through the guide. Have them find the following, using sticky notes to mark the pages. Once they have completed the assignment, have them share their findings.
  - One lesson they want to try in their classroom.
  - One lesson they think they could benefit from personally.
  - One concept from the guide that they already use in their classroom.

## **13 Closing (15 minutes)**

- Lead a closing circle using the Head, Heart, Hand Method. Have participants say something they learned (head), something they feel (heart) or some action they will take (hand).



## TRAINING HANDOUT

### Howl Card Template



HOWL CARD



SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



HOWL CARD



SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



HOWL CARD



SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



HOWL CARD



SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



## TRAINING HANDOUT

### The Benefits of SEL<sup>24</sup>

#### 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

<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>



- **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.

<sup>22</sup> Amy Edmondson, “Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace,” May 4, 2014, TEDxHGSE video, 11:26, <https://youtu.be/LhoLuui9gX8>.



## TRAINING HANDOUT

### Curiosity Tracker

- 1** What does your partner do to make students feel safe in their space (classroom, office, etc.)?

*Name of partner* \_\_\_\_\_

- 2** What is your partner's assessment of educator well-being in their school? Share one tip to promote well-being.

*Name of partner* \_\_\_\_\_

- 3** "Emotional intelligence (EQ) is "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior."

— Peter Salovey and John Mayer

List some ways that showing empathy can enhance EQ.

*Name of partner* \_\_\_\_\_





## TRAINING HANDOUT

### Educator Stress Self-Assessment<sup>23</sup>

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

<sup>23</sup> 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](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](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.



## TRAINING HANDOUT

### Emotional Regulation 5-2-5

#### SELF-REGULATION

The ability to manage your emotions and behavior appropriately in any given situation.



B R E A T H E I N

.....



H O L D P L E A S E

.....



B R E A T H E O U T

#### IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICING SELF-CARE

If you do things that take energy without replenishing energy, you will burn out. Some things you can do to replenish energy:

- 1 Wake up 10 minutes early.
- 2 Take a breath every time you transition during the day.
- 3 Record three “wins” each day and how you contributed to them.
- 4 Try something new.
- 5 Move on.
- 6 Say no more often. If it’s not *hell yes*, say no.
- 7 Make a “to be” list next to your “to do” list.
- 8 Practice mindfulness.

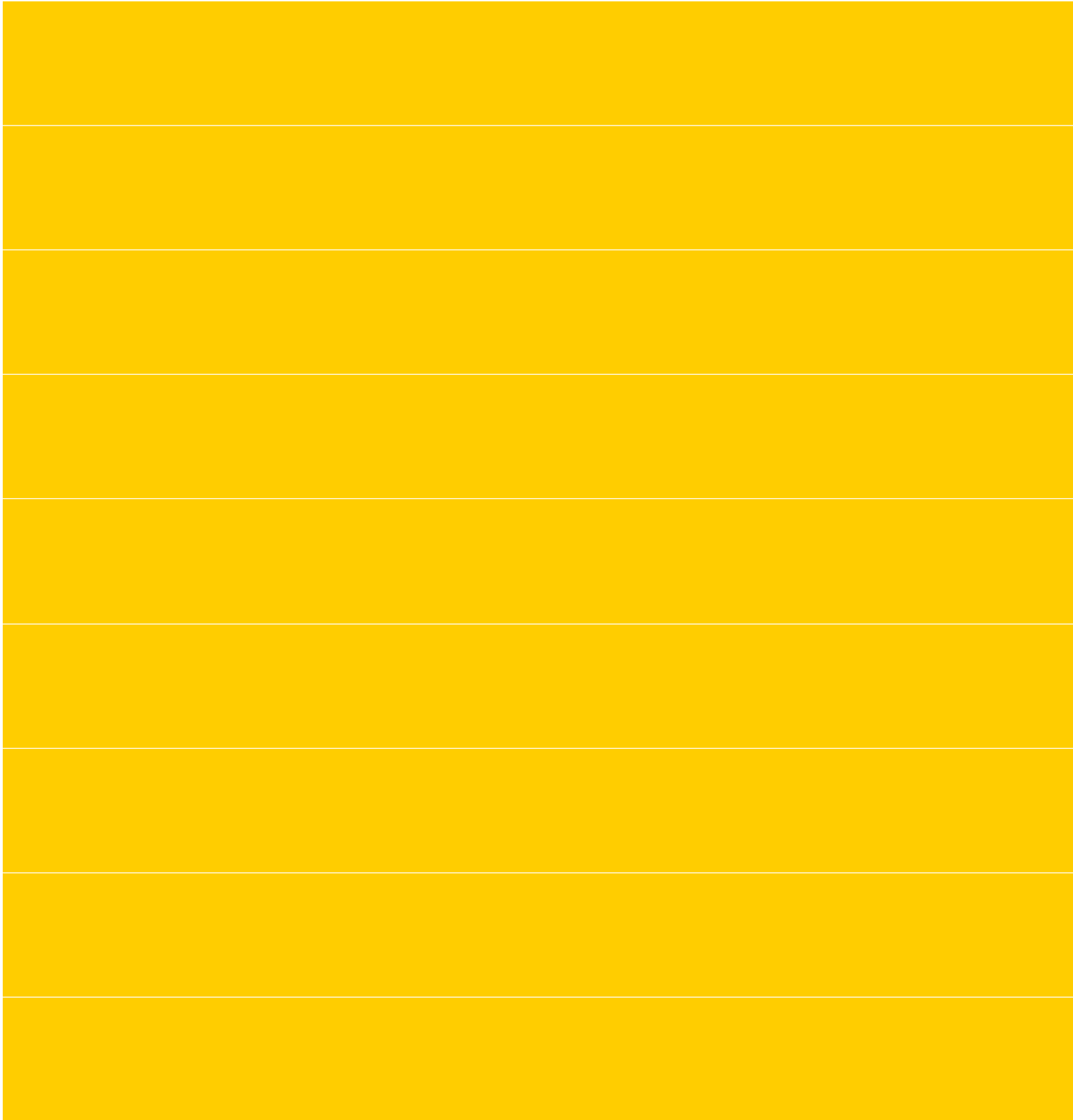


**NOTES FOR CONSIDERATION**

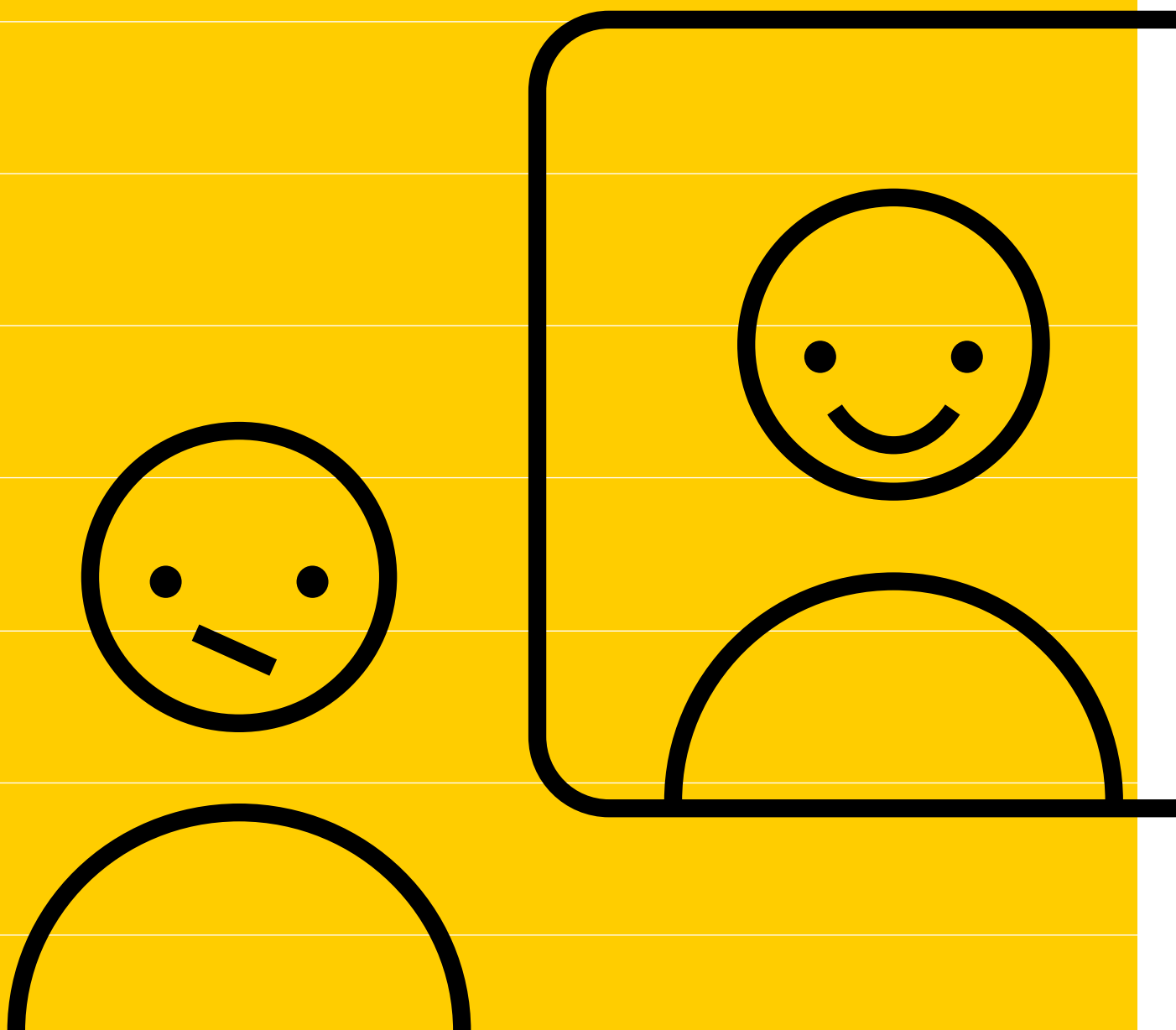
**MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS MAY  
CHOOSE TO USE THE ELEMENTARY  
LESSONS WITH THEIR STUDENTS.**

**INCORPORATING DAILY ROUTINES  
CREATES HABITS.**

**EVERY STUDENT SHOULD HAVE A  
JOURNAL FOR THE GUIDE. HABITS ALL  
INCLUDE JOURNALING PROMPTS.**



# SELF-AWARENESS



*Emotions play out in the theater of the body.  
Feelings play out in the theater of the mind.*

Antonio Damasio

#### Character Pillars

---



Responsibility

---



Caring

---

# Feelings

## BACKGROUND

The words “feelings” and “emotions” are often used interchangeably. Although they are similar, these words are distinctly different. Emotions are the body’s biochemical reactions to situations. For example, your heart races when you are scared. The reasons you feel scared might differ, but your body’s response (heart racing) will be the same.

Feelings are your mental associations and reactions to emotions. When your body has an emotion, your brain attaches meaning to that emotion and that is what you feel.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> iMotions, “How to Measure Emotions and Feelings (And the Difference Between Them),” May 17, 2016, <https://imotions.com/blog/difference-feelings-emotions/>.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn new feeling words.



## MATERIALS

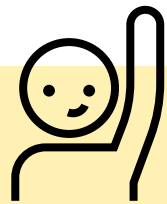
- *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis (book)
- *Today I Feel* handout (a copy for each student)
- Notebook (one for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Read *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis to the class.
- 2 After reading the book, ask the class to identify the feelings that were described. Make a list of the feelings on the board or on chart paper.
- 3 Distribute the *Today I Feel* handout.
- 4 Review the words, and define any words the students do not know.
- 5 As a class, select a color to attribute to each feeling. Have students color their own handout with the chosen colors.
- 6 Next, elicit stories that relate to each feeling. Ask the students to share a time when they had one of the feelings discussed today.
- 7 Once the students have completed the handout, glue the handout to the first page of a notebook for each student. The notebook could be titled *Today I Feel*. This notebook will be used to create a habit of discussing the feelings the students are experiencing.
- 8 As a large group, have a conversation using the discussion questions.

## NOTE

The book *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day* is a rhyming book about a girl who has different moods each day. The end of the book has a feelings wheel that could be used with students to help them identify their feelings.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Are there certain colors that are obvious for certain feelings? Which colors and why?
- 2 Which feeling do you feel right now? Why?
- 3 Can you feel more than one feeling at a time? Why do you think that happens?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you had a strong feeling, good or bad. What was the situation? Is it possible to feel differently about the same situation if it happens at a different time? Why might we feel differently in similar situations? What affects how we feel at different times? What can you do to help yourself have positive feelings?



### HABITS

- ✓ Start each day by asking the students how they are feeling. This is a great way to gauge the mood of the classroom.
- ✓ Lead students in evaluating the feelings of characters in literary texts.
- ✓ Encourage students to articulate their emotional reactions to current events.
- ✓ Introduce RULER's Mood Meter (developed by Yale University; <https://www.nprinc.com/ruler-products/>) or a similar program. Post visuals to assist students in recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing and regulating their emotions and the class's collective mood. Teachers can model how to use the chart by expressing their own feelings regularly. Example: "I'm feeling high red because I am frustrated."
- ✓ Create a *Today I Feel* notebook. Reintroduce feelings by showing the video "Inside Out: Guess That Feeling" (<https://youtu.be/dOkyKyVFnsSs>; 3:16). Each of the five feelings from the movie *Inside Out* (Pixar, 2015) are introduced by a scene with Riley, the main character. Pause the video after each scene, and ask the students to identify Riley's feeling.

Now the students can identify their own feelings. Using the *Today I Feel* handout, have students date the top of each page. They can either write a feeling they had that day, draw a picture or indicate the feeling with the designated color. However they decide to express their feeling, have a discussion afterwards with the class about how each person is feeling that day. One question you can ask is "What is one action or behavior you did today because of the feeling?"



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
**LESSON HANDOUT**

### Today I Feel

*Look over the following words. Are there words you don't know?*

*Color the box next to the word with the color that you think describes the feeling.*

☐

**Silly**

☐

**Confused**

☐

**Bored**

☐

**Grumpy**

☐

**Quiet**

☐

**Happy**

☐

**Mean**

☐

**Jealous**

☐

**Discouraged**

☐

**Angry**

☐

**Sad**

☐

**Frustrated**

☐

**Hurt**

☐

**Excited**

☐

**Glad**

☐

**Joyful**

☐

**Cranky**

☐

**Scared**

☐

**Proud**

☐

**Lonely**

☐

**Love**



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn new feeling words and learn to accurately identify feelings.



MATERIALS

- *Feeling Scenarios* handout (cut into strips)

## Procedures

- 1 Introduce the feeling words below that students often use to express themselves. Ask the students to come up with other words that are variations of these feelings. Have the students write down the lists. (They'll use them in the following activity.) Use the list below to add to their words.

**Happy**—satisfied, cheerful, content, delighted, ecstatic, elated, glad, joyful, excited, joyous, jubilant, lively, merry, overjoyed, pleased, thrilled, upbeat, blissful, gleeful, jolly, peppy, playful, in high spirits, on cloud nine

**Sad**—unhappy, depressed, bitter, dismal, heartbroken, melancholy, mournful, pessimistic, somber, sorrowful, wistful, bereaved, blue, dejected, despondent, distressed, down, forlorn, gloomy, glum, grief-stricken, grieved, heartsick, heavy-hearted, hurting, low, morbid, morose, troubled

**Mad**—angry, agitated, exasperated, frantic, furious, livid, resentful, abandoned, enraged, fuming, incensed, infuriated, irritated, provoked, seeing red, uncontrolled, upset, vengeful

**Disgust**—aversion, repulsion, dislike, distaste, hatred, loathing, revulsion, detest, objection

**Fear**—alarm, apprehensive, anxiety, concern, despair, dismay, doubt, dread, horror, jitters, panic, scare, suspicion, terror, unease, worry, cowardice, unease, creeps, distress, fright, cold feet, trepidation



**Surprise**—amazed, astonished, awe, bewildered, curiosity, disappointed, miracle, shock, revelation, wonder, marvel, astounded, eye-opener, unexpected, unforeseen

**Love**—adoration, very strong liking, affection, appreciation, devotion, emotion, fondness, friendship, respect, infatuation, lust, passion, attachment, cherishment, delight, devotion, enchantment, enjoyment, fervor

**Annoyed**—irritated, upset, agitated, bothered, displeased, disturbed, exasperated, peeved, perturbed, distressed, harassed, nagged, nudged, pestered, provoked, teased

- 2 Separate the students into small groups (two to four students per group).
- 3 Using the scenarios from the *Feelings Scenarios* handout (cut into strips before beginning the activity), explain to the students that each group will perform a different scenario. As each group performs, the other groups will write down all the feelings they can identify in the scenario.
- 4 Model the following scenario for the students and have them guess the feelings being represented.
  - Scenario: You just got a good grade on a test.
  - Feelings: cheerful, delighted, ecstatic, joyful, excited, jubilant, thrilled, pleased, peppy, amazed, shock, astounded, unexpected.
- 5 Keep score based on the number of feelings listed by each group. Provide a reward for the winner.
- 6 Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the benefit of using alternative words for common feelings?
- 2 Which feelings make you feel comfortable? Why?
- 3 Which feelings make you feel uncomfortable? Why?
- 4 Why is it important to accurately identify the actual feeling we are having at any given moment?
- 5 Why is it sometimes hard for people to talk about their feelings?
- 6 Have you ever had a feeling you felt it was not okay to show? If we suppress the feelings we are having, how does that impact our emotional health?
- 7 Where do we learn which feelings are appropriate to show and which feelings are inappropriate to show?

## NOTE

Encourage the students to add new feelings to their lists as the game progresses.

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you acted on your feelings. Is it productive for people to act on their feelings? What are some examples of situations when it is helpful to act on your feelings? What is an example of a time when it is better not to act on your feelings? Do you often find yourself reacting to others based solely on your feelings? What strategies can you use to think before you emotionally react?



### HABITS

- ✓ Post an emotion wheel in the classroom to provide students with a broad emotional vocabulary.
- ✓ Fill out the *Emotions, Thoughts and Behaviors* worksheet over time. Take some time to look through the words on the worksheet. If needed, define any unknown words and have the students write the definition next to the word. Fill out the worksheet, working on one feeling a week. Students can work individually on a feeling they are currently feeling, or the class can work together on the same feeling. Either way, compare the students' responses for each feeling.



## LESSON HANDOUT

### Feelings Scenarios

**SCENARIO:** You just got a good grade on a test. Feelings: cheerful, delighted, ecstatic, excited, jubilant, thrilled, pleased, amazed, shock, astounded, unexpected

**SCENARIO:** You just got a bad grade on a test. Feelings: unhappy, heartbroken, dismal, pessimistic, dejected, distraught, livid, rage, objection, bewildered

**SCENARIO:** Your friend just threw up in the hallway. Feelings: revulsion, compassion, devotion, upset

**SCENARIO:** You cannot get your friend to understand your point of view. Feelings: frustrated, distraught, exasperated, troubled

**SCENARIO:** You look really good in your outfit today. Feelings: confident, joyful, peppy

**SCENARIO:** You hate what you are wearing today. Feelings: detest, distraught, glum

**SCENARIO:** You just won a tournament but do not want to brag. Feelings: in high spirits, satisfied, thrilled

**SCENARIO:** You think everyone is talking about you. Feelings: anxiety, concern, unease

**SCENARIO:** Your parents will ground you if you do not get an A. Feelings: dread, panic, bitter

**SCENARIO:** You have no friends in your lunch period. Feelings: lonely, unhappy, abandoned

**SCENARIO:** You do not feel like talking to anyone today. Feelings: melancholy, depressed

**SCENARIO:** Your arm hurts you because you got stitches. Feelings: hurt, pain, down

**SCENARIO:** You did a great job, but no one notices. Feelings: resentful, infuriated, grieved

**SCENARIO:** You have no feelings and do not care about anything. Feelings: despondent, depressed, pain

**SCENARIO:** You think everyone is stupid. Feelings: loathing, dislike, angry

**SCENARIO:** You know you make people laugh a lot. Feelings: playful, appreciation, enjoyment

**SCENARIO:** You have so many ideas for the art project. Feelings: creative, excited, blissful

**SCENARIO:** You found a present for you on your desk. Feelings: curiosity, unexpected, overjoyed

**SCENARIO:** You are eating your favorite food. Feelings: glad, very strong liking, blissful

**SCENARIO:** They stopped making your favorite candy. Feelings: unforeseen, wistful, bewildered



## HABIT HANDOUT

### Emotions, Thoughts and Behaviors

<i>I feel...</i>	<i>What does it look or feel like?</i>	<i>What makes you feel this way?</i>	<i>How do you behave or act when you have this feeling?</i>	<i>What can you value about this feeling?</i>
<b>Anxious</b>	Fast heartbeat, sweaty palms, mind racing	Deadline of a project, being in trouble	Rushed, yell at people	Feel motivated to do my best, study harder for the test, practice soccer more
<b>Appreciated</b>	Big smile, proud	A friend tells me I helped them through a hard time, an adult praises me	I become more helpful	Other people recognize me and my actions
<b>Scared</b>				
<b>Bored</b>				
<b>Brave</b>				
<b>Mean</b>				
<b>Embarrassed</b>				
<b>Kind</b>				
<b>Surprised</b>				
<b>Ignored</b>				
<b>Insecure</b>				
<b>Hurt</b>				
<b>Hopeless</b>				



# HABIT HANDOUT

## Emotions, Thoughts and Behaviors (Continued)

<i>I feel...</i>	<i>What does it look or feel like?</i>	<i>What makes you feel this way?</i>	<i>How do you behave or act when you have this feeling?</i>	<i>What can you value about this feeling?</i>
Excited				
Horrible				
Empty				
Funny				
Jealous				
Wronged				
Angry				
Betrayed				
Clever				
Creative				
Energetic				
Impulsive				
Frustrated				
Tired				



# HABIT HANDOUT

## Emotions, Thoughts and Behaviors (Continued)

<i>I feel...</i>	<i>What does it look or feel like?</i>	<i>What makes you feel this way?</i>	<i>How do you behave or act when you have this feeling?</i>	<i>What can you value about this feeling?</i>
Good				
Hyper				
Hopeful				
Overwhelmed				
Optimistic				
Pessimistic				
Numb				
Nice				
Judgmental				
Tense				
Worthy				
Stressed				
Undervalued				



## HABIT HANDOUT

## Emotions, Thoughts and Behaviors (Continued)

<i>I feel...</i>	<i>What does it look or feel like?</i>	<i>What makes you feel this way?</i>	<i>How do you behave or act when you have this feeling?</i>	<i>What can you value about this feeling?</i>
Quiet				
Unsocial				
Motivated				
Social				
Pain				
Pressured				
Paranoid				
Ignored				
Isolated				
Humble				
Shame				
Confident				
Misunderstood				
Valued				

*If you do not tell the truth about yourself  
you cannot tell it about other people.*

Virginia Woolf

#### Character Pillars

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Trustworthiness

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Respect

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Responsibility

---



Caring

---

# Character Strengths

## BACKGROUND

The character strengths referenced in this lesson are from Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman's book *Character Strengths and Virtues*. The 24 character strengths they identified are global and historical and exist *in every individual* to varying degrees. There are many educational programs that are based on these 24 character strengths. One called The Positivity Project (<https://posproject.org/>) provides a comprehensive approach to character strengths for educators.





## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the 24 character strengths that exist in everyone and will identify their own dominant character strengths.



## MATERIALS

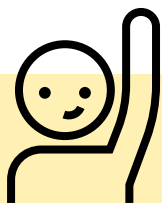
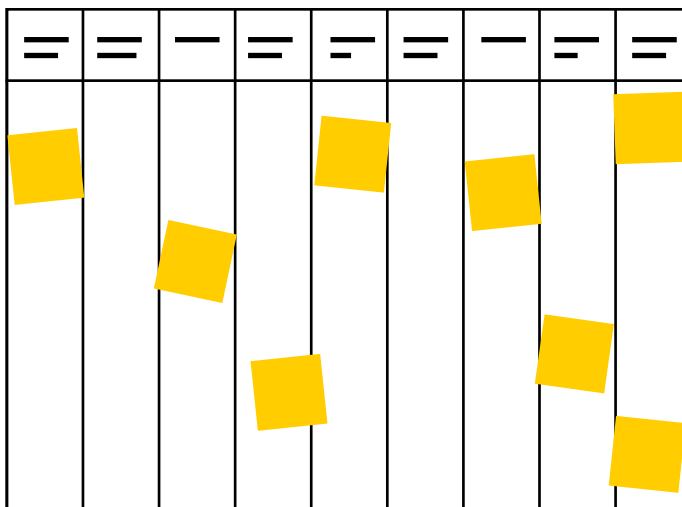
- *Character Strength Dictionary* handout (a copy for each student)
- *Character Strengths Bingo* handout (a copy for each student; optional)

# Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that everyone has all 24 character strengths in varying degrees.
- 2 Distribute the *Character Strength Dictionary* handout. Review each word, and have the students complete each sentence in writing or out loud. Introduce them either all at once or one at a time over a few weeks. Regardless of how you choose to complete the dictionary, make sure each student understands all the terminology.
- 3 Once the dictionary is complete, have the students choose their three greatest character strengths. Have them write them down on a sheet of paper.
- 4 Depending on your class's ability, choose from one of the following options:
  - Have the students make a poster about themselves, identifying their top three character strengths. They can display their posters near their cubby, on their desk or on a "wall of character" in the classroom.
  - Conduct a *Character Strengths Bingo* as a get-to-know-you activity. Distribute the *Character Strengths Bingo* handout. Instruct the students to find for each character strength a classmate who picked it as one of their top three. Students should write their classmate's initials in each square of the bingo board.

## Procedures (continued)

- Graph each student's top three strengths to see the strengths in your classroom. One way to do this might be to have each person write their three strengths on three separate sticky notes. Also have each student write their name on all their sticky notes so they can be aware of each other's strengths. Create a large paper with all 24 character strengths listed on an x-axis. Have the students place their sticky notes on the paper next to the corresponding strength. This will create a classroom bar graph that represents the class strengths.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Is there a character strength that you feel proud to have? If so, which one and why?
- 2** Which character strengths do you appreciate in other people in your class? How do they show their strengths?
- 3** Is there a character strength that you want to work on more?

- 5** Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

# Putting into Practice



- ✓ Highlight character strengths that students exhibit in the classroom.
- ✓ When evaluating group work, have students identify character strengths of group members.
- ✓ When reading a piece of literature, identify the characters' signature strengths.
- ✓ The students can make posters of their top character strengths and display them in the classroom as a reminder of their attributes.
- ✓ Each week focus on a different character strength. It sounds like a lot of work, but the Positivity Project has mapped it all out for you! The Positivity Project is an organization with a mission "to empower America's youth to build positive relationships and to understand, appreciate, and exemplify the character strengths in us all." They have an extensive database of videos, projects, calendars and more to help you highlight a different character strength each week of the school year. You can find their resources at <https://posproject.org/resources/>.
- ✓ Watch the video "The Science of Character" (<https://vimeo.com/794444520>; 8:01). Discuss ways to improve individual character strengths and have students commit to three actions they will do to improve one or two components of their character. Set a time frame and follow up with the students to check on progress.
- ✓ The organization "Let it Ripple" organizes a Character Day that thousands of institutions participate in annually. They provide free videos and downloadable resources for all ages, including adults. These resources can center around participating in the annual Character Day or can be used on their own throughout the year. Check out the videos and the discussion kit for schools at <https://www.letitripple.org/character-day/>.

## JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a person you admire. What are their character strengths? Why do you admire those character strengths? Which character strengths do you wish were stronger in you? Why do you think those are good to have as strengths? Which are your weakest character strengths? How could improving these character strengths make you a better person?



## LESSON HANDOUT

## Character Strength Dictionary

*This dictionary contains 24 different character strengths that every person has. Read about each character strength and then finish the sentence.*

**APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE**

- You see beauty and value in people and the world.
- You notice the beauty in small things.

**I appreciate beauty and excellence when**

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**BRAVERY**

- When things get hard or scary, you are strong and push through.
- You speak up for what is right.

**I was brave when**

---



---

**CONNECTION/PURPOSE**

- You think about your own life purpose.
- You think about how everything in life is connected.

**I am connected when**

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---

**CREATIVITY**

- You come up with new and unique ways to do things.
- People look to you for solutions.
- You are original.

**I am creative when**

---



---

**CURIOSITY**

- You love to ask questions and learn about everything.
- Some people call you nosy, but you just love to explore.
- You have interest in many things.

**I am curious about**

**because**

---



---

**FAIRNESS**

- You do not let your feelings rule how you judge others.
- You treat people according to how you want to be treated (the Golden Rule).

**One time that I was fair was when**

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## LESSON HANDOUT

## Character Strength Dictionary (Continued)

**FORGIVENESS**

- You know all people (even you) make mistakes.
- You give people a second chance.

**I once forgave**

---

**when they**

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---

**GRATITUDE**

- When good things happen, you notice them and are thankful.
- You make sure to thank others when they are kind.

**One thing I am grateful for is**

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**HONESTY**

- You speak the truth.
- You are true to yourself and are authentic.
- You respond to the world based on what you truly believe inside.

**I like being honest because**

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**HOPE**

- You are optimistic.
- You know that problems are temporary and your actions can solve them.
- You see good things in the future.

**One thing I am hopeful for in the future is**

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**HUMILITY**

- You know when you are good at something but do not brag.
- You are modest.

**I try to show humility about**

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**HUMOR**

- You like to make people smile and laugh.
- You enjoy funny things.

**I show humor when**

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## LESSON HANDOUT

## Character Strength Dictionary (Continued)

**KINDNESS**

- You enjoy helping people.
- You are generous with your time and the things that you have.
- You care about others.

**One time I showed kindness was**

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**LEADERSHIP**

- You organize group activities.
- You inspire people to do their best.
- You encourage people to get things done.

**I show leadership when**

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**LOVE**

- You value close relationships.
- You enjoy giving and receiving love.

**I have love for the following people in my life:**

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**LOVE OF LEARNING**

- You are always looking to learn more.
- Sometimes you look things up and get lost in the research.

**I love learning about**

---



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**OPEN-MINDEDNESS**

- You are good at considering all perspectives of a situation before responding.
- You do not jump to conclusions.
- You are able to change your mind when given new information.

**I am open-minded when**

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**PERSEVERANCE**

- You rarely give up, especially when things get tough.
- You finish what you start.

**A time I persevered was when**

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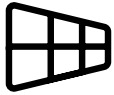


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## LESSON HANDOUT

## Character Strength Dictionary (Continued)

**PERSPECTIVE**

- You appreciate seeing many sides of situations and people.
- You give good advice.
- You can see the big picture.

**I have good perspective because**

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**PRUDENCE**

- You think about risks before making decisions.
- You are careful.
- You are cautious.

**I am prudent when**

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**SELF-REGULATION**

- You can control your emotions and impulses.
- You think before you act.

**I showed self-regulation when**

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---

**SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE**

- You know why people do the things they do.
- You are tuned in to people's motives, moods and behaviors.

**One time I used social intelligence was when**

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---

**TEAMWORK**

- You can set your own goals and desires aside for the betterment of the group.
- You are loyal.
- You feel responsible for others in your group.

**The last time I showed good teamwork was**

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**ZEST**

- You are enthusiastic.
- You make people feel energized and excited about life.

**I have zest when**

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## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the 24 character strengths that exist in everyone and will identify their own dominant character strengths.



## MATERIALS

- *What Are My Character Strengths?* handout (a copy for each student)
- *Character Strength Bingo* handout (a copy for each student; optional)

### NOTE

This lesson can be used with fourth and fifth graders who are more advanced.

### NOTE

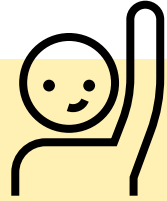
Model your own top three character strengths first. Sharing personal information, such as your own character strengths, creates the conditions for students to feel comfortable sharing their own, and helps to build the student-teacher relationship.

## Procedures

- 1 Explain that psychologists have determined 24 character traits that each person possesses in different degrees. Mention that there are many tests that can be taken to determine people's strongest character traits. Tell students they will be taking one today.
- 2 Distribute the *What Are My Character Strengths?* handout, and have the students complete it individually.
- 3 When the students have completed the handout, have them review it and identify the strengths that they circled as "this is definitely me." Have them write these character strengths on the lines marked "Signature Strengths."
- 4 Ask the students to identify all the character strengths they circled as "this is mostly me" and write them on the "Occasional Strengths" lines.
- 5 Have the students pair up and discuss their signature and occasional strengths using the questions at the bottom of the handout. While they are paired, have them put a star next to the three strengths they believe are their top signature strengths. Let the students know that even though a strength is listed as occasional, it could still be a signature strength in certain situations. For example, while humor and curiosity might be two of your signature strengths, you may want to choose your third top strength from your occasional list. While zest might be an occasional strength, it is one you value deeply, so you choose it as one of your three top strengths to star.



- 6** Choose one or all of the following options to continue your reflections on character strengths:
- ➔ Play Character Strengths Bingo as a get-to-know-you activity. Give each student a copy of the *Character Strengths Bingo* handout. Instruct them to find someone who has each strength starred as a top signature strength. Students should write the initials of their classmates on their bingo board.
  - ➔ Graph the class to see where the top strengths in your classroom are. Graph each student's top three strengths.
  - ➔ Have older students take the Via Survey of Character Strengths at <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>. This test provides more conclusive information. Note: Students will need to register an email address in order to take the test and receive results.
- 7** Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How can you use your character strengths more in your life with friends, family, strangers and acquaintances?
- 2** Which strengths have you noticed today in yourself or in others? What was happening when you noticed them?
- 3** What are the benefits of knowing your character strengths?
- 4** What are the benefits of being able to recognize other people's character strengths?
- 5** What are some strengths that you have not developed yet? Which ones would you want to develop more?
- 6** What benefits, if any, are there in viewing others as not developing strengths yet versus seeing them as having a weakness? For example, rather than seeing someone as boring, what might be the benefit in seeing someone as not fully using their creativity yet?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about the character strengths you identified as your strongest traits. How do these character strengths work to your advantage? Which strengths were your weakest? How could increasing your weakest strengths create more opportunities for you? What could be advantages or disadvantages of balancing all the character strengths within you? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of different people having different strengths?



### HABITS

- ✓ Highlight character strengths that students exhibit in the classroom.
- ✓ When evaluating group work, have students identify character strengths of group members.
- ✓ When reading a piece of literature, identify the characters' signature strengths.
- ✓ Each week, focus on a different character strength. It sounds like a lot of work, but the Positivity Project has mapped it all out for you! The Positivity Project is an organization with a mission "to empower America's youth to build positive relationships and to understand, appreciate, and exemplify the character strengths in us all." They have an extensive database of videos, projects, calendars and more to help you highlight a different character strength each week of the school year. You can find their resources at <https://posproject.org/resources/>.
- ✓ Watch the video "The Science of Character" (<https://vimeo.com/794444520>; 8:01). Discuss ways to improve individual character strengths, and have students commit to three actions they will do to improve one or two components of their character. Set a time frame and follow up with the students to check on progress.
- ✓ The organization "Let it Ripple" organizes a Character Day that thousands of institutions participate in annually. They provide free videos and downloadable resources for all ages, including adults. These resources can center around participating in the annual Character Day or can be used on their own throughout the year. Check out the videos and the discussion kit for schools at <https://www.letitripple.org/character-day/>.



