

High School

School Curriculum

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & ETHICAL LEARNING

Educating the Heart and Mind

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Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics



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UNIVERSITY

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A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

Welcome to the High School SEE Learning curriculum. This curriculum is designed to be used with the SEE Learning® (Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning) program, which was developed by the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

Apart from developmental considerations, the high school curriculum has many similarities to the middle school curriculum, and follows the same scope and sequence. This is because each version of the curriculum is designed to be the first engagement that students will have with SEE Learning. This means students need not progress through the elementary or middle school curriculum to begin this one. If you have students who have already completed the elementary or the middle school curriculum, you may want to adapt the learning experiences from this curriculum so as to build on prior knowledge and avoid repetition of scenarios. One way to accomplish this is by using either the advisory adaptations or curriculum integration model.

This print curriculum represents the standalone version of the high school program. It is considered standalone because a designated time and space need to be identified to guide students through the learning experiences. Another option for implementing SEE Learning at high school level is through the advisory adaptation. The advisory adaptation consists of modified learning experiences that can be done in a shorter amount of time (around 25 minutes). Another approach is the curriculum integration model. This model consists of an overview of learning experiences that introduce or reintroduce SEE Learning competencies (self-compassion, appreciating interdependence, recognizing common humanity, etc), which will then be integrated into the main curriculum that includes the content, instructional practices, and assessment. Examples include doing a grounding practice before a quiz, reflecting on a self-compassion prompt before reviewing an exam result, exploring ethical discernment to understand characters in a piece of literature, or finding interdependence in biology or chemistry. Both the advisory and curriculum integration models are offered digitally.

Before implementing the SEE Learning high school curriculum (standalone, advisory, and curriculum integration), it is highly recommended that schools and educators first register with Emory University or one of its affiliates, and participate in the online “SEE 101: Orientation” course or the in-person version. Also, as you work your way through this curriculum, you are encouraged to participate in the worldwide SEE Learning community to share your experiences, learn from others, and engage in the ongoing professional development opportunities designed to help you and your students.

In addition, educators are encouraged to read *SEE Learning Companion*, which explains the overarching objectives, rationale, and framework of the program, and particularly the chapter on implementation, which has useful practical information on how best to use this curriculum. The curriculum is based directly on the SEE Learning framework found in that volume, which was largely inspired by the work of the Dalai Lama, as well as other thought leaders and education specialists. It provides a comprehensive approach for complementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) with the cultivation of basic human values, systems thinking, attention and resilience skills, and other important educational practices.

Thousands of educators have participated in the SEE Learning program since 2016. They have attended foundational workshops, engaged their classes in SEE Learning lessons, and contributed feedback and suggestions on the curriculum. Numerous educators and curriculum writers have contributed to this version and earlier versions of the curriculum in invaluable ways. Scores of educators have provided important feedback on individual learning experiences. As with all aspects of the SEE Learning program, the process was overseen by Dr. Lobsang Tenzin Negi, Director of Emory University's Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics.

Scope and Sequence

The SEE Learning curriculum consists of seven chapters (or units) and a SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. Each chapter begins with an introduction that outlines the major content of the chapter, followed by four to nine learning experiences (or lessons). Each learning experience is designed to take around 45 minutes. However, high school learning experiences have been modified to fit within a 25-minute advisory class. The learning experiences can always be expanded on a given day, or spread out over one or more days, for deeper and more graduated learning. Curriculum integration can be utilized to deeply and meaningfully embed SEE Learning competencies into what and how learning occurs. Most learning experiences can be divided into two sections when time does not allow for an entire learning experience to be completed in one session.

Each learning experience has up to four parts. These are:

1. Check-In
2. Presentation / Discussion
3. Insight Activity
4. Reflective Practice

The four parts of the SEE Learning experience correspond to SEE Learning's pedagogical model of deepening one's knowledge from received knowledge to critical insight to embodied understanding. In general, the Check-in provides the opportunity to ground oneself, in preparation for focused learning; the Presentation/Discussion conveys information to develop received knowledge; the Insight Activity is aimed at stimulating critical thoughts and insights; the Reflective Practice allows for deeper personal reflection that can lead to an embodied understanding. The Reflective Practice also serves to guide learners in making thoughtful connections that anchor the learning. These are explained in greater detail in the introduction to Chapter 1 of the curriculum.

Care has been taken in designing the sequence of the chapters and learning experiences so that they gradually build on and reinforce one another, so we recommend that you do them in the order presented. Research has shown that educational programs like SEE Learning work best when they are implemented in a way that promotes student centered learning and engagement. Students centered learning consists of the following:

- aligned and related activities that support skill development
- engaging learning experiences promote mastery of skills and outlooks
- intentional skill development that promote both personal and social competencies
- targeted skills that promote social and emotional competence

On a conceptual basis, you can introduce the competencies within the SEE Learning framework. However, when implementing the standalone curriculum it is encouraged to facilitate individual chapters or learning experiences in the sequence presented in the curriculum to avoid confusion among your students. For example, many ideas and practices introduced early in the curriculum (such as interdependence or using resilience skills to calm the nervous system) are then built upon later in the curriculum (such as when recalling interdependence to understand systems, or thinking back on what was learned about the nervous system to understand emotions). Since SEE Learning is a resilience and trauma-informed program, and resilience skills are taught in Chapter 2, skipping this chapter would result in a program that is no longer informed by best practices in this area. Providing your students with this journey of experiences one stepping stone at a time will help ensure they have the foundational knowledge and skills to move with confidence through each subsequent section, leading to a sense of agency and ownership of the core ideas.

Chapter 1: Creating a Compassionate Classroom

Chapter 1, "Creating a Compassionate Classroom," introduces the foundational concepts of kindness and compassion. Although there may be subtle differences between these terms, for the purpose of SEE Learning, the important thing is to introduce these concepts and explore them with your students so that they eventually develop their own rich understanding of the concepts and what they look like in practice. Subsequent chapters of SEE Learning then build upon this foundation by exploring self-compassion in the personal domain with regard to the body, the mind, and emotions (Chapters 2 to 4); compassion for self and others (Chapters 5 and 6); and compassion and ethics in a systemic context (Chapter 7). The first chapter introduces the "what" of SEE Learning and the remaining chapters fill out the "how."

Chapter 2: Building Resilience

Chapter 2 explores the important role that our bodies, and in particular our nervous systems, play in our happiness and well-being. In modern life, our bodies sometimes react to danger when there is no real threat to our survival, or hold on to a sense of danger after a threat has passed. This can lead to a dysregulation of the nervous system, in turn damaging students' ability to concentrate and learn, and can even compromise their physical health. Fortunately, students can learn to calm their bodies and minds and regulate their nervous systems. This chapter introduces students to resilience skills to enhance this type of self-care.