## LESSON HANDOUT

## What Are My Character Strengths?





Every person has all of the following 24 character strengths in varying degrees. For each of the 24 character strengths listed below, read the description and determine whether the description is definitely you, is mostly you, you do not know, is kind of you or is not you at all. Circle the best response.

Character Strength	Description	Is this me? (Circle one.)
 <b>Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You see beauty and value in people and the world.</li> <li>You notice the beauty in small things.</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.
 <b>Bravery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When things get hard or scary, you are strong and push through.</li> <li>You speak up for what is right.</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.
 <b>Connection/Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You think about your own life purpose.</li> <li>You think about how everything in life is connected.</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.
 <b>Creativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You come up with new and unique ways to do things.</li> <li>People look to you for solutions.</li> <li>You are original.</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.
 <b>Curiosity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You love to ask questions and learn about everything.</li> <li>Some people call you nosy but you just love to explore.</li> <li>You have interest in many things.</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.
 <b>Fairness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You do not let your feelings rule how you judge others.</li> <li>You treat people according to how you want to be treated (the Golden Rule).</li> </ul>	This is definitely me. This is mostly me. I do not know. This is kind of me. This is NOT me.



## LESSON HANDOUT






### What Are My Character Strengths? (Continued)

Character Strength	Description	Is this me? (Circle one.)
 <b>Forgiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You know all people (even you) make mistakes.</li> <li>You give people a second chance.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Gratitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When good things happen, you notice them and are thankful.</li> <li>You make sure to thank others when they are kind.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Honesty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You speak the truth.</li> <li>You are true to yourself and authentic.</li> <li>You respond to the world based on what you truly believe inside.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Hope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are optimistic.</li> <li>You know that problems are temporary and your actions can solve them.</li> <li>You see good things in the future.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Humility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You know when you are good at something but do not brag.</li> <li>You are modest.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Humor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You like to make people smile and laugh.</li> <li>You enjoy funny things.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>



## LESSON HANDOUT

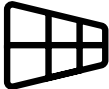
## What Are My Character Strengths? (Continued)

Character Strength	Description	Is this me? (Circle one.)
 <b>Kindness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You enjoy helping people.</li> <li>You are generous with your time and the things that you have.</li> <li>You care about others.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You organize group activities.</li> <li>You inspire people to do their best.</li> <li>You encourage people to get things done.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Love</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You value close relationships.</li> <li>You enjoy giving and receiving love.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Love of Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are always looking to learn more.</li> <li>Sometimes you look things up and get lost in the research.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Open-Mindedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are good at considering all perspectives of a situation before responding.</li> <li>You do not jump to conclusions.</li> <li>You are able to change your mind when given new information.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Perseverance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You rarely give up—especially when things get tough.</li> <li>You finish what you start.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>



## LESSON HANDOUT

### What Are My Character Strengths? (Continued)

Character Strength	Description	Is this me? (Circle one.)
 <b>Perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You appreciate seeing all the sides of situations and people.</li> <li>You give good advice.</li> <li>You can see the “big picture.”</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Prudence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You think about risks before making decisions.</li> <li>You are careful.</li> <li>You are cautious.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Self-Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can control your emotions and impulses.</li> <li>You think before you act.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Social Intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You know why people do the things they do.</li> <li>You are tuned into people’s motives, moods and behaviors.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Teamwork</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can set your own goals and desires aside for the betterment of the group.</li> <li>You are loyal.</li> <li>You feel responsible for the people you are within a group.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>
 <b>Zest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are enthusiastic.</li> <li>You make people feel energized and excited about life.</li> </ul>	<p>This is definitely me.</p> <p>This is mostly me.</p> <p>I do not know.</p> <p>This is kind of me.</p> <p>This is NOT me.</p>



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL  
**LESSON HANDOUT**

## What Are My Character Strengths? (Continued)

### **SIGNATURE STRENGTHS** (This is definitely me.)

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### **OCCASIONAL STRENGTHS** (This is mostly me.)

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### **LOWEST STRENGTHS** (This is NOT me.)

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### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1** Share your signature strengths. Are these strengths accurate? Why?
- 2** Share a time when something went well in your life because you used one of your signature strengths.
- 3** Share a time in your life when something went wrong and you could have used one of your signature strengths to help the situation.
- 4** Which strengths will you star as your top **THREE** strengths? Why?
- 5** Which character strengths did you identify as your lowest strengths? What can you do to increase your use of these strengths?



## LESSON HANDOUT

## Character Strengths Bingo



Appreciation  
of Beauty  
and Excellence



Bravery



Connection/  
Purpose



Creativity



Curiosity



Fairness



Forgiveness



Gratitude



Honesty



Hope



Humility



Humor



Kindness



Leadership



Love



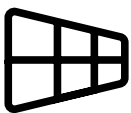
Love of  
Learning



Open-  
Mindedness



Perseverance



Perspective



Prudence



Self-  
Regulation



Social  
Intelligence



Teamwork



Zest



*I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.*

Thomas Edison

#### Character Pillars



Trustworthiness



Responsibility

# Self-Confidence

## BACKGROUND

According to Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, a student needs to know *how* to learn in order to be ready to learn. The process of learning, according to Goleman, or the *how*, directly correlates to emotional intelligence, or EQ. There are seven key components of EQ, one of which is confidence. Goleman defines confidence as “a sense of control and mastery of one’s body, behavior, and world; the child’s sense that he is more likely than not to succeed at what he undertakes, and that adults will be helpful.”<sup>26</sup>

One critical component of confidence is self-talk. Self-talk is the internal voice in your mind. This voice can be positive or negative, acting as a cheerleader or as a critic. In order to boost confidence, negative self-talk needs to be challenged. Positive self-talk can help you to talk down fears, be supporting and affirming of yourself and bolster self-confidence.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2006), 193–94.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will understand what self-confidence is and how to build upon it.



## MATERIALS

- An acorn
- *Mindful Mantras: I Can Handle It!* by Laurie Wright (book)
- AV equipment to show a video

# Procedures

- 1 Show an acorn to the students, and share the following anecdote with them:

This acorn believes that it will someday grow to be a big oak tree. Even though it does not look like a big oak tree, it knows inside that one day it will grow to be a big oak tree. The acorn does not care what you think or what I think or what anyone else thinks about it, the acorn *knows* it inside. That is what is called self-confidence. Knowing inside that one day you will become something bigger than what you are right now.<sup>27</sup>

- 2 Ask the students if they know what the word “confidence” means. Write this definition of confidence from Merriam-Webster on the board or on chart paper:

### **confidence:**

Confidence is a feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something.

- 3 Ask: Have you ever felt really confident in yourself? What made you feel like you could succeed in that situation? Elicit examples from the students.

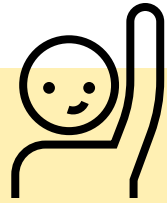
<sup>27</sup> Adapted from Courtney Ferrell, “Girl Up: The Secrets to an Extraordinary Life,” August 18, 2015, TEDx video, 15:01, <https://youtu.be/t6dnI9srW5k>.

- 4 Now ask students: Have you ever felt that you could not succeed at something? Give a personal example of a time when you were *not* self-confident and what you *told yourself* to get through the situation.
- 5 Read the book *I Can Handle It!* by Laurie Wright, or watch the video online of a read aloud of the book (<https://youtu.be/eG1H9nTQ0Rs>; 3:48).

### NOTE

*I Can Handle It!* by Laurie Wright is part of a series of children's books called *Mindful Mantras*. This book features a boy who comes across different situations that make him sad, stressed and frustrated. When he comes across them, he uses the mantra "I can handle it" and thinks of things he can do to deal with each situation.

- 6 Lead a conversation with the class using the discussion questions.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some of the feelings Sebastien had in the book/video?
- 2 How did his feelings change after he told himself he could handle it?
- 3 What were some of your favorite examples of how Sebastien handled a situation?
- 4 When Sebastien kept telling himself, "I can handle it," he practiced something called "self-talk." Self-talk is the talk—both good and bad—that we hear inside our heads. Do you think the things we tell ourselves affect how we can handle a situation? Why or why not?
- 5 Confidence is the feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something. What are some things you tell yourself to help you have more confidence?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you felt very confident. What about the situation made you feel confident? Do you need others to make you feel good, or can you make yourself feel good? What are some things that other people do to make you feel good about yourself? What are some things you do to feel good about yourself? Why is it important to be able to make yourself feel good?



### HABITS

- ✓ Practice posture exercises to project self-confidence: head up, heart open (chest up), sitting up straight.
- ✓ Encourage students to keep a self-esteem file with awards, teachers' comments, note cards and other things that made them feel successful. Have them refer to this file when they need self-confidence.
- ✓ Maintain a class rule to speak confidently and in clear, direct voices during class discussions. No mumbling.
- ✓ Post on the board the names of students you have noticed working hard or being kind. Rotate names so everyone gets on the board.



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will understand what self-confidence is and how to build upon it.



MATERIALS

• AV equipment to show a video

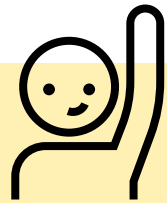
## Procedures

- 1 Ask students if they know what the word “confidence” means. Introduce this definition of confidence from Merriam-Webster:

### **confidence:**

Confidence is a feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something.

- 2 Ask students what they think the difference is between self-confidence and self-esteem. Explain that self-esteem describes a person’s overall sense of self-worth or personal value, whereas self-confidence is about their belief that they can succeed. Write on the board: “Self-Esteem = I am worthy, Self-Confidence = I can do it.”
- 3 Model this distinction: “I feel good about myself as a person, and at the same time I am not sure how well I will do on the math test.” In this example, the person might have healthy self-esteem, but not have confidence about how well they will do on the math test. You can be confident in some areas and not others. Confidence is domain specific.
- 4 Show the video “3 Tips to Boost Your Confidence” (<https://youtu.be/LNYrWqUR40>; 4:16).
- 5 Lead a conversation using the discussion questions.



### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1 What were the three tips to boost confidence that the video mentioned? Answers: (1) try a quick fix, (2) believe in your ability to improve [a growth mindset] and (3) practice failure.
- 2 Which of the tips do you think might be easiest or hardest for you to try? Why?
- 3 Tip 1 mentions listening to music as a “quick fix” to make you feel powerful. What sorts of activities help you feel powerful?
- 4 The video talks about practicing failure. Do you think that practicing failure is a good way to feel more confident? Why or why not?
- 5 What do you think gets in the way of practicing failure? Why might this be hard for some of us?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT

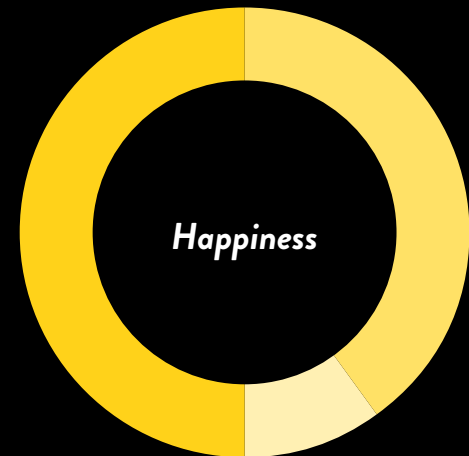
Think about a time when you felt very confident. What about the situation made you feel confident? Do you need others to make you feel good, or can you make yourself feel good? What are some things that other people do to make you feel good about yourself? What are some things you do to feel good about yourself? Why is it important to be able to make yourself feel good?

### HABITS

- ✓ Practice posture exercises to project self-confidence: head up, heart open (chest up), sitting up straight.
- ✓ Encourage students to keep a self-esteem file with awards, teachers' comments, note cards and other things that made them feel successful. Have them refer to this file when they need self-confidence.
- ✓ Maintain a class rule to speak confidently and in clear, direct voices without verbal crutches such as "like," "you know" and "ummm." Encourage declarative speaking by not ending statements as questions.
- ✓ Watch this TED talk from Amy Cuddy, "Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are" ([http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en); 20:56) or "Amy Cuddy: 30 Seconds on Power Poses" (<https://youtu.be/C4ACeoqEjeA>; 0:37). Practice power poses with students before giving them a test!
- ✓ Have students reflect on their own failures *right after they occur* in the classroom and incorporate a reflection on what students can do to grow and learn from the experience.

*Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.*

Abraham Lincoln



- 50% Biology
- 40% Intentional Activity
- 10% Life Circumstances

#### Character Pillars



Caring

# Happiness

## BACKGROUND

Most people believe the age-old formula of happiness: work hard, become successful and THEN you will be happy. However research in fields of positive psychology and neuroscience has flipped this notion around and has found that happiness and optimism fuel success and achievement. Shawn Achor calls this the Happiness Advantage in his book, *The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life*.<sup>28</sup> Martin Seligman, a prominent psychologist in the field of positive psychology, breaks down happiness as 50% biology, 10% life circumstances and 40% intentional activity.<sup>29</sup> Although biology makes up half of this equation, we have the ability to impact a significant level of our own happiness through our choices.

<sup>28</sup> Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> Martin E. P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002).



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

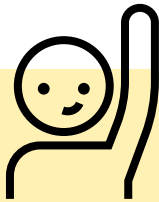
Students will reflect on what makes them happy in their own lives.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video

# Procedures



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some other things that make you happy, besides what you put on your poster?
- 2 Are there any themes in what makes people in this class happy?
- 3 Do you think people can choose to be happy? Why or why not?
- 4 Do you think what makes you happy now can change? Why or why not?

- 1 Explain that *knowing* what makes you happy and then doing that thing that makes you happy, actually makes you a happier person overall!
- 2 Show the students the video “What Makes Kids Happy?” (<https://youtu.be/q6z-yZwfS5k>; 3:32).
- 3 Ask the students to name some things that made people happy in the video.
- 4 Have the students make happiness posters. Ask them to choose one thing that makes them happiest. Then have them create their own happiness posters about that happy thing.
- 5 Have each student share their happiness poster with the class. Display all posters in the classroom.
- 6 Use the discussion questions to lead a class conversation.



## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Use the Attitude of Gratitude habit at the end of the lesson and encourage students to find daily gratitude.
- ✓ Have the students journal about one positive experience they have had over the past 24 hours. Regularly doing this exercise allows the brain to relive the experience and makes a person happier.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you were truly grateful for something. Why were you grateful? What feelings, beside gratitude, did you feel? How did you treat others when you felt this way? How did others treat you? How can gratitude help make us happier people? How do you think you can continue that feeling of gratitude?



## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the three dimensions of happiness and identify these areas of happiness in their own lives.



## MATERIALS

- *Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life* handout (one for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that Martin Seligman introduced one way to help us understand what is needed to be fully happy. He explained that happiness comes in three forms:

**The Pleasant Life** involves having as many positive emotions as you can and learning the skills that amplify them. This is the Hollywood or Facebook view of happiness; this kind of happiness is about eating the best foods and having the best vacations.

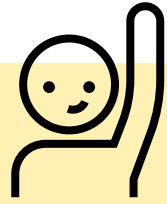
**The Good Life** is about knowing your strengths and using them to be in flow, to stop time and to be completely in the moment. The more you deploy your greatest strengths, the more you can be in flow. Flow is an important contributor to creativity and well-being. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes the seven conditions of what it feels like to be in flow:

- Completely involved in what we are doing—focused, concentrating
- A sense of ecstasy—being outside everyday reality
- Great inner clarity—knowing what needs to be done and how well we are doing
- Knowing that the activity is doable—our skills are adequate to the task

- A sense of serenity—no worries about oneself and a feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of ego
- Timelessness—thoroughly focused on the present, hours seem to pass by in minutes
- Intrinsic motivation—whatever produces flow becomes its own reward

**The Meaningful Life** is knowing your greatest strengths and being able to use them in service to others. Examples: a teacher impacting students, saving whales, involvement in local politics, a deep religious practice.

- 2 Using the *Pleasant, Good, Meaningful Life* handout, have the students individually list examples of the happiness they have in their life.
- 3 When they have completed the handout, have them meet in pairs to share where they experience happiness in their lives.
- 4 Use the discussion questions to process the activity.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Was it easy or difficult to identify happiness in your life? Explain.
- 2 What can you do to increase happiness in any area (pleasant, good or meaningful) that is lacking?
- 3 What are some limitations to what you can do to be happy? Come up with some ways to overcome those limitations.

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about one of the happiest moments of your life. Describe it, and identify aspects of the pleasant, good and meaningful life of this memory. Do you think your happiness is dependent only on you and your actions, or do others have an impact on your happiness? What can you do to increase the likelihood of happiness in your own life?



### HABITS

- ✓ Use the Attitude of Gratitude habit at the end of the lesson and encourage students to find daily gratitude.
- ✓ Have the students journal about one positive experience they have had over the past 24 hours. Regularly doing this exercise allows the brain to relive the experience and makes a person happier.

**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.



## HABIT HANDOUT

### Attitude of Gratitude

**GRATITUDE IS A FEELING OF APPRECIATION OR THANKFULNESS.**

*What is the secret to happiness? There is no secret. There is only science. And science tells us that creating a habit of gratefulness makes us “more energetic, emotionally intelligent, forgiving, and less likely to be depressed, anxious, or lonely.”<sup>30</sup> Science also tells us that if we do not switch up our habit daily, we get bored and stop doing it. Below is a list of 180 gratitudes to do every day of the school year. If you create the attitude of gratitude in your classroom, science says you will have a happier classroom.*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR END OF YEAR

1. What did you value about doing this exercise?
2. What did you learn about yourself while doing this exercise?

#### DAILY GRATITUDES

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. List 3 things you are grateful for about your parents.          | 15. List 3 things you are grateful for about time.            | 29. List 3 things you are grateful for about your mistakes.        |
| 2. List 3 things you are grateful for about your family.           | 16. List 3 things you are grateful for about music.           | 30. List 3 things you are grateful for about your wins.            |
| 3. List 3 things you are grateful for about friendship.            | 17. List 3 things you are grateful for about TV.              | 31. List 3 things you are grateful for about your disappointments. |
| 4. List 3 things you are grateful for about your enemies.          | 18. List 3 things you are grateful for about your cell phone. | 32. List 3 things you are grateful for about your losses.          |
| 5. List 3 things you are grateful for about your sense of sight.   | 19. List 3 things you are grateful for about technology.      | 33. List 3 things you are grateful for about your tears.           |
| 6. List 3 things you are grateful for about your sense of hearing. | 20. List 3 things you are grateful for about books.           | 34. List 3 things you are grateful for about your fears.           |
| 7. List 3 things you are grateful for about your sense of smell.   | 21. List 3 things you are grateful for about nature.          | 35. List 3 things you are grateful for about your pain.            |
| 8. List 3 things you are grateful for about your sense of touch.   | 22. List 3 things you are grateful for about rain.            | 36. List 3 things you are grateful for about snow.                 |
| 9. List 3 things you are grateful for about your sense of taste.   | 23. List 3 things you are grateful for about the sun.         | 37. List 3 things you are grateful for about movies.               |
| 10. List 3 things you are grateful for about your body.            | 24. List 3 things you are grateful for about vacation.        | 38. List 3 things you are grateful for about strangers.            |
| 11. List 3 things you are grateful for about your health.          | 25. List 3 things you are grateful for about grocery stores.  | 39. List 3 things you are grateful for about laughter.             |
| 12. List 3 things you are grateful for about your school.          | 26. List 3 things you are grateful for about animals.         | 40. List 3 things you are grateful for about love.                 |
| 13. List 3 things you are grateful for about your teachers.        | 27. List 3 things you are grateful for about pets.            | 41. List 3 things you are grateful for about life.                 |
| 14. List 3 things you are grateful for about the earth.            | 28. List 3 things you are grateful for about your bed.        | 42. List 3 things you are grateful for about your house.           |

<sup>30</sup> Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2010), 98.



## HABIT HANDOUT

### Attitude of Gratitude (Continued)

43. List 3 things you are grateful for about mornings.
44. List 3 things you are grateful for about evenings.
45. List 3 things you are grateful for about late nights.
46. List 3 things you are grateful for about the past.
47. List 3 things you are grateful for about the present.
48. List 3 things you are grateful for about the future.
49. List 3 things you are grateful for about your skills.
50. List 3 things you are grateful for about your religion.
51. List 3 things you are grateful for about your values.
52. List 3 things you are grateful for about your knowledge.
53. List 3 things you are grateful for about your hobbies.
54. List 3 things you are grateful for about your accomplishments.
55. List 3 things you are grateful for about your childhood.
56. List 3 things you are grateful for about food.
57. List 3 things you are grateful for about something you recently learned.
58. List 3 things you are grateful for about doctors.
59. List 3 things you are grateful for about museums.
60. List 3 things you are grateful for about cars.
61. List 3 things you are grateful for about beaches.
62. List 3 things you are grateful for about mountains.
63. List 3 things you are grateful for about babies.
64. List 3 things you are grateful for about calculators.
65. List 3 things you are grateful for about candy.
66. List 3 things you are grateful for about vegetables.
67. List 3 things you are grateful for about fruit.
68. List 3 things you are grateful for about food.
69. List 3 things you are grateful for about clouds.
70. List 3 things you are grateful for about trains.
71. List 3 things you are grateful for about airplanes.
72. List 3 things you are grateful for about electricity.
73. List 3 things you are grateful for about language.
74. List 3 things you are grateful for about firefighters.
75. List 3 things you are grateful for about police.
76. List 3 things you are grateful for about google.
77. List 3 things you are grateful for about GPS.
78. List 3 things you are grateful for about history.
79. List 3 things you are grateful for about holidays.
80. List 3 things you are grateful for about clothes.
81. List 3 things you are grateful for about imagination.
82. List 3 things you are grateful for about intelligence.
83. List 3 things you are grateful for about medicine.
84. List 3 things you are grateful for about neighbors.
85. List 3 things you are grateful for about pajamas.
86. List 3 things you are grateful for about peace.
87. List 3 things you are grateful for about plants.
88. List 3 things you are grateful for about recycling.
89. List 3 things you are grateful for about restaurants.
90. List 3 things you are grateful for about roads.
91. List 3 things you are grateful for about seasons.
92. List 3 things you are grateful for about shopping.
93. List 3 things you are grateful for about soap.
94. List 3 things you are grateful for about spell check.
95. List 3 things you are grateful for about stores.
96. List 3 things you are grateful for about texting.
97. List 3 things you are grateful for about toothbrushes.
98. List 3 things you are grateful for about tweezers.
99. List 3 things you are grateful for about water.
100. List 3 things you are grateful for about sports.
101. List 3 things you are grateful for about weather forecasts.
102. List 3 things you are grateful for about Wi-Fi.
103. List 3 things you are grateful for about yesterday.
104. List 3 things you are grateful for about today.
105. List 3 things you are grateful for about tomorrow.
106. List 3 things you are grateful for about magic.
107. List 3 things you are grateful for about board games.
108. List 3 things you are grateful for about playing cards.
109. List 3 things you are grateful for about art.
110. List 3 things you are grateful for about acceptance.
111. List 3 things you are grateful for about organization.



## HABIT HANDOUT

### Attitude of Gratitude (Continued)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 112. List 3 things you are grateful for about generosity.          | 135. List 3 things you are grateful for about perspectives.    | 158. List 3 things you are grateful for about breaking rules.    |
| 113. List 3 things you are grateful for about encouragement.       | 136. List 3 things you are grateful for about creativity.      | 159. List 3 things you are grateful for about chores.            |
| 114. List 3 things you are grateful for about accountability.      | 137. List 3 things you are grateful for about apologies.       | 160. List 3 things you are grateful for about promises.          |
| 115. List 3 things you are grateful for about smiles.              | 138. List 3 things you are grateful for about forgiveness.     | 161. List 3 things you are grateful for about email.             |
| 116. List 3 things you are grateful for about change.              | 139. List 3 things you are grateful for about weekends.        | 162. List 3 things you are grateful for about running.           |
| 117. List 3 things you are grateful for about fun.                 | 140. List 3 things you are grateful for about Mondays.         | 163. List 3 things you are grateful for about tools.             |
| 118. List 3 things you are grateful for about boredom.             | 141. List 3 things you are grateful for about Fridays.         | 164. List 3 things you are grateful for about fire.              |
| 119. List 3 things you are grateful for about comfort.             | 142. List 3 things you are grateful for about respect.         | 165. List 3 things you are grateful for about bicycles.          |
| 120. List 3 things you are grateful for about hope.                | 143. List 3 things you are grateful for about memories.        | 166. List 3 things you are grateful for about carnivals.         |
| 121. List 3 things you are grateful for about patience.            | 144. List 3 things you are grateful for about excitement.      | 167. List 3 things you are grateful for about space.             |
| 122. List 3 things you are grateful for about honesty.             | 145. List 3 things you are grateful for about nervousness.     | 168. List 3 things you are grateful for about your bedroom.      |
| 123. List 3 things you are grateful for about photographs.         | 146. List 3 things you are grateful for about conflict.        | 169. List 3 things you are grateful for about your grandparents. |
| 124. List 3 things you are grateful for about surprises.           | 147. List 3 things you are grateful for about thoughts.        | 170. List 3 things you are grateful for about optimism.          |
| 125. List 3 things you are grateful for about dreams.              | 148. List 3 things you are grateful for about compassion.      | 171. List 3 things you are grateful for about pessimism.         |
| 126. List 3 things you are grateful for about kindness.            | 149. List 3 things you are grateful for about opinions.        | 172. List 3 things you are grateful for being good at.           |
| 127. List 3 things you are grateful for about challenges.          | 150. List 3 things you are grateful for about electricity.     | 173. List 3 things you are grateful for about money.             |
| 128. List 3 things you are grateful for about sleep.               | 151. List 3 things you are grateful for about questions.       | 174. List 3 things you are grateful for about your town.         |
| 129. List 3 things you are grateful for about compliments.         | 152. List 3 things you are grateful for about strength.        | 175. List 3 things you are grateful for about government.        |
| 130. List 3 things you are grateful for about freedom.             | 153. List 3 things you are grateful for about weakness.        | 176. List 3 things you are grateful for about clocks.            |
| 131. List 3 things you are grateful for about writing.             | 154. List 3 things you are grateful for about receiving gifts. | 177. List 3 things you are grateful for about remote controls.   |
| 132. List 3 things you are grateful for about listening to others. | 155. List 3 things you are grateful for about giving gifts.    | 178. List 3 things you are grateful for about clean laundry.     |
| 133. List 3 things you are grateful for about empathy.             | 156. List 3 things you are grateful for about breathing.       | 179. List 3 things you are grateful for about traffic.           |
| 134. List 3 things you are grateful for about feelings.            | 157. List 3 things you are grateful for about rules.           | 180. List 3 things you are grateful for about gratitude!         |



*Anyone who has never made a mistake  
has never tried anything new.*

Albert Einstein

*I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost  
almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I've been trusted to take  
the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over  
and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.*

Michael Jordan

#### Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility

# Growth Mindset

## BACKGROUND

Research shows that how students perceive their ability to learn can have an actual effect on how they learn, both in the classroom and beyond. People with a growth mindset have been shown to outperform those with a fixed mindset.<sup>31</sup> A fixed mindset is one where a person believes they have a certain amount of intelligence at birth that cannot be modified. A growth mindset is where a person believes their intelligence can be developed with time and practice. “Research shows us that the brain is plastic: with focus and practice, the brain can change, it can grow new cells, and we can strengthen neurological pathways. This is called neuroplasticity, or the ability of the brain to restructure itself based on repetitive practices.”<sup>32</sup> Learning from mistakes, adding the word “yet” to difficulties (I cannot do that “yet”) and a willingness to change are examples of having a growth mindset.

<sup>31</sup> Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> Grapeseed, “How a Growth Mindset and Neuroplasticity Boosts Learning,” September 11, 2017, <https://grapeseedus.com/how-a-growth-mindset-and-neuroplasticity-boosts-learning/>.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the importance of having a growth mindset and how this mindset can help them achieve a positive outlook on tasks and challenges.



## MATERIALS

- *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain* by JoAnn Deak (book)
- AV equipment to show a video
- *Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset* poster
- *Fixed to Growth* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

### NOTE

*Your Fantastic Elastic Brain* by JoAnn Deak (for ages 4+) is a book that explains how the brain works in easy-to-understand language. It also focuses on stretching your brain to learn new things.

**1** Begin talking about growth mindset by introducing the students to their brains. Read the book *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain* by JoAnn Deak to the students and have a conversation using the following questions:

- What are some things you are really good at doing? Did you have to learn and practice those things before you got good at them?
- What are some things that you learned that made you stretch your brain?
- How do you feel when something is hard to do? Why? Do you think those feelings can be changed?
- How do you feel when you make a mistake? Why? Do you think those feelings can be changed?
- What are some things that other people are good at? How do you think they got good at those things?

**2** After your discussion, tell the students that they are not born with a specific amount of intelligence. Explain that they can become smarter by deciding not to give up when things are difficult. Introduce the students to the concept of growth mindset by showing “Growth Mindset Video” (<https://youtu.be/EIVUqv0v1EE>; 2:31). The video names Steve Jobs as a person who used a growth mindset to be successful.

- 3 Answer any questions the students might have about the video. Then discuss the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset.

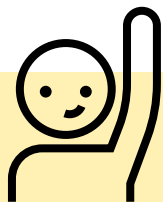
### **fixed mindset:**

A fixed mindset is when you believe that you are born with your intelligence and your talents and you cannot do anything to change them. People with a fixed mindset use language like “I cannot do it,” “That’s just who I am,” “This is too hard,” “I cannot do better,” “I stick to what I know,” and “I’m either good at it, or I’m not.”

### **growth mindset:**

A growth mindset is when you believe that you can learn, change or grow, whatever intelligence or talents you were born with. People with a growth mindset use language like, “I can do this,” “Mistakes help me learn,” “I can figure it out,” “If I practice, I’ll get better,” “I am not good at this—yet,” “I need to keep trying a little longer,” “I need to figure out what I am doing wrong,” “I can learn anything I want to,” and “When I’m frustrated, I persevere.”

- 4 Introduce the students to the power of “yet” by showing them one of the following two videos:
- ➔ For grades K–2. “Sesame Street: Janelle Monae - Power of Yet” (<https://youtu.be/XLeUvZvuvAs>; 2:41)—a great video that highlights how using the word “yet” when you do not know how to do something or you make a mistake, helps you to have a growth mindset.
  - ➔ For grades K–8. “C. J. Luckey (@cjluckeydope) - The Power of Yet - Official Music Video” (<https://youtu.be/J6CnrFvY94E>; 3:54)—a catchy song that promotes a growth mindset through the power of “yet.”
- 5 Answer any questions the students might have about the power of “yet.”
- 6 Model using the power of “yet” by sharing a personal example of a time when it helped you as a person.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How can having a growth mindset help you be successful in life?
- 2 How might having a fixed mindset prevent you from growing as a person?
- 3 How does having a growth mindset help you to be a better learner?
- 4 Where can you use the power of “yet” in your own life?

## Procedures (continued)

- 7 Read each of the following statements aloud and have the students add the power of “yet” to each statement. Encourage their enthusiasm.
  - I cannot do multiplication. I cannot do multiplication *yet*.
  - I do not get it. I do not get it *yet*.
  - I cannot draw. I cannot draw *yet*.
  - I am not good at reading. I am not good at reading *yet*.
  - I cannot sing well. I cannot sing well *yet*.
- 8 Review the *Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset* poster with students.
- 9 For grades 3–5, have the students work together to complete the *Fixed to Growth* handout. Refer to the poster as a guide for other examples of growth mindset language. The following are some suggestions of possible answers:

FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
I cannot do multiplication.	If I practice math, I will get better!
I cannot do it.	I cannot do it yet.
That is just who I am. I will never be able to draw.	It is good to try new things.
This project is too hard.	Because this project is hard, I am going to learn a lot.
I will never figure out this problem.	This is an opportunity for me to learn.
I am so frustrated.	If I get stuck, I can ask someone for help.
I do not want to play lacrosse. I have never done it.	Lacrosse seems hard, but once I learn how to play, I could join a team.
I quit. I keep making mistakes.	Even though this is hard, I can learn from my mistakes.
The teacher gave me a lot of corrections on my paper. I am embarrassed.	Now that I know what I did wrong, I can remember to fix it for next time.

- 10 Lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Continually use the power of “yet” in your classroom. When you see a student getting stuck in a fixed mindset, remind them of the power of “yet” and encourage them to keep working.
- ✓ Use the songs introduced in the lesson as background music, brain break music or dance party music to keep the power of “yet” alive in your classroom.
  - ➔ “Sesame Street: Janelle Monae - Power of Yet” (<https://youtu.be/XLeUvZvuvAs>; 2:41)—a great video that highlights how using the word “yet” when you do not know how to do something or you make a mistake, helps you to have a growth mindset.
  - ➔ “C. J. Luckey (@cjluckeydope) - The Power of Yet - Official Music Video” (<https://youtu.be/J6CnrFvY94E>; 3:54)—a catchy song that promotes a growth mindset through the power of “yet.”
- ✓ Read the book *I Can't Do That, YET* by Esther Pia Cordova to the students. Have each student make a poster of one thing they have not learned—yet. Hang the posters up around the room to serve as a visual reminder of the power of “yet.”
- ✓ When students feel overwhelmed by work or life, watch the video “Sesame Street do Growth Mindset with Bruno Mars” ([https://youtu.be/SnrHZ\\_uvtxk](https://youtu.be/SnrHZ_uvtxk); 4:24). Continue the conversation with the students about not giving up.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT

Think about a time when you could not do something well. Describe the time. What feelings did you have? Did you feel bad about yourself? Why or why not? When you see someone who is not able to do something well, how can you be a friend to them and be encouraging? When you are having a hard time doing something, how can you be a friend to yourself and encourage yourself? Why is it important to believe in yourself?

#### NOTE

*I Can't Do That, YET* by Esther Pia Cordova (for ages 7+) is about a girl named Enna who falls asleep and meets a future version of herself who can do lots of things Enna has not learned—yet.



## LESSON HANDOUT

### Fixed to Growth

*Change each fixed mindset sentence to a growth mindset sentence.*

#### FIXED MINDSET

I cannot do multiplication.

I cannot do it.

That is just who I am. I will never be able to draw.

This project is too hard.

I will never figure out this problem.

I am so frustrated.

I do not want to play lacrosse. I have never done it.

I quit. I keep making mistakes.

The teacher gave me a lot of corrections on my paper.  
I am embarrassed.

Make up your own sentences:

#### GROWTH MINDSET

If I practice math, I will get better!



## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

The students will learn fixed and growth mindsets and will identify strategies to develop emotional growth and perseverance.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset* poster
- *Growth Mindset* handout (a copy for every two students)

# Procedures

- 1 Show the following video to the students: “Serena Williams on Losing” (<https://www.facebook.com/TED/videos/10158599945665652/>; 0:35)—Serena Williams talks about learning from her mistakes and the importance of losing.
- 2 Model a growth mindset by sharing a time that you failed at something and what you learned from the failure.
- 3 Ask a volunteer to share a time they failed at something.
  - What was the failure?
  - How did you feel about it?
  - What did you learn from the experience?
- 4 Explain that you will be reading two statements. If the students agree with a statement, they should stand up, take a moment to look around in silence and sit down.
- 5 Read the following two statements:
  - “I believe that either you are good at something or you are not, and there is not much you can do to get better.”
  - “I believe that through hard work, you can improve at something that you are not good at.”

## Procedures (continued)

- 6 Explain that students who stood in response to question one lean toward a fixed mindset, while those who stood in response to question two lean toward having a growth mindset. Those who did not stand or stood for both statements may have a combination of both fixed and growth mindsets.
- 7 Draw a line with two anchors on chart paper or the board. Label one end “fixed mindset” and the other “growth mindset.” Use this visual to explain the work of Carol Dweck, a social psychologist who studies different mindsets and coined the terms “fixed mindset” and “growth mindset.”

### **fixed mindset:**

A fixed mindset is one that believes that intelligence and ability are set traits. Either we are naturally smart or talented or we are not—our traits are “fixed.”

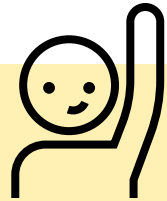
### **growth mindset:**

A growth mindset is one that believes that intelligence and ability are changeable. Growth mindset believes that with goal setting and focused work, we can become better at things outside of our natural abilities.

- 8 Tell students that having a growth mindset is useful in all areas of life and can impact how we approach our relationships and how we navigate challenges in our lives.



- 9** Show the following video to students: “Pathway Transformation Initiative: Growth Mindset” (<https://youtu.be/d0jEF66xSBA>; 4:05)—a video that highlights the importance of growth mindset and the power of the word “yet.” Use the following questions to debrief the video:
- The video discusses the idea that your brain grows when you are being challenged, not when you are repeating something you are already good at. What do you think about this idea? Why might it be hard to not just stick to what you are good at?
  - Melissa Castaneda talks about using the word “yet” when thinking about the things she does not know how to do. What are some areas of your life where you can use the word “yet” to practice growth mindset?
- 10** Share the *Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset* poster with the students, and review the sample statements. Answer any questions they might have.
- 11** Explain to the students that they will pair up and work together to create growth mindset statements for different situations.
- 12** Distribute the *Growth Mindset* handout to each pair.
- 13** When the pairs have completed the handout, reconvene and ask for examples for each situation.
- 14** Have a conversation using the discussion questions.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Which statements were easier to come up with? Why do you think that is?
- 2** Was it difficult to develop a growth mindset response to the situations? Why or why not?
- 3** How can you maintain a growth mindset?
- 4** When have you struggled in your life to learn something new? What were the messages you told yourself?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you were not good at something and you gave it up. What happened? What thoughts did you have about yourself? In hindsight, are these thoughts accurate about who you are as a person? What can you do in the future to give yourself a break? When you see someone else struggling, what are the thoughts you have about them? Do you think people are harder on themselves than they are on others? Why do you think that is?



### HABITS

- ✓ Highlight mindsets in characters from literature and prominent people from the social and physical sciences. Discuss possible narrative changes if the character had a different mindset.
- ✓ Identify current events featuring people with growth mindsets.
- ✓ Encourage students to create a personal motto for growth mindset and a classroom motto for the class community. Examples of a classroom motto: “There is no such thing as a stupid question,” “What did my mistakes teach me today?” “I really think a champion is defined not by their wins but by how they can recover when they fall” (Serena Williams’s quote from the top of the lesson).



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

# LESSON HANDOUT

## Growth Mindset

**Example:** *Your alarm does not go off, and you miss the bus for school.*

**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

I can never get up on time.

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**

Tomorrow I will get up 10 minutes earlier.

1. You do not get picked for the school baseball team.

**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**

2. You fail your driver's exam.

**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**

3. Your teacher notices that you are doing really well in a subject and assigns a challenging leadership project and you are afraid to fail.

**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**

4. Your friend's mom offers you a job at her office after school, and you worry you do not know enough to be successful.

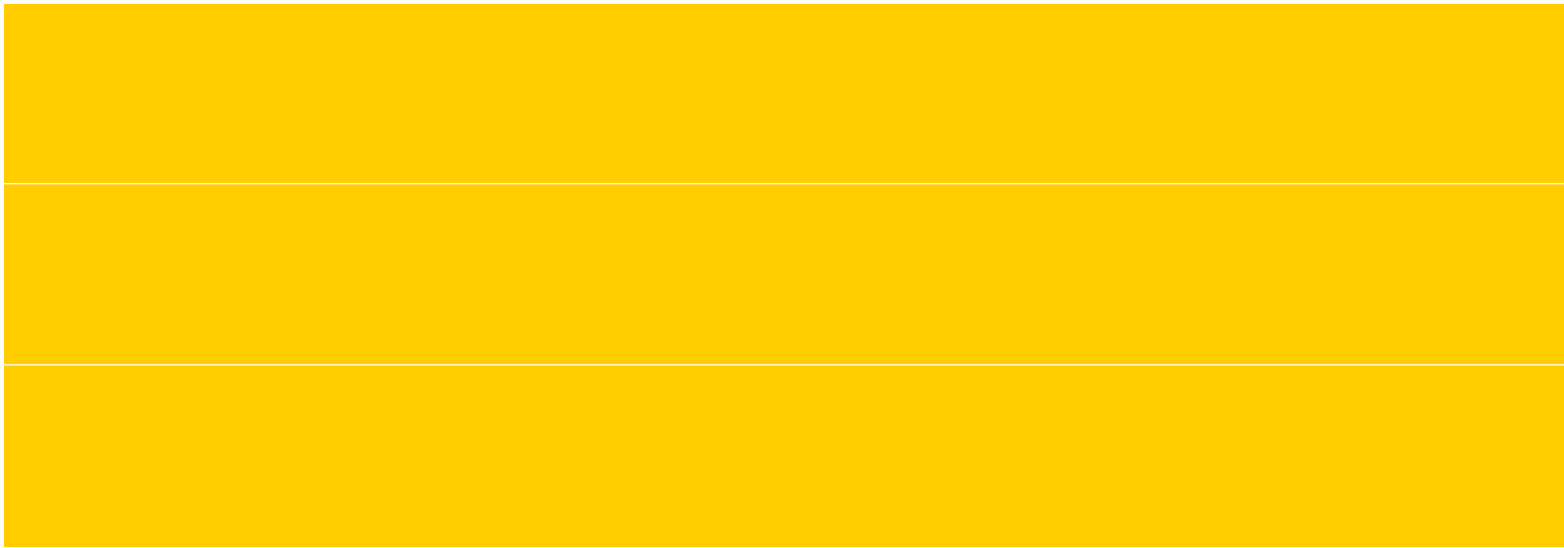
**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**

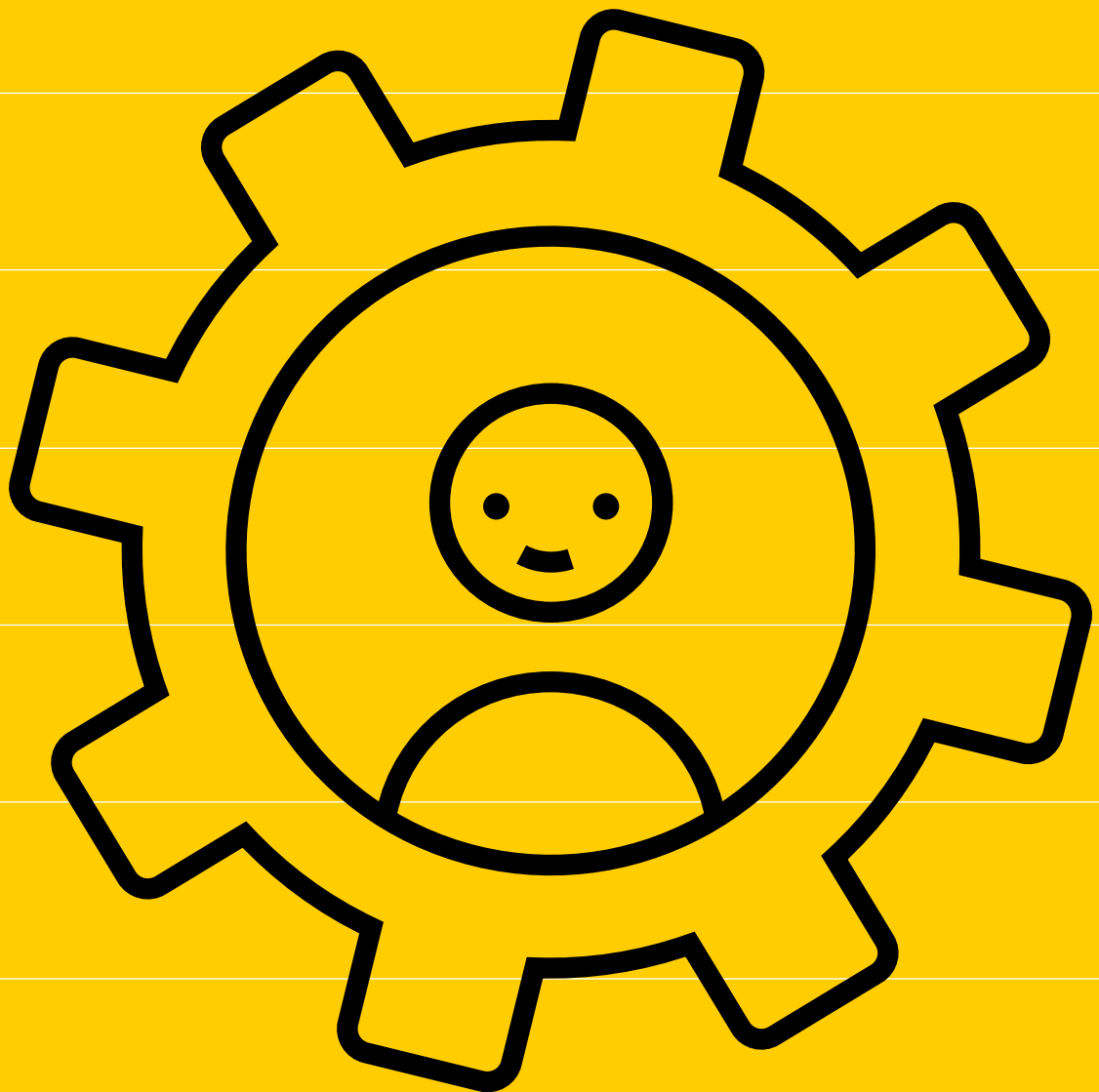
5. Everyone in class seems to understand the material and you do not.

**FIXED MINDSET STATEMENT**

**GROWTH MINDSET STATEMENT**



# SELF-MANAGEMENT



*When the wind of change blows, some people  
build walls, others build windmills.*

Chinese proverb

## NOTE

Resilience is a foundational concept for many of the lessons in “Self-Management” and should be introduced before other lessons in this section.

### Character Pillars



Respect

# Resilience

## BACKGROUND

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from a difficult situation without suffering damage. Everyone needs resilience. It is the key to success and satisfaction in life.<sup>33</sup> Research has found that with enough practice, resilience can be mastered by anyone. One main idea is that your thoughts regulate your emotions. If you can gain control over your thinking, you can control your feelings and be more resilient.<sup>34</sup> There are seven skills that have been determined to maximize resilience:

1. Emotional regulation
2. Impulse control
3. Optimism
4. Flexible and accurate thinking
5. Empathy
6. Self-efficacy—the belief you can achieve success, effectively solve problems and master your environment. “The worst possible way to build someone’s self-efficacy is to pump them up with you-can-do-it platitudes.”<sup>35</sup>
7. Connecting and reaching out<sup>36</sup>

By learning and practicing these seven skills, you can improve your resilience.

<sup>33</sup> Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté, *The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life’s Hurdles* (Broadway Books: New York City, 2002), 1.

<sup>34</sup> Reivich and Shatté, *The Resilience Factor*, 52–53.

<sup>35</sup> Reivich and Shatté, *The Resilience Factor*, 52–53.

<sup>36</sup> Reivich and Shatté, *The Resilience Factor*, 52–53.



## SCHOOL

Elementary and Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the definition and the concept of resilience.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video

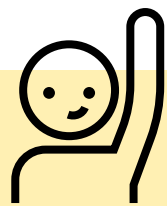
# Procedures

- 1 Ask the students to define the word “resilient.” Share the following definition with them, and write it on the board or on chart paper.

### resilience:

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from a difficult situation without suffering damage.

- 2 Explain to the students that being resilient when something is difficult is an important life skill that can help them when times get tough. Explain that being resilient helps people have more successful and happy lives.
- 3 Show the video “We’re The Superhumans: Rio Paralympics 2016 Trailer” (<https://youtu.be/IocLkk3aYlk>; 3:12). This is a brief video (for ages 5+) about athletes who compete in the Paralympic Games, an international sporting competition for people who have physical disabilities.
- 4 After watching the video, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are your reactions to this video? What emotions come up for you? Why?
- 2 (For middle/high school) How does this video challenge any assumptions you might have?
- 3 How are the athletes in this video resilient?
- 4 How have you been resilient in your own life?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you were resilient. What happened, and why were you resilient? Now think about a time when you were not resilient. What happened, and why were you not able to be resilient? What is the difference between these two situations? Are you able to be resilient all the time? Why or why not? What do you need in order to be resilient?



### HABITS

- ✓ Highlight students showing resilience in your classroom, such as keeping calm when recess is cancelled and staying mellow when a project is announced.
- ✓ Encourage students to sleep, eat well and exercise. Maintaining physical health positively impacts resiliency.
- ✓ Create a classroom of respectful laughter. Laugh at yourself, and encourage students to find the humor in their daily encounters.
- ✓ Identify examples of resiliency when interpreting literary texts or analyzing media stories or historical events.
- ✓ Occasionally read books or show videos that talk about resiliency. After reading or watching, support the idea of resiliency by identifying ways the characters in the books or videos were resilient.



## BOOKS AND VIDEOS THAT DISCUSS OR CENTER ON RESILIENCE:

- ➔ For educators. “In Brief: Resilience Series” by The Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University (<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/>).
  - A resource on the science and the benefits of building resiliency.
- ➔ For grades Pre-K–2. *Bounce Back! A Book about Resilience* by Cheri J. Meiners.
  - A book about a young girl who has some problems and thinks of ways she can bounce back from being upset.
- ➔ For grades Pre-K–2. *The Hugging Tree: A Story about Resilience* by Jill Neimark.
  - A book about a tree that does not have an ideal home but remains hopeful and ultimately receives help from a boy.
- ➔ For grades Pre-K–2. *The Adventures of Beekle the Unimaginary Friend* by Dan Santat.
  - A book about an imaginary friend who shows resilience when trying to find his perfect match.
- ➔ For grades Pre-K–4. *Arthur: Family Health: Resilience* from PBS Kids (<https://pbskids.org/arthur/health/resilience/>).
  - A website with materials on how to respond to upsetting events with games, activities, videos and information for educators and parents.
- ➔ For grades 2–6. *El Deafo* by Cece Bell.
  - A graphic novel memoir that chronicles the author’s hearing loss at a young age.
- ➔ For grades 3–7. *Ugly* by Robert Hoge.
  - The story of a boy who refuses to let the way his face looks dictate his life.
- ➔ For grades 4–6. *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang.
  - The story of an immigrant girl with a lot of secrets.
- ➔ For grades 4–6. *Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin.
  - A book about a misunderstood autistic girl who searches for her missing dog.
- ➔ For grades 5–8. *A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story* by Linda Sue Park.
  - The story of Salva, one of the “Lost Boys” of Sudan.
- ➔ For grades 6–12. “Resilience but What Is It? Here’s 5 Ways to Build Resilience” (<https://youtu.be/1FDyiUEn8Vw>; 2:17)
  - A short video that explains resiliency and talks about some strategies that can help you be more resilient.
- ➔ For grades 6–12. *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* by Malala Yousafzai and Patricia McCormick.
  - The story of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner.
- ➔ For grades 8–12. *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas.
  - A book about a girl who witnesses the shooting of her friend by a police officer.

*Unleash in the right time and place before you  
explode at the wrong time and place.*

Oli Anderson

*For news of the heart, ask the face.*

West African saying

## Character Pillars



### Responsibility

## NOTE

Although there is a fine line between feelings and emotions (feelings are the brain's interpretation of emotions) this lesson uses these terms interchangeably.

# Emotional Regulation

## BACKGROUND

Emotional regulation consists of being aware of your feelings and then being able to regulate them. Emotional regulation allows a person to stay calm under pressure which is a factor of resiliency. Being able to self-regulate emotions is also important when forming relationships. Research has shown that people who have difficulty regulating their emotions, have a harder time forming and maintaining relationships.<sup>37</sup> They exhibit great intensity which can often emotionally exhaust the people around them. Emotions are contagious so people who are unable to regulate emotions, such as sadness, anxiety or anger, can lead others to feel those negative emotions, even if they do not want to.

This is not to say that negative emotions should not be shared. Quite the opposite is true. Just as keeping all your feelings to yourself can be damaging, so can magnifying every emotion. Emotional regulation is about moderating your emotions so others can respond to your emotional needs without being overburdened or overwhelmed.<sup>38</sup>

Professor James Gross from Stanford, a major researcher on emotional regulation, has developed what is known as The Process Model of Emotion Regulation. This model rests on the premise that emotions are typically generated by a “situation, attention, appraisal, response” sequence. You can read more about this model at <https://www.verywellmind.com/emotion-regulation-skills-training-425374>.

<sup>37</sup> Julie P. Farley and Jungmeen Kim-Spoon, “The Development of Adolescent Self-Regulation: Reviewing the Role of Parent, Peer, Friend, and Romantic Relationships,” *Journal of Adolescence* 37, no. 4 (June 2014): 433–40, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.03.009>.

<sup>38</sup> Reivich and Shatté, *The Resilience Factor*.



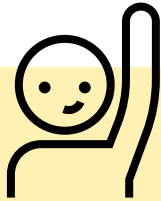
## Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that being aware of your emotions and regulating them can be difficult, especially when something is upsetting. Explain that everyone has feelings, and there is absolutely nothing wrong about the way you might feel at any time. It is what a person does with the feelings that makes the difference. This is called self-regulation.

### **self-regulation:**

Self-regulation is the ability to manage your emotions and behavior appropriately in any given situation.

- 2 Explain that self-regulation helps you to do the following:
  - Resist being very emotional in difficult circumstances
  - Calm yourself down when you get upset
  - Adjust to change
  - Handle frustration without yelling
- 3 Ask the students what they do when they are feeling particularly emotional and need to calm themselves. Examples: take a walk, listen to music, count to 10, think happy thoughts, read a book. Make a list of their responses on chart paper that can be hung in the classroom. Title the list “Self-Regulation Techniques.”



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Describe a time when you think the 5-2-5 method might have been helpful to you in regulating your emotions.
- 2** Why is it important to regulate your feelings?
- 3** Is there ever a time when it is okay to not feel what you are feeling? Explain. (It is important to stress to the students that you are always entitled to your feelings and there is never an emotion that is wrong. It is what you do with the emotion that can cause problems.)

## Procedures (continued)

- 4** Tell the students which methods you use when you are working to self-regulate. Share any obstacles you experience when trying to calm yourself.
- 5** Looking at the list of ways the students regulate their emotions, use the following questions to lead a discussion:
  - Why might some of these methods work for one person but not another?
  - Which methods work the best for you and why?
  - What obstacles have you experienced while trying to self-regulate?
- 6** Introduce the 5-2-5 method as one way the students can regulate their emotions if they are feeling especially emotional:
  - Breathe in for 5 seconds.
  - Hold for 2 seconds.
  - Breathe out for 5 seconds.
- 7** Have the students practice this breathing technique. You can start or end each day with the 5-2-5. You can also institute the 5-2-5 when the class needs to be refocused.
- 8** Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## Putting into Practice



- ✓ Create a designated area for “pressing pause” or for a “reset.” (You may choose to call this area “The Reset Spot.”) Provide stress balls or squishies. Have the students go to this area and reflect on these posted questions:
  - What is happening right now?
  - How do I feel about it?
  - What do I want the outcome to be?
- ✓ Using the *Regulating my Feelings Mini-Book* templates, have each student create their own mini-book with strategies they have used to calm themselves down. You could create the book in one lesson or slowly add pages with different techniques the students used or would like to use. Refer students to their mini-books when they need to self-regulate.
- ✓ Encourage students to learn to read their bodies for sensations such as sweating, upset tummy, pressure on their chests and to identify the situations that elicit these sensations.
- ✓ Model your own reading of your body and your self-regulating solution, when appropriate. Example: “Class, I feel chest pressure starting because I feel I am not being listened to. I need to count to 10.”
- ✓ Read student cues, identify their feelings and suggest a self-regulating strategy. Example: “\_\_\_\_\_, I see you are breathing hard. Why don’t you go over to ‘The Reset Spot’ and spend a few moments squishing balls and thinking about the answers to the questions listed.”
- ✓ Post a guided breathing chart.

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you had a hard time regulating your emotions. What happened? What feelings were you having? What did your body feel like? Were you able to regulate yourself? What did you do? What do you wish you had done? What might you do in the future if these feelings happen again? Can others help you when you need emotional regulating? What advice would you give to someone else who needs help regulating their emotions?



## Regulating My Feelings Mini-Book Templates

### Regulating My Feelings Mini-Book

These are the ways I can calm myself down.

© New Jersey State Bar Foundation

Today, I calmed myself down by ...

Illustration:

© New Jersey State Bar Foundation



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the difference between stress and anxiety and the benefits of practicing self-regulation.



MATERIALS

• *Sharing Stress* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that being aware of your feelings, stress and anxieties can be difficult. Being able to regulate these can sometimes be even more difficult. Explain that everyone has feelings, stress and anxiety and that there is absolutely nothing wrong about the way you might feel at any time. It is what a person *does* with the feelings, stress and anxiety that makes the difference. This is called self-regulation. Share the following definition:

### **self-regulation:**

Self-regulation is the ability to manage your emotions and behavior appropriately in any given situation.

### **NOTE**

Throughout the lesson, if students express that they experience panic attacks or excessive irrational worry and fear, recommend they discuss their symptoms with a school counselor, parent/guardian or any other trusted adult.

- 2 Explain that self-regulation helps you to do the following:
  - Resist being very emotional in difficult circumstances
  - Calm down when you get upset
  - Adjust to change
  - Handle frustration without yelling

## Procedures (continued)

- 3 Next, explain the difference between stress and anxiety.
  - Stress is caused by external factors and is a reaction to a problem. Stress can sometimes be positive when it becomes a motivator in finishing work. Stress ends when the problem ends. Examples: being late to school, having an argument with a friend, feeling pressured because of school assignments.
  - Anxiety is a person's reaction to stress and is internal. "Anxiety is stress that continues after the stressor is gone."<sup>39</sup> Anxiety includes excessive unease, worry and fear. Anxiety is always negative because it continues even after the stressor is gone.
- 4 Clarify the difference for students using the following example:
  - Stress is when you are late for school and you are in a panic, stressing out and sweating, and having heart palpitations because you worry that you will get a detention for being late. You arrive at school on time, and you begin to feel a bit better. Your internal temperature regulates, and you are able to let it go and focus in class. Anxiety is when you feel all that, but after arriving at school, you still feel worried and panicked. You worry about tomorrow and the day after. You have trouble sleeping at night because you fear being late the next day and, even if you do everything to make sure you are on time, you are still worrying uncontrollably about being late.
- 5 Share an experience you had that was either stress or anxiety. Tell the students the methods you used to self-regulate. Share any obstacles you experienced when trying to calm yourself.
- 6 Distribute the *Sharing Stress* handout. Have the students answer the questions individually. Once the students are finished, collect the papers, shuffle them and distribute them randomly back to the class.

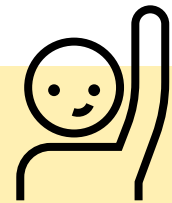
<sup>39</sup> "Stress and Your Health," National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, quoted in Gabrielle Moss, "4 Ways To Tell The Difference Between Stress & Anxiety," Bustle, January 18, 2016, <https://www.bustle.com/articles/136328-4-ways-to-tell-the-difference-between-stress-anxiety>.



- 7 Review the answers one by one and only one at a time. For each question, have the students share the responses on their paper.
- 8 While the students read the responses, record the answers on chart paper so the students can see them. Highlight the methods the students use to relieve their stress and anxiety. Use the following questions to debrief this portion of the lesson:
  - Which stressors and anxieties were the most common? Why do you think that is?
  - Are there methods to relieve stress and anxiety that you use more regularly?
  - Was anything mentioned that you had not thought of before?
- 9 Introduce the 5-2-5 method as one way the students can regulate their emotions if they are feeling stressed or anxious:
  - Breathe in for 5 seconds.
  - Hold for 2 seconds.
  - Breathe out for 5 seconds.
- 10 Have the students practice this breathing technique. You can choose to start or end each day with the 5-2-5. You can also institute the 5-2-5 when the class needs to be refocused.
- 11 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## NOTE

Some students may choose to share that they use medications to handle anxiety. This is very common and should be treated as normal.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to regulate your feelings?
- 2 What signs do people show when they are experiencing stress and anxiety? How does your body react?
- 3 Anxiety is always negative, and stress can be negative too. But stress can also be positive. What are some ways that stress can be positive? (Stress can be a motivator and can also get you out of danger.)
- 4 Why might some self-regulation methods work for one person but not another?
- 5 What obstacles have you experienced while trying to self-regulate? What have you done to overcome those obstacles?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you were very stressed. What prevented you from letting the stress go? What do you need in order to let things go? Think of a time when you could not let something go. How did this experience manifest in you? What did you do to ultimately move forward? How can you support a family member or friend who struggles with anxiety?



### HABITS

- ✓ Encourage students to learn to read their bodies and the situations that elicit sensations such as sweating, upset stomach and pressure on their chests.
- ✓ Model reading your body and using a self-regulating solution, when appropriate. Example: “Class, I feel chest pressure starting because I feel I’m not being listened to. I need to count to 10.”
- ✓ Post a guided breathing chart.



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

## LESSON HANDOUT

### Sharing Stress

- 1 List a few things in your life that make you stressed.
- 2 List some things that give you anxiety.
- 3 What does your body feel like when you have stress and anxiety?
- 4 What do you do to help relieve your anxiety and stress?



*Last night I dreamt I ate a ten-pound marshmallow.  
When I woke up the pillow was gone.*

Tommy Cooper

#### Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility



Caring

# Impulse Control

## BACKGROUND

The marshmallow test is famously referenced almost any time the topic of impulse control comes up. In the 1960s, Stanford psychologist Walter Mischel studied the impact of impulse control on social and academic success. In the study, young children, all around the age of four, were brought to a small room by a researcher who then pretended to get called out of the room. Before they left, the researcher would put a marshmallow on the table in front of the child. The researcher would tell the child that if the child could wait a few minutes until the researcher returned to eat the marshmallow, the child could have two marshmallows. While the researcher was out of the room, there was a hidden camera filming the children. There are many videos online that replicate this study. One such video is “The Marshmallow Test” ([https://youtu.be/QX\\_oy9614HQ](https://youtu.be/QX_oy9614HQ); 3:27). Years after, when these children were seniors in high school, researchers studied them again, measuring their academic and social skills. The researchers found that those who had been able to control their impulses and wait for the second marshmallow as children did significantly better socially and academically in high school and they were more adept at handling difficult life situations.

The study has been recreated numerous times, which has led to criticism of the original outcomes. One study in 2018 by researchers from University of California, Irvine and New York University, found that the child-rearing and home life of the children played a much larger role in their future success than their ability to resist temptation. Although Walter Mischel’s study has been surrounded by some controversy, having impulse control has been found to be universally beneficial.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Grant Hilary Brenner, “Does the ‘Marshmallow Test’ Really Predict Success?,” *Psychology Today*, May 27, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/experimentations/201805/does-the-marshmallow-test-really-predict-success>.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will boost their resiliency by learning the benefits and practices of impulse control.



## MATERIALS

- *What Were You Thinking* by Bryan Smith (book)
- *Be Your Own Boss* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Ask the students if they know what impulsive means. Elicit some responses and then write the following definition on the board or on chart paper:

### **impulsive:**

Impulsive is reacting to something quickly without carefully thinking about it first.

- 2 Read the book *What Were You Thinking* by Bryan Smith aloud to the students.
- 3 Using the following questions, lead a large group discussion about the book:
  - What were some of the feelings Braden was having right before he acted impulsively? (funny, unfair, mad, hungry)
  - What happens when you act impulsively?
  - What happens when you control your impulses?
  - What are some reasons why controlling your impulses is a good thing?
  - What are some examples of times that you might have been impulsive? What could you do in the future to make a better choice?

### **NOTE**

The book *What Were You Thinking* by Bryan Smith is the story of a third-grade boy named Braden who has impulsive behaviors and learns to control them using four steps for impulse control.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Were there scenarios that were more frustrating for you? Why?
- 2 In the scenarios that were most frustrating for you, what was your first impulse?
- 3 What can you do to help yourself remember to control your impulses?
- 4 Why might it be more difficult to control your impulses when you are in a real situation versus these role plays?
- 5 How does knowing how you feel help you respond more effectively to a situation?

## Procedures (continued)

- 4 Remind the students of the four steps that Braden used in the book to control his impulses:

**STOP** what you are doing.

**THINK** about what you are going to say or do.

**DECIDE** if it will make the situation better or worse.

**CHOOSE** the behavior that makes the situation better.

- 5 Model these steps using the following scenario.

*Scenario: Someone pushes in front of you in line in the cafeteria.*

**STOP** before you respond. *I am really mad, but I am going to breathe for a second before reacting.*

**THINK** about how to handle the situation. *I want to push them out of the line. But I guess that is not my only option.*

**DECIDE** that this would make the situation better or worse. *If I push them out of the line, I will only make the situation worse by getting in trouble myself. What else could I do? I could just tell them what they did is wrong and let it go.*

**CHOOSE** how to make the situation better. *Hey, cutting in line is not nice.*

- 6 Distribute the *Be Your Own Boss* handout to each student. Have them decorate them, and then use them for the following role play.

### NOTE

These templates can be kept on students' desks at all time as a reminder to control their impulses. You can also refer to them when necessary.

- 7 Have the students practice the steps by pairing up and role-playing the scenarios in the *Be Your Own Boss* handout.

- 8 When all groups have practiced controlling their impulses, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

### NOTE

Children do not always choose the correct response when reacting to difficult situations. When a student chooses a poor response, have them take some time to fill out the *What? Why? How?* handout to reflect on the situation. When educators approach inappropriate behavior or bad choices in a calm and supportive manner, students can learn to choose better in the future.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ There are a lot of small and large group games that can support impulse control through problem-solving, attention, planning, memory, motor control and mindfulness. Include some or all of the following games in your classroom and encourage students to play them. Also, create time to play the large group games as a class.

SMALL GROUP GAMES	LARGE GROUP GAMES
Operation	Red Light, Green Light
Hedbanz	Musical Chairs
Spot It	Freeze Dance
Jenga	Follow the Leader
Simon Memory Game	Simon Says

- ✓ Provide class time for stretching and meditation. Teach students personal practices such as facial exercises (lion face, relaxing jaw and placing tongue on the bottom of the mouth) and hand reflexology (lightly pinch between thumb and forefinger to relieve tension).
- ✓ Incorporate movement time with techniques such as Nia, Tai Chi, Zumba or even a class dance party.
- ✓ Have students use the *What? Why? How?* handout when impulse control is a struggle.

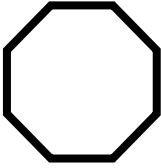



#### JOURNAL PROMPT

Think about a time when you had trouble controlling yourself (either your body or your words) and an adult corrected you. What happened? Why did they feel you were not behaving appropriately? How did it feel to be corrected? Why did you have trouble controlling your impulses? Thinking back, what could you have done differently? What can you do in the future to control your impulses?



## LESSON HANDOUT

## Be Your Own Boss

STOP	THINK	DECIDE	CHOOSE
			
Stop what you are doing.	Think about what you are going to say or do.	Decide if it will make the situation better or worse.	Choose the behavior that makes the situation better.

## BE YOUR OWN BOSS SCENARIOS

- You are in an argument with your sister, and she hits you.
- The person sitting next to you in class keeps tapping their pen on the table.
- You want to have ice cream after dinner, but your parent is not letting you.
- You are going to music class, and you want to run in the hallway.
- Your teacher is in the middle of a math lesson, and you want to ask a question that is not about math.
- You are playing a game with a friend, who is taking a long time during their turn and you have to wait.
- Create your own scenario.





SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will boost their resiliency by learning the benefits and practices of impulse control.



MATERIALS

- *Be Your Own Boss* handout (a copy for each student)

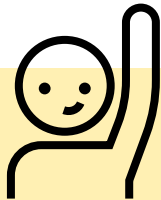
## Procedures

- 1 In order to be more resilient, impulse control is a necessary skill to practice. Share the following definition of “impulsive”:

### **impulsive:**

Impulsive is reacting to something quickly without carefully thinking about it first.

- 2 Explain to the students that controlling impulses can make you more resilient by helping you to:
  - have accurate thinking
  - be more flexible
  - effectively solve problems
  - connect to others
  - be more successful in relationships
  - feel good about yourself



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What do you want to happen when you find yourself in a difficult situation?
- 2 How does identifying your feeling help you react more effectively to the difficult situation?
- 3 Was it easy or hard to come up with three responses? Why?
- 4 Why did you choose to respond with the option you chose?

## Procedures (continued)

- 3 Distribute the *Be Your Own Boss* handout to the students. Model the strategy on the handout by reading the following potentially difficult situation aloud and moving through each step.

*Scenario: Someone pushes in front of you in line in the cafeteria.*

**STOP**—Do not respond immediately.

**FEEL**—In your own mind, identify your feeling.

**BREATHE**—Take a few deep breaths.

**THINK THREE**—Do not react until you think of three ways to respond.

**RESPOND**—Choose one and use “I” statements.

- 4 Have the students pair up and practice the *Be Your Own Boss* strategy using the scenarios on the bottom of the handout.
- 5 When all groups have practiced controlling their impulses, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

### NOTE

Children do not always choose the correct response when reacting to difficult situations. When a student chooses a poor response, have them take some time to fill out the *What? Why? How?* handout to reflect on the situation. When educators approach inappropriate behavior or bad choices in a calm and supportive manner, students can learn to choose better in the future.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Provide class time for stretching and meditation, especially before class assessments.
- ✓ Teach students personal practices such as facial exercises (lion face, relaxing jaw and placing tongue on the bottom of the mouth) and hand reflexology (lightly pinch between thumb and forefinger to relieve tension). Use these practices as brain breaks or at the beginning or end of class.
- ✓ Have students use the *What? Why? How?* handout when impulse control is a struggle.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT

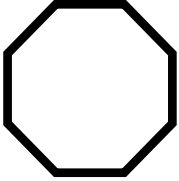
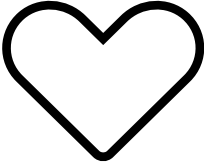
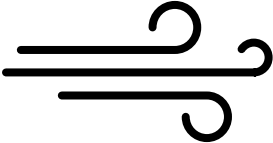




Think about a time when you reacted before thinking. What happened? What were some of the thoughts going through your mind? Were you able to hold yourself back and control yourself at all? What did you want to do or say? What did you actually do or say? What could you have done differently that could have gotten a better reaction? Are there particular settings or people where you are more impulsive? What are some practices you will put into place for the future that will help you control your impulses?