Many of these skills were developed through trauma and resilience work and they are based on a significant body of clinical and scientific research. It is possible that while exploring sensations of the body with your students, some of them will have difficult experiences that you may not be able to deal with sufficiently on your own, especially if they have suffered or are suffering from trauma. "Help Now! Strategies" can be suggested to the student in the immediate aftermath of an unexpected reaction. If you have counselors or school psychologists, or a wise administrator or colleague, we encourage you to seek assistance and further counsel as necessary. However, the approach taken in SEE Learning is a resilience-based approach that focuses on the strengths of individual students, not on treating trauma. These are general wellness skills that can be beneficial to anyone, regardless of their level of experience of trauma. Students will be well positioned to explore the next elements of SEE Learning, cultivating attention and developing emotional awareness, when they have more ability to regulate their nervous systems.

Chapter 3: Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness

In addition to “body literacy” and awareness of the nervous system, self-compassion and compassion for others are supported by “emotional literacy” and an understanding of how our minds work. For this, we need to be able to observe our minds and our experiences carefully and with close attention. These are explored in Chapter 3, “Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness.”

Attention training has numerous other benefits for students. It facilitates concentration, learning, and the retention of information. It allows one to better control one’s impulses. It calms the body and mind in ways that promote physical and psychological health. And while often told to “Pay attention!”, students have rarely been taught the methods by which they can train and cultivate stronger attention skills. In SEE Learning, attention is not cultivated through force of will, but by repeatedly and respectfully cultivating opportunities for practice, just like any other skill.

Students generally do not have trouble paying close attention to things they find interesting. The problem is paying attention when things are less stimulating or when there are distractions. Chapter 3 takes a multi-pronged approach to attention training. First, it introduces the idea of attention training and its potential benefits. Second, it shows students that when we pay attention to things, we may find them more interesting than we initially thought. Third, it introduces attention exercises that are engaging and accessible. Lastly, it introduces attention training with objects of attention that are more neutral and less stimulating, like the simple act of walking or paying attention to one’s breath. Throughout, students are invited to notice what happens to their minds and bodies when they are able to pay attention with calmness, stability, and clarity.

Chapter 4: Navigating Emotions

Adolescents are at a highly suitable developmental stage to engage in a deep exploration of emotions. This chapter explores emotions both directly and through mental models, so that students can develop what can be called a “map of the mind,” meaning an understanding of different mental states, such as emotions, and their characteristics. This map of the mind is a kind of emotional literacy, contributing to emotional intelligence and helping students to better navigate their own emotional lives. Students explore emotion timelines: the sequence of the processes of emotion generation, emotion regulation, and behavior. They also explore emotion families and how to develop strategies for dealing with “risky emotions”: those which can lead to problems for oneself and others, if left unchecked. Through this, students can become better equipped to exercise restraint from behaviors that harm themselves and others, a key aspect of ethical intelligence. This can further lead to appreciating the value of cultivating good “emotional hygiene,” which does not mean suppressing emotions, but rather dealing with them in a healthy way.

Chapter 5: Learning About and From One Another

Changes in brain development mean that students in adolescence become increasingly oriented towards their peers, and gain much more developed capacities for perspective-taking and empathy. Far more than at any previous time in life, their identity comes to be formed relationally with peers, and not just with family members. Students at this age are ready to be taught specific skills and concepts to help them understand and navigate this tricky period of development. Adolescence is a perfect time for introducing the topics of empathy and perspective-taking, and the skill of mindful listening. Moreover, since adolescence is also a time of considerable stress for many students, exploring the ways in which they are like one another, and understanding their differences alongside shared commonalities, can help them feel less alone in their struggles. These are the topics of Chapter 5, which focuses on interpersonal awareness—becoming increasingly aware of the other people with whom one interacts.

Chapter 6: Compassion for Self and Others

Teenage students are undergoing rapid and at times seemingly uneven development. This makes for a time of great opportunity, and also potentially great stress. While 95% of brain structure has been developed within the first six or so years of life, the stage of adolescence sees further growth and reorganization of the prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain is associated with reasoning, impulse control, and decision-making. While this development allows for greater perspective taking and consideration of others, it is also associated with greater emotional reactivity and risk taking. As students' social identities mature, their relationship circle expands to include their peers as well. With this can come a fear of social rejection and social isolation, and a heightened susceptibility to peer influence and social comparisons. As a result, a high number of students at this age struggle with anxiety about academics, body image, and other pressures. Other issues such as social anxiety, self-esteem and self-worth can become very impactful for teenagers.

Adolescence is also a particularly important time for identity formation. A central part of identity formation is how we relate to ourselves and how we view ourselves: our self-concept. Do we treat ourselves with kindness, understanding, and compassion? Are teenagers aware of their limitations but also aware of their capabilities and the fact that we are always growing and changing? Or do they look on at their current state with frustration, impatience, and disappointment, comparing themselves unfavorably to others and to the idealized images presented in society and on social media? This time of development is therefore a crucial stage. Despite the challenges they face, students at this age have greater resources for caring for themselves and others than at any time before in their lives. It is therefore an especially opportune time to explore empathy, forgiveness, compassion, and self-compassion with them. This is the focus of Chapter 6.

Chapter 7: We're All In This Together

"Our innate systems intelligence, just like our innate capacities to understand self and others, needs to be cultivated," writes Peter Senge, one of the world's leading systems thinkers, in *The Triple Focus*.¹ In our increasingly complex world, kindness and compassion alone are not enough to ensure that the ethical ways we choose are realistic. Good intentions must be complemented with discernment. Discernment is the capacity to assess, and respond to, different and changing factors to maximize benefits and minimize harm. It is essential for responsible decision making that is based on an understanding of the wider systems within which we live. Students must learn to grapple with issues of complexity so they can better understand the world around them, and better engage with, and within, it. Systems thinking serves as the basis for ethical discernment. The capacity to be a systems thinker also supports the experience of gratitude and connection with others which serves to motivate acts of kindness and compassion.

In SEE Learning we use the terms interdependence and systems thinking interchangeably. Chapter 7 of the curriculum fosters the competency of appreciating interdependence by focusing on systems and systems thinking. These are not entirely new topics, having been introduced throughout the curriculum. In Chapter 1, students drew an interdependence web, showing how many things are connected to a single item or event. In Chapters 3 and 4, they explored how emotions arise from causes and are contextual, and what it takes for an emotional spark to escalate into a raging fire, thus affecting everything around it. In Chapters 5 and 6, students explored identity, forgiveness, and compassion for others. Thus, systems thinking has been built into the entire curriculum, but in this chapter it is approached directly and explicitly.

SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project: Building a Better World

The SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project (CAP) can function as a service project experience or as a culminating action activity for students. It can be implemented over the course of the year. One clear pathway is for CAP to serve as a culminating or capstone project on the basis of completing the SEE Learning curriculum. The chapter provides a guide for creating, planning, implementing, and presenting a SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project CAP. In addition to outlining the process for engaging in the CAP, ideas are provided to help adapt and implement the capstone project into different international contexts and educational settings. The CAP can, and should, be adapted to meet the needs of students and the school community it is implemented in. The resources provided in the chapter will enable individuals and schools to effectively integrate the CAP into their curriculum and educational programming.