## LESSON HANDOUT

## Be Your Own Boss

STOP	FEEL	BREATHE
		
Do not respond immediately.	In your own mind, identify your feeling.	Take a few deep breaths.
THINK THREE		RESPOND
		
Do not react until you think of three ways to respond.		Choose one and use "I" statements.

## BE YOUR OWN BOSS SCENARIOS

- You are in Target and see a shirt you want to buy, but you are saving up to buy a skateboard.
- You are in an argument with your sister, and she hits you.
- You find yourself continuously eating while binge watching a show.
- The person sitting next to you in class keeps tapping their pen on the table.
- An acquaintance wrote something untrue about you on social media.
- You called and texted a friend with an urgent question, but they have not gotten back to you yet.
- You lose something your mom loaned you, and she yells at you when you tell her.
- Create your own scenario.

**HABIT HANDOUT****What? Why? How?**

*Mistakes happen. We do not always handle problems the right way. Take a moment to answer the following questions:*

WHAT went wrong?

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WHY did it go wrong?

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HOW can I fix it next time?

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*I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.*

Jimmy Dean

#### Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility

# Optimism

## BACKGROUND

Many people believe that optimism is always seeing the positive. This is not the case. Psychologists believe that an optimist holds two important beliefs:

1. Their problems are temporary.
2. Their actions can shrink their problems.<sup>41</sup>

Research has found that optimism is not a fixed trait. When we have a growth mindset, we can train our brains to be optimistic through routines and habits. Focusing on goals rather than ruminating on problems changes our neural pathways to be more inclined towards optimism.

Optimism is a necessary component of resilience. People who are optimists set more goals than pessimists, stay more engaged while trying to achieve these goals, rise above the obstacles that inevitably occur while working to achieve the goals and cope better in high-stress situations.

<sup>41</sup> Martin E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 4–5.



SCHOOL

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will boost their resilience by learning the benefits and practices of optimism.



MATERIALS

- *Mr. Grumpy* by Roger Hargreaves (book)
- AV equipment to play a video
- *Inner Grump vs. Inner Optimist* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Read the book *Mr. Grumpy* by Roger Hargreaves or play the video “Mr. Men: Mr. Grumpy” (<https://youtu.be/KW3PsiEwlsc>; 7:34).
- 2 Explain to the students that inside every person is a grump and an optimist. Ask the students to do their best to try to define optimism. The students will most likely define optimism as seeing the positive side of things. Allow the students to explore this idea, and then expand on their definition by adding the following:

### optimism:

Optimism is knowing that problems are temporary and that a person can do things to help the problems get better.

- 3 Explain that we can choose who we want to bring out. Together with the students, make a list of qualities that a grump might have and qualities that an optimist might have. Possible answers:

### NOTE

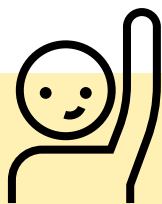
The book *Mr. Grumpy* by Roger Hargreaves is about a grumpy person who gets tricked by Mr. Happy and Mr. Tickle into being less grumpy.

#### GRUMP

Complains a lot, mean to people, does not care about things.

#### OPTIMIST

Smiles a lot, forgives people, tries to solve problems.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some of your responses to the situations in the handout?
- 2 Do you think optimists are happier people than grumps? Why or why not?
- 3 Was it easier to come up with a grump response or an optimist response for each scenario? Why?
- 4 Think of a person in your life who is an optimist. How do people act toward this person? Do you notice that they respond to this person differently than those in your life that might be a grump? If so, why?
- 5 What are some situations where being an optimist might be difficult? Why?

## Procedures (continued)

- 4 Tell the students that in most situations, they will have a choice to be either a grump or an optimist. Explain that it is not always easy to choose the inner optimist—sometimes the inner grump is powerful! Explain that if they practice using their inner optimist, it will be easier to choose it in the future.
- 5 Have the students pair up and fill out the *Inner Grump vs. Inner Optimist* handout. Model the instructions using the following example.

SITUATION	The Inner Grump Says...	The Inner Optimist Says...
When you arrive at school, it is raining and you do not have a raincoat. You run through the rain to enter the school.	Now I am all wet, and I am going to be uncomfortable all day.	<i>I know the problem is only temporary, so this is the action I will take to make the situation better.</i>  I am going to go to the bathroom and use the hand dryer to dry my socks.

- 6 Once the students have completed the handout, use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

### NOTE

Is optimism always useful? Optimism has a beneficial effect on people's leadership, tenacity, achievement, physical health and lifespan. Yet unrelenting optimism is not always in the best interest of individuals. Optimists can overestimate their skills and think more highly of themselves than others think of them.

Pessimism might be useful in some situations. Pessimists have a clearer sense of reality.<sup>42</sup> Pessimism pulls us back from unattainable dreams and helps us see potential future issues and pitfalls. It is necessary in creating balance. If used too much, pessimism can stunt growth. However, if not used at all, optimism can lead us down a path of unrealistic dreams that may never be actualized.

According to positive psychologist Martin Seligman, "Clear evidence that nondepressed people distort reality in a self-serving direction while depressed people tend to see reality accurately."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Martin E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 109.

<sup>43</sup> Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 111.





# LESSON HANDOUT

## Inner Grump vs. Inner Optimist

### SITUATION

### The Inner Grump Says...

### The Inner Optimist Says...

*I know the problem is only temporary, so this is the action I will take to make the situation better.*

When you arrive at school, it is raining and you do not have a raincoat. You run through the rain to enter the school.

*Now I am all wet, and I am going to be uncomfortable all day.*

*I am going to go to the bathroom and use the hand dryer to dry my socks.*

You really want steak for dinner, but your dad makes hot dogs instead.

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You get in a fight with your friend at school because he takes your fruit snacks and eats them all.

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You have a big test in the morning, and your grandmother makes you go to bed early.

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Your father tells you he will pick you up immediately after school, but he arrives an hour late.

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Your soccer team does not win the championship.

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You are bored, and you have no more screen time left.

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\_\_\_\_\_

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you were a grump. What could you have done to be more of an optimist? How did the people around you react to your being grumpy? How would they have reacted differently if you had been more optimistic? What can you do to remember to be more optimistic? Will that be easy or hard for you? Why?



### HABITS

- ✓ At the end of the day, have the students list three good things that happened during the day. Remind the students that these things do not need to be monumental. They can be simple, like eating a favorite food, getting a hug or reading a good book. This habit forces the mind to scan experiences for the positive. The brain will create pathways so it automatically focuses more on the positive experiences throughout the day.
- ✓ Use the *I Am an Optimist* handout to evaluate adversity when it arises.

### NOTE

One study found that people who wrote down three good things each day for one week were happier and less depressed than their peers one month, three months and six months later.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Martin E. P. Seligman, Tracy A. Steen, Nansook Park, and Christopher Peterson, "Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 5 (July–August 2005): 410–421, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410>.

**HABIT HANDOUT****I am an Optimist**

*Use this handout when you want to help yourself be an optimist.*

Write a brief description of the adversity (problem or difficulty).

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What do you feel about the problem?

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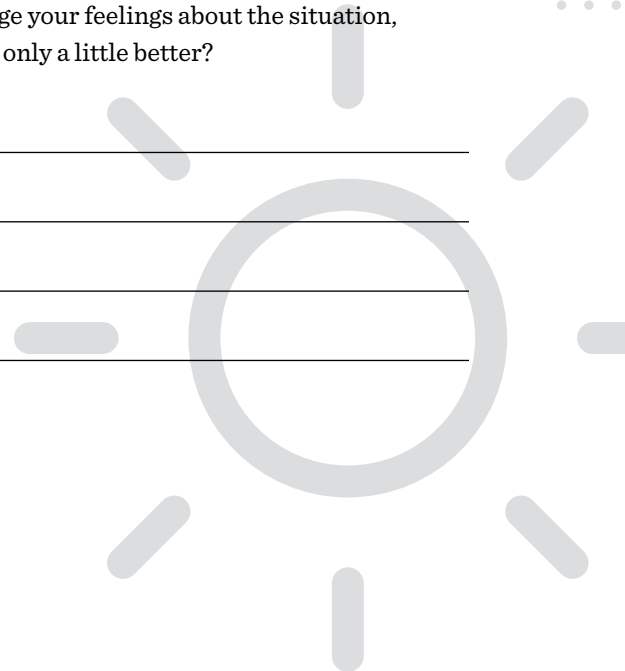
Remembering that the problem is only temporary, how can you change your feelings about the situation, or what actions can you take to make the situation better, even if it is only a little better?

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## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will boost their resiliency by learning the benefits and practices of optimism.



## MATERIALS

- A roll of toilet paper
- *ABC* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that optimism is not simply always seeing the positive. Psychologists explain optimism as having two components:
  - Knowing your problems are temporary
  - Knowing your actions can shrink your problems
- 2 Pass around a roll of toilet paper. Have the students take as many sheets of the toilet paper as they wish.
- 3 Once each student has their toilet paper, ask them to count the sheets they have and using that number, make a list of some thoughts they had today. Examples: I hope I get to class before the bell, I like my outfit today, I forgot to do my homework. (Three sheets of toilet paper = three thoughts written down.)
- 4 Once the thoughts have been written down, explain to the students that these thoughts are considered self-talk. Introduce this definition of self-talk:

### NOTE

Negative self-talk is very personal.  
Allow space to share if students want  
to, but do not insist.

### self-talk:

Self-talk is the talk—both good and bad—that we hear inside our heads.

- 5 Have the students identify which thoughts were positive, negative or neutral by writing “+” (for positive), “-” (for negative) or “N” (for neutral) next to each thought.
- 6 Explain that self-talk is very often negative. Ask students:
  - ➔ What do you think the impact is of consistent negative self-talk?
  - ➔ How might negative self-talk influence our behavior in our everyday lives?
- 7 If a person can turn that negative self-talk into positive self-talk, this creates optimism.
- 8 A famous researcher named Martin Seligman has spent many years trying to understand optimism and its impact on humans. He came up with the ABC model.

**A**—Adversity: A challenging or difficult event that happens.

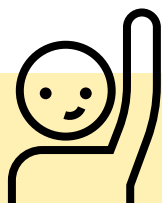
**B**—Belief: The thoughts you have about the difficulty. Not feelings. Just thoughts.

**C**—Consequence: The feelings you have and the actions you take in response to the adversity.
- 9 Explain that self-talk exists in the “B” part of this idea. The belief is the thought about the situation. It is not the feeling. If people can self-talk in a more positive way, they can have more optimistic consequences—or feelings.
- 10 Give the following example:

**Adversity**—Mr. Jones yelled at me in front of the whole class, and everybody laughed.

**Belief**—Mr. Jones thinks I am a troublemaker and is always picking on me.

**Consequence**—I was so embarrassed and mad and I wished I could yell at him, but I controlled myself to avoid detention.
- 11 Ask the students: How is the self-talk in this situation negative? Explain that it is negative because it leads the person to feel embarrassed and bad about themselves.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How easy or difficult was it to identify the belief you held when the adversity occurred? Why?
- 2 Do you think the belief can be challenged? Is the belief you hold about an adversity always correct?
- 3 Why might a belief you have about a difficult situation not be accurate?
- 4 Explain some points you made to counter some of your beliefs?
- 5 The more patterns you notice in your beliefs, the better you will be able to identify and dispute disruptive beliefs in the future. You are also likely to be more resilient when adversity strikes. Do you notice any patterns in your beliefs? What are they?
- 6 Why do you think it might be difficult to challenge the beliefs we have about a difficult situation?
- 7 What needs to happen in a moment of adversity in order to challenge your beliefs? (Stop and take a moment to think.)
- 8 What are the benefits of challenging our beliefs when we are experiencing adversity?
- 9 Why is it more difficult to counter our own beliefs than the beliefs we hear from others?
- 10 Are there criticisms you make of yourself that you would be upset if others made of you? Why is it so easy to criticize ourselves?

## Procedures (continued)

- 12 Elicit some ways that the belief about the situation could be more positive. What are some ways the person can self-talk to bring about a more optimistic or positive consequence? For example, the student could self-talk a reason for the adversity: Wow, Mr. Jones is in a bad mood today, I better stay away, or Mr. Jones yells at everyone and not just me.

- 13 Take a few minutes to discuss how making your belief more positive can lead to more positive consequences.

### NOTE

There are times when being optimistic is not positive—when eternal optimism happens. When deciding whether or not to be optimistic, ask yourself the following question: What is the cost of failure in this situation? If the cost of failure is high, it is better not to be optimistic. For example, if you are at a party and a friend is drinking and wants to drive home, ask yourself: What is the cost of failure in this situation? The answer is a terrible accident, or worse. It is better not to be optimistic about your friend making it home safely. In this situation you would instead use precautionary measures to prevent your friend from driving home.

- 14 Distribute the *ABC* handout, and have the students work in pairs to complete the handout.

### NOTE

This activity may be difficult for some students. You may choose to complete the handout as a class exercise.

- 15 When the handouts are complete, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Encourage students to end their day listing three good things that happened that day. These things do not need to be monumental. They can be simple: eating a favorite food, getting a hug or reading a good article. This habit forces the mind to scan experiences for the positive. The brain will create pathways so it automatically focuses more on the positive experiences throughout the day.

#### NOTE

One study found that people who wrote down three good things each day for one week were happier and less depressed than their peers after one month, three months and six months.<sup>45</sup>

- ✓ Push the students to also consider three things in their day that were not as positive. Challenge them to articulate optimistic or positive aspects of those things.
- ✓ Use the *I Am an Optimist* handout to evaluate adversity when it arises.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT

Play the video “Signs You’re an Eternal Optimist” (<https://youtu.be/AI4drLY7RI0>; 1:34). The video portrays two women being eternally optimistic. Define eternal optimism as focusing on the positives of a situation and ignoring any obstacles. Next, introduce the students to the concept of conditional optimism. Define conditional optimism as focusing on the positives of a situation and being realistic about any obstacles that may come up.

Think of a time when you were eternally optimistic. What were some advantages and disadvantages to being eternally optimistic? What are some advantages or disadvantages of conditional optimism? How would you rather live your life, as an eternal optimist or as a conditional optimist? Why?

<sup>45</sup> Martin E. P. Seligman, Tracy A. Steen, Nansook Park, and Christopher Peterson, “Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 5 (July–August 2005): 410–421, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410>.



# LESSON HANDOUT

## ABC

**SOME ADVERSITY IS BIG, AND SOME ADVERSITY IS SMALL. YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE ADVERSITY DETERMINE THE CONSEQUENCE, OR THE FEELINGS, YOU WIND UP HAVING ABOUT THE EVENT.**

*Directions: For the following adversities, fill out possible beliefs and consequences that could come from the adversity. When possible, try to have positive self-talk for an optimistic outcome.*

### adversity:

A challenging or difficult event that happens.

### beliefs:

The thoughts you have about the difficulty. Not feelings. Just thoughts.

### consequences:

The feelings you have and the actions you take in response to the adversity.

**Adversity:** Your sibling walks into your room without knocking.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adversity:** The zipper on your backpack is stuck, and you cannot open it.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adversity:** Your parent/guardian tells you that you cannot go to a friend's house after school.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adversity:** You fail an important math test.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adversity:** You see a mean comment that someone you know wrote about you online.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adversity:** Someone breaks up with you.

**Belief:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consequence:** \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTE

You might need to fill out the adversity, the consequence and THEN the belief. It may take some reflection even to realize what your belief is about a particular situation.



**HABIT HANDOUT****I Am an Optimist**

*Use this handout when you want to help yourself be an optimist.*

Write a brief description of the adversity (problem or difficulty).

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What do you believe about the problem? What is your self-talk? What can you change about your beliefs?

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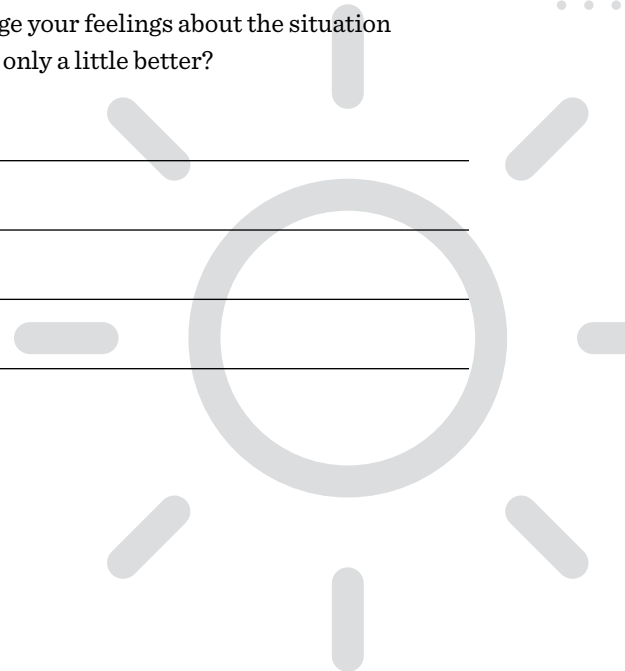
Remembering that the problem is only temporary, how can you change your feelings about the situation or what actions can you take to make the situation better, even if it is only a little better?

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*A goal without a plan is just a wish.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

#### Character Pillars

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#### Responsibility

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# Goal Setting

## BACKGROUND

Goal setting is a process that can help us move forward and grow when we face a difficult situation. When we have a growth mindset, we believe that goal setting and focused work can help us become better at things outside of our natural abilities. Goal setting can be easy for students when something is innate to them. If our students work to achieve goals that are too easy for them, they may experience self-confidence, but the self-confidence rests in their fixed mindset: *That was easy. I achieved that goal because I knew the material.* It is important to push a student to set more challenging goals. This helps promote a growth mindset, which is ideal: *That was hard. I am proud of myself that I figured that out.*

The more our schools, classrooms and mindsets are challenged to stretch and grow and the more people are encouraged to learn from their mistakes, the easier it will be to set demanding yet attainable goals.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of a goal, the benefits of having goals and how to set goals.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *Great Goal* handout (a copy for each student)
- Butcher paper

# Procedures

- 1 Introduce the students to goal setting by showing the video “I Think We All Need a Pep Talk” by Kid President ([https://www.ted.com/talks/kid\\_president\\_i\\_think\\_we\\_all\\_need\\_a\\_pep\\_talk](https://www.ted.com/talks/kid_president_i_think_we_all_need_a_pep_talk); 3:27).
- 2 Ask the students what they would like to do to make the world awesome. Elicit some responses, and write them on the board or on chart paper. Choose one response that you will later highlight as a sample goal.
- 3 Ask the students to define the word “goal.” Some students might point out that goals are used in sports. Explain that the word is used in other ways too, and share the following definition:

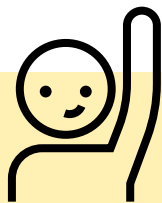
### goal:

A goal is something that you are trying to do or achieve. Goals can be big, like thinking about how to make the world more awesome, or small, like figuring out how to get a good grade on your spelling test.

- 4 Have the students share some times that they achieved a goal they had, such as in school, sports or hobbies. Ask them how achieving their goal made them feel. Model this step by sharing one of your own achievements and sharing how you felt afterwards.

### NOTE

Research shows that the act of writing goals down can be helpful in achieving them.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to have goals?
- 2 Why are goals important for us to feel motivated?
- 3 How do goals inspire us?
- 4 How does breaking goals into smaller steps make them easier to achieve?
- 5 Why is it helpful to imagine yourself completing your goals?
- 6 Share some ways you can use goals during school.
- 7 Share some ways you can use goals at home.

### NOTE

You may want to create an image of a mountain on the butcher paper first. The students can then draw their pictures on the top of the mountain, symbolizing their achievement of their goals.

### NOTE

At the end of the school year, refer to the Great Goals mural and see if each student has achieved their chosen goal.

## Procedures (continued)


- 5 Have the students take a few minutes to list some of their goals for the academic school year.
- 6 Explain to the students that in order to achieve a goal, they will have to take smaller steps to get there. Show the following video: “Innovation Jr: Goal Setting” (<https://youtu.be/XrsERz952qM>; 1:21).
- 7 Have a large group conversation about what the bear did in order to become a rock star.
  - What were the steps the bear had to take in order to achieve his goal?
  - Was he always successful while he worked toward his goal?
  - What did he need to do in order to overcome the challenges he faced?
- 8 Using the example you chose at the beginning of the lesson (how to make the world awesome), work together as a class to model turning the goal into smaller steps. For example, if the goal is to stop hunger in the world, it would be helpful to point out that this is a very big goal that cannot easily be met. A more realistic goal would be to help the hungry people in the community where you live. Some smaller steps could be to organize a food drive at the school or ask the school’s parent organization to help organize a day for students at a local soup kitchen.
- 9 Next, have each student fill out the *Great Goal* handout.
- 10 Once the students have completed the handout, have them share their goals with the class.
- 11 As a class, create a mural on a large sheet of butcher paper. Have each student draw a picture of what they will look like after they have achieved their Great Goal.
- 12 Lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Use the *Great Goal* handout regularly in your classroom when a student has a goal they need or want to achieve.
- ✓ Make time for daily goal setting. Have students plan their after-school agenda:
  - Complete homework efficiently (how much time should they spend on each task)
  - Playtime and/or downtime
  - Getting a good night sleep
- ✓ At the end of the week, invite students to check in with their daily goal plans and evaluate them. Discuss what they might do similarly or differently in the future.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you achieved a goal, big or small. What was the goal? What did you have to do in order to achieve it? How did it feel once it was achieved? Next, think of a time when you did not achieve a goal. What happened? What could you do differently to achieve that goal in the future?

**LESSON HANDOUT****Great Goal**

*Directions: Write your goal at the top of the paper. Answer the questions below.*

**GOAL:**

1. Why is this goal important?

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2. What are three to five small steps you will need to do in order to achieve your goal?

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3. What are some obstacles (or problems) you might see?

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4. What will you do to overcome these obstacles?

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5. Who will you ask for help to achieve your goal?

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SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will identify the importance of having goals, recognize realistic versus unrealistic goals and learn the SMART method of goal setting.



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *SMART Goal* handout (a copy for each student)
- *Goal Climbing* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Keeping the students seated, break the room into four groups and assign each group one of the following movements:  
  
**Group 1:** continuously rub hands together  
**Group 2:** continuously snap fingers  
**Group 3:** continuously hit thighs with hands  
**Group 4:** continuously stomp feet
- 2 Count to three, and have all the groups do their movement at the same time.
- 3 After about 30 seconds, have them stop. Elicit responses as to why they were doing the different movements. Ask them to come up with a purpose for the activity.
- 4 Point out that even though they made an effort during the activity, they did not accomplish anything because they were not given a reason, motivation, purpose or goal for what they were trying to achieve as a group. Explain that when you identify a goal before trying to accomplish it, you have a clearer idea of the path to get there.

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Ask the students to define the word “goal.” Once they have brainstormed some possible definitions, write the following definition on the board or on chart paper:

### goal:

A goal is something that you are trying to accomplish or achieve. Goals can be big or small.

- 6 Tell students that they will be repeating the same movements as earlier, but this time, the goal will be to recreate the sounds of a rainstorm. Let students know that you will point to each group to signal when they should begin and point again when they should stop. Slowly point to one group at a time, starting with group 1 and ending with group 4. Once the rainstorm is loud, slowly point to the groups in reverse order, starting with group 4 and ending with group 1, before signaling the last group to stop.
- 7 Ask the students to identify the accomplishment and the steps that were taken to achieve the goal. Explain that having a clear goal in life helps to make sense of the steps it takes to achieve that goal. Point out that when the class was making movements without a specific goal in mind, the movements were just noise. But once the goal of creating a rainstorm was presented and specific steps were introduced, the purpose and meaning of the movements made more sense.
- 8 Tell students that it is important for their goals to be realistic. Explain that if a goal is not realistic, they could become discouraged, but that if it is too easy, they could become bored. Lead students to recognize that a goal should be both achievable and challenging.
- 9 Using the following examples, ask the students if these goals are realistic or unrealistic and ask them to explain their reasoning:
  - Lucy is good at math and organized so she decides to become a computer programmer.
  - Juan is a senior in high school and plans to backpack across Europe after graduation but has not saved any money.
  - The seventh-grade teacher decides that the goal for the year is to have all students pass every test they take.



- 10** Introduce the concept of a SMART goal. Write the acronym SMART on the board or on chart paper. Explain that SMART goals are more easily reached. Write what the acronym stands for next to each letter, and explain the meaning of each letter:

S—Specific

M—Measurable

A—Attainable

R—Realistic

T—Timely

Alternatively, you can show either of the following short videos: “SMART Goals Defined” (<https://youtu.be/DiKwjVhquro>; 2:15) or “LearnStorm Growth Mindset: How to Write a SMART Goal” (<https://youtu.be/U4IU-y9-J8Q>; 2:52).

- 13** Using the goal of graduating from high school (or middle school), work together as a class to model turning the goal into a SMART goal. Write it on the board or on chart paper as an example.

Goal: I will graduate high school (or middle school) and receive a diploma when I successfully complete my senior year.

S—Specific: graduate high school

M—Measurable: will receive a diploma upon graduation

A—Attainable: currently in school

R—Realistic: already on the path

T—Timely: when the last year of school is complete

- 14** Next, have each student work individually to fill out the *SMART Goal* handout.

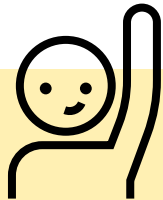
- 15** Once the students have completed the handout, have them share their goals.

- 16** Use the following questions to process the work the students did on the *SMART Goal* handout:

- Why is it important to have goals?
- How does using SMART goals help to make goals easier to achieve?
- Share some ways you can use SMART goals during school?
- Share some ways you can use SMART goals at home?

## NOTE

Find a place to display their goals as a reminder. Refer to them at the end of the school year and see if they have achieved their chosen goal.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What might happen that could prevent you from achieving your goals?
- 2 What are some factors that might keep you motivated to achieve your goals?
- 3 Why is it helpful to imagine yourself completing your goals?
- 4 Describe a time when even though you did not feel like doing something, you were motivated to get it done because you were clear on what you wanted to achieve.

## Procedures (continued)

- 17** Distribute the *Goal Climbing* handout. Read the following paragraphs to the students to help them visualize their goals and to guide them in completing the handout.

*One day, you are sitting in your room and you decide that you have a goal you want to achieve. You know it is a big goal, but you can almost see yourself already there. What are some feelings you have as you think about that goal? Does the goal make you feel excited or nervous or anxious? Write your feelings on the lines next to number 1 on your handout.*

*You start thinking about the steps you need to take in order to achieve your goal. These steps may be big or small. As you think about the steps, there may be some obstacles in your way. What do you need to do in order to overcome any obstacles? Write a few character strengths you can use to overcome obstacles you might face on the lines next to number 2. Examples: resilience, grit, persistence.*

*You overcome your obstacles, and successfully achieve each step it takes to achieve your goal. You are now at the top of the mountain. On the lines next to the number 3, write the feelings you have now that you have accomplished your goal.*


- 18** Once you have completed guiding the students in visualizing the achievement of their goals, take some time to go over the student's answers for each line.
- What were some feelings you had when thinking about achieving your goal? (line 1)
  - What were some character strengths you needed in order to achieve your goal? (line 2)
  - What are some feelings you have after you achieved your goal? (line 3)
- 19** Lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Use the *SMART Goal* handout regularly whenever a student has a goal they need to achieve, such as planning for long-term projects, midterm and final exams and application deadlines.
- ✓ Set time for daily goal setting. Have students plan their after-school agenda:
  - Complete homework efficiently (how much time should they spend on each task)
  - Extracurricular activities and/or downtime
  - Getting a good night sleep
  - At the end of the week, invite students to check in with their daily goal plans and evaluate them. Provide time to discuss what they might do similarly or differently in the future.
- ✓ Identify goal achievers in history and how they were successful. Suggested sources include *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and Steve Jobs's TED talk, "How to Live Before You Die" ([https://www.ted.com/talks/steve\\_jobs\\_how\\_to\\_live\\_before\\_you\\_die](https://www.ted.com/talks/steve_jobs_how_to_live_before_you_die); 15:04).

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you were not realistic about a goal. Describe that situation. Why do you think you were not realistic? What are the benefits of being realistic? What are some disadvantages of dreaming too big? What are the benefits of dreaming big?

**LESSON HANDOUT****SMART Goal**

Directions: In the GoalStorm box, brainstorm some academic or personal goals you would like to achieve. Choose one goal, and write it on the “SMART Goal” line. Fill in each letter of the SMART acronym to plan how you will achieve your goal.

**GOALSTORM:****SMART GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_**S**

Specific

**M**

Measurable

**A**

Attainable

**R**

Realistic

**T**

Timely



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

**LESSON HANDOUT**

**Goal Climbing**

A large pyramid diagram divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is labeled with a large number '3' and contains three horizontal lines for writing. The middle section is labeled with a large number '2' and contains three horizontal lines for writing. The bottom section is labeled with a large number '1' and contains three horizontal lines for writing. The pyramid is outlined in a thick gray line.

**3**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

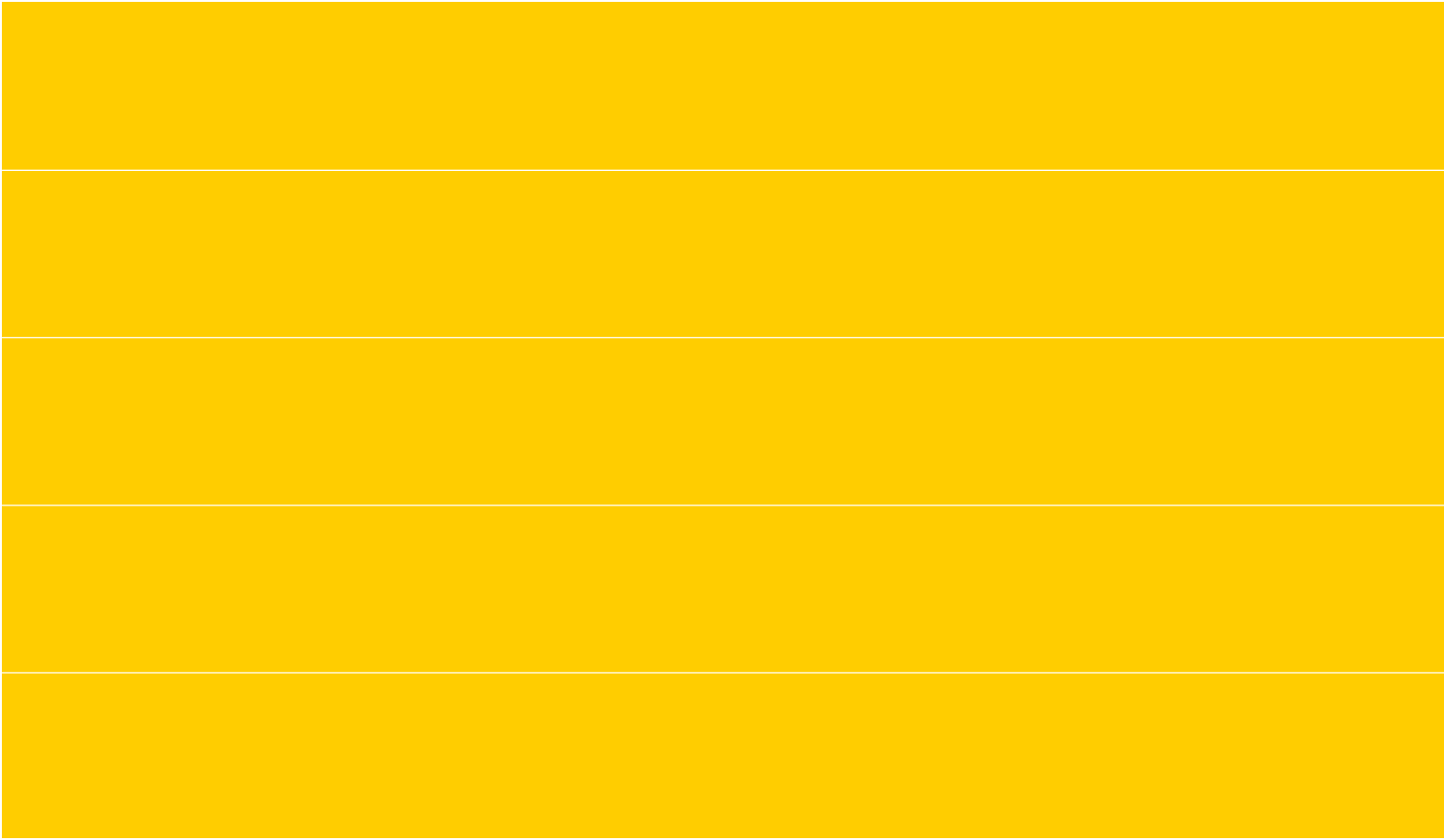
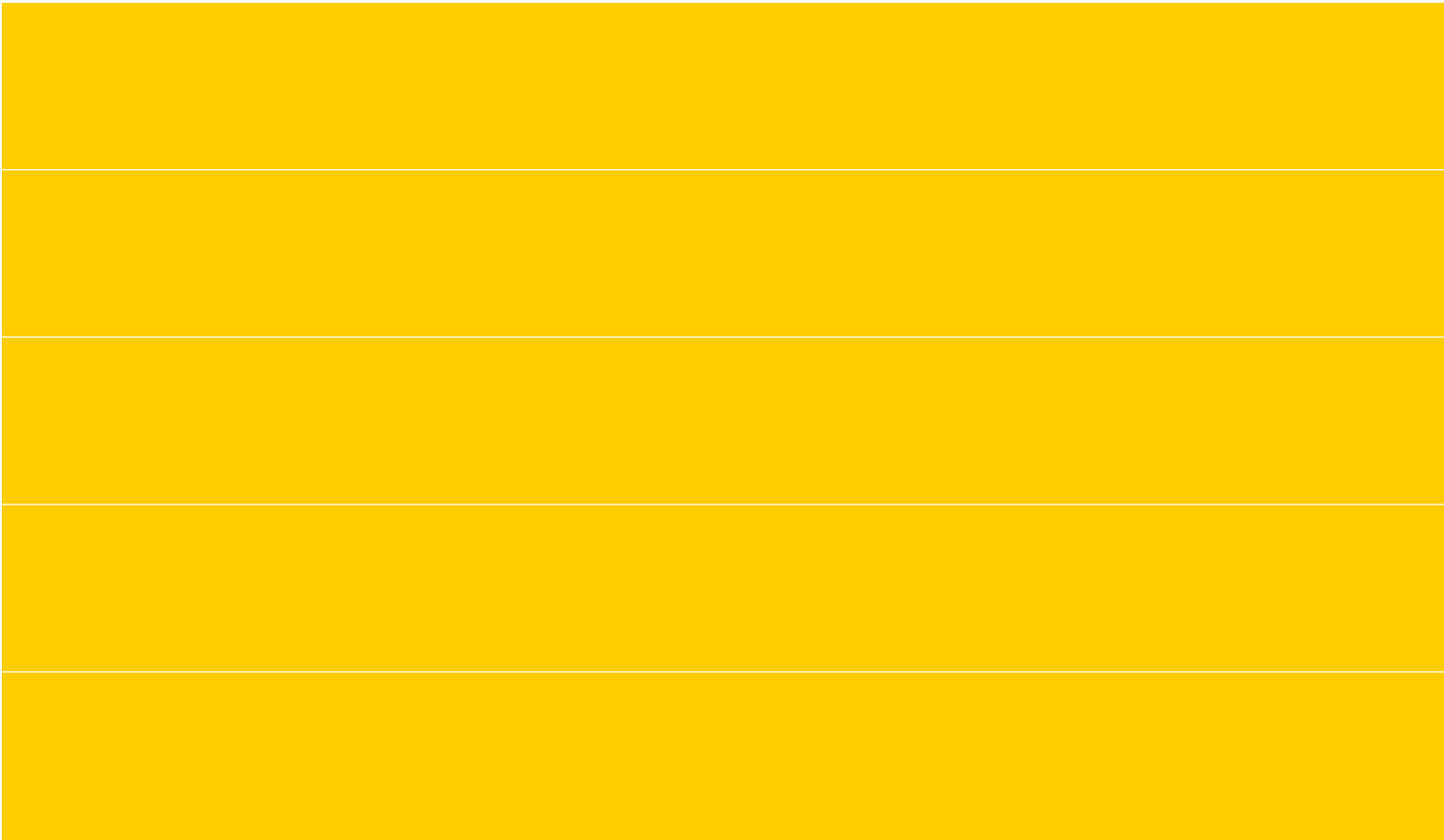
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**1**

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# SOCIAL AWARENESS



*Empathy is about finding echoes  
of another person in yourself.*

Mohsin Hamid

*Before you criticize a man, walk a mile in his shoes.  
That way, when you do criticize him, you'll be a mile  
away and have his shoes.*

Steve Martin

#### Character Pillars



Trustworthiness



Respect



Caring

# Empathy

## BACKGROUND

People often use the terms “empathy” and “sympathy” interchangeably. They are not interchangeable. Sympathy is the act of feeling for someone and their situation, while empathy is the act of feeling *with* someone. Empathy is what creates close bonds that support authentic relationships. Research has proven that empathy is not solely based on intuition.<sup>46</sup> While there is certainly an innate component of empathy that involves instinctively feeling the feelings of others, empathy also requires you to consciously regulate that experience. A person needs to be aware of themselves and modulate their response in order for the response to be empathic.

Empathy is a learned behavior, and all people have the capacity for it. Differences in capacity and environments explain why some people are more empathetic than others. A child who grows up with loving and attentive parents, who label feelings and model empathetic behaviors, will most likely grow up to be an empathic adult. A child who grows up in a neglectful environment is less likely to be empathetic, even though both children may have the same capacity. When empathy is embedded into a classroom, it creates an environment where children can reach their full empathic potential.

<sup>46</sup> Peg Streep, “6 Things You Need to Know About Empathy,” *Psychology Today*, January 23, 2017, <https://www.psychology-today.com/us/blog/tech-support/201701/6-things-you-need-know-about-empathy>.





## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of empathy and practice it with their classmates.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video

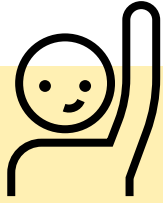
# Procedures

- 1 Define empathy by writing the following definition on the board or on chart paper:

### **empathy:**

Empathy is the ability to understand other people's feelings and perspectives, because you can imagine yourself in their shoes. When expressing empathy, you *feel with* someone.

- 2 Explain to the students that expressing empathy is like exercising a muscle in the brain. Ask the students the following questions:
  - How do we get bigger muscles in our body? (Lift weights or exercise)
  - How do we get bigger muscles in our brain? (Practice a skill, talk about it and reflect on it.)
- 3 Model the concept of empathy by sharing a time you exhibited empathy. Example: A friend's feelings were hurt and you understood how they felt and tried to help them feel better.
- 4 Ask the students to think about a time when they have thought about what it was like to "be in another person's shoes."
- 5 Explain to the students that they will be exercising their empathy muscle by imagining that they are in the shoes of other people.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does it feel when someone shows you empathy?
- 2 How can we show more empathy toward our classmates?
- 3 How can we feel empathy towards people we never met?

## Procedures (continued)

- 6 Show the following video of Shel Silverstein reading his poem “One Inch Tall” (<https://youtu.be/o8H5nbcY2I4>; 1:12).
- 7 Following the poem, lead a conversation using the following questions:
  - How would you get from place to place if you were only one inch tall?
  - How much food would you need to eat compared to what you eat now if you were only one inch tall?
  - Where would you sleep if you were only one inch tall?
- 8 Show or read the poem again to the class. This time, prompt the students to imagine what it must feel like to be one inch tall as they listen. To keep the students actively listening, they can list the feelings they might have on a sheet of scrap paper.
- 9 After listening to the poem a second time, lead a conversation using these questions:
  - What are some feelings you heard in the poem?
  - Put yourself in the shoes of a person who is one inch tall. What do you imagine that person would feel going to school?
  - What do you imagine that person would feel at home?
  - What do you imagine that person would feel at a store?
- 10 Use the following discussion questions to process the first part of the lesson:
  - Who are the people who live in our world who feel one inch tall?
  - Describe a time when you felt one inch tall.
  - How is imagining you are one inch tall helping to understand empathy?
- 11 Next, have the students practice expressing empathy by writing the following sentence on the board: “Tell me more about that. How did that make you feel?” Explain that this is an example of being empathetic.
- 12 Have the students think of a time when they felt a strong feeling. Pair them up and have them share their stories with their partner.
- 13 After each student has shared, have the partner use the sentence prompt that was written on the board to elicit more information. They should use active listening while their partner is speaking.
- 14 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Have the students find and share current events that highlight people who have shown empathy toward others.
- ✓ Have the students practice mindful eating. They should eat their lunches or snacks while reflecting on where the food came from and who helped to grow, cook and package it. Facilitate a discussion about the people involved in getting the food to the students and what their lives might be like.
- ✓ Encourage empathy during conflicts or when tackling a challenging topic by prompting students to use the following language: “Am I right that it must feel like \_\_\_\_\_?”
- ✓ When interpreting literary texts or analyzing historical events, ask students to evaluate empathetic actions or actions that lack empathy.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when someone showed empathy toward you. Who was it, and what was happening at the time? How did it make you feel? Now think of a time when you wish you had showed more empathy toward another person. What happened? Why did you not show empathy? What was the outcome? How could the outcome have differed if you had chosen to show empathy?



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the difference between empathy and sympathy and strategies to practice and strengthen their empathy skills.



MATERIALS

- *How to Be Empathetic* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Explain to the students that you will be talking about the concept of empathy. Empathy is a skill that can be developed. We are all born with the ability to empathize with others, but it requires practice and a willingness to really try and see things from another perspective to effectively empathize with others.<sup>47</sup>
- 2 Define empathy by writing the following definition on the board or on chart paper. Read it aloud to the students, and answer any questions they might have.

### **empathy:**

Empathy is the ability to understand other people's feelings and perspectives, because you can imagine yourself in their shoes. When expressing empathy, you *feel with* someone.

- 3 Emphasize to the students that empathy and sympathy are not the same thing. Provide the following definition of sympathy.

### **sympathy:**

Sympathy is feeling bad for someone, or pitying them, but not imagining what they must feel like. When expressing sympathy, you *feel for* someone.

<sup>47</sup> Roman Krznaric, *Empathy: Why It Matters and How to Get It* (New York: Perigree, 2014), 27–28.

- 4 Ask for some examples of sympathy and empathy. Some possible responses:

SYMPATHY	EMPATHY
I feel bad your hair did not come out the way you wanted it to.	I feel for you. It is frustrating when you have an image in your mind and it does not come out that way.
I am so sorry you got a bad grade on your test.	I totally get how you can feel defeated when you put so much work into studying and then the results of the test do not show it.
I am sorry your dog died.	I can relate to how upset you are. My dog died last year and it was so difficult. Do you want to talk about it?

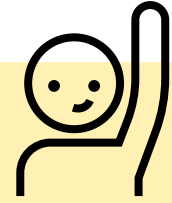
- 5 Ask the students to give some reasons why it is important to develop empathy for others. Some possible responses: it helps us understand others so we can respond appropriately, it makes people more helpful and empathy brings about social change.

### NOTE

Having empathy is demonstrated and practiced when differences between people are found and the differences are accepted without judgment.

This means that the listener does not agree or disagree with what they are hearing. They practice active listening and work to remove their own ideas and conceptions about the other person's experience.

- 6 Model the concept of empathy by sharing a time you exhibited empathy. Example: A friend's feelings were hurt, and you understood how they felt and tried to help them feel better.
- 7 Distribute the *How to Be Empathetic* handout. Review "Guidelines" and "Examples of Empathetic Questions and Statements" with the students.
- 8 Have the students partner with a person they do not know well and answer the "Pair Share Questions" on the *How to Be Empathetic* handout. While they listen to one another, they should use the "Guidelines" on the handout. They should also ask one another empathetic questions.
- 9 When each pair has finished, use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What was it like to take time to speak with someone you do not know well and learn their perspectives?
- 2 How might we take time to develop more empathy for our classmates? For our community members?
- 3 How do we develop empathy for people that we might never meet? Possible answers: read books, watch the news, learn about other cultures and remember what connects us to all humans.
- 4 Is it possible to gain understanding of another person's worldview if you disagree with their beliefs or values? Why?
- 5 What are some circumstances where it is better to feel sympathy for a person rather than empathy?

### NOTE

If students are reluctant to pair themselves with someone they do not know, you should pair them.

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a specific person you see regularly but hardly know. Possible answers: the barista at your favorite coffee shop, a cashier at your favorite store, the person who collects your trash or a classmate in school. Where do they live? What type of family do they have? What might be their hopes? What do they worry about? What are the benefits of imagining the lives of others? Has there ever been something you wished people would try to understand about you?



## HABITS

- ✓ Have the students practice mindful eating. They should eat their lunches or snacks while reflecting on where the food came from, who helped to grow, cook and package it. Facilitate a discussion about the people involved in getting the food to the students' plates and what their lives might be like.
- ✓ Have the students find and share current events that highlight people who have shown empathy toward others.
- ✓ Encourage empathy during conflicts or when tackling a challenging topic by prompting students to use the following language: "Am I right that it must feel like \_\_\_\_\_?"
- ✓ When interpreting literary texts or analyzing historical events, ask students to evaluate empathetic actions or actions that lack empathy.
- ✓ Encourage students to look at the tags on their clothing when they dress in the morning to see where they were made. Have them imagine the lives of the workers who contributed to making their garment.



## 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.<sup>48</sup>

#### 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.

<sup>48</sup> 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>.

*I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.*

Jackie Robinson

## Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility



Caring



Citizenship

# Respect for Others

## BACKGROUND

“Respect” is a word most people can describe but are challenged to define. Respect can have positive connotations such as awe and admiration (I really respect her) but can also be negatively associated with strict hierarchy and fear (respecting a dictator).

## NOTE

For more on the meaning of respect, watch Cultures of Dignity’s short video “Dignity vs. Respect” to see children and adults attempt to answer the question “What is respect?” (<https://youtu.be/o2lbd-10hFI&feature=youtu.be; 2:20>).

Throughout human history, people have aspired to be respected. The concept of respect is part of multiple religious doctrines, has been discussed for centuries by philosophers and has been a value embraced by civilizations across the world. Respect is so fundamental that the United Nations, in 1948, established a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, based on a “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family”—or stated simply, based on respect.<sup>49</sup>

Today the term “respect” is ubiquitous. Students are encouraged to respect diversity, respect the environment and respect their bodies. In order to give more meaning to acts of respect, students should begin to understand the roots of respect and evaluate for themselves why it is worthwhile to uphold, for themselves and for the larger community.

<sup>49</sup> UN General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 217 A (III), December 10, 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.





## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of respect and practice sharing their respect for others through appreciations.



## MATERIALS

- *Respect for Me* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Ask the students to share what respect means to them. Write their answers on the board or on chart paper.
- 2 Share the following definition of respect:

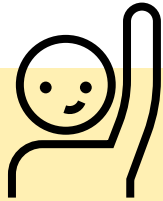
### **respect:**

Respect is finding value in people, ideas or things because they have worth.

- 3 Ask the students to give some examples of things they can look for in other people that show their worth. Write their responses on the board or on chart paper. (Possible responses: sports ability, intelligence, self-confidence, humor.)
- 4 Elicit some ideas about how students can show verbally and nonverbally that they value another person's worth.

Verbal examples:

- I really like that you help your parents by taking out the garbage.
- It is nice that you read to your younger sister.
- Wow. The way you are able to come up with so many new ideas is cool!



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 During your interviews, did you disagree with anything your partner said? How can you still respect someone even if your viewpoints differ?
- 2 Why is it important to have respect *from* others?
- 3 Why is it important to have respect *for* others?
- 4 What does disrespect look like?
- 5 How does disrespect feel?
- 6 In this lesson, we showed respect by giving people compliments and appreciations. If we give someone a compliment, does that automatically mean we respect them? Why or why not?
- 7 If you do not find something to appreciate about a person, why might they still deserve respect?
- 8 How can you earn respect?

## Procedures (continued)

- I appreciate the way you always have something positive to say.
- You clearly really love your dog.
- You are so good at soccer! You can really kick the ball far!

Nonverbal examples:

- Not talking about someone behind their back
  - Making eye contact
  - Smiling at someone
- 5 Explain to the students that they are going to interview one another to get to know each other better. While they are interviewing, they should listen for qualities or ideas they respect in the other person. When they hear something they respect, they should tell their partner by complimenting them or showing some sort of appreciation.
  - 6 Pair the students with students they may not know well. Distribute the *Respect for Me* handout, and have the students interview one another. They should write their partners' responses neatly in the space provided under each question.
  - 7 When the students have finished their interviews, have the pairs share something they value about their partner with the class. Write "What I value about (partner's name) is..." on the board. Instruct the students to use the prompt and fill in the blanks.
  - 8 Use the discussion questions to lead a large class conversation.

## Putting into Practice



- ✓ Establish classroom courtesy. Encourage students to say, “hello,” “please,” “thank you” and “goodbye.”
- ✓ During class discussions, model a response pattern of “I appreciate that you said...” or “What I liked about what \_\_\_\_\_ noticed was...”
- ✓ Create a system of homework partners. When classmates are absent, partners can contact them to see how they are feeling and let them know class assignments.
- ✓ Encourage students to gather supplies for tablemates and hold the door for each other.
- ✓ Have each student draw a self-portrait. Mount the self-portrait on a sheet of construction paper. Starting with one self-portrait, have the students write something they admire or appreciate about the artist on the construction paper surrounding the portrait. As the year progresses, rotate through all of the self-portraits. Display the self-portraits with the appreciations around the classroom. At the end of the year, allow each student to take their self-portrait home as a reminder of how the class respects them.

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you showed respect for someone you did not know. Who was it? Why did you feel respect at that time? How did you show respect to that person? When you respect someone you do not know, how does that make you a better person? Has anyone that you do not know well ever shown respect to you? What happened? How did it feel?



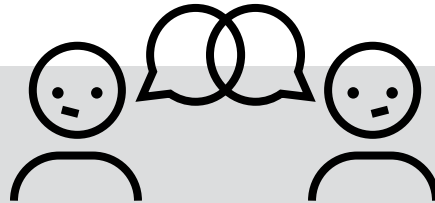
## LESSON HANDOUT

## Respect for Me

*Directions: Interview your partner using the questions below. Write your partner's responses in the space below the question.*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



- ① What is something you are really good at?
- ② How are you a good friend to others?
- ③ What are some things you do in your home to help your family?
- ④ What is your favorite thing about having siblings (or about being an only child)?
- ⑤ If you could have any pet, which pet would you have and why?
- ⑥ What is your favorite thing to do on the weekends and why?
- ⑦ What do you like best about yourself and why?
- ⑧ What is something that is hard for you that you have tried?
- ⑨ Who do you respect and why?



SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will evaluate the word respect and demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- Signs (hung on opposite sides of the room):  
Agree  
Disagree

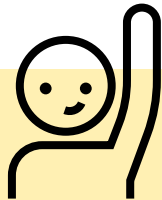
# Procedures

- 1 Ask the students to share what respect means to them.  
Write their answers on the board or on chart paper.
- 2 Show the video “Inspiring Moments of Respect in Sports” (<https://youtu.be/3dXl28y7BIA>; 4:43).
- 3 Ask students to identify the following from the video:
  - Who was showing respect and to whom?
  - In what way was respect demonstrated?
  - What did you feel watching these examples?
- 4 Share the following definition of respect:

### **respect:**

Respect is finding value in people, ideas or things because they have worth.

- 5 Hang the words “Agree” and “Disagree” on opposite sides of the room. Read the statements on the following page, and ask the students to walk to the side of the room that corresponds to their answer.
- 6 Have the students on both sides explain why they agree or disagree with the statement.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What are your reactions to this activity? Was it easy or hard to find things you respected about the other side's point of view?
- 2** Why do you think it is important to show someone respect, particularly when your viewpoints differ?
- 3** What skills do you think are essential for a person to be respectful?
- 4** People often say you have to give respect to get respect. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
- 5** Do you think there are times when people are not worthy of respect? When and why?

## Procedures (continued)

- 7** Next, have each group tell the other group what they can respect about their reasoning.

### Statements

(Choose a few statements that are most relevant to your group):

- Nighttime is better than daytime.
- Dessert is better than dinner.
- Salty is better than sweet.
- Cats are better than dogs.
- Speaking your mind is better than keeping it inside.
- Social media is bad for you.
- Mac is better than PC.
- iPhone is better than Android.
- It is better to keep your head down than to rock the boat.
- Feeling stress can be a positive thing.
- Friendships you make now will last forever.
- Friends are more important than family.
- The legal age for drinking should be 18.

- 8** At the conclusion of the activity, use the discussion questions to have a large group conversation.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Start each day by greeting your students with a “hello” and end by bidding them “goodbye.”
- ✓ Encourage students to say “hello” and “thank you” to their school security guards, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and crossing guards.
- ✓ Set expectations for a respectful classroom and school environment where littering and graffiti are unacceptable.
- ✓ Challenge students to assist elderly people in their neighborhood, offer their seats on buses to the elderly and to pregnant women.
- ✓ Urge students to look behind them when they open doors and to hold the door open for others.
- ✓ Model courtesy and hold the door open for your students, and encourage them to do the same.
- ✓ Urge students to say hello and smile to someone they do not normally greet.
- ✓ Challenge your students to intentionally go through their day without wearing earbuds or headphones and observe the humanity around them. Ask them to notice the respect or disrespect around them.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about a time when you felt respected by someone who was older than you or had more authority than you. What was the situation? How were you shown respect? How did it make you feel? Why do you think you were treated with respect? Think about a time when you did not feel respected by either a peer or an adult? What was happening? How did you feel at the time? What might you have changed, in your reaction or your thinking, to feel better about the act of disrespect?

*If we only depend on what people say verbally,  
we're not even close to understanding half of what  
is really going on. Go deeper!*

Assegid Habtewold

#### Character Pillars



Responsibility



Caring



Citizenship

# Social Cue Awareness

## BACKGROUND

Social cues are an important part of understanding the world and how to act in it. For adults, social cues provide clues that tell us whether we are being accepted or rejected when we are in different environments. When we understand expectations, we can act appropriately and have more success. Children rely even more on social cues to understand the world. They more commonly use social cues as context clues to figure out, comprehend and learn from situations.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Bhavin R. Sheth, James Liu, Olayemi Olagbaju, Larry Varghese, Rosleen Mansour, Stacy Reddoch, Deborah A. Pearson, and Katherine A. Loveland, "Detecting Social and Non-Social Changes in Natural Scenes: Performance of Children with and Without Autism Spectrum Disorders and Typical Adults," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 41, no. 4 (April 2011): 434–446, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-010-1062-3>.





SCHOOL

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about social cues and practice using their bodies and voices to send messages to others.



MATERIALS

- *Guess the Social Cue Clue* cards (one pack of cards per three students)

## Procedures

- 1 Make an announcement to the students that you are beginning the lesson. Take a deep, dramatic breath and pretend you are not feeling well. Give both visual and vocal cues that will allow the students to draw this conclusion, such as placing your hands on your stomach, scrunching up your forehead and eyebrows and talking in a low volume.
- 2 Ask the students: What do you think I'm feeling right now?
- 3 Upon the successful conclusion that you are feeling sick, ask the students: What about my face, my voice and my body led you to draw this conclusion? Write down their responses on the board or on chart paper.
- 4 Explain to the students that the list of words you just created are considered social cues. Define social cues by writing the following definition on the board or on chart paper. Read it aloud to the students and answer any questions they might have.

### social cues:

Social cues are hints or clues of what a person really thinks or feels.

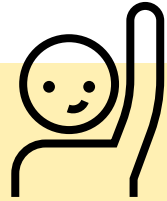
### NOTE

Personal space is also considered a social cue. Some young people have trouble interpreting appropriate physical distance. Explain that taking a step closer to another person indicates interest in that person while taking a step back indicates disinterest in another person.

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Explain to the students that we give and receive social cues through three things:
  - Our face
  - Our voice
  - Our body
- 6 Share a time when social cues helped you understand a situation better.
- 7 Review **facial social cues** with the students by reading the following directions. After each request, have the students look around the room at other faces.
  - Show a scared face.
  - Show a sad face.
  - Show a surprised face.
  - Show an excited face.
  - Show an angry face.
  - Show a happy face.
- 8 Review **vocal social cues** with the students by reading the following directions. After each request, have the students listen to their classmates.
  - Use your scared voice.
  - Use your sad voice.
  - Use your surprised voice.
  - Use your excited voice.
  - Use your angry voice.
  - Use your happy voice.

- 9 Review **body social cues** with the students by reading the following directions. After each request, have the students watch their classmates modeling the request.
  - Show you are scared with your body.
  - Show you are sad with your body.
  - Show you are surprised with your body.
  - Show you are excited with your body.
  - Show you are angry with your body.
  - Show you are happy with your body.
- 10 Explain to the students that they are now going to be participating in a game called “Social Cue Clues.”
- 11 Divide the students into groups of three.
- 12 Explain to the students that each group will receive a pack of cards that contain feelings and messages. They need to take turns choosing a feeling or message to act out. The other people in their group need to guess what they are acting out. They can use words or body language, but they cannot use the words on the cards.
- 13 Model the game with an example. Look at your watch or move towards the door while not making eye contact. Ask the students to guess how you are feeling. (Answer: rushed, in a hurry to leave.)
- 14 Allow the students enough time to play the game “Social Cue Clues.” Have them complete all the cards.
- 15 Afterwards, use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why are reading social cues important?
- 2 Why is it important to send out appropriate social cues?
- 3 What happens if we use the wrong social cue for a certain place? Example: yelling in the library or putting our feet up on a desk in school.
- 4 Who should we ask if there is a misunderstanding about a social cue?
- 5 How does the ability to read social cues help us make and keep friends?
- 6 Are there social cues that we have to work on as a classroom? What are they? How can we practice them?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you were able to “read” a person based on their body language. How were you able to understand the actions they were using to communicate? How do you communicate with your body, both positively and negatively? Describe a time when you thought you were communicating one thing but it was misunderstood by another. What could you have done to make yourself better understood?



### HABITS

- ✓ Have students make a collage of people from magazines and newspapers. Discuss what the people might be feeling and what messages they are trying to convey, based on their facial and body expressions.
- ✓ When students have a misunderstanding, ask them what social cues they might have missed during the conflict.
- ✓ Encourage students to greet their tablemates each day by looking each other in the eye and nonverbally demonstrating how they are feeling.

**LESSON HANDOUT****Social Cue Clue Cards**

*NOTE: For younger students, you may want to create a chart listing these social cues for the students to use as a reference while playing the game.*

**YOU ARE ANNOYED.**

**YOU WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.**

**YOU ARE EXCITED.**

**YOU ARE HAPPY TO SEE SOMEONE.**

**YOU ARE NERVOUS TO  
SEE SOMEONE.**

**YOU FEEL PROUD.**

**YOU ARE EMBARRASSED.**

**YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND  
SOMETHING.**

**YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT  
SOMEONE IS SAYING.**

**YOU ARE WORRIED.**

**YOU ARE SAD.**

**YOU ARE BORED.**



## Procedures

### NOTE

Some of the responses to the questions may differ depending upon cultural backgrounds. Be aware as you are guiding the discussion to refrain from “right” or “wrong” answers.

### NOTE

Highlight how important it is to consider environment when deciding what behaviors would be appropriate to exhibit. Example: Using your cell phone is appropriate at a sports game but not at a movie theater.

- 1 Read the following scenario aloud to the students and allow them to share their responses to the questions listed below.

#### **You are at the library.**

- What will you wear?
- What facial expressions will you have?
- Will your voice be loud or quiet?
- Can you use a cell phone?
- Where will you position yourself physically in relationship to other people?

- 2 Next, take time to review some of the following scenarios and answer the same questions listed above:

- You are at a candy shop after school.
- You are at the movies.
- You are at a sports game.
- You are attending a job interview.

- 3 Have a brief conversation about behavioral expectations in different settings using the following questions:

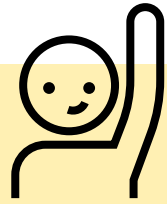
- Why do you behave differently in different situations?
- What happens if you behave inappropriately in certain situations?
- If your friends expect an inappropriate behavior of you, what is the benefit to you to follow expected behaviors, instead of what your friends want?

- 4 Ask the students to explain what a social cue is. Share the following definition.

### social cues:

Social cues are hints or clues of what a person really thinks or feels.

- 5 Share a time when social cues helped you to understand a situation better.
- 6 Explain to the students that they are now going to be playing a game called “Different Faces, Different Places.”
- 7 Divide the students into groups of four or five.
- 8 Explain that you will announce a social behavior and that each group should brainstorm and write down numerous scenarios where that behavior would be appropriate.
- Social behavior: writing notes.
  - Possible scenarios: school, work, training session, job interview, doctor visit, taking driving directions, getting someone’s number.
- 9 After each round, have the groups share the scenarios they came up with. Groups get a point for scenarios that no other group listed.
- 10 Complete steps 8 and 9 with the following social behaviors:
- Texting
  - Chewing gum
  - Dressing fancy
  - Using a loud voice
  - Slouching
  - Listening to music
  - Telling a joke
  - Playing a game on a cellphone
  - Any other social behaviors that you would want the students to discuss
- 11 Name the winners of the game, and call them your “social behavior experts.”
- 12 Facilitate a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why should you care about the social behaviors that you exhibit?
- 2 Are there times that you should not care about the social behaviors that you exhibit?
- 3 Have you ever had a difficult time when you did not know how to behave, and how did you handle that?
- 4 What can you do to prepare yourself for a new situation so your behavior is socially appropriate?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you may not have used an accepted social cue in a specific environment; for example, wearing sweatpants to church, attempting to skip a line at the grocery store, or cursing in front of a parent. What happened? Did anyone tell you what you were doing was not an accepted way of behaving? Did you receive this information a different way? Explain. Will you attempt to use this social cue in this same environment again? Why or why not?



### HABITS

- ✓ Play a part of a movie or music video without the sound. Have students guess what is happening in the video as a result of the nonverbal social cues they are observing.
- ✓ When students have a misunderstanding, ask them what social cues they might have missed during the conflict.
- ✓ When encountering communication in texts, evaluate the nonverbal messages and cues.



*Everyone is kneaded out of the same dough  
but not baked in the same oven.*

Yiddish proverb

#### Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility



Caring



Citizenship



Fairness

# Appreciating Diversity

## BACKGROUND

In this lesson, students will be exploring their skin color and the skin color of other students in their class. This lesson requires the educator to balance facilitating students' thoughts while addressing misconceptions. Even though your students are young, they may bring assumptions and stereotypes to the lesson. Their ideas and questions should be addressed head on. For instance, if a child asks about why skin colors differ, refrain from saying, "Skin color doesn't matter, we are all the same on the inside." This response addresses similarities while the child is asking about differences. Instead, explain that we all have melanin and the amount we have in our bodies determines our skin color. The goal is to create an environment that is safe for students to respectfully question and appreciate differences.

For more detailed information on how to respond to difficult questions that young children might ask, see *Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias: What Parents Can Do* by Louise Derman-Sparks, María Gutiérrez and Carol Brunson Phillips of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (<http://www.cccpre-school.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Teaching-Children-to-Resist-Bias4.pdf>).



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will recognize and value the different skin tones in their classroom.



## MATERIALS

- *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz (book)
- AV equipment to show a video
- Paint chips from a local paint store that represent the different skin tones of the students in class. If there are multiple colors per paint chip, cut them into individual squares.

# Procedures

### NOTE

For more detailed information on melanin, you can read *Skin Color Adaptation* by Dennis O'Neil of the Behavioral Sciences Department at Palomar College ([https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/adapt/adapt\\_4.htm](https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/adapt/adapt_4.htm)).

### NOTE

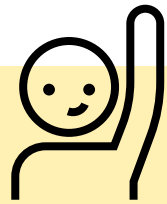
The book *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz is the story of a girl who begins to notice and appreciate the different skin tones of the people around her.

- 1 Explain to the students that people have different skin colors because of a pigment in our skin called melanin. How much melanin we have in our skin determines our skin color.
- 2 Model your comfort discussing skin tone by describing your skin tone to students and how much melanin you have in your skin. This will help to normalize the conversation and to create a comfortable atmosphere.
- 3 Read the book *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz to your class. Lead a group discussion using the questions below. Alternatively, you can show a video of students reading *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz (<https://youtu.be/679Sw4IACAk>; 4:15).
  - Think of a person in your life. How would you describe their skin color?
  - How would you describe the color of your own skin?
  - What are some reasons you like your skin color?
- 4 Display the paint chips on a table. Ask the students to find the paint chip that best matches the color of their skin.
- 5 Once they have their paint chip, sit in a circle and have the students read the name of the color on the paint chip aloud to the group. If the paint chips have only numbers, skip to the next step.

- 6** Ask the students to take the paint chip home and bring something in the following day that is the same color as the paint chip. Tell them they will not receive the item back so they should make sure it is not something meaningful to them.
- 7** Create a class sculpture using the items the class brings in to represent their skin colors. Title the sculpture “The Colors of Us” and display it proudly in the classroom.
- 8** After the sculpture is created and displayed, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

**NOTE**

If you do not want to create a class sculpture, you can alternatively use the paint chips to create a collage or mosaic that you can then title “The Colors of Us” and display in the classroom.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1** Who has the same or similar skin color as you, either in or out of the classroom?
- 2** Why is it a good thing that there are different skin colors?
- 3** Has anyone ever heard someone say something mean about a person’s skin color?
- 4** What can you do if you ever hear someone say something mean?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you met a person who was different than how you see yourself. Were they from a different culture, did they speak a different language or have parents who worked in a different job than your parents? What made you curious about this person? What questions would you want to ask them? What makes you different from other people in your school and community?



### HABITS

- ✓ Welcome students daily to the class using different greetings in different languages, including American Sign Language and any other languages spoken in the community.
- ✓ Have the class develop interview questions in order to get to know staff members throughout the school. Invite aides, lunchroom workers, custodians, secretaries and others to periodically attend your class to be interviewed. The students will then have the opportunity to get to know them more personally and learn to appreciate them on a different level.
- ✓ Set aside a designated time for a few students to explain why they appreciate a difference they have with someone else in the class.



## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will gain awareness and appreciation of the different socioeconomic statuses of families around the world.



## MATERIALS

- Computers, tablets or smartphones with internet access (enough for small groups to work online)
- *The Dollar Street* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

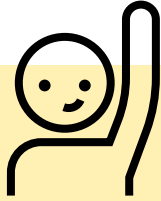
- 1 Explain to the students that the term “diversity” is often used to describe differences but that it has various meanings. Ask the students to brainstorm some ways the students in your school are diverse. List these differences on the board or on chart paper.
- 2 Tell students one way in which people are diverse, or different from one another, is socioeconomic status. Ask the students to explain what socioeconomic status means. Share the following definition with them:

### **socioeconomic status:**

According to the American Psychological Association, socioeconomic status is a classification of an individual or a group based on a combination of their income, education and occupation.<sup>51</sup>

- 3 Explain to the students that socioeconomic status varies from culture to culture.
- 4 Introduce the students to The Dollar Street website. Explain that The Dollar Street is a project where every day items in 264 homes in 50 countries were documented and photographed and sorted by income.

<sup>51</sup> “Socioeconomic Status,” American Psychological Association, accessed March 5, 2019, <https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/index>.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What were your feelings or reactions as you learned about the different families?
- 2 What information that was not included on The Dollar Street website do you want to know about the families?
- 3 As you looked at the images, did you find yourself judging the families and/or having empathy for the families? Why is it important to be aware of this?
- 4 Why is it important to acknowledge and talk about diversity? When does talking about and acknowledging differences become a problem?

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Have the students form small groups of two to three students. Each group should have a computer to work with. Share the web address for The Dollar Street (<https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix>), and ask the students to pull up the website.
- 6 Distribute a copy of *The Dollar Street* handout to each student, and have them work in their small groups to complete the handout.
- 7 In a large group, have the students share their answers to question 5 on the handout.
- 8 Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Have the students choose a family from The Dollar Street website and research the economics of the region. This can be done with multiple families through the school year, and comparisons can be made by region, economics, lifestyle, etc.
- ✓ Using news sources from different regions around the world, examine current events in different languages. You might look at the news of a single region or take one news event and examine it from different perspectives. Google translate can help with the language.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a character, a movie or a story that you have read that takes place in a culture different from your own. Imagine yourself going to that place and having a conversation with the people who live there. What about how the people live would you wonder about? What questions would you imagine they would ask about you and your background? What types of things would you imagine you have in common?



## LESSON HANDOUT

### The Dollar Street

*Directions: Using The Dollar Street website (<https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix>), find the following families and answer the corresponding questions.*

#### NOTE

You may want to use the search bar on the main page ([www.gapminder.org](https://www.gapminder.org)) to find the specific families by name.

#### 1 Find the Chaurasia family that lives in New Delhi, India.

- What is their monthly income? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- Find the picture of the water outlet in the home and use three words to describe it. \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the next item they plan to buy? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Find the Raju family that lives near Thanlyin in Myanmar.

- What is their monthly income? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the heat source for cooking? \_\_\_\_\_
- Describe the table they use for entertaining guests. \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the next item they plan to buy? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3 Find the Xi family that lives in the Yunnan province of China.