¹ Goleman and Senge, *The Triple Focus: A New Approach to Education*.

The SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project seeks to develop students who embody SEE Learning competencies. This includes:

- identify personal pathways to engage in compassionate activities
- reflect on how compassion can become embodied through actions
- cultivate a sense of purpose and experience flourishing through service focused on compassion
- recognize how they can make a difference through identifying goals, planning action, and engaging in activities that benefit oneself and others
- develop lifelong skills related to leadership, taking the initiative, and assuming responsibility for the welfare of others
- engage as a systems thinker in anticipating, discerning, and coordinating the changing factors associated with the project
- overcome challenges and cultivate resilience through each of the project stages
- appreciate how they are a part of a local and global community and how their welfare is interdependent with the welfare of others

Adaptations

Educators are the best judges of what's needed in their classrooms and schools. Although the SEE Learning High School Curriculum is provided as three models; standalone, advisory, and curriculum integration, it can also be adapted in many other ways. As such, teachers and administrators should feel free to change the names of characters in the stories and other specific details in the learning experiences to better align with the context of your group. If teachers are considering making more significant changes, we encourage them to first look carefully at the objectives for that learning experience, and to consider discussing the changes with a colleague to ensure that they do not unintentionally alter the intent, impact, or safety of the learning experience.

Effectively Implementing SEE Learning

How SEE Learning is implemented plays a crucial role in influencing the outcomes and benefits for students. Implementation refers to the ways a program is put into practice. It draws a picture of how to facilitate the program and is an essential component of intervention effectiveness². High quality implementation of evidence-based programming in schools is essential to achieve the specific outcomes targeted through the program. When implementing SEE Learning, it is critical to recognize the importance of completing all lessons and activities in the program (dosage) in the way it was designed by the program developers (fidelity), in order to maximize the likelihood of success in your own classroom environment. To achieve high quality implementation, be sure that the curriculum is facilitated through the established and theory-driven guidelines of the SEE Learning framework.

Research shows us that ongoing monitoring and supporting of the implementation process is vital. In their meta-analysis, Durlak and colleagues³ found that the positive effects of Social and Emotional Learning interventions on academic gains, reductions in depression and anxiety, and reductions in conduct problems were approximately twice as large when implemented with full fidelity to design and dosage.

Although the importance of implementing the program and its individual components fully, and as described and intended in the curriculum, is widely accepted, contextualizing program implementation is fairly common in educational settings. For example, teachers may choose to adapt their facilitation of the curriculum to match their teaching style, or to address specific student interests and needs in their classroom. At times, full implementation is impossible due to time constraints, but note that altering the intended implementation can compromise the fullness of the curriculum's effectiveness. Key concepts related to establishing high implementation quality include:

- **Fidelity:** the degree to which the major elements of the curriculum are delivered as designed
- **Dosage:** how much of the program is delivered (how many lessons, and how completely)
- **Quality of Delivery:** how completely the implementation is conducted, and the extent of facilitator training and support

² Durlak, J. A. (2016). "Programme implementation in social and emotional learning: basic issues and research findings." *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 46, 333-345.

³ Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). "The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: a meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions." *Child Development*, 82, 405–32.

- **Adaptation:** any ways in which the program was altered or adapted
- **Participant Engagement:** the degree to which students engaged in the activities⁴

The SEE Learning framework builds on the innovative work done in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), soft skill development, and non-cognitive skill development. Each of these focus areas seeks to provide a holistic education for adolescent students. SEE Learning helps students develop proficiencies that are linked to higher likelihood of employment, job satisfaction, and higher income. Competencies such as adaptability, coping with uncertainty, self-motivation, sustained attention, organizational awareness, empathy, etc. are all explicitly linked with both personal and professional wellness. Research on the part of James Heckmen⁵ and Raj Chetty⁶ have demonstrated the longitudinal benefits of soft skill or non-cognitive skill development. Their research explicitly indicates how these skills lead to the following:

- Higher Rates of Employment
- Greater Lifetime Earnings
- College Attendance
- Home Ownership
- Retirement Savings

The development of soft skills, non-cognitive skills, and social and emotional learning, or SEL, involves the processes through which students and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and achieve positive goals, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions, so that we can handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work

⁴ Durlak, J. A., & DuPre, E. P. (2008). "Implementation matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 327–350; Durlak, J. A. (2016). "Programme implementation in social and emotional learning: basic issues and research findings." *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 46, 333-345.

⁵ James Heckman and Ganesh Karapakula,(2019) "Intergenerational and Intragenerational Externalities of the Perry Preschool Project," *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

⁶ Chetty, R., Friedman, J., Hilger, N., Saez, E., Schanzenbach, D., Yagan. (2011). How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project STAR. *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

effectively and ethically.⁷ These competencies are viewed as “mastery skills” underlying virtually all aspects of human functioning. Moreover, SEE Learning competencies offer educators, students, families, and communities relevant strategies and practices to better prepare for “the tests of life, not a life of tests.”⁸

SEE Learning competencies comprise the foundational skills for positive health practices, engaged citizenship, and academic and social success in school and beyond. The development of soft skills is sometimes called “the missing piece,” because it represents a part of education that is inextricably linked to school success, that may not have been explicitly stated or given much attention until recently. SEE Learning fosters active learning approaches in which skills can be generalized across curriculum areas and contexts when opportunities are provided to practice the skills that foster positive attitudes, behaviors, and thinking processes. The good news is that soft skills, non-cognitive skills and SEL skills can be learned through intentionally providing nurturing and caring learning environments and experiences.⁹

A Note about “Mindfulness”

The term “mindfulness” has become very popular over the past decade and is now applied to a variety of strategies and practices, some of them quite distinct from historical origins. One of the most popular current definitions of mindfulness describes it as a type of non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Many have argued over whether mindfulness is a spiritual practice, a secular one, or both; or whether it necessarily involves meditation or can be cultivated without meditation. While some may question the universality of the term “mindfulness,” there is no question about the universality of attention.

In SEE Learning, “mindfulness,” therefore, refers to continuing to focus on what the mind is attending to. It is similar to the idea of retention, or not forgetting. For example, if one needs to

⁷ Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., & Gullotta, T. P. (2015). Social and emotional learning: Past, present, and future. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg, & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and practice* (pp. 3–19). New York, NY: Guilford.

⁸ Elias, M. J. (2001). Prepare children for the tests of life, not a life of tests. *Education Week*, 21(4), 40.