- What is their monthly income? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do they use as fuel for their stove? \_\_\_\_\_
- Use three words to describe the plate of food in their home. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4 Find the Poma family that lives in the La Paz region of Bolivia.

- What is their monthly income? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do they dream of purchasing? \_\_\_\_\_
- Choose one of the pictures of their home and describe it. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5 As a group, choose a family not listed above. Have a conversation using the following questions:

- What are some major differences between their lives and yours?
- What are some similarities between their lives and yours?
- What were some feelings you had when looking at the items in their home?
- What do you think children in this family, or culture, do for fun?
- What are some challenges you think this family faces?

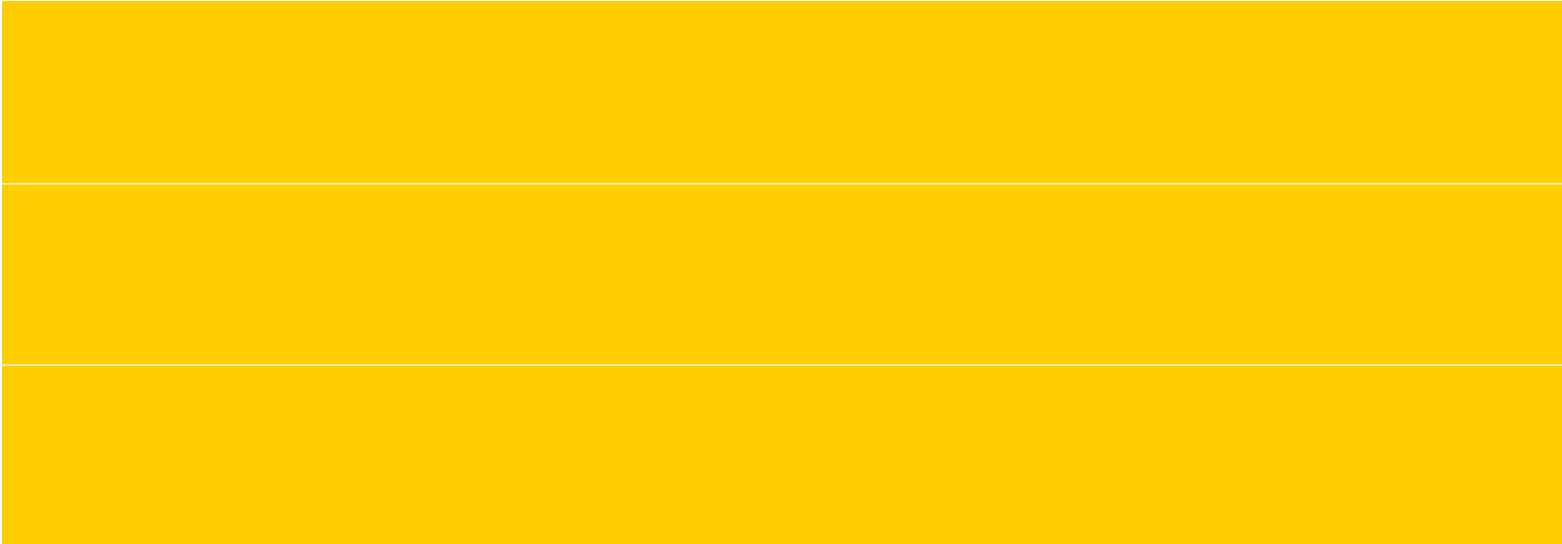


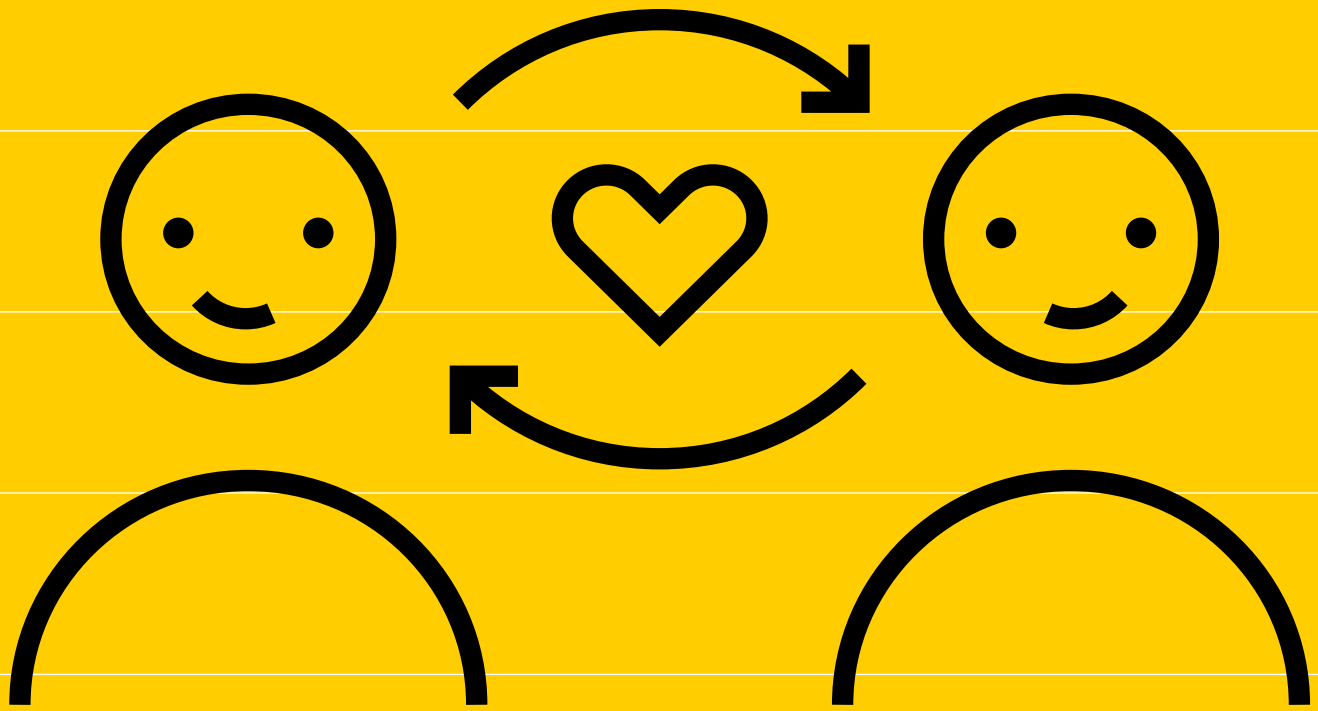


## LESSON HANDOUT

## The Dollar Street Answer Key

- 1 Find the Chaurasia family that lives in New Delhi, India.
  - a. What is their monthly income? **\$753**
  - b. What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? **graphic designer**
  - c. Find the picture of the water outlet in the home and use three words to describe it.
  - d. What is the next item they plan to buy? **house**
  - e. Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? **middle**
- 2 Find the Raju family that lives near Thanlyin in Myanmar.
  - a. What is their monthly income? **\$45**
  - b. What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? **rice farmer**
  - c. What is the heat source for cooking? **wood**
  - d. Describe the table they use for entertaining guests.
  - e. What is the next item they plan to buy? **car battery to power the home**
  - f. Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? **bottom**
- 3 Find the Xi family that lives in the Yunnan province of China.
  - a. What is their monthly income? **\$781**
  - b. What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family?  
**postman and runs a restaurant**
  - c. What do they use as fuel for their stove? **electricity, natural gas and wood**
  - d. Use three words to describe the plate of food in their home.
  - e. Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? **middle**
- 4 Find the Poma family that lives in the La Paz region of Bolivia.
  - a. What is their monthly income? **\$265**
  - b. What is the occupation of the primary wage earner in the family? **carpenter**
  - c. What do they dream of purchasing? **refrigerator**
  - d. Choose one of the pictures of their home and describe it.
  - e. Where do they fall on The Dollar Street income scale? **middle**





RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

*To share your weakness is to make yourself vulnerable;  
to make yourself vulnerable is to show your strength.*

Criss Jami

*Real dishes break. That's how you know they're real.*

Marty Rubin

#### Character Pillars



#### Trustworthiness



#### Caring

# Vulnerability

## BACKGROUND

Vulnerability is having the courage to share who you are even if other people might not accept you. When you share who you are, you take risks that can create closer relationships. Young children can be inherently vulnerable, often without even realizing it. Research indicates that as children age, we send them explicit and implicit messages about shame, uncertainty and self-doubt. As they learn the negative risks associated with being vulnerable, such as getting hurt, devalued or disappointed, children begin to hide parts of who they are and lose their sense of worthiness. This generally begins between the ages of 9 and 13. Encouraging students to take risks will lessen their fears about taking risks and allow them to see the benefits of being vulnerable.<sup>52</sup>

For more information on vulnerability, watch Brené Brown's TED talk "The Power of Vulnerability" ([https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_on\\_vulnerability](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability); 20:13).

<sup>52</sup> Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly* (New York: Avery, 2012), 112–15, 214–45.



SCHOOL

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn what it means to be vulnerable and understand that expressing vulnerability ultimately creates meaningful relationships.



MATERIALS

- Signs (hung on opposite sides of the room):  
A lot of courage  
A little bit of courage
- Story handouts (your choice)

## Procedures

- 1 Write the following definition of vulnerability on the board or on chart paper. Read it aloud to the students, and answer any questions they may have.

### **vulnerability:**

Vulnerability is having the courage to share who you are even if other people might not accept you. When you share who you are, you take risks that can create closer relationships.

- 2 Model vulnerability by sharing something about yourself that you sometimes feel scared to share. This might be that you grew up in a poor part of town, that you failed a class in high school or that you root for an unpopular sports team. Explain to the students that you are taking a risk by sharing this personal information with them. Use the following example, or one like it, when modeling vulnerability:

*"I feel vulnerable telling you that I failed a class because I am a teacher and teachers are supposed to be knowledgeable. The potential problem in telling you that I failed a class is you could tease me because I do not know everything. Something positive that could come from sharing this information is that some of you who might struggle with school can relate to me because I have also struggled in school."*

## Procedures (continued)

### NOTE

Be aware of your own biases and remain neutral as you react to where students stand. Students will stand in different spots for each story. There is no right or wrong answer for each story, and where a student chooses to stand has to do with their comfort in taking risks and being vulnerable.

### NOTE

You may want to focus on only two or three stories, depending on the age of your students.

- 3 Ask the students if they have ever taken a risk. Emphasize that taking a risk is part of being vulnerable.
- 4 Point out the signs posted on the ends of the room: “A lot of courage” and “A little bit of courage.”
- 5 Tell the students there is an imaginary line between these two signs.
- 6 Explain to the students that you will be reading stories. While they listen to the stories, they should think about how much courage the character in the story needs.
- 7 Read Priya’s story to the students:

*Priya is new to school. Her mother knows she loves samosas and packed some for her lunch today. When Priya arrives at the lunchroom, she sees that all the other students are eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Priya knows that her lunch will attract attention because no one else in the lunchroom is eating samosas. They smell and look different. How much courage does Priya need to sit down and enjoy her samosas?*

- 8 Ask the students to stand on the imaginary line indicating how much courage they think Priya needs to eat the samosas.
- 9 Have some students share their reasoning for where they chose to stand on the line.
- 10 Tell the students: “**Have courage, take a risk, be vulnerable.**”
- 11 Read Madelyn’s story to the students:

*Madelyn is really smart, but she never raises her hand to answer a question or to participate. She is always worried that she might look like a know-it-all. Today, she is especially interested in the science lesson. The teacher asks a hard question, and Madelyn knows the answer. How much courage does she need to raise her hand to answer the question?*

- 12 Ask the students to stand on the imaginary line indicating how much courage they think Madelyn needs to answer the science question.
- 13 Have some students share their reasoning for where they chose to stand on the line.
- 14 Tell the students: ***“Have courage, take a risk, be vulnerable.”***
- 15 Read Soner’s story to the students:

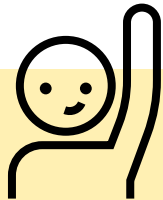
*Soner has a hard time leaving his family to come to school. He often feels worried that something bad is going to happen. Because he feels worried, it is hard for him to concentrate in class. One day, a classmate sees he is worried. The classmate asks if he is okay. How much courage does Soner need to tell his classmate the truth and admit that he misses his family when he comes to school?*

- 16 Ask the students to stand on the imaginary line indicating how much courage they think Soner needs to tell his classmate the truth.
- 17 Have some students share their reasoning for where they chose to stand on the line.
- 18 Tell the students: ***“Have courage, take a risk, be vulnerable.”***
- 19 Read Jeremiah’s story to the students:

*Jeremiah loves basketball. He often worries that he is not good enough to play but has decided that he needs to practice to get better at the sport. He does not know the kids who play basketball at recess, but he really wants to start playing with them. How much courage does Jeremiah need to ask the kids playing basketball if he can join?*

- 20 Ask the students to stand on the imaginary line indicating how much courage they think Jeremiah needs to ask the kids if he can play basketball with them.





- 1 How do we know who we can take a risk with? Are there people you need to be more careful about sharing with?
- 2 What is trust?
- 3 How do you know when you can trust someone?
- 4 What do you need to do to be a trustworthy person?
- 5 When you have taken a risk in the past, did it turn out good or bad? What happened?
- 6 How does being vulnerable show strength?
- 7 How can being vulnerable and taking risks create closer relationships?

## Procedures (continued)

- 21 Have some students share their reasoning for where they chose to stand on the line.
- 22 Tell the students: ***“Have courage, take a risk, be vulnerable.”***
- 23 Read Krystal’s story to the students:

*Krystal lives with her grandfather. A classmate named Ciara asks Krystal if her mother can call Ciara’s mother so they can play together outside of school. Krystal is worried about telling Ciara that she does not live with her parents. How much courage does Krystal need to tell Ciara the truth about who she lives with?*

- 24 Ask the students to stand on the imaginary line indicating how much courage they think Krystal needs to tell Ciara who she lives with?
- 25 Have some students share their reasoning for where they chose to stand on the line.
- 26 Tell the students: ***“Have courage, take a risk, be vulnerable.”***
- 27 Divide the students into five groups. Assign each group one of the five stories—Priya, Madelyn, Soner, Jeremiah or Krystal—and distribute the corresponding handout.
- 28 Have the students answer the questions on the handout. Allow the students time to complete the handout.
- 29 Have each group share the ending to their story and the answers to the handout questions.
- 30 Lead a large class conversation using the discussion questions.




## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Have an end-of-the-week community meeting. Allow the students to write down something they are struggling with in their personal lives. Invite students to share their struggles with the class. As a class, offer support and comfort, and acknowledge the vulnerability that was shared.
- ✓ Throughout the year, whenever a situation arises where students need to apologize to one another, point out that apologizing is an example of vulnerability.
- ✓ Identify examples of vulnerability when interpreting literary texts or analyzing media stories or historical events.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you had a lot of courage. What did you have courage about? What were you afraid of that you had to overcome? How did it feel to take the risk and be courageous? After you took the risk and it was all over, how did you feel? Have you ever taken a risk and it did not work out the way you hoped it would? What did you feel after that? Why is it important to continue taking risks even if it does not always work out?





## LESSON HANDOUT

## Priya's Story

*Priya is new to school. Her mother knows she loves samosas and packed some for her lunch today. When Priya arrives at the lunchroom, she sees that all the other students are eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Priya knows that her lunch will attract attention because no one else in the lunchroom is eating samosas. They smell and look different.*

**PRIYA CHOOSES TO BE VULNERABLE, AND SHE EATS HER SAMOSAS.**

*Directions: Answer the questions below.*

- 1** What problems could Priya face by eating her unpopular lunch in front of the other students?

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- 2** What positive things could happen to Priya because she took a risk and ate her lunch in front of everyone?

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**LESSON HANDOUT****Madelyn's Story**

*Madelyn is really smart, but she never raises her hand to answer a question or to participate. She is always worried that she might look like a know-it-all. Today, Madelyn is really interested in the science lesson.*

**MADELYN CHOOSES TO BE VULNERABLE AND RAISES HER HAND  
TO ANSWER A QUESTION IN SCIENCE CLASS.**

*Directions: Answer the questions below.*

- 1** What problems could Madelyn face by raising her hand?

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- 2** What positive things could happen for Madelyn because she took the risk of raising her hand?

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**LESSON HANDOUT****Soner's Story**

*Soner has a hard time leaving his family to come to school. He often feels worried that something bad is going to happen. Because he feels worried, it is hard for him to concentrate in class. One day, a classmate sees he is worried. The classmate asks if he is okay.*

**SONER CHOOSES TO BE VULNERABLE AND TELLS HIS CLASSMATE THAT HE IS NOT OKAY AND THAT HE OFTEN COMES TO SCHOOL FEELING WORRIED.**

*Directions: Answer the questions below.*

- 1** What problems could Soner face because he told his classmate he is worried about his family?

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- 2** What positive things could happen for Soner because he took the risk to share his worries about his family?

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## LESSON HANDOUT

## Jeremiah's Story

*Jeremiah loves basketball. He often worries that he is not good enough to play but has decided that he needs to practice to get better at the sport. He does not know the kids who play basketball at recess, but he really wants to start playing with them.*

**JEREMIAH CHOOSES TO BE VULNERABLE AND ASKS  
TO PLAY BASKETBALL AT RECESS.**

*Directions: Answer the questions below.*

- 1** What problems could Jeremiah face when he asks kids he does not know if he can join their game?

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- 2** What positive things could happen for Jeremiah because he took the risk of asking to join the game?

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**LESSON HANDOUT****Krystal's Story**

*Krystal lives with her grandfather. A classmate named Ciara asks Krystal if her mother can call Ciara's mother so they can play together outside of school. Krystal is worried about telling Ciara that she does not live with her parents.*

**KRYSTAL CHOOSES TO BE VULNERABLE AND TELLS CIARA  
THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO SHE LIVES WITH.**

*Directions: Answer the questions below.*

- 1** What problems could Krystal face because she tells Ciara the truth about who she lives with?

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- 2** What positive things could happen to Krystal and Ciara's relationship because Krystal told the truth?

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## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn what it means to be vulnerable and understand that expressing vulnerability ultimately creates meaningful relationships.



## MATERIALS

- Envelopes
- Index cards
- Dot stickers or small sticky notes

# Procedures

- 1 Write the questions below on the board, and ask students to silently journal their responses. Tell students that this activity is private and reflective and that there are no right or wrong answers.
  - How willing are you to show your friends your true self? Why?
  - How willing are you to show strangers your true self? Why?
  - How willing are you to show your family your true self? Why?
- 2 Distribute an envelope to each student. Ask them to put their name on the outside of the envelope, place the answers to their questions inside the envelope and seal it. Collect the envelopes and redistribute them at the end of the school year.
- 3 Ask the students what they think the questions on the board have to do with vulnerability and relationships. Write their answers on the board or on chart paper.

## NOTE

Returning the envelopes at the end of the year can be a reflective activity in which the students evaluate whether they became more vulnerable in their lives as a result of this lesson.

## Procedures (continued)

### NOTE

If needed, share with the students that vulnerability is not simply oversharing information or deciding to tell a personal story for ulterior motives (e.g., posting your whole life on social media, telling a personal story so that people feel sorry for you or so you can get what you want).

- 4 Share the following definition of vulnerability:

### vulnerability:

Vulnerability is having the courage to share who you are even if other people might not accept you. When you share who you are, you take risks that can create closer relationships.

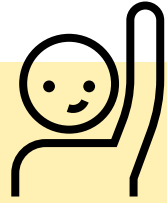
- 5 Model vulnerability by sharing something about yourself that you sometimes feel scared to share. This might be that you grew up in a poor part of town, that you failed a class in high school or that you root for an unpopular sports team. Explain to the students that you are taking a risk by sharing this personal information with them. Use the following example, or one like it, when modeling vulnerability:

*"I feel vulnerable telling you that I failed a class because I am a teacher and teachers are supposed to be knowledgeable. The potential problem in telling you that I failed a class is you could tease me because I do not know everything. Something positive that could come from sharing this information is that some of you who might struggle with school can relate to me because I have also struggled in school."*

- 6 Explain to the students that being vulnerable with others creates a space for the other person to share a part of them too. Emphasize that it is the student's choice and their right to choose *when* to be vulnerable.



- 7** Distribute an index card to each student.
- 8** Ask the students to write the following prompt on the front of their index card: "I feel vulnerable when..."
- 9** Model the task by sharing what you would write on the index card. Example: "I feel vulnerable when I get in front of students, and I do not know if they are going to like me."
- 10** Give the students time to write their answer on the index card. Ask students to write legibly because you will be collecting the index cards. Also ask the students not to write their names on the cards because this activity will be anonymous.
- 11** Collect the completed index cards. Redistribute them by having students choose one of the collected cards.
- 12** Have students read aloud the card they picked. Tell students not to mention if they picked their own card.
- 13** Once all the cards have been read, hang them at the front of the room.
- 14** Give the students three stickers (or sticky notes) to place on the index cards that speak to them the most.
- 15** Allow time for the students to silently read the index cards and choose the three they most identify with.
- 16** After all the students have used their three stickers, have the class sit back in their seats and read out loud the index cards that received a large number of stickers. Also read out loud the index cards that received no stickers.
- 17** Lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How do the index cards and stickers show that everyone experiences vulnerability?
- 2** What is the value of sharing your vulnerability even if you did not get stickers? (getting it out, informing others the vulnerability exists, others may also share in vulnerability but had no more stickers left)
- 3** Is feeling vulnerable "normal"?
- 4** How does being vulnerable show a person's strength?
- 5** Who is deserving of our vulnerability? Who is not deserving of our vulnerability?
- 6** What is trust?
- 7** How do you know when you can trust someone?
- 8** What do you need to do to be a trustworthy person so others can be vulnerable with you?
- 9** When you have taken a risk in the past, was the outcome good or bad? What happened?
- 10** How does being vulnerable and taking risks create closer relationships?
- 11** How does peer pressure impact our ability to be vulnerable?



## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about someone in your life who shows vulnerability. How do they show it? How do you feel when you are with this person? Who is someone in your life who does not often show vulnerability? What are the ways that they hide their vulnerability? How do you feel when you are with this person? Do you show vulnerability? Why do you choose to be the way you are?



### HABITS

- ✓ Throughout the year, whenever a situation arises where students need to apologize to one another, point out that apologizing is an example of vulnerability.
- ✓ Have the students find articles on the benefits of vulnerability. Spend time each week sharing these articles. One article that can be used is “8 Habits of Actively Vulnerable People” ([https://www.huffpost.com/entry/habits-of-vulnerable-people\\_n\\_587679d8e4b05b7a465d2713](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/habits-of-vulnerable-people_n_587679d8e4b05b7a465d2713)).

*I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I'm going to learn, I must do it by listening.*

Larry King

#### Character Pillars

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Respect

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Responsibility

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Caring

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Citizenship

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Trustworthiness

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# Active Listening

## BACKGROUND

Human beings talk all the time, but are we truly listening to each other? To hear each other is one of the greatest gifts we can give, and to be heard is one of the greatest gifts we can receive. In this lesson, students will practice the art of active listening, and the students will work on the skills necessary to create trust, empathy and understanding. Active listening is the key to developing effective communication and leadership skills in school and beyond the hallways.



Students will learn what whole body listening looks like and the benefits of using whole body listening.

## Procedures

### NOTE

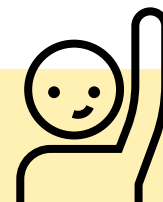
Before beginning this lesson, watch the video “Strategies: Whole Body Listening” by the Teaching Channel (<https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/whole-body-listening; 1:24>).

- 1 Have students sit in a circle, on chairs or on the carpet. Explain that they are going to be playing a game that will require their best listening skills.
- 2 Ask the students if they know what “whole body listening” means. Elicit some responses.
- 3 Explain what “whole body listening” means by sharing the following guidelines with the students. Go over each guideline, and check for understanding. Write them on the board or on chart paper.
  - My eyes are looking at the speaker.
  - My feet are grounded and still.
  - My ears are turned on and focused in.
  - My heart is caring about what the speaker is saying.
  - My brain is considering what is being said.
- 4 Ask the students to come up with ideas about what other parts of their bodies will be doing when they are whole body listening.
- 5 Tell the students they will be writing a story together out loud that has a beginning, a middle and an end. Explain that each student can add only one word at a time. Remind the students to use whole body listening so they can listen closely to all of the words that have come before their turn.

- 6 Begin the first round with the word “once.” This is open enough that the next student might add *upon* or *there* as the next word. It is helpful to keep the first round as easy and as smoothly running as possible.
- 7 When the story comes to a natural pause after one or two times around the circle, applaud the success of the first story and see if anyone can retell the entire story from the beginning.
- 8 Ask students to rate how well they think they did. If they think they used whole body listening “100% of the time and did a great job adding to the story,” they should put up three fingers. If students feel they did “okay, but could have listened better,” have them put up two fingers. If they think they “didn’t listen well,” have them put up one finger. Have them look around the room.
- 9 Explain that you are going to challenge the whole room to have three fingers up after the next story.
- 10 Repeat the storytelling rules. Choose a student to start the story. Before beginning, remind everyone they are trying to tell a story with a beginning, a middle and an end that they will all feel successful about.
- 11 After the story concludes, have the students assess their listening using the three-finger model. If time allows, try the exercise a third time.
- 12 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## NOTE

As students add words to the story in the first round, if they seem to be off track, ask gentle questions such as, “Does that word seem to fit with what you listened to before?” or ask for a review or recap from a student of what was said so far.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What was your favorite part of any of the stories that were created? Why?
- 2 What was the most difficult part about building the stories? Why do you think that was difficult?
- 3 How does whole body listening help make us better listeners?
- 4 How does it make others feel when we actively listen to them?
- 5 Where can you use whole body listening?
- 6 Why does it matter to listen before we speak?

## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when someone really listened to you. What was happening? How did you know they were listening? How did it make you feel? Think of another time when you felt someone was not listening to you. Why do you think they were not listening? How did that make you feel? If this happens again, how could you respectfully request complete attention?



### HABITS

- ✓ Establish a class system of response. Write each student's name on an individual popsicle stick. Ask a question, and give students a moment to jot down their response. Choose a popsicle stick to select who to call on to minimize frantic arm waving, which prevents active listening.
- ✓ Practice making eye contact.
- ✓ Encourage students to take notes as a record of listening.



## OBJECTIVE

The students will practice listening to each other and checking for understanding using whole body active listening techniques.

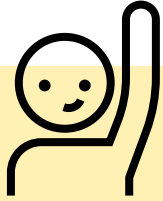
## Procedures

- 1 Start by asking students if they think they are good listeners. Encourage them to share what they think a good listener does and looks like.
- 2 Explain that good listening is whole body listening. Share the following active listening guidelines with the students. Have them pre-charted, or write them on the board or on chart paper as you review them with the class.
  - Face the speaker, and maintain eye contact.
  - Be attentive but relaxed.
  - Keep an open mind.
  - Listen to the words, and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
  - Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.
  - Pay attention to what is not said—the nonverbal cues.<sup>53</sup>
- 3 Have the following feedback sentence pre-written on the board or on chart paper: “One way you showed me you were a good active listener was when you \_\_\_\_\_. You can be an even better active listener by \_\_\_\_\_.” Explain that the students will be listening to one another and then giving each other feedback using the active listening guidelines and the feedback sentence.
- 4 Break students into pairs, and have them think of a story where they did something daring. (This can be the first time they went on a roller coaster, rode a bike without training wheels or auditioned for a play. It is open to their interpretation.) Please tell students that whatever story they will be sharing will be repeated by their partner later.

**NOTE**

This activity can be adapted so that students can share a story about anything. It should, however, be a specific memory that is clear and has a beginning, a middle and an end.

<sup>53</sup> Adapted from Dianne Schilling, “10 Steps to Effective Listening”, *Forbes*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening/#54a79f373891>.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What skills did you use in listening to your partner's story?
- 2 What was the hardest part of listening to someone else's story? What was an obstacle you overcame?
- 3 Think about a time when you really wanted to share something and you were not listened to. How did it make you feel? What do you wish would have happened?
- 4 Why do you think actively listening to other people matters?

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Ask one student to be partner A and one student to be partner B. Instruct partner A to tell their story to partner B. Instruct B to whole body listen. Remind them of the guidelines stated earlier. Encourage them to pay attention to gestures and body language as well. This is all part of listening.
- 6 After partner A tells their story, partner B tells their story.
- 7 Once both partners have told their stories, have them give feedback to each other using the feedback sentence introduced earlier. Remind them they can reference the active listening guidelines.
- 8 If time allows, have the students practice the activity again with another partner.
- 9 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Regularly call on other students to paraphrase the responses of their classmates. This reinforces the active listening guidelines.
- ✓ Periodically ask the students if they are remembering to keep an open mind when people share with them. Are they distracted by their own judgments? Are they really listening to their friends?
- ✓ When watching videos in class, ask the students to point out nonverbal cues and the messages they convey.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when someone really listened to you. What was happening? How did you know they were listening? How did it make you feel? Think of another time when you felt someone was not listening to you. Why do you think they were not listening? How did that make you feel? If this happens again, how could you respectfully request complete attention?



*People might forget what you said, but they will  
never forget how you made them feel.*

Maya Angelou

#### Character Pillars

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Respect

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Responsibility

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Caring

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Citizenship

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# Communication Styles

## BACKGROUND

*How we say something is as important as what we say. In life, we may notice that we might speak or behave aggressively, assertively or passively depending on the circumstances. We might also notice that we get different responses or results depending on how we behave.*



SCHOOL

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will identify three major communication styles and practice using each style. They will also identify the best place to use each style of communication.



MATERIALS

- Three slips of paper that read:  
Aggressive—Say to the room, “Move!”  
Assertive—Say to the room, “Excuse me, I’d like to get through.”  
Passive—Say to the room, “Um, excuse me, if you do not mind, could I get through?”

## Procedures

- 1 Explain that sometimes the *way* we say something is as important as what we say. Explain that this lesson is about understanding different styles of communication.
- 2 Ask the class if they remember the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Remind them that Goldilocks was not satisfied or comfortable when the bed was *too soft* or *too hard*—she was looking for what was *just right*.
- 3 Write on the board the following three words with their definitions:

### **aggressive:**

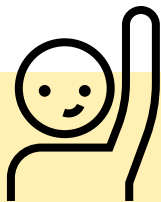
Loud, pushy, dominant, must get their way

### **assertive:**

Honest, makes eye contact, speaks clearly, easy to understand

### **passive:**

Quiet, avoids conflict, gives in easily



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How did it feel when someone asked you to “Move!”? Did you want to move for them? Did you move? Why or why not?
- 2 How did it feel to be asked assertively?
- 3 How did you respond to the passive volunteer?
- 4 How did it feel to say your line? Did you feel like your style was effective?
- 5 Which style was the most effective overall? Why do you think that was?
- 6 What might be the problem with being too passive? Too aggressive?
- 7 When might it be best in life or in school to speak assertively but not aggressively?

## Procedures (continued)

- 4 After each word and explanation, check for understanding and ask students for examples of where they might see people or students behaving aggressively, assertively or passively.
- 5 Model the concept of communication styles by sharing some examples from your life when you experienced each of these communication styles.
- 6 After you have shared some examples, ask everyone to stand up. Now that everyone has a better understanding of each word, ask the class to show with their bodies what being “aggressive” might look like. Ask how it felt to stand in that pose.
- 7 Do the same for the word “assertive.” Ask the students how it felt differently from the aggressive stance.
- 8 Ask the students to do it one last time for “passive.” Ask them how they feel standing that way. How did each stance feel different?
- 9 Next, bring all the students together in an open space in the room, and ask for a volunteer. Explain that the volunteer is going to attempt to walk through the group.
- 10 Give a slip of paper to the volunteer with one of the following messages: “Aggressive—Say to the room, ‘Move!’” “Assertive—Say to the room, ‘Excuse me, I’d like to get through,’” or “Passive—Say to the room, ‘Um, excuse me, if you do not mind, could I get through?’”

### NOTE

For younger students, it might be appropriate to stand next to them while modeling and coaching them. Also, remind students that the most important rule is that they may not touch any one, they may use only their words.

- 11 Ask the volunteer to attempt to “part” the group of students in front of them using *only* the words on the paper and the communication style on their slip.
- 12 Ask for other volunteers, and repeat the procedure as time allows, alternating through the styles. Tell the students in the group to make it feel real and to move as they would in real life.
- 13 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Remind students of all the places they mentioned seeing students using different communication styles. Ask them to try being “assertive” (polite but firm) when they ask for a turn with a toy or a swing, or when they try to get past other students. Ask them to notice the results! Is it like Goldilocks—*just right*?
- ✓ Incorporate the phrase, “May I please...” as the classroom’s social norm of courtesy.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about how you talk to people. When you are at home, how do you communicate? When you are in school? In an after-school class or sport? With your friends? Where do you feel the most comfortable communicating? Why? Think of a time when you did not like how you communicated. What was different about the situation? What could you have done to feel better about how you communicated?





SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Through a role-play activity, students will become familiar with communications styles and practice being able to identify with them.



MATERIALS

- Six cards with the words “Aggressive,” “Assertive” and “Passive” (two cards per word)
- Slips with scenarios (some possible examples):
  - Two people who both believe they were next in line at Starbucks
  - Two people who reached for the same T-shirt at the same time in a store
  - Two people who want the TV remote
  - One person who is accusing another person of stealing something
  - One person who is trying to return something without a receipt to a store clerk
  - Two people who want the same parking space

## Procedures

- 1 Write the following definitions on chart paper or on the board.

### **aggressive:**

Loud, pushy, dominant, must get their way

### **assertive:**

Direct, makes eyes contact, honest, firm, expresses needs clearly

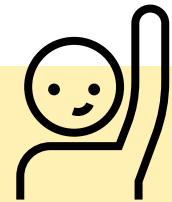
### **passive:**

Quiet, avoids conflict, gives in easily

- 2 As a class, go over each communication style. Model and share some examples from your life when you experienced each of these communication styles.
- 3 Ask students to identify where and when they may have seen people communicating in each style. When are they effective? When are they problematic?
- 4 After each has been thoroughly examined, move on to the next part of the activity.
- 5 Explain to the class that they are going to role play the different styles.
- 6 Ask for two volunteers to come to the front of the room. Explain to the class that the volunteers will be given a scenario and a card with one of the following words: “passive,” “aggressive” or “assertive.”
- 7 Read the scenario aloud to the room. Volunteers will act out the scenario using the communication style they have been assigned. Be sure to keep the communication style hidden so the class can guess the style.
- 8 Have the class watch the scene enacted by the volunteers and guess which style the volunteers are demonstrating.
- 9 Ask the students for specific examples of the communication style. Examples: things that were said, body language, tone. Have the volunteers reveal their roles.
- 10 Repeat the process with the other scenarios.
- 11 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## NOTE

Make sure the volunteers understand their role before they start the improvisation. Encourage the rest of the class to be respectful and active listeners. Count out “3-2-1 action.”