⁹ Greenberg, M. T. (2010). School-based prevention: Current status and future challenges. *Effective Education*, 2, 27–52.

remember one's keys, it is mindfulness that helps one do so; if one forgets one's keys, it is because one had a lapse of mindfulness. What is most important here is that students will develop an understanding that one can also be mindful of one's values and commitments. Indeed, this is vital to developing ethical literacy. Mindfulness is one of the key elements that helps us stay true to our values and act accordingly, whereas "forgetting ourselves" is a common cause of acting out of alignment with our values.

SEE Learning also retains the term "mindfulness" in describing well-known practices such as "mindful listening," "mindful walking," etc., because they are common conventions. If your school prefers, however, you can substitute other terms such as "active or attentive listening," "attentive eating," or "attentive walking." Whichever term you find best for your situation is fine, what is important is that students come to understand the value of cultivating attention and using that attention to develop discernment with regard to their internal and external situations.

Thank You

We thank you for your interest in SEE Learning. By implementing SEE Learning you are joining a global community of compassion practitioners who are committed to create a more aware, resilient, and compassionate world. We hope SEE Learning is a useful resource for you and your students. We hope that you will share your experiences and insights with the SEE Learning community in your region and worldwide. Your contributions, however small, are directly adding to the wellness of our shared global community.



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1

Creating a Compassionate Classroom

Overview

At the high school level SEE Learning is about students learning how best to take care of themselves and each other. In order to accomplish this, SEE Learning helps students develop social, emotional, and ethical competencies. The goal of SEE Learning is to promote compassion: for oneself (self-compassion) and others. It is not enough to tell students to be compassionate to others and to themselves; rather students must have opportunities to reflect upon and experience compassion. The learning experiences in the curriculum allows students to gain the knowledge and tools to embody compassion. As students come to understand the value of these tools and methods, they embody them through their actions and behaviors.

Chapter 1, "Creating a Compassionate Classroom," introduces the foundational concepts of kindness and compassion. Although there may be subtle differences between these terms, for the purpose of SEE Learning, the important thing is to introduce these concepts and explore them with your students so that they eventually develop their own rich understanding of the concepts and how they look in practice. All the subsequent chapters of SEE Learning then build upon this foundation by exploring self-compassion in the personal domain with regard to the body, the mind, and emotions (Chapters 2 to 4); compassion for self and others (Chapters 5 and 6); and compassion and ethics in a systemic context (Chapter 7). This first chapter introduces the "what" of SEE Learning and the remaining chapters fill out the "how."

Learning Experience 1, "Exploring Happiness and Well-being," enables students to explore interpersonal awareness and common humanity through the lens of happiness and well-being. Students are asked to identify how happiness can be cultivated through the development of ethics, the recognition of common humanity, and well-being.

Learning Experience 2, "Exploring Common Humanity," encourages the exploration of the concept of common humanity through a series of activities. Students examine how all people share a desire to be happy, well, and to experience both kindness and compassion. Students are prompted to reflect on how everyone wants happiness and to avoid distress, worry, and suffering.

Learning Experience 3, "Exploring Systems Thinking and Appreciating Interdependence," allows students to examine how interdependence affects their life. Through an exploration and personal application of the concept of interdependence, students identify the interdependence that exists within a single event, object, or accomplishment. Students are asked to reflect on how an awareness of interdependence can inform the daily decisions they make.

Learning Experience 4, "Laying the Foundation for Class Agreements," enables students to view their classroom as an interdependent system. Primed with an understanding of common humanity, diversity, inclusivity, and interdependence, students will work together to explore shared ways of interacting and relating to one another that promote shared happiness and well-being. Students reflect on how they can interact with others and expect others to interact with them.

Learning Experience 5, "Co-creating Class Agreements," engages students to apply the lenses of interdependence and systems thinking, common humanity, diversity, and inclusivity to shape suggestions into class agreements. Students are encouraged to reflect on the short-term and long-term implications of upholding these agreements on both themselves and others.

Learning Experience 6, "Identifying Thinking Traps," engages students to explore the concept of Thinking Traps. Through their inquiry students will relate them to well-being and the class agreements. This concept will enable students to begin the process of looking internally to understand how they direct and guide their experiences.

Learning Experience 7, "Building Compassion Through Reciprocity," asks students to explore scenarios and identify underlying motives for the actions each character took. Students are asked to decide whether they were acts of genuine compassion or apparent compassion/kindness. Through the use of mindful dialogue students will reflect on their own actions and motives and finally illustrate/write about a time when they gave or received compassion and kindness.

The Components of a SEE Learning Experience

You will notice that each learning experience begins with a check-in, which over time changes and develops. The check-ins provide a way of transitioning into the SEE Learning experience and signaling a shift in the day. Check-ins also serve as a way to strengthen skills through repeated practice. You are encouraged to use the check-ins even when you do not have enough time to do a full learning experience. Some learning experiences involve discussions or presentations that give students a basic knowledge of a term or an idea. This is for the purpose of received knowledge.

The learning experiences also include insight activities, which are designed to deepen the received knowledge and develop critical insights, which in SEE Learning is called "a-ha" moments and signifies a deeper realization. Whenever possible, received knowledge is incorporated into the insight activities (rather than as a separate presentation) so that students can learn by doing.

Learning experiences include reflective practices. These are for moving from critical insight into

embodied understanding. They enable students to make personal connections to what they are exploring.

In some cases there is not a sharp distinction between insight activities and reflective practices. Reflective practice can lead to insights. Also, an insight activity can be repeated and deepened to encourage further reflection and internalization. Both insight and activities are sometimes marked with an asterisk. This symbol indicates that you are encouraged to do that particular activity more than once if you feel it would be helpful. Some lessons end with a debrief. This is an opportunity for students to reflect on the learning experience as a whole and share their thoughts, feelings, and questions.

Time and Pacing

Each learning experience is designed to be a minimum of 45 minutes. It is recommended that you take longer than this if time allows and if your students are capable of it, spending more time on the activities and reflective practices especially. If you have less than 45 minutes, you can choose to only do one of the activities or a part of the activity, and finish the learning experience in the following session. However, remember that check-ins and insight activities are important to include regardless of time.

SEE Learning High School Curriculum has also been adapted to fit within an advisory program model. Typically advisory sessions are around 25 minutes. Therefore the learning experiences have either been divided or shortened to fit within this timeframe.

SEE Learning is also offered through a Curriculum Integration Model. This model enables educators to connect their curriculum (content, instructional practices, and assessment) to SEE Learning competencies and practices. Educators may select to use a grounding practice before an assessment to help regulate their students' nervous systems. Educators can also use a self-compassion prompt or reflective activity to prepare students for when an exam is returned back to them for review. Many educators are actively integrating SEE Learning enduring capabilities into their content. Whether through literature, history, science, etc educators are weaving concepts of compassion, resilience, interdependence, etc into what, how, and why they educate students.

Student Personal Practice

Your students will be learning personal practices that they can use, and each student will connect with a different set of practices. SEE Learning scales up into practices gradually, recognizing that if not approached skillfully, some practices may actually make students feel worse, rather than better. Chapter 1 sets the stage for personal practice by establishing a safe and caring environment.

Chapter 2 then provides practices that calm and regulate the nervous system. Chapter 3 then introduces practices involving the cultivation of attention (and what are commonly called “mindfulness” practices). Chapter 4 then engages then students with practices involving identifying emotions and emotional regulation. Chapter 5 then introduces practices that foster awareness of identity, appreciating diversity, and recognizing common humanity. Chapter 6 then engages students in practices related to self-compassion, forgiveness, and compassion for others. Chapter 7 then provides practices that enable students to become systems thinkers and to cultivate the capacity for ethical and compassionate discernment. The curriculum concludes with a hands-on service learning experience called The SEE Learning Compassion In Action Project. It is advised that you follow this sequence as best as you are able, as that way your students will be well prepared for each additional type of practice and will be able to return to the simpler forms of practice in case they become upset or dysregulated. Students will journal throughout the curriculum and the Compassion in Action Project to capture personal reflections through drawings, notes, or written work.

Teacher Personal Practice

It is highly recommended that you begin some of the practices in Chapters 2 and 3 before you start teaching them to your students if you do not already have familiarity with them. Even a slight bit of personal practice (such as a few minutes each day) will make your teaching more effective when you reach those sections. Starting early will allow you to get in as much practice as you are able before working on the practices with your students.

Further Reading and Resources

If you have not yet completed reading the SEE Learning Framework, contained within the SEE Learning Companion, you are encouraged to read that up to and through the Personal Domain. Also recommended is Daniel Goleman and Peter Senge’s short book *The Triple Focus*, and Linda Lantieri and Daniel Goleman’s book *Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children*.

Chapter 1: Creating a Compassionate Classroom

Learning Experience 1: Exploring Happiness and Well-being

Learning Experience 2: Exploring Common Humanity

Learning Experience 3: Exploring Interdependence and Systems Thinking

Learning Experience 4: Laying the Foundation for Class Agreements

Learning Experience 5: Co-creating Class Agreements

Learning Experience 6: Identifying Thinking Traps

Learning Experience 7: Building Compassion Through Reciprocity

Exploring Happiness and Wellbeing

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will explore interpersonal awareness and common humanity through the lens of happiness and wellbeing. Students will be asked to identify how happiness can be cultivated through the development of ethics, the recognition of common humanity, ethics, and wellbeing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Identify how the orientation to happiness and wellbeing is an area of common humanity
- Determine how the orientation to happiness can help to explain many human activities, motivations, and emotions
- Describe the relationship between happiness and the four key concepts that will be developed throughout SEE Learning: ethics, common humanity, wellbeing, and interdependence

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Recognizing
Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Large "Yes" and "No" signs that are placed on either end of a continuum line
- Writing utensils and paper
- "Happiness" graphic organizer handout

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

- Display the prompts “What is happiness?” and “What leads to happiness?”
- Briefly reflect on the prompts.
- Discuss these questions in small groups or with a partner and write or draw an example that illustrates your response.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 10 minutes

Where I Stand

Overview

Students will be given prompts that encourage them to think about the personal and universal wish for happiness, the internal and external causes for feeling happy, and the role this plays in their own motivations and actions. They will reflect on prompts, agree or disagree with those statements, and then explain their thinking to others.

Directions

- Set up a continuum line in the classroom by placing two large signs reading “Yes” and “No,” on either end of a line. The line can be imaginary or can be created with string or colored tape on the floor.
- Read the provided prompts aloud to the students, provide time for students to ponder the prompt and then choose their position along the continuum.
- Ask for volunteers to explain to the whole group why they chose their position.

Guiding Language

“I’m going to read some statements and we will each stand along this continuum line, showing how close to ‘definitely yes’ or ‘definitely no’ each of us feels about the statement.

We’ll have some time to think about where we’d like to stand, then we’ll each pick a place to stand and we will have the opportunity to share our thoughts with each other on why we are standing where we are.

You may find that you are unsure about where you’d like to stand, and this is okay too.

Also, at any time if you change your mind or hear something that makes you feel differently, you can move to a different place.”

Happiness Statement Prompts

1. Everyone wants happiness in their life.
2. I know exactly what I need to make me happy.
3. If I got what I just said I needed to make me happy, I would be happy forever.
4. I can think of a time when something I thought would make me happy did not actually make me happy in the end.
5. Sometimes people do things they think will make them happy, but they end up hurting themselves or others in the process.

6. People prefer to be treated with kindness rather than cruelty.
7. There are different kinds of happiness, some temporary and some longer lasting.
8. Our wish for happiness is at the root of many things we do.
9. We each play a role in the happiness of others in our lives.

Why might these topics be important to explore?"

Gallery Walk

"In small groups, we will visit 4 stations that outline the 4 major themes that we will be examining this year.

These themes are common humanity, interdependence, wellbeing and happiness, and ethics.

Each group will have about 4 minutes to visit each station in a gallery walk.

While at each station you will:

- 1. Read and discuss each question**
- 2. Put a check mark next to a question that you like or that you think is interesting or important.**
- 3. Put a question mark next to any questions that you are curious about or don't understand fully.**
- 4. Add a question of your own to any of the four categories above."**

Create 4 charts using the language below, hang them up around the room so students can move from station to station in a gallery walk.

1. Common humanity.

- **"What do we all have in common as human beings?"**
- **In what ways are we different as individuals or groups?**
- **What might we gain from exploring our shared humanity and our diversity?"**

Debrief

Display the statement below.

Our wish for happiness and to avoid unnecessary hardship can play a significant role in our lives and in the lives of others, and it affects our actions, motivations, hopes, and fears.

"Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?"

Ask a few volunteers to share.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 20 minutes

Introducing SEE Learning

Guiding Language

"This year we are going to explore and discuss topics like

- **how we navigate life and its challenges;**
- **how we take care of ourselves emotionally;**
- **how we support one another, and**
- **how we create communities that promote the wellbeing of all and welcome all as valued members.**

2. Interdependence.

- ***"Do things exist by themselves?"***
- ***Do they depend on other things?***
- ***How do systems work?***
- ***Is our physical and social reality static (unchanging) or dynamic (changing)?***
- ***What might we gain from exploring interdependence and dynamic systems?"***

3. Wellbeing and Happiness.

- ***What is wellbeing?***
- ***What is happiness?***
- ***Do we all want them?***
- ***What leads to wellbeing and happiness?***
- ***What undermines them?***
- ***Are they individual, collective, or both?"***

4. Ethics.

- ***How do we want to lead our lives?***
- ***What leads to having purpose and meaning in life?***
- ***What responsibilities, if any, do we have to ourselves and others?***
- ***How do we want to engage collectively in groups or in society such that these groups have collective wellbeing and less suffering?***
- ***Can we come up with a common set of ethical values, despite our individual, religious or cultural differences?***
- ***Is ethical discernment or ethical intelligence something that can be cultivated, and if so, does it have any benefits?"***

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5-10 minutes

Our Aspirations and Our Wish for Happiness

Display the reflection questions and ask students to silently read and reflect on each one and then choose one to write about.