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How successful were you at guessing the communication style of each volunteer?
- 2 When you were performing, what did you notice about how you felt during your scene? Did your assigned style match your personality? Why or why not?
- 3 Which were the scenes where people communicated the most successfully? What was successful about the communication?
- 4 What do you think the real difference is between aggressive and assertive?
- 5 When is it best to be assertive but not aggressive?
- 6 Which communication style do you use most in your own life? Is it effective?



## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think about someone who is a great communicator. What do you admire about how they communicate? Think about someone whose communication style irritates you. How do you respond to that communication style? Is your response helpful to the situation? What can you do when a communication style clashes with yours? How can you respectfully coexist with someone when you have very different communication styles?



### HABITS

- ✓ Use the terms “passive,” “aggressive” and “assertive” in helping students name their style in disagreements or communications with fellow students.
- ✓ Remind them of when they saw strong and effective communication in the role plays and when communication could use improvement.
- ✓ Identify communication styles in literary texts and historical speeches.



*The ugly reality is that peer pressure reaches its greatest intensity at just the age when kids tend to be most insensitive and cruel.*

Walt Mueller

#### Character Pillars



Responsibility



Fairness



Caring

# Resisting Peer Pressure

## BACKGROUND

Students become familiar with peer pressure well before adolescence. People are prone to seek out group acceptance, and this tendency is embedded into human social wiring. At times, cues from peers can be a positive force that push students to strive for academic or athletic excellence and approval. However, peer pressure can be troubling when young people exert a negative influence in areas such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual experimentation or bullying. Peer pressure is present beyond playgrounds or at school. In today's digital age, students also face it on social media.

Educators and parents often worry about peer pressure and its harmful effects on adolescents, but research indicates that younger children are equally susceptible to peer pressure. The younger students who experience peer pressure have fewer emotional and communication tools to recognize and combat it.<sup>54</sup>

For adolescents, the brain does not always respond constructively. Teens tend to pursue immediate feedback regardless of whether it is healthy or not. They tend to be more reactive and unpracticed at taking time to think. When peer pressure is defined and strategies are learned to face it, students of all ages can begin a lifelong strategy of embracing their self-identity in order to counter unwelcomed influences.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Rick Nauert, "Younger Than You Think: Peer Pressure Begins in Elementary School." *Psych Central*, last modified August 8, 2018, <https://psychcentral.com/news/2013/06/06/younger-than-you-think-peer-pressure-begins-in-elementary-school/55667.html>.

<sup>55</sup> "Peer Pressure: It's Influence on Teens and Decision Making." *Scholastic*, 2008, <http://headsip.scholastic.com/students/peer-pressure-its-influence-on-teens-and-decision-making>.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of peer pressure and understand how knowing who you are on the inside helps to combat peer pressure.



## MATERIALS

- *Zilly: A Modern-Day Fable* by Kelly Parks Snider (book)
- *This Is Me on the Outside* handout (a copy for each student)
- *This Is Me on the Inside* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Invite students to drum on their desks in any pattern. There are no rules for drumming.
- 2 Allow drumming to continue until most of the children are in a rhythm. Then stop the drumming. Ask the following questions:
  - Was it hard to keep your original drumming pattern as you heard your classmates' rhythms? Why?
  - Did anyone change their drumming because they felt they needed to follow the group?
- 3 Suggest that when we are in groups, we can be influenced by what other people do or say. When we are influenced in ways that go against what we want to do, that is called peer pressure. Explain that peers are people in your age group. Write the term and definition on chart paper or on the board.

### NOTE

Keep the discussion to feelings rather than anecdotes. Appropriate responses may include nervous, embarrassed, short-of-breath, sweaty, having an upset stomach or headache.

### peer pressure:

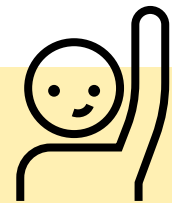
Peer pressure is feeling you should do something that you might not feel comfortable doing.

- 4 Share a time from your life when you were influenced by peer pressure. Example: you needed to study for a test, but all your friends were going out so you went too, even though you ended up failing the test.

- 5 Ask, by a show of hands, if anyone has ever felt they had to do something because other people were pushing them.
- 6 Ask the students to share how the pressure made them feel.
- 7 Tell the students that the best way to resist harmful or unhelpful influences from others is to truly know who you are and what makes you... *you*!
- 8 Introduce the character Zilly as a girl who could fly and thought she knew who she was and what she valued until she experienced peer pressure to behave a different way.
- 9 Do a read-aloud of *Zilly: A Modern-Day Fable* by Kelly Parks Snider.
- 10 Lead a large group conversation about Zilly using the following questions:
  - What is special about Zilly that makes her unique?
  - In what ways was Zilly influenced by other flyers and the billboard?
  - Has there ever been a time when you were influenced by others? What happened?
  - Zilly declared her self-love at the end of the story by saying what? (Answer: “You cannot change me! I like being me, and I am exactly the way I am supposed to be!”) How does saying this help Zilly?
- 11 Next, take some time to have the students examine who they are. Distribute the *This Is Me on the Outside* handout to each student. Have them draw themselves.
- 12 Distribute the *This Is Me on the Inside* handout, and allow them time to fill out the prompts on the handout.
- 13 Have the students meet with a partner and share both handouts.
- 14 Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## NOTE

*Zilly: A Modern-Day Fable* by Kelly Parks Snider is about a free spirit named Zilly who loves to fly with her goat friend Mingle, until other fliers criticize Zilly’s free form and ostracize goats. Mingle remains unruffled, while Zilly faces uncomfortable feelings about herself, her identity and negative influencers in her life.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How can staying true to who you are help you resist peer pressure?
- 2 What are some examples of peer pressure that you have had in your own life?
  - How did you handle it?
  - How did it make you feel?
  - What can you do differently in the future?
- 3 When you do feel peer pressure, what is something you can do to resist it? Possible answers: remember who you are on the inside, stay true to yourself, talk to a friend or remove yourself from the situation.



## Putting into Practice

### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you saw a friend or classmate being pressured by peers. For example, on the playground, in the classroom, at a playdate or at a birthday party. How did you feel seeing this? Did you do anything to stop the pressure? What did you do? If you did intervene, how did the person react? How do you think it made them feel?



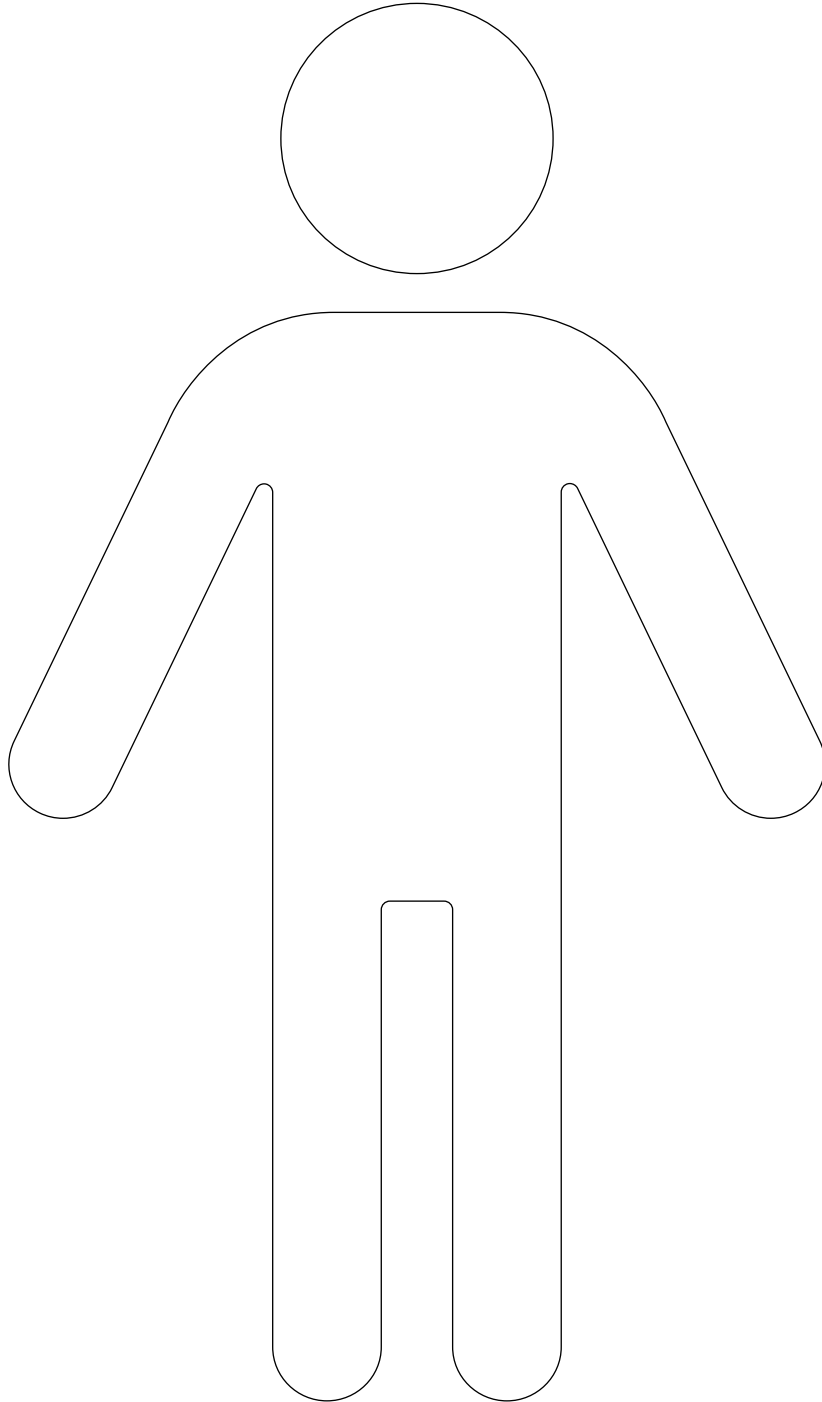
### HABITS

- ✓ Encourage students to make placards of their Zilly-inspired sayings and keep them in seat pockets, in cubbies or on desks. Include class time to shout, sing or mime these sayings. They can also be used if a conflict arises. (Possible phrases: “Fly your way,” “Mingle it!” “Learn like Zilly” or “I know me—let me be.”)
- ✓ Allow time for free-form drumming. This can be used as a brain break.



**LESSON HANDOUT**

**This Is Me on the Outside**





## LESSON HANDOUT

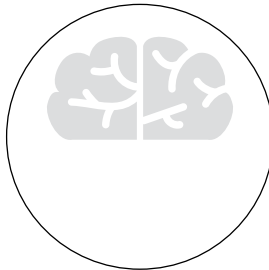
## This Is Me on the Inside

What are some of your favorite things to do?

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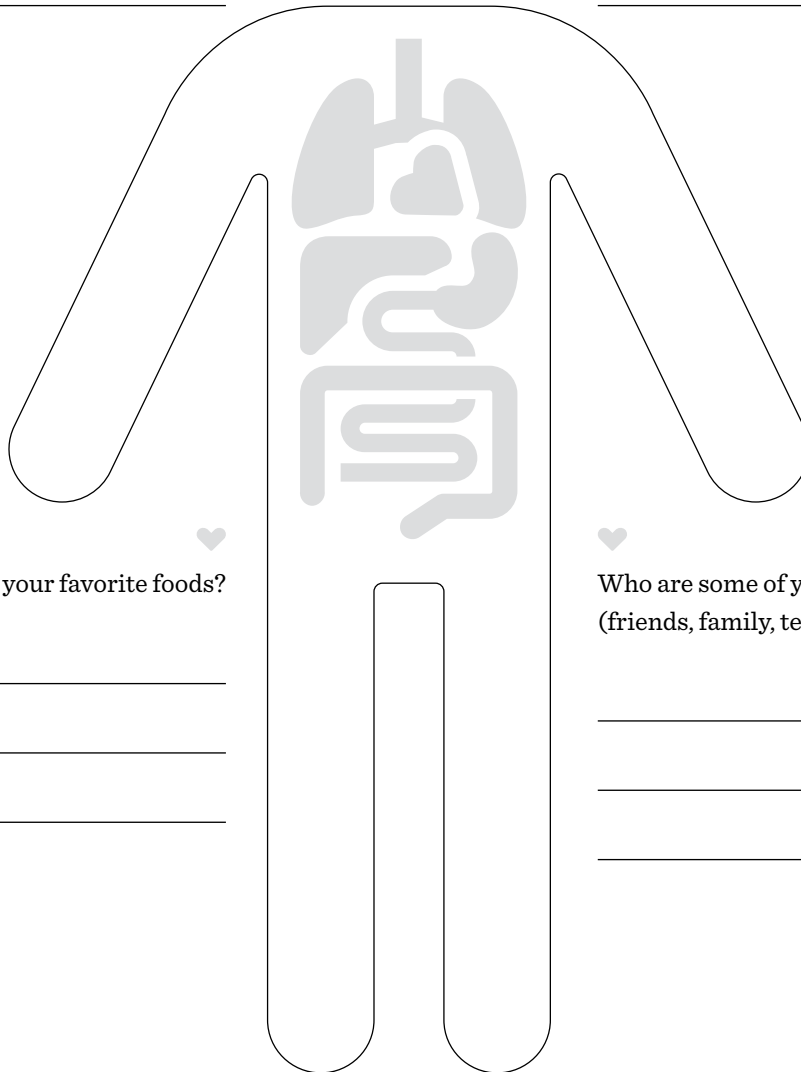


What are some things you do *not* like to do?

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What are your favorite foods?

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Who are some of your favorite people  
(friends, family, teachers, etc.)?

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What is your favorite thing about your personality?

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## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will identify peer pressure and why people are susceptible to it, and will strategize how to resist unwanted social influences.



## MATERIALS

- Signs (hung on opposite sides of the room):  
Agree  
Disagree
- AV equipment to show a video
- *Peer Talk on Peer Pressure* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Before the lesson, hang the “Agree” and “Disagree” signs on opposite sides of the room.
- 2 Explain to the students that you will read a prompt and the students should stand near the sign that represents their answer. Let the students know that they need to remain silent during the activity.
- 3 Read the following prompt aloud: “Peer pressure is *always* negative.”
- 4 Once the students have chosen a place to stand, have them look around the room to see where their peers are standing. Then lead a conversation using the following question while they remain standing in their spots.
  - Were you affected seeing where your classmates stood? How?
  - For those who agreed with the prompt, how is peer pressure always negative?
  - For those who disagreed with the prompt, how is peer pressure not always negative?
  - What is peer pressure, and how can this activity illustrate it?
- 5 Have the students return to their seats. Share the following definition of peer pressure:



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 When confronted with a situation that makes you uncomfortable, why might it be difficult to go against the group?
- 2 When do you think it is important to stand firm and express your thoughts or say no?
- 3 When might it be useful to silently disagree and not express your thoughts out loud?
- 4 Why do the Behavioral Science Guys emphasize going against the group respectfully and politely? Do you agree or disagree?
- 5 Your groups created a list of ways to say no. Share your most creative one or two ideas. (Suggested strategies: stopping and thinking, looking a person in the eye, ignoring, telling a trusted adult, making a joke, changing the subject, choosing to hang out with others who share your values.)

## Procedures (continued)

### peer pressure:

Peer pressure is feeling you should do something that you might not feel comfortable doing.

- 6 Explain that we all feel peer pressure at times in our lives. Share a time from your life when you were influenced by peer pressure. Example: You needed to study for a test, but all your friends were going out so you went too even though you ended up failing the test.
- 7 Ask the students to identify some feelings and physical responses that can occur when peer pressure is happening. Possible answers: embarrassing, stressful, nervous, short-of-breath, sweaty or having an upset stomach or headache.
- 8 Show the video “One Simple Skill to Overcome Peer Pressure” by the Behavioral Science Guys (<https://youtu.be/1-U6QTRTZ-Sc>; 4:48).

### NOTE

Joseph Grenny and David Maxfield, the Behavioral Science Guys, are *New York Times* bestselling authors and social scientists. They have published their research in *Harvard Business Review*, *Forbes* and other publications.

- 9 Pause at 2:26 in the video and ask: What do you think are the benefits to following the crowd? Continue watching the rest of the video.
- 10 Discuss the video in a large group using the following questions:
  - What did you observe in the students’ body language during the experiment in the video?
  - Why do you think students identified the matching line as “A” even though the correct answer was “C”?
  - What is “polite doubt”?
  - Share a time where you either expressed polite doubt or wanted to disagree with a group.
- 11 Distribute the *Peer Talk on Peer Pressure* handout, and break students into small discussion groups to complete the handout.
- 12 Reconvene and use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Establish a class value of committing to express polite doubt and being the “power of one” when something does not sit right in the class or school community.
- ✓ Lead students through a regular practice of saying no: say it politely and firmly, and walk away.
- ✓ Encourage students to feel comfortable spending time alone by crafting non-academic assignments that challenge the students to spend time alone. Some ideas: people watching, go for a walk outside, meditate and listen to music.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you experienced peer pressure. What were you thinking at the time? What were you feeling? How did you respond to the situation? What do you wish you would have done differently? How does having experienced peer pressure help you to support others who are experiencing it?





## LESSON HANDOUT

### Peer Talk on Peer Pressure

*Directions: Read the scenarios below, and construct a firm way to go against peer pressure. Feel free to be humorous or creative.*

- ① You are waiting with a bunch of friends to go to the movies. Some of the kids are vaping and offer the Juul to you. You do not want it. How do you respond?
- ② You are chilling out after school and playing an online game with several other players. One starts “griefing” on another player, QTpie, and types, “Come on everybody— isn’t QTpie the worst? Say so!” You like QTpie. How do you respond?
- ③ A good friend is unprepared for an individual class assignment, and many kids are sharing their notes with her. Your school has a strict cheating policy, and you think this falls under the definition of cheating. Your friend approaches you for answers a few periods before class. You do not want to share the answers. How do you respond?
- ④ Your teacher is absent, and the class plans to behave obnoxiously for the substitute by rearranging the desks and switching names with each other. You are approached to participate but you feel bad for the substitute. How do you respond?

Brainstorm and create a list of ways you can say no or express polite doubt to your peer group. Jot them down here:

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*To pacify your external conflicts, you must wage peace,  
first and foremost, within yourself.*

Vironika Tugaleva

#### Character Pillars



Respect



Responsibility



Fairness



Citizenship

# Conflict Resolution

## NOTE

This lesson was adapted from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation's Conflict Resolution Guide. For more in-depth knowledge about conflict, attend the Conflict Resolution training at the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.

## BACKGROUND

Conflict resolution skills are essential in order to grow and maintain relationships. The One-to-One Strategy was first developed by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. Very often, students come to adults for resolution before working to solve their own issues. This strategy provides a method for students to solve their own conflicts. In order to use the strategy, students need to be knowledgeable about different feelings and be able to identify those feelings within themselves. It is recommended that the Feelings lesson in this guide be taught before this lesson.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn how to identify and de-escalate conflict. They will also learn how to be independent and productively address interpersonal conflict.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *One-to-One Strategy* handout (a copy for each student)
- *One-to-One Practice Scenarios* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

- 1 Introduce the students to conflict by showing the following video: “Conflict Management Funny Animated” (<https://youtu.be/PYPJoKUysDQ>; 2:14).
- 2 Ask the students the following questions about the video:
  - What was the conflict that the bear and the moose were having? (Answer: They wanted to pass each other on the bridge.)
  - What did the bear and moose do to stay in the argument? (Answer: The bear blamed the moose by pointing at him. The moose denied being responsible for the problem and blamed the bear. The bear growled loudly, and both the bear and the moose were mean to the raccoon and rabbit when they tried to help. The bear and the moose got physical with each other.)
  - The rabbit and the raccoon had the same problem, but they solved it. What did they do to solve the conflict?
- 3 Explain to the students that conflict happens every day and is a normal thing. Sometimes good can even come from conflict. Write the definition of conflict on the board or on chart paper. Spend time making sure everyone understands the definition and answering any questions the students might have.

**conflict:**

Conflict is a misunderstanding or disagreement that causes an emotional reaction between two or more connected people who need or want something from one another.

- 4 As the teacher, model sharing by speaking about a time when you had a conflict. Did the conflict escalate? How was it resolved? What good came from the conflict?
- 5 Either using the example of the bear and the moose or asking the students to draw from their own lives, ask the students what can be done to de-escalate, or lessen, a conflict. Possible answers: stop talking and listen, empathize with the other person, make eye contact, show understanding by nodding your head, find out what the person wants or needs, verbally acknowledge the other person or ask for understanding.
- 6 Explain to the students that knowing how to solve a conflict on their own is a life skill. Distribute copies of the *One-to-One Strategy* handout.
- 7 Review the steps of the strategy and answer any questions the students may have. Spend time defining the terms “initiator” and “responder.” Explain to the students that before the steps can be used in the One-to-One Strategy, the initiator must ask the responder if they can talk about the conflict. Review the following definitions.

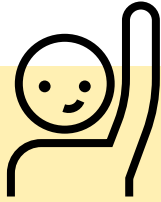
**initiator:**

The person who starts the conversation to solve the conflict.

**responder:**

the person who agrees that a conversation needs to happen to solve the conflict.





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some good things that can happen when people have a conflict and then solve it?
- 2 What are some things that people do that stop conflict from being solved? (Possible responses: interrupting, ignoring, sarcasm, insults or name calling, using “always” and “never,” judging or blaming.)
- 3 What did it feel like to be the initiator?
- 4 What did it feel like to be the responder?
- 5 How can using the One-to-One Strategy help you solve a conflict in your life?

## Procedures (continued)

- 8 Distribute the *One-to-One Practice Scenarios* handout to each student. Explain to the students that they will be partnered. As partners, they should practice the steps of the One-to-One Strategy together. For each scenario, they should alternate between playing the role of the initiator and the responder.

### NOTE

Be clear that the initiator must first ask the responder if they would like to talk about the conflict. Elicit reasons from the students regarding why it is important for the responder to agree to talk about the conflict.

- 9 Assign each student a partner.

### NOTE

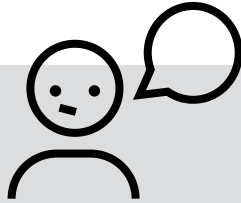
This activity may need to be modeled for younger students. One modification that can be made is to work through the scenarios together as a large group and have student volunteers role play the scenarios.

- 10 Allow enough time for the students to work through the scenarios.
- 11 When the pairs have completed the scenarios, lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



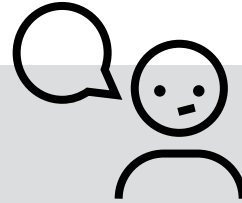
## LESSON HANDOUT

### One-to-One Strategy



#### THE INITIATOR

The person who starts the conversation to solve the conflict.



#### THE RESPONDER

The person who agrees that a conversation needs to happen to solve the conflict.

*Below are instructions on how to have a positive conversation to solve a conflict between two people.*

**→INITIATOR GOES FIRST**

**→RESPONDER LISTENS**

1 Can we talk?

2 I am upset because \_\_\_\_\_

3 I feel \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

4 I would like \_\_\_\_\_

**→RESPONDER GOES SECOND**

**→INITIATOR LISTENS**

1 I am upset because \_\_\_\_\_

2 I feel \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

4 I would like \_\_\_\_\_

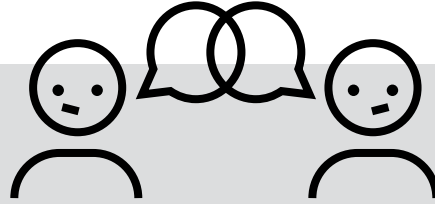


### WORK IT OUT

*How can you both get what you want?*

**LESSON HANDOUT****One-to-One Practice Scenarios**

*Directions: As partners, read the following scenarios and practice solving the conflicts using the One-to-One Strategy. Using the four steps, take turns being the initiator (person 1) and the responder (person 2).*

**1**

Someone took a pencil off your desk without asking. You have to solve this without telling a teacher. You decide to try the One-to-One Strategy.

**2**

Someone hit you with a ball on the playground at recess. There is no teacher or aide in sight, and you have to solve the problem yourself. You decide to try the One-to-One Strategy.

**3**

You see some people playing kickball after school. You go over to ask if you can play. They tell you that they already have enough players, but you see they need more. You feel angry that they are excluding you. You decide to try the One-to-One Strategy with a person you know who is playing.

**4**

Your friend keeps telling you what to do in art class. You already know what to do, and she is bothering you. Use the One-to-One Strategy to avoid getting into an argument.





## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn how to identify and de-escalate conflict. They will also learn how to independently and productively address interpersonal conflict.



## MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *One-to-One Strategy* handout (a copy for each student)
- *One-to-One Practice Scenarios* handout (a copy for each student)

# Procedures

### Suggested Middle School Opening

- 1 Introduce the students to conflict by showing the video “Shrek—That’s What Friends Are For” (<https://youtu.be/MzLEjzvvgYE>; 3:18).
- 2 Ask the students the following questions about the video:
  - What were some of the mistakes Shrek and Donkey made while arguing? (Possible responses: yelling, sarcasm, physical conflict, name-calling, walking away from the argument, blaming and “you” messages, use of “always” and “never” and avoidance)
  - What did they do to solve their argument? (Possible answers: authentic apology, acceptance of responsibility, stopping talking and listening, empathy with the other, eye contact, better tone, nodding to show understanding, finding out what the person wants or needs, verbal acknowledgment of the other person and asking for clarification.)

### Suggested High School Opening

- 3 Introduce the students to conflict by showing the video “I Have No Idea What We’re Fighting about!”—*black-ish*” (<https://youtu.be/WRxSNzpmurI>; 1:35).

### NOTE

This lesson was adapted from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation’s *Conflict Resolution Guide*. For more in-depth knowledge about conflict, attend the Conflict Resolution training at the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.

### NOTE

The *black-ish* video can be intense for some students. The middle school video may be better for some classes.

## Procedures (continued)

- 4 Ask the students the following questions about the video:
  - What were some of the mistakes Dre and Bow made while arguing? (Possible responses: they brought up old arguments, they used “you messages” or blaming messages, they did not take responsibility for their own parts in the argument, they yelled and they used “always” and “never.”)
  - What could they have done to solve their argument? (Possible responses: stop talking and listen, empathize with the other, make eye contact, have a better tone, show understanding by nodding their head, find out what the person wants or needs, verbally acknowledge the other or ask for clarification.)
- 5 Explain to the students that conflict happens every day and is a normal thing. Sometimes positive outcomes can come from conflict. Elicit some ideas as to how conflict can be positive.
- 6 Write the definition of conflict on the board or on chart paper. Spend time making sure everyone understands the definition and answering any questions the students might have.

### **conflict:**

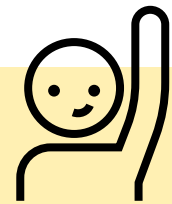
Conflict is a misunderstanding or disagreement that causes an emotional reaction between two or more connected people who need or want something from one another.

- 7 As the teacher, model sharing by speaking about a time when you had a conflict. Did the conflict escalate? How was it resolved? What good came from the conflict?
- 8 Explain to the students that knowing how to solve a conflict on their own is a life skill. Distribute copies of the *One-to-One Strategy* handout.

- 9** Review the steps of the strategy, and answer any questions the students may have. Spend time talking about timing. If a person is not ready to discuss the conflict, it must wait. This is clear in the first step the initiator takes. Timing plays a large role in resolving a conflict. Both parties need to be ready to solve the issue.
- 10** Distribute the *One-to-One Practice Scenarios* handout to each student. Explain to the students that they will be partnered. As partners, they should practice the steps of the One-to-One Strategy together.
- 11** Assign each student a partner.
- 12** Allow enough time for the students to work through the scenarios.
- 13** When the pairs have completed the scenarios, lead a group conversation using the discussion questions.

**NOTE**

For each scenario, the students should alternate between playing the role of the initiator and the responder.

**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

- 1** What did it feel like to be the initiator?
- 2** What did it feel like to be the responder?
- 3** What are some things that people do that stop conflict from being solved? (Possible responses: interrupting, ignoring, being sarcastic, using insults or calling someone names, using “always” and “never,” judging or blaming.)
- 4** How can using the One-to-One Strategy help solve a conflict in your life?
- 5** When might the One-to-One Strategy not work?





## LESSON HANDOUT

### One-to-One Strategy

*When there is an interpersonal conflict, the conflict takes place between two individuals. The person who initially looks to solve the conflict is called the initiator, and the person who is being asked to work it out is called the responder.*

#### FOR THE INITIATOR:

##### 1 ASK TO TALK

The initiator requests time to talk with the responder to ensure that both people have time to discuss the issue.

##### 2 CHOOSE ONE ISSUE

By choosing only one issue to focus on, both people can stay focused on the actual issue that caused the conflict. If too many issues are addressed at the same time, the root of the conflict can get lost. This also ensures that the initiator has thought through the problem and decided on the most important issue for them.

##### 3 STATE THE FACTS ONLY

This step is used to create agreement among the individuals. Facts are indisputable.

##### 4 STATE ASSUMPTIONS

This is the opportunity for the initiator to let the responder know their thoughts regarding the facts of the issue.

##### 5 STATE YOUR FEELINGS

The initiator tells the responder their feelings about the situation.

##### 6 REQUEST FOR CHANGE

This step requires the initiator to make a request for future interactions.

#### FOR THE RESPONDER:

##### 1 AFFIRM THE FACTS ARE TRUE

Let the initiator know if you agree with the facts of the situation.

##### 2 CORRECT ASSUMPTIONS

Let the initiator know if their assumptions were right or wrong.

##### 3 ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS/SAY SORRY WHEN AUTHENTIC

Let the initiator know that you hear their feelings about the situation. If you truly feel apologetic, let the initiator know exactly what you are sorry for. Be authentic in your apology.

##### 4 STATE YOUR FEELINGS

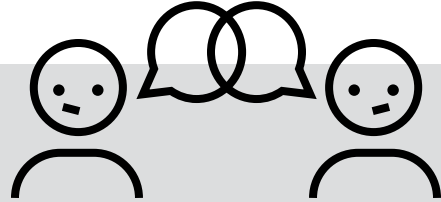
Let the initiator know how you feel about the situation.

##### 5 NEGOTIATE CHANGE

Directly address the request that the initiator made. If you can fulfill the request for the future, let the initiator know. If you cannot fulfill the request, suggest an alternate solution and look to collaborate.

**LESSON HANDOUT****One-to-One Practice Scenarios**

*Directions: As partners, read the following scenarios and practice solving the conflicts using the One-to-One Strategy. Take turns being the initiator and the responder.*

**1**

You are having a quiet weeknight at home. You notice on social media that your friends are posting pictures of themselves at Dunkin' Donuts, laughing and having fun. It makes you feel really sad that you were not invited to join them. You do not believe you are in a fight with any of them so you wonder why they did not invite you. You decide that instead of blowing it up into a big fight, you will approach your closest friend in the group using the One-to-One Strategy.

**2**

You and a friend agree to meet after school in front of the auditorium to walk home together. When the bell rings at 2:45 p.m., you go to your locker to collect your belongings. You rush to meet your friend because you do not want to keep them waiting. When you get to the auditorium, your friend is not there. You wait and wait. You repeatedly text and call your friend, but they do not respond. Finally, at 3:30 p.m., you leave feeling furious and walk home alone. Using the One-to-One Strategy, how will you address the situation?

**3**

There is a huge concert coming to your area. Your friend bought five tickets and invited you to go. It is one of your favorite bands. When you ask your parent for permission, they tell you they do not want you to go because you are too young to go unsupervised to a concert. All your other friends' parents have allowed them to go. You will be the only one not going. You and your parent get into a screaming match. The next day, you decide that if there is any hope of you going at all, you will need to be mature and talk it out with your parent. You decide to try the One-to-One Strategy.

**4**

Your social studies class has been assigned a group project on African American soldiers during the Civil War. As a group, you decide on your thesis and divide up the work equally among the four members of the group. One of the members, Carmen, is not doing her share of the work. The other members of the group are getting upset, and they have asked you to address the situation. Using the One-to-One Strategy, approach Carmen to solve the problem.

*You are never strong enough that you don't need help.*

Cesar Chavez

#### Character Pillars

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Trustworthiness

---



Caring

---



Citizenship

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# Resource Mapping

## BACKGROUND

The ability to reach out for help is key to a student getting the assistance they need in any area of their life. Many students are hesitant to ask for help because they think others will view them as weak, or they do not know where to go for the help they need. Resource mapping is the process of naming and discussing all the people students can ask for help.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will identify reasons why it is good to ask for help. They will identify two to three people they can ask for help in their community.



## MATERIALS

- Possible signs (hung around the room):  
Teachers  
Coaches  
Lunch Aides  
Counselors  
Parents  
Bus Drivers  
Others
- *My Resource Map* handout (a copy for each student)

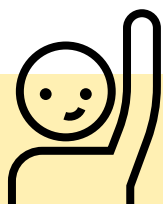
# Procedures

- 1 Start by explaining that everyone needs help—even adults. Model this by giving an example of something you can do on your own (e.g., tie shoes, write your name, pour a glass of water, etc.) and something you may need help with (e.g., fix your computer).
- 2 Find out how the students feel about asking for help. Ask:
  - Is asking for help something you feel comfortable with? Why or why not?
  - If you do ask for help, who are some of the people you ask? Why?
- 3 Say that it is very normal to need help, and we should know who we can turn to when we need help. Think aloud about who could help you with fixing your computer. Perhaps the genius at the Apple store or your friend who works in IT.
- 4 Explain that today we will talk about different people in our community and how they can help us.
- 5 Place signs around the room that represent the people in your community who can potentially help the students. Possible signs: Teachers, Coaches, Lunch Aides, Counselors, Parents, Bus Drivers or Others.

## Procedures (continued)

### NOTE

The situations listed include generic types of people, but you should elicit actual names from students of specific people in their community.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is it important to be able to ask for help?
- 2 How is making a resource map helpful?
- 3 What might keep you from asking for help?
- 4 Describe a time when you asked for help and you did not get the help you needed.
- 5 When you ask for help and someone does not give it to you, what can you do?

- 6 Ask the students to think of someone who has helped them in their life. Have them go to the sign that represents that person. They should talk with the other students by that sign about the person who helped them and how they were helped.
- 7 When the students have finished sharing their personal help stories, have them return to their seats.
- 8 Present the following situations where a student might need some help. Brainstorm as a group some potential people in the school or community who can help with this situation.

WHAT I NEED HELP WITH	WHO I CAN ASK FOR HELP
Open ketchup packet at lunch	Lunch aide or friend
How to do a math problem	Teacher or parent
Someone was teasing me	School counselor, teacher, parent

- 9 Hand out the *My Resource Map* handout.
- 10 Have students fill in the boxes with situations they have in their personal lives where they need some help. Have them work individually to think about specific people they could ask for help with their problem.
- 11 Review their maps together as a class.
- 12 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



## Putting into Practice



### HABITS

- ✓ Refer back to the class resource map weekly or biweekly, and review one or two community resources and the benefits of asking for help. Add any resources that may come up as the school year progresses. Make it a working document so students keep it in the forefront of their minds as a useful resource.
- ✓ Before class assignments, encourage students to brainstorm research ideas and resourceful individuals from whom to seek assistance for the project
- ✓ Lead students through a self-evaluation about *their* expertise as helpful resources for their friends, family, teammates or classmates.
- ✓ It's important to know *who* to ask for help and it is also important to know *how* to ask for help. As a class, brainstorm ways the students can ask for help. Create a poster for the class and refer to it consistently as people need to ask for help. It can also be a working document that can be added to as students use new good ways to ask for help.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when you needed help. What was it that you needed help with? Did you reach out for help from anyone? Why or why not? How were you helped? How did you feel asking for help? Was there a time when someone sought help from you? How were you able to help? How did you feel about being able to help someone?