1. What Activities Do I Care About?

- ***"What are activities I really like to do and value as important? This might include playing sports, being with friends, studying, spending time with family, or anything else."***

2. My Hopes and Dreams For This Year.

- ***"If I could achieve certain things by the end of this year, what would I most want that to be?"***
- ***Where might these dreams take me?"***

3. My Worries For This Year.

- ***"What concerns do I have about the year ahead?"***
- ***What worries can I identify, so that I can better understand them?"***

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

As a whole class, ask students to respond to the prompt below and verbally share with the rest of the class. If students do not wish to share they can choose to "pass."

Prompt:

"Reflecting on your answer(s) to prompts 1-3, how do these prompts connect to your wish for happiness and wellbeing?"

Graphic Organizer

Happiness

Activities I do that I care about	My hopes and dreams for this year	My fears and worries for this year

Our Wish for Happiness

Our wish for happiness and to avoid unnecessary hardship can play a significant role in our lives and in the lives of others.

It affects our actions, motivations, hopes, and fears.

Exploring Common Humanity

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will examine the concept of common humanity. Through a series of activities students will determine how all people share a desire to be happy, well, and to experience both kindness and compassion. Students will reflect on how like them others want happiness and to avoid distress, worry, and suffering.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Demonstrate the relationship between common humanity, diversity, and inclusion
- Identify how awareness of common humanity supports the appreciation of diversity and the practice of inclusion

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Recognizing
Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Charts created by class from Chapter 1, Learning Experience 1, Insight Activity 2
- Blank index cards
- Writing utensils and paper
- Colored pencils, markers

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Whole group verbal share with the option to "pass".

"Reflect on the topic of happiness and wellbeing from our last SEE Learning Experience.

Think about a real-life example of something that recently contributed to your happiness or wellbeing, or to the happiness and wellbeing of someone you know."

- We all need nourishment and safety;
- We all depend on others for survival, especially when we are young;
- We all depend on this planet for our survival;
- We prefer wellbeing, happiness and health.

Are we all the same?

Are we each unique?

How does our uniqueness relate to common humanity?

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

What do we mean by Common Humanity?

Guided Language

Use the questions and prompts below to engage the class in a discussion around Common Humanity and Diversity.

"Today we are going to look more deeply at the concept of common humanity.

What is common humanity?

Name some things that we all have in common as human beings:

- We're all born, we all age;
- We all need food and water;
- We all have bodies, we all live, grow and eventually die;
- We are all vulnerable to physical, emotional and environmental harm;

What about our identity?

What types of group identities are there?

- Gender identity;
- Cultural identity
- Racial identity;
- National identities

Do we all share the same identities?

This diversity doesn't mean we don't have common humanity. In fact, one could say that our diversity is part of our common humanity.

To be a human being is to share many commonalities with other human beings, and to be a human being is also to be unique.

Throughout history, there have been many times when one group tried to deny the common humanity of another group by focusing on the differences others had and not acknowledging their basic humanity.

For long periods of human history, girls and women weren't valued the same way boys and men were, just because they were different. The same has happened to many ethnic and racial groups, people with disabilities, and many other groups that were stigmatized or discriminated against just for being different.

Since we are exploring wellbeing, we want to investigate this question:

- How can we recognize the diversity of others while at the same time respecting and acknowledging their common humanity? Can the two go hand-in-hand?"*

Give students a moment to reflect and ask a few volunteers to share their thoughts.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 15 minutes

All People/Not All People

Directions

- "You will each receive 2 index cards. Label one card with the words "All People" and label the other card "Not All People"*
- Write down 2-3 examples on each index card. Under the heading "All People" write down examples of common humanity. Under the heading "Not All People" write down examples of diversity (something that is true for some people but not all people).*
- Please use appropriate examples that will not be harmful to anyone in the group*

as we will be sharing our examples with everyone else in the class.

- After completing the statements on the cards, all the cards will be shuffled together and you will receive two random cards that were written by another classmate.*
- Next you will pair up and take turns reading the statement(s) on the card. Your partner will respond yes (agree) or no (disagree), giving some evidence or an example that supports their answer. And then you will switch roles.*
- After each of you has read and responded to the statements on the cards:*
 - Thank your partner;*
 - Trade cards, and*
 - Find another partner by holding your cards up.*
- Repeat until time is up."*

Debrief the activity in the last four minutes. Ask each current pair to join up with another pair, forming groups of four. Pose several questions, one at a time, for them to discuss in their group of four. This will be followed by a whole group share.

- "Which statements (that you're holding now or that you talked about in other partnerships) got mostly "no" answers? What do you notice about those statements?"*

- Which statements (that you're holding now or that you talked about in other partnerships) got mostly "yes" answers? What do you notice about those statements?"

Whole group debrief:

- "What did you notice from doing this activity? Did anything surprise you?"
- Is it possible to appreciate common humanity and diversity at the same time? If so, how?"

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Small Group Debrief

- "Which statements (that you're holding now or that you talked about in other partnerships) got mostly "no" answers? What do you notice about those statements?"
- Which statements (that you're holding now or that you talked about in other partnerships) got mostly "yes" answers? What do you notice about those statements?"

Whole Group Debrief

- "What did you notice from doing this activity? Did anything surprise you?"
- Is it possible to appreciate common humanity and diversity at the same time? If so, how?"

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Silent Reflection/Writing Prompt

"We all probably know what it feels like to be rejected or to have someone treat us as if we are not equal or not as good as others.

The opposite of that is when someone recognizes our common humanity. They treat us as someone with feelings, as someone who is equal, who is good enough. They respect us as human beings.

Have you ever had an experience like this? Or can you imagine what it feels like for someone to respect your common humanity?"

Exploring Systems Thinking and Appreciating Interdependence

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will examine how interdependence affects their life. Through an examination of the concept of interdependence and through the application of systems thinking students will identify the interdependence that exists within a single event, object, or accomplishment. Students will reflect on how an awareness of interdependence can inform the daily decisions they make.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Investigate the interdependence of objects, people, and events as a feature of our shared reality by using the interdependence drawing.
- Examine how the things we need for our happiness and well-being depend on many other objects, events and people.
- Recognize interdependence as a foundational aspect of systems thinking.
- Reflect on the potential value of recognizing interdependence and cultivating systems thinking.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Community &
Global Engagement

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 8 minutes

Interdependence Mapping Warm Up

- Draw a stick figure or write the words "Human Being" in the center of the board. Draw a circle around it.
- Write the following prompt: "What does a human being need to survive and be happy?"
- **"We will each write or draw at least one thing on the board to answer the prompt. Read what others have written and draw lines connecting related things. (5 mins)**
- **Now let's take a look at what we've put on the board. We can share something we notice, something we like, or something we wonder about. To do so, say "I notice... I like... or I wonder..." (3 mins)**

PRESENTATION | 5 minutes

Interdependence

"Along with common humanity, another aspect of our shared human reality is interdependence.

What is interdependence?

Interdependence refers to the fact that everything that exists – including all objects, events or people – exists in dependence on other things and in relationship to other things. Exploring interdependence helps us appreciate complexity and is a key aspect of what is called "systems thinking."

Why might it be important to explore interdependence?

Exploring interdependence can be a powerful tool for recognizing how we depend on others and others depend on us; it can underscore the importance of reciprocity; it can serve as a foundation for gratitude and a feeling of connectedness to others.

The ability to explore interdependence is also essential for systems thinking, since interdependence is a characteristic of all systems. This in turn supports an ecological and scientific understanding of the world and a holistic way of understanding and solving problems, whether they are individual or collective.

To explore the idea of interdependence, we'll be working in small groups to create an interdependence drawing.

Each group is going to identify an accomplishment, event, or object that you all agree can contribute to a person's well-being and happiness.

Each group will choose a specific and concrete thing or event. This will be called your "starting object/event." Let's list a few "starting objects" together before we begin our group work."

Generate a list of "Starting Objects/Events"

"Can anyone give us an example of an item?

- food
- a house
- a bicycle
- a book
- drinking water
- a car
- a school
- a hospital
- health care system

How about a particular event or accomplishment?

- getting a good grade
- a new job
- being admitted to college
- having success on a sports team

List the starting objects as examples for groups to choose from."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Creating a Web of Interdependence

In small groups students will create a web of interdependence by choosing a single accomplishment, event, or object related to well-being or happiness. The web of interdependence can include drawings and/or words that illustrate all the things that their chosen accomplishment, event or object depends or depended on.

Display the instructions below.

1. **"Choose an accomplishment, event, or object that can contribute to a person's well-being and happiness. This is your starting object (or starting event)."**

Draw and label it in the middle of the piece of paper. (1-2 minutes)

2. **Add other things or events around it that your starting object depends on.**

Draw lines to connect them to your starting object. Keep adding more and more things until you can't think of any more.

This is your first circle of interdependence. (4-5 minutes)

3. **Now look at your first circle of things. What do they themselves depend on?**

Add additional items around those things, connected by lines. (4-5 minutes)

4. **Look at all the things in your drawing. What people are needed for these things to exist or happen? Add any people or groups of people that are necessary. (3-4 minutes)**

5. **Add up the total number of people on your drawing and write this number on the sheet. This is your estimate of the total number of people needed for your**

starting object or event to exist.

(2 minutes)

6. When you're done, sign your drawing with the names of each group member.

7. We will now share our drawings! (you can use the listed questions below that is helpful to guide your presentation of the drawings) (2 minutes per group)

a. What was your topic?

b. What are the limits of the connections you could make if you had enough time?

c. What did you realize about yourself and others through this activity?

d. How can you carry those insights with you throughout your day/life?"

Monitor each group to provide guidance as necessary. You can prompt them to think further by asking questions like, "This item here, does it exist all by itself or does it need other people or things for it to exist?"

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

"The activity we just did can be used to investigate any event or object.

Scientists have found that we have a tendency to think in very immediate terms. We can see what's right in front of us, but it's harder for us to see the connections between things, especially when they are distant in terms of time or space.

We tend to think things just exist or happen by themselves. But in reality, everything happens through complex chains of causation.

Exploring these chains and the entire system that makes up something, with all the relationships within that system, is called "systems thinking."

It's a very crucial skill for us to develop, because it can help us see deeper into the nature of things.

Did creating this web of interdependence assist you in seeing complexities, relationships, connections or chains of causation?

In your small group, discuss your findings."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5 minutes

"'Since a recognition of interdependence allows us to see things more holistically and realistically, it can contribute to our understanding of happiness and well-being by showing how our happiness and well-being depend on many causes and conditions. With an understanding of interdependence, we know our happiness and well-being depend on others or on our environment. We also understand how our actions impact the happiness and well-being of others'.

Reflect on the above quote and the process of creating an interdependence web.

How might an understanding of interdependence inform your personal decisions on a day to day basis?

How might your decisions impact the larger systems?"

Laying the Foundation for Class Agreements

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will see their classroom as an interdependent system. Primed with an understanding of common humanity, diversity, inclusivity, and interdependent students will work together to explore shared ways of interacting and relating to one another that promote shared happiness and wellbeing. Students will review a needs inventory list and an emotions inventory list to provide them with the languages they need to reflect on how they can interact with others and expect others to interact with them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Determine the impacts of actions and attitudes on others and the learning environment
- Construct and agree upon guidelines for classroom engagement (class agreements)
- Examine how collective agreements can reflect an awareness of common humanity, diversity, inclusivity, and interdependence.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness



Relationship Skills

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart Paper
- Markers
- Gallery Walk printouts for stations

CHECK-IN | 8 minutes

Welcoming

Have the following prompt up on the board.

"In groups of two or three, draw or describe a moment when a person or group's common humanity was recognized (real or imagined)."

Examples of this can include:

- when citizenship was granted to former slaves in the United States or
- women were granted the right to vote in countries around the world.

Give students 5 minutes or so to discuss in groups and draw. Then ask each group to share their drawing in just two or three sentences.

Conclude by inviting any student to share thoughts with "I notice, I like, I wonder."

Guiding Language

"So far we have started to ask a few key questions."

What is well-being and what leads to it?

What is our common humanity and what is diversity?

And how are we interdependent?

It's okay if we haven't fully answered these questions yet; in fact we've probably just scratched the surface. We will continue to explore them in the weeks and months to come.

Today we'll be exploring our class as an interdependent system and how we'd like it to operate based on our understanding of common humanity and diversity.

So first let's take a moment to think about what it means to show kindness to another person by acknowledging their common humanity.

Can you think of a time when someone recognized another person's common humanity?

It could be from your own life, or it could be something you saw on television, in a film, online, or in a book or comic book.

Please get into groups of two or three. Think of an example from real life or something you've seen or something you'd like to imagine. Then draw it together on the board.

Let's take just a few minutes to do this."

When 5 minutes or so is up, invite each group to finish their drawings and then share briefly what they drew. Then invite students to share their thoughts with "I like, I notice, I wonder."

"Now let's share what we've drawn. Those who are listening can then share something we notice, something we like, or something we wonder about. To do so, say "I notice... I like... or I wonder..."

PRESENTATION | 5 minutes

Overview

Students will consider what could contribute to happiness and well-being when viewing their class as an interdependent system and when reflecting on their own common humanity and diversity.

Guiding Language (3 minutes)

"Our classroom is an interdependent system, in which each person affects and is affected by the others.

Today we will begin to brainstorm shared agreements that outline how we will be together in this class.