**LESSON HANDOUT****My Resource Map****WHAT I NEED HELP WITH****WHO I CAN ASK TO HELP ME**



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will gain awareness of resources in their community. They will identify reasons why it is good to ask for help and will name resources they know they can go to for help.



MATERIALS

- Signs (hung around the room):  
School  
Home  
After-School Clubs/Sports  
Online  
Community/Other
- Sticky notes

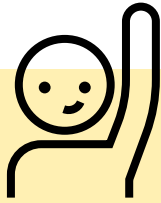
## Procedures

- 1 Ask students for a show of hands for how many people think it is a good thing to *help others*. Then ask for a show of hands for how many people think it is a good thing to *ask for help*. (Most likely there will be less hands raised for asking for help than for helping others.) Ask the students, “Why are some people reluctant to ask for help?”
- 2 Tell students that today they are going to talk about how important it is to ask for help and to map out the people who can help in their community.
- 3 Ask the students to share some reasons why asking for help is beneficial. (Possible responses: finding out you are not alone, finding experienced people who can help you find a solution or solving problems.)
- 4 Explain that it is important to know beforehand who we can reach out to for help so when the need arises, we already know our resources.
- 5 Point out that there are signs around the room indicating different places that students might request help: School, Home, After-School Clubs/Sports, Online and Community/Other.

**NOTE**

Allow the students to name actual people who they trust to help them.

They do not need to, but it can benefit the other students to see people they may not have thought of before as trustworthy.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why is it important to be able to ask for help?
- 2 What might keep you from asking for help?
- 3 Describe a time when you asked for help and you did not get the help you needed.
- 4 When you ask for help and someone does not give it to you, what can you do?
- 5 Vulnerability is having the courage to share who you are, even if other people might not accept you. When you share who you are, you take risks that create closer relationships. How is asking for help being vulnerable?

**Procedures (continued)**

- 6 Give each student a bunch of sticky notes. Have them think of a person in each place who could help them. They should write the name on a sticky note and walk around the room to place their sticky notes near the corresponding signs. Possible answers: coach, principal, assistant principal, school nurse, school counselor, SAC, school secretary, custodian, parent, doctor, someone from your house of worship and police officer.
- 7 Have some sticky notes prepared with any resources you think should be on your resource map (in case no student names them), and participate in the activity with the students.

- 8 Ask the students to stand by the sign listing the place where they feel they need help most often. Have those students share the resources listed on the sticky notes with the class.

**NOTE**

Point out that some resources may fit under two categories, and that is fine.


- 9 Explain that resource mapping is one way to list helpers in your community and their roles so that we can be aware of our resources when we need help.
- 10 Students may have listed friends on their sticky notes. If friends did not show up on their sticky notes, mention that in middle or high school, quite often a major resource is their friends. Have the students work in small groups to answer the following questions:
  - In what types of situations are friends great at being a resource?
  - What are some situations where friends are not the best resource?
- 11 Use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Refer back to the class resource map weekly or bi-weekly and review one or two community resources and the benefits of asking for help. Add any resources that may come up as the school year progresses. Make it a working document so students keep it in the forefront of their minds as a useful resource.
- ✓ Examine a current events issue (local, national or global). Invite students to develop a recommended resource map to begin to help ameliorate the problem.

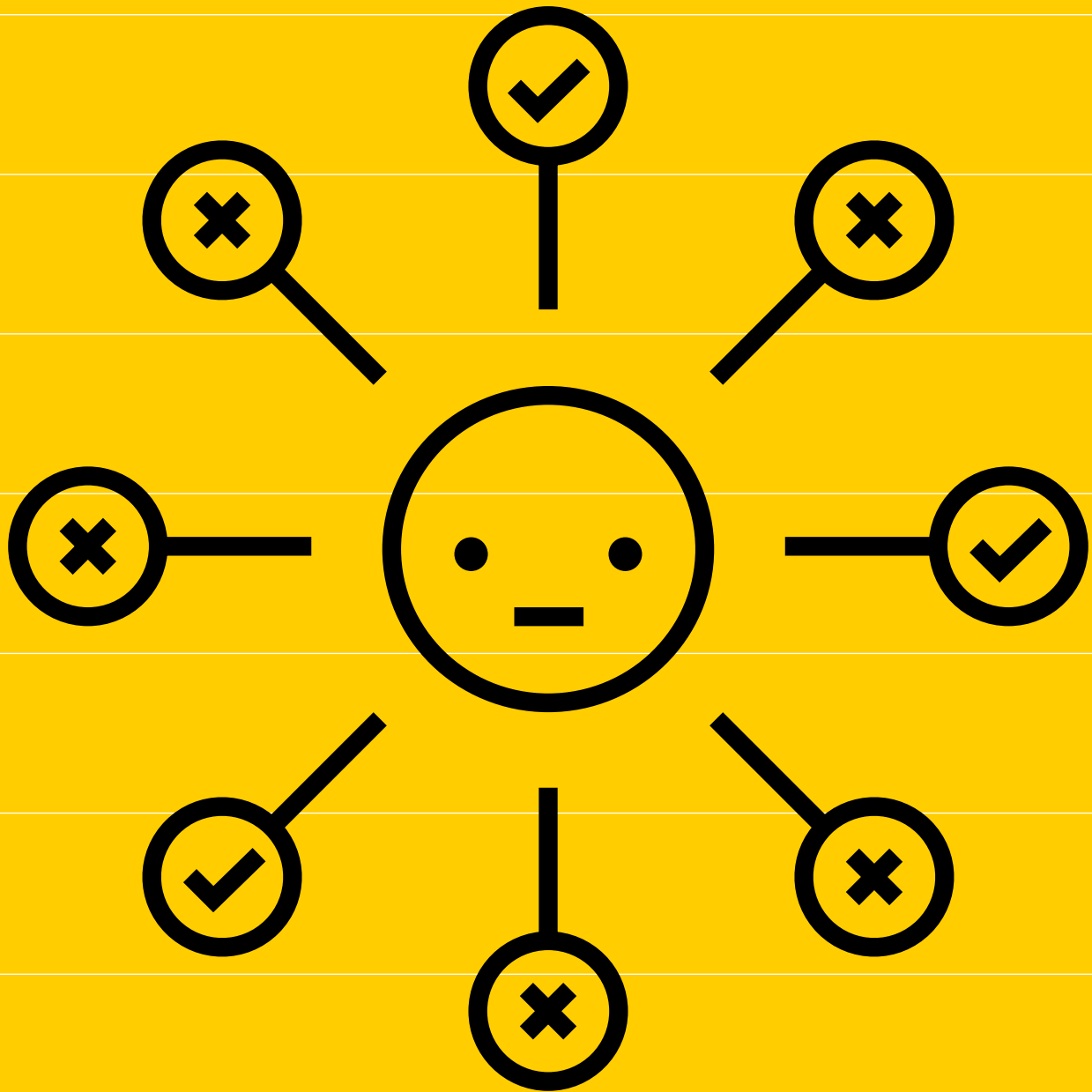
#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Think of a time when someone came to you for help. What was their need? How did you help? What did it feel like to have someone coming to you for help? What types of judgments can be made about people who ask for help? Did you feel that way about the person who asked you for help?



**R E S P O N S I B L E**



DECISION-MAKING

Keep talking about problems, and they will only increase.

Haresh Sippy

#### Character Pillars



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,<sup>56</sup> perform better in school<sup>57</sup> and are developing “soft” skills vital for future employment.<sup>58</sup> When teens lack problem-solving skills, they are at greater risk for depression and other mental health issues.<sup>59</sup>

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.

<sup>56</sup> 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>.

<sup>57</sup> 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](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global_learning/2018/06/how_to_encourage_problem_solving_and_creativity_skills.html?r=1795387251).

<sup>58</sup> 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/>.

<sup>59</sup> 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

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will identify their emotional reactions to problems and will also find strategies for calming down and for resolving their problems.



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *Problem-Solving!* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Show the video “Rollin’ France: What If Animals Were Round?” (<https://youtu.be/ba62uuv-5Dc>; 2:13). Ask students to share their thoughts on the problems that occur when all animals are round.
- 2 Explain that sometimes when a person has a problem, the problem might solve itself. But sometimes, the person needs to consciously work to solve their problem.
- 3 Introduce the different components of problem-solving: staying calm, thinking of could-dos, determining upsides and downsides and choosing a solution. Write these components on a sheet of chart paper (you will refer to them throughout the lesson).
- 4 Explain the following definitions:

### **problem:**

A difficult situation that needs to be solved

### **upside:**

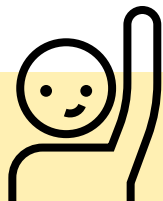
The positive outcome of a could-do

### **could-do:**

A possible solution to a problem  
(you can have many)

### **downside:**

The negative outcome of a could-do



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the steps to problem-solving? (calm down, identify the problem, consider could-dos and the upside and downside to them, pursue a solution path)
- 2 How can this strategy make us less afraid of problems?
- 3 Keeping calm is a key part of problem-solving. Why do you think this is?
- 4 We discussed how to solve problems you may have in life. Do you think this strategy could work with a challenging math number story or writing assignment? Why or why not?

## Procedures (continued)

For example:

- A **problem** might be: You have been invited to a playdate but you have a test the next day.
- A **could-do**: I go to the playdate.
- An **upside** might be: I will have a fun time playing and getting exercise.
- A **downside** might be: I will not have enough time to study for the test if I go on the playdate.
- Another **could-do**: I will not go on the playdate and will go home and study.
- An **upside** might be: I will be well prepared for the test, be able to get to bed early and be well rested.
- A **downside** might be: I will miss out on playing, exercising and being social.

- 5 Share a problem you have experienced. Highlight your problem, a could-do, an upside and a downside. Also share what you did to calm yourself before working to solve the problem, and your solution.
- 6 Show the following clip from “PBS’ Peg + Cat’s How To Solve Big Problems (Part 2)” (<https://youtu.be/9dRO3c-wy7c>). Play from 3:32 to 4:20, and use the questions below to discuss what Peg was experiencing:
  - What was Peg’s problem? (She does not want to play chess, and she does not want her friend chased.)
  - Before Peg could consider the could-do, she had to calm herself down. What did she do? (She counted to eight.)
  - Why is it important to calm down before problem-solving?
- 7 Ask the students to raise their hands if they ever experienced a problem. Ask them to share some strategies they use to calm themselves down. Write these strategies on a sheet of chart paper. Explain that before problem-solving, you must be calm, and using these strategies can help.
- 8 Distribute the *Problem Solving!* handout. Invite students to brainstorm about a problem they encountered at school, at home or in their activities. The problem might be one from the past or one they are having now. Lead them through identifying a **could-do**, an **upside** and a **downside** to help solve their problem.
- 9 Reconvene after the students have completed the handout. Use the discussion questions to lead a conversation with the class.

## Putting into Practice



- ✓ Create a class calming mantra (similar to Peg's, "I'm totally freaking out! I should count...") and use it before assessments or when there is class conflict.
- ✓ Build problem-solving or "problem-busting" into all aspects of learning. Remind students to calm down and "bust that problem" when comparing texts, solving math equations, exploring scientific principles and investigating social studies questions.
- ✓ Keep a problem-busting box in the classroom for students to submit problems troubling them or a successful strategy they used to solve a problem. Hold a weekly meeting to discuss these submissions.

### JOURNAL PROMPT



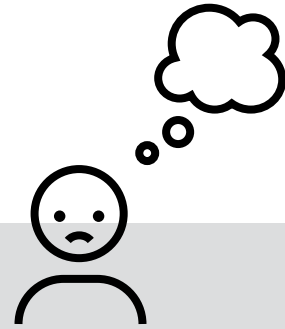
Think back to a time when you had a really big problem. You are now on the other side of the problem. You solved it! Describe the problem. What did you do to solve the problem and make yourself feel better? Can you use any of the same strategies to solve problems you are having now?





# LESSON HANDOUT

## Problem-Solving!



**DESCRIBE YOUR PROBLEM HERE?**

---



---



---

**HOW DO YOU FEEL?**

---

**1 COULD-DO...**

---



---



---

**2 COULD-DO...**

---



---



---

**UPSIDE**

**DOWNSIDE**

**UPSIDE**

**DOWNSIDE**

**PROBLEM SOLVED!** After considering the upsides and downsides of your “could-dos,” use this space to explain the best path to solve your problem.

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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.

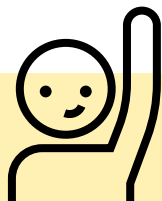


MATERIALS

- 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](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.



## 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?

## Procedures (continued)

- 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?



**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...**

**ADVANTAGES**

**DISADVANTAGES**

**COULD-DO...**

**ADVANTAGES**

**DISADVANTAGES**

**COULD-DO...**

**ADVANTAGES**

**DISADVANTAGES**

**COULD-DO...**

**ADVANTAGES**

**DISADVANTAGES**

*Everything you say and do is having an impact on others.*

Barry Manilow

#### Character Pillars

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Respect

---



Responsibility

---



Caring

---

# Intent vs. Impact

## BACKGROUND

One goal of good communication is for our intent to be in line with our impact. Sometimes we are successful in doing this, and sometimes we are not. When the intent and impact of our communication are out of sync, it can cause confusion that can lead to all kinds of problems.

Making decisions responsibly and building relationships with others requires that we think of not only the intent but also the impact of our words. It is hard to prioritize impact over intent. The truth is, impact often plays a much larger role in communication.

For more on intent versus impact, see the *Scientific American* article titled “‘But I Didn’t Mean It!’ Why It’s so Hard to Prioritize Impacts over Intent” (<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/psysociety/e2809cbut-i-didne28099t-mean-ite2809d-why-ite28099s-so-hard-to-prioritize-impacts-over-intents/>).



SCHOOL

Elementary



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the difference between intent and impact and brainstorm ways to bring them into alignment.



MATERIALS

- Balled-up sheet of paper
- Trash can
- *Positive Intent/Negative Impact* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Write the following definitions on the board, and answer any questions the students might have about the terms.

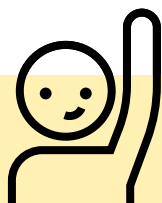
### **intent:**

Something that you plan to do on purpose

### **impact:**

Having an effect on someone or something

- 2 Take a sheet of paper and crumple it up. Tell the class that your intent is to get the paper in the trash can. (Do your best to miss.)
- 3 When the paper hits the floor, ask the students if your intent was carried out. What happened instead?
- 4 Let some students shoot, but make sure they know they get one shot and if they miss they will have to take responsibility for missing. They should pick up the paper and put it in the trash can. Remind the students that it is okay to miss and it is important to take responsibility for it!



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you feel when you do or say something that was taken the wrong way?
- 2 How do you feel when you have been hurt and you find out the person didn't mean it that way?
- 3 Can you always control your impact on another person? Why or why not?
- 4 Can we always control what happens after we say or do something?
- 5 What can you do before speaking or doing something to make sure you have the impact you want? (Possible responses: pause before speaking or acting, think about the possible impact.)

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Explain that in life, and as with people, there is often a difference between what you mean to do or say and what actually is heard or happens. Even though our intent was to get the paper in the trash can, we missed, and now we have to go clean up our mess.
- 6 For the sake of modeling, pretend the following example happened to you. You were excited about learning and often called out answers during class. You meant to share your knowledge with the class but what actually happened is that other students did not have a chance to think about the answers and learn on their own. You were not a bad person for being excited about learning, yet the impact was that other students got frustrated.
- 7 There are two parts to intent versus impact. Explain both parts to the students, and have them answer the questions based on the previous example.
  - ➔ Sometimes we do or say something that we think is fine, yet someone else feels bad because of it. What can we do when this happens? (Possible responses: listen to people's feelings about the impact, apologize for hurting feelings or stop yourself mid-sentence.)
  - ➔ We can also prevent negative impacts before we act. What are some things we can do? (Possible responses: take a few breaths before answering to allow time for others, count to 10 before raising your hand or raise your hand only three times a day by choosing the answers that are the most important to you.)
- 8 Divide the students into small groups, and distribute the *Positive Intent/Negative Impact* handout. Review the instructions, and have them complete the handout.
- 9 Once all groups have finished, review their responses and lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice



- ✓ When conflicts occur in the classroom, encourage the students in conflict to clearly share their intent and impacts with one another. Direct students to practice active listening skills and have good will towards one another.
- ✓ When interpreting a literary text, prompt students to consider characters' intent and impact.

### JOURNAL PROMPT



We all sometimes say or do things that hurt others unintentionally. Describe a time when this happened to you. How did it feel to be misunderstood? What (if anything) did you do to help the other person feel better? What changes did you make in your words or behaviors after that?



Directions: Read the scenario as a group. Fill in the columns.



ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

LESSON  
HANDOUT

Positive Intent/  
Negative Impact

SCENARIO	What is the intent?	What can you do to take responsibility for the negative impact after it happens?	What can you do to prevent the negative impact in the first place?
1 You are excited about a playdate with your friend. You start talking about it in front of some other friends who were not invited. They get quiet and look down.			
2 You are playing foursquare at recess and hit someone in the face with a ball. You win and are excited. The person you hit has a big red mark on their cheek.			
3 Your friend talks about being embarrassed when he tripped and fell in the hallway. You laugh but notice he is not laughing with you.			
4 You are working on a project with a group. You know the topic very well and you are telling everyone what to do. You notice people looking at each other and rolling their eyes.			



SCHOOL

Middle/High



OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the difference between intent and impact and brainstorm ways to bring them into alignment.



MATERIALS

- *Positive Intent/Negative Impact* handout (a copy for each student)

## Procedures

- 1 Write the following definitions on the board, and answer any questions the students might have about the terms.

### **intent:**

Something that you plan to do on purpose

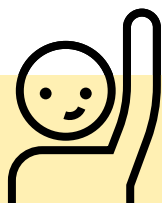
### **impact:**

Having an effect on someone or something

- 2 Ask students to think of a time when someone stepped on their physical toes. Was it at home? On public transportation? Ask the students, “What was the person doing when they stepped on your toes?” Take a few responses.
- 3 Ask the students, “Was it their intent to step on your toes?”
- 4 Explain that even if it was not their *intent* to step on your toes, the *impact* was that it still hurt. One way to understand the importance of intent versus impact is that someone may not have meant to hurt you but still did. Sometimes the impact is unintended, accidental or even the opposite of what you would have hoped. There is often a difference between what you meant and what was experienced by the other person.

### **NOTE**

Model intent versus impact by  
sharing a time when your intent did  
not match the impact. Example:  
You told a joke that was meant to  
be funny, but you ended up hurting  
someone’s feelings.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some factors that contribute to how others interpret your actions?
- 2 What could happen to someone else's feelings when the impact is not our intent?
- 3 How do you feel when you do or say something that was taken the wrong way?
- 4 How do you feel when you have been hurt and you find out the person did not mean it that way?
- 5 What can you do to make sure your impact matches your intent?

## Procedures (continued)

- 5 Two things can happen with intent and impact. Explain both parts to the students, and have them answer the questions based on the example of stepping on someone's toes.
  - We will realize we hurt someone *after* we act. We will say or do something that we do not think is harmful, but the person on the receiving end feels bad. What can we do when this happens? (Possible responses: listen to people's feelings about the impact, apologize for hurting them, stop yourself from getting defensive.)
  - *Before* we act, there are things we can do to prevent a negative impact. What are some things we can do? (Possible responses: be aware of your surroundings to avoid hurting anyone, do not rush or allow other people to go first when there is a crowd.)
- 6 Divide the students into small groups, and distribute the *Positive Intent/Negative Impact* handout. Review the instructions, and have them complete the handout.
- 7 Once all groups have finished, review their responses, and lead a large group conversation using the discussion questions.



## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Start a daily intention journal. Have students spend two minutes each morning setting an intention for the day. Close each day with a two-minute written reflection evaluating the impact of their intent.
- ✓ When you find a student having a negative impact on their classmate, find out what their intent was and remind them of intent versus impact.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



We all sometimes say or do things that hurt others unintentionally. Describe a time when this happened to you. How did it feel to be misunderstood? What (if anything) did you do to help the other person feel better? What changes did you make in your words or behaviors after that?





Positive Intent/  
Negative Impact

Directions: Read the scenario as a group. Fill in the columns.

SCENARIO	What is the intent?	What is the impact?	What can you do to take responsibility for the negative impact after it happens?	What can you do to prevent the negative impact in the first place?
----------	---------------------	---------------------	--	--

1 You are excited to hang out with a new friend. You start talking about it in front of some other friends who were not invited. They get quiet and look down.

2 You are playing volleyball in gym class, and the winning spike hits someone in the face. Your team wins, and you are excited. The person you hit has a big red mark on their cheek.

3 Your friend talks about being embarrassed when he tripped and fell in the hallway. You laugh but notice he is not laughing with you.

4 You are working on a project with a group. You know the topic very well, and you are telling everyone what to do. You notice people looking at each other and rolling their eyes.

5 Every day at lunch you are starving. You run to the lunchroom as soon as the bell rings and head straight for the pizza. You grab two slices and go to pay, when you realize there is a long line that you just cut.

## NOTE

This lesson may be geared more toward upper elementary students, depending on their social media usage.

*Tweet others the way you want to want to be tweeted.*

Germany Kent

### Character Pillars



Trustworthiness



Respect



Responsibility



Fairness



Caring



Citizenship

# Social Media Literacy

## BACKGROUND

Social media first emerged in 1979. It became popular in mainstream American culture in 2003 with the creation of MySpace. Since then, sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others have made social media a prominent thread in our cultural fabric. Along with the advantages of social media come disadvantages. It can be used as a weapon to embolden hatred and to threaten and intimidate, and it can lower people's self-esteem. On the positive side, social media helps people stay in touch with friends and family and offers a platform for people to fight for causes they believe in, raise awareness and support people in need. However social media is used, understanding how to navigate it successfully can benefit everyone.



## SCHOOL

Elementary



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of social media literacy and how to be responsible online.



## MATERIALS

- *The Technology Tail* by Julia Cook (book)

# Procedures

- 1 Write the following phrase on the board: “@FortniteGame.” Ask the students where this comes from. (Answer: Twitter.)
- 2 Ask the students for other examples of social media. Some responses might be Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, gaming conversations, etc.
- 3 Provide the following definition of social media:

### social media:

Social media are websites, apps and games where people communicate and share information online.

## NOTE

*The Technology Tail* by Julia Cook is the story of a girl learning that what she posts online has consequences down the line.

- 4 Read *The Technology Tail* by Julia Cook. Tell the students you will introduce the THINK model from the story and that you will use this model for the rest of the lesson.

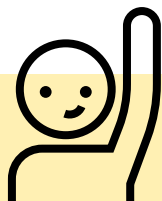
- 5 Have a brief conversation about the book using the questions below. Highlight the reasons why it is important to use social media responsibly.
- What does THINK stand for?
  - What is “keyboard courage,” and how is it used?
  - What are some things you should not do online? Possible answers: post pictures when you did not invite everyone to your party, share test answers, share your address, share your private passwords.
  - What are some benefits of using social media responsibly?
  - What can happen if social media is used irresponsibly?
- 6 Explain that the answers to the previous questions are considered social media literacy. Write the following definition on the board or on chart paper:

### **social media literacy:**

Social media literacy is critically thinking about communicating appropriately and responsibly online.

- 7 Explain to the students that being responsible online means using the THINK model and asking the corresponding simple questions. Write these questions on the board as a reminder for the rest of the lesson.
- T—Is it true?  
H—Is it helpful?  
I—Is it inspiring?  
N—Is it necessary?  
K—Is it kind?
- 8 Share a time when you experienced something online that was not true, helpful, inspiring, necessary and kind. Example: Two of your friends had an argument online and one friend began calling the other names. You knew it was not true, helpful and kind, so you called your friends on the phone and asked them to stop.





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 When social media is not true, helpful, inspiring, necessary or kind, who gets hurt? Who benefits?
- 2 What can you do to be appropriate and responsible online?
- 3 What is cyberbullying? (Cyberbullying is when people use phones, computers or tablets to bully someone.)
- 4 How can asking if something is true, helpful, inspiring, necessary or kind help prevent cyberbullying?
- 5 What can you do if you see someone using social media irresponsibly? Possible answers: report inappropriate individuals to the webmaster, take a screenshot and share with an adult or stand up for others.

## Procedures (continued)

- 9 Tell the students you are going to read actual social media quotes aloud. After each example, if the students think the quote is true, helpful, inspiring, necessary and kind, they should stand up. If they do not think the quote is all of these things, they should remain seated. After each quote, ask students why they chose to stand or sit.

### Social Media Quotes

- “Don’t say anything online that you wouldn’t want plastered on a billboard with your face on it.” —Erin Bury
- “I am proud of these strong women and wish them the best.” —Selena Gomez
- “Social media is where losers go to feel important.” —Charles Barkley
- “I’m teaching my daughter that the sun goes down each night because it’s mad at her.” —Ryan Reynolds
- “Be sweet when you tweet.” —Twitter
- “She looks ridiculous.” —Piers Morgan
- “There are other ways to go about making yourself relevant than to criticize young, beautiful, successful women for everything they do.” —Ariana Grande
- “Love yourself.” —BTS
- “Three things me thankful for: cookies, cookies and more cookies. Me monster of simple tastes.” —Cookie Monster

### NOTE

The quotes may be ambiguous. They are up for interpretation and can be used as a jumping-off point for a conversation about how not everything that is posted online is true.

- 10 Have a large group conversation using the discussion questions.

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Create a class pledge about digital literacy at the beginning of the school year. You may want to include ideas such as asking other people before posting about them, not sharing personal information online, creating strong passwords and using only safe sites. Include what to do when students encounter unacceptable use in social media or gaming: tell a trusted adult, print out the offending material and remind the students they are never alone. Refer to the pledge periodically throughout the year as a reminder and also prior to any online work.
- ✓ Introduce the social media literacy pledge to parents at back-to-school night. Invite them to sign the pledge and adhere to it. Highlight the importance of social media literacy by including reminders in all correspondence with parents.
- ✓ Have the students develop a social media literacy presentation for parents that includes the pledge, their personal experiences working safely online and any other strategies for healthy digital citizenship.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Describe a time when you (or someone you know) had a bad experience online. How did it make you feel? What did you do about it? Did you change how you behave online?





## SCHOOL

Middle/High



## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn the definition of social media literacy and will practice recognizing the advantages and disadvantages of different aspects of social media.



## MATERIALS

- Signs posted around the room with the following statements:
  - Negative comments by viewers
  - Online rumors
  - Getting news from social media
  - Making online friends who are not known in person
  - Sharing personal information online
  - Having any information or answers at your fingertips
  - The fast-paced environment of social media
  - The anonymity of social media

# Procedures

### NOTE

If there is an aspect that does not have a group, that is okay. Each aspect will be discussed as a large group later in the activity.

- 1 Share with the students that you use social media. Tell them what you use social media for. Examples: to get news, to stay in touch with friends, to research different topics or to network.
- 2 Ask the students how they use social media.
- 3 Provide the following definition of social media:

### **social media:**

Social media are websites, apps and games where people communicate and share information online.

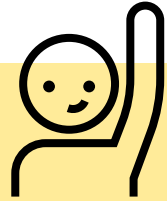
- 4 Define the term “social media literacy.” Write the following definition on the board or on chart paper:

### **social media literacy:**

Social media literacy is critically thinking about communicating appropriately and responsibly online.



- 5 Explain to the students that there are signs around the room with different aspects of social media. Ask the students to choose one aspect that speaks to them. This might be something they have experienced, been impacted by or is important to their lives.
- 6 Once each student has chosen an aspect, have students work in groups. Each group will use the five W questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why?) to create pro and con lists for that aspect. Explain that each group will be presenting and discussing their lists with the rest of the class.
- 7 Allow the students time to create their pro and con lists. Once all the groups have finished creating their lists, have each group present its findings. Take time after each small group presents to delve into their examples. Use the examples on the following page to add to the students' lists.
- 8 After each aspect is discussed, use the discussion questions to lead a large group conversation.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does thinking about the pros and cons of how we use social media help you make better choices online?
- 2 What are the negative effects of not recognizing both the pros and cons of social media?
- 3 Resilience is the ability to bounce back from a difficult situation without suffering damage. What are some ways you can be resilient, or help others be resilient, on social media?
- 4 What are some signs that someone may need help with their social media literacy skills? How can you help them?

ASPECT	PROS	CONS
Negative comments by viewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online product reviews inform consumers</li> <li>• Validates feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hurts self-esteem of original poster</li> <li>• Creates false impression that many people agree (it might be only one or two people)</li> </ul>
Online rumors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches you to question legitimacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreads inaccurate information</li> <li>• Damages reputation</li> </ul>
Getting news from social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides information on many topics</li> <li>• Offers most current information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is not always accurate</li> <li>• Opinions are often expressed as facts</li> </ul>
Making online friends that are not known in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a safe atmosphere for someone who struggles with making friends</li> <li>• Allows for finding people who have things in common</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No face-to-face human interaction</li> <li>• Online friends may not always be who they say they are</li> </ul>
Sharing personal information online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for practicing vulnerability</li> <li>• Permits someone to make a purchase or sign up for something</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misuse of your personal thoughts and feelings</li> <li>• Information can be hacked</li> </ul>
Having any information or answers at your fingertips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No need to ask others for information</li> <li>• Helps self-esteem to know things and be self-sufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is not always accurate</li> <li>• Mistake data for real knowledge</li> </ul>
The fast-paced environment of social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have current information</li> <li>• Negative comments cycle more quickly and are forgotten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information becomes outdated quickly</li> <li>• Can easily miss something if not consistently monitoring</li> </ul>
The anonymity of social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice being someone they want to be in the real world; being true to self</li> <li>• Safely exploring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ownership of words</li> <li>• Predators use anonymity to find victims</li> </ul>

## Putting into Practice

### HABITS

- ✓ Repeatedly emphasize the importance of digital footprints. Spend time each month allowing students to monitor their digital trail. Have the students google themselves and note any differences between their online and real-life selves.
- ✓ Discuss ways to keep the footprint within the student's control, such as updating privacy settings and changing passwords. Reinforce that any digital activity is public and exists forever. Remind students that if they encounter something troubling, they should take a screenshot and share the information and their feelings with a trusted adult.

#### JOURNAL PROMPT



Your digital footprint includes everything you have ever done online, such as research, shopping, texting, comments while playing games and social media posts. Your digital footprint comes from your activity on computers, cell phones and tablets. How can you keep your digital footprint within your control? Discuss a time when your digital choices impacted your life? What happened? How did you feel about it? Did the actions of others play a part in the experience?



## THE FIVE COMPETENCIES OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING MATRIX

### New Jersey Social and Emotional Learning Competencies and Sub-Competencies

### New Jersey State Bar Foundation Social Emotional Character Development Lesson

#### SELF-AWARENESS

Recognize one's feelings and thoughts

Feelings, Self-Confidence, Happiness

Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior

Self-Confidence, Happiness

Recognize one's personal traits, strengths and limitations

Character Strengths, Growth Mindset

Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges

Self-Confidence, Growth Mindset

#### SELF-MANAGEMENT

Understand and practice strategies for managing one's own emotions, thoughts and behaviors

Emotional Regulation, Impulse Control, Optimism

Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals

Impulse Control, Optimism, Goal Setting

Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals

Resilience, Emotional Regulation, Goal Setting

#### SOCIAL AWARENESS

Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others

Empathy, Respect for Others, Appreciating Diversity

Demonstrate an awareness of the differences among individuals, groups and others' cultural backgrounds

Respect for Others, Appreciating Diversity

Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

Respect for Others

Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings

Social Cue Awareness

#### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Establish and maintain healthy relationships

Vulnerability, Active Listening, Communication Styles, Conflict Resolution

Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others

Active Listening, Communication Styles

Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure

Resisting Peer Pressure

Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways

Conflict Resolution

Identify who, when, where or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

Resource Mapping

#### RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving and critical-thinking skills

Problem-Solving

Identify the consequences associated with one's actions in order to make constructive choices

Intent vs. Impact

Evaluate personal, ethical, safety and civic impact of decisions

Social Media Literacy

## Contributor Bios



Elissa Zylbershlag has been the director of conflict resolution and anti-bias initiatives at the New Jersey State Bar Foundation since 2016. In this role, she develops and writes curricula and constructs and delivers trainings for educators in New Jersey. Her work centers on the concept that creating a positive school climate through social emotional learning benefits both students and adults working in the school environment. She has also been a diversity educator with the Anti-Defamation League since 2005.



Erin Lee is an educator, writer and facilitator with a passion for designing creative approaches to teaching diversity awareness. She brings over 15 years of experience in diversity and inclusion, women's leadership, project management, and training and facilitation in the corporate, non-profit and education sectors.



Maryann Mulé has been an educator since 2008. She studied counseling at The College of New Jersey and currently works as a school counselor in the Lyndhurst School District. She works to support children and families each day and has no doubt that social and emotional learning is at the core of all educational success.



Debra Plafker is a seasoned educator and founder of Oblong Road Learning, an educational consultancy. She has authored original curriculum for technology platforms, classrooms and museums to refresh teaching of digital citizenship, social emotional learning, social justice, humanities and media studies. A veteran social studies teacher, Debra has been recognized for excellence in teaching at Stuyvesant High School, where she created American studies and women's studies courses. She is known for being an observer, connector and storyteller.



Melle Powers is an educator and artist based in New York City. As a teaching artist, she works with students from pre-K to college, utilizing theater as a tool for developing social emotional growth and communication skills. She is also a diversity, equity and inclusion facilitator, and a CDP candidate.



Melissa Shaw is a writer, theater artist and educator who offers a unique consultancy based in the arts, social justice, diversity and inclusion and social emotional learning. She has facilitated workshops for high school students, security guards, chaplains, non-profit managers, video game designers, Buddhist monks, school principals, older adults, NGO leaders and the NYPD. Melissa also facilitates for a variety of the Anti-Defamation League's programs, including the A World of Difference Institute, Words to Action, Echoes and Reflections and Respect for All initiatives. Last summer, she was on faculty at Drew University's Institute on Religion and Conflict Transformation, where she helped foster dialogue among religious and lay leaders from Israel, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Indonesia. Melissa holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College.



Mary Biagianti is a New Jersey educator with over 20 years of experience. She has spent most of that time in elementary special education, but she has also worked in general education and taught children and adult English learners. She is certified as a special educator, an elementary teacher and a teacher of English as a Second Language. Mary has a BA in Spanish and an MA in educational administration.