Collective agreements help support the well-being of individuals and groups, especially when made through an exploration of both the common humanity and diversity in the group. Through this process, we will each have a voice in how our classroom is experienced by us and others.

In the past, laws were often handed down by rulers and common people didn't have any say in things. Now it is common for people to have a say in how they are governed.

Most societies have common agreements in the form of laws, regulations, and policies. These agreements generally apply to all members of a society. Ideally, they serve to regulate conflict and to support the general well-being of the people in society.

The agreements arise because we share a common wish for well-being, and because we are interdependent: our actions affect other people, and other people's actions affect us.

Although our agreements arise from and reflect our common humanity, it is rare for everyone to completely agree that the laws and policies of their society are all the best they can be or that they are perfectly fair.

We also see that laws and policies vary across countries. This is a reflection of our diversity. The agreements within a society are thus a reflection of both this common humanity and this diversity.

Like a society, our classroom is also an interdependent system. We're going to create class agreements among ourselves, treating ourselves like a small form of society.

We're going to make agreements that:

- Support the safety, well-being and happiness of us as individuals and as a collective.**
- Reflect our common humanity, diversity, and interdependence.**
- Support our ability to learn, grow, and flourish."**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 25 minutes

Gallery Walk

Create stations around the room by printing out or writing out the prompts below. *Note: The print out should be taped or stapled on to the large chart paper so there is enough space for all students to write down their responses. Each large chart paper or station will have one prompt on it. Students will visit each station discussing and writing down ideas and thoughts on the chart paper provided.

Explain

"In small groups or pairs, you will have 3-5 minutes to visit each station in our "Class Agreement Gallery Walk."

The purpose of this activity is to notice the similarities and differences we share specifically related to personal needs and expectations in the classroom setting.

We will not be creating class agreements at this time but rather authentically and compassionately responding to each prompt.

Please be thoughtful and respectful when writing down your ideas.

Gallery Walk Prompts

- How do we want to feel in our classroom?
- What do you need personally to be successful as a learner?

- How do we impact and affect one another? Intentionally (on purpose) or unintentionally (without knowing)?
- How do we depend on each other in our classroom?
- Are my needs and assets the same as everyone else in my class? What might be a particular asset (useful or valuable quality), that I or some students might have, that not everyone in our class might have?

Once all groups have visited and contributed to each station, move into the reflective practice.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Gallery Walk Reflection

"In your pairs or small groups silently walk around to each station again and consider what your classmates wrote. If you agree with a response, put a star or check mark next to the idea."

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Whole Class Discussion

How do our commonalities and differences impact the way we are together in class?

Gallery Walk

How do we want to feel in our classroom? Why?

Think about or imagine a time you were in a class or
on a team and you felt successful and supported.

Share that instance and tell what it was about the situation
that made you feel successful and supported.

Gallery Walk

What do you need personally to be successful as a learner?

Think about or imagine a time you were in a class or
on a team and you felt successful and supported.

Gallery Walk

How do we impact and affect one another?

Intentionally (on purpose) or unintentionally (without knowing)?

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts

Gallery Walk

How do we depend on each other in our classroom?

Gallery Walk

**Are my needs and assets
the same as everyone
else in my class?**

**What might be a particular asset
(useful or valuable quality),
that I or some students
might have, that not everyone
in our class might have?**

Co-creating Class Agreements

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will employ the lenses of interdependence and systems thinking, as well as common humanity, diversity, and inclusivity to shape brainstormed suggestions into a list of class agreements that can be used by the class for the remainder of the school year. Students will reflect on the short term and long term implications of upholding these agreements on both themselves and others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Evaluate class agreements through the lenses of interdependence, common humanity, diversity, inclusion, and well-being.
- Collaboratively form agreements that serve as personal and collective commitments.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness



Appreciating Interdependence

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Charts created by class from Insight Activity in Chapter 1, Learning Experience 4
- Sticky notes, index cards or slips of paper near each poster
- Chart paper for final draft of agreements
- Markers

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Display the charts from Classroom Agreements Part 1

- **“Let’s review our work from last week. Take a few moments to revisit each chart.**
- **What do you see that you like or feel is important? Place a checkmark next to at least one agreement that you think is important that wasn’t from your group.**
- **Do any agreements overlap? Try to find at least one theme that seems to appear multiple times. Place a star next to the agreement that you feel best represents a recurring theme.**
- **Write down as many recurring themes as you can find on an index card or sheet of scrap paper.”**

• **“One at a time, share the recurring themes that you identified in the check in activity. Notice any similarities and differences in the themes that were identified.**

- **Based on the themes your group identified and the information on the charts around the room, write one agreement that is most important to you and share it with your group.**
- **Together write 3-5 class agreements using your group’s ideas, the overlapping themes, and the information on the charts around the room.**
- **Reflect on the following three questions and make changes to your agreements as needed.**
- **Will our agreeing to this contribute to our well-being individually and collectively as well as our ability to learn while in this class?**
- **Does this agreement reflect our common humanity by addressing basic needs that we all have (like a need for respect, or a need for safety)?**
- **Does this agreement include every one of us and acknowledge our diversity?**
- **Check again for any repetitive ideas and work to combine and refine your ideas.**
- **Finally, come up with three proposed agreements that you will share with the whole class from your group. Put them in**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Small Group Activity

Students will work in small groups to build a list of class agreements, drawn from the suggestions they previously brainstormed and recorded. They will use three prompts as a guide to help in assessing class agreements and in rewording them.

Step by Step Directions

Display or print out the directions for the groups to follow.

the form of positive statements "We will..." instead of negative ones "We will not..."

- **Write each agreement individually on an index card or sticky note."**

Whole Class

"As a whole class, we will share our 3 group agreements and combine agreements that are similar.

We will settle on up to 5 agreements that we will formally adopt. We want to have enough agreements that they cover the things we feel are important, but not too many so we can't remember and keep track of them.

Each group will read out and present their three agreements.

Please explain why you chose that agreement.

Once you have presented, place your index card or sticky note on the table or board next to other agreements that have similar themes so that we can combine them.

Look at these proposed agreements and see which we can combine. (Invite discussion if necessary when combining proposed agreements.)

Now that we've condensed the proposed ideas, let's evaluate them as a group.

Let's remember our three main criteria:

- 1. Will our agreeing to this contribute to our well-being individually and collectively as well as our ability to learn while in this class?**
- 2. Does this agreement reflect our common humanity by addressing basic needs that we all have (like a need for respect, or a need for safety)?**
- 3. Does this agreement include every one of us and acknowledge our diversity?"**

Note

It is important to spend enough time discussing the agreements so that students feel that their voices are being heard. If you do not have enough time to reach a consensus, you may need to continue the discussion and adoption in the next session. However, if the discussion seems to be going on too long, remind students that the list of class agreements is a living document and that you will return to it as a class regularly. This means that it is not set in stone, and they can always change or revise the agreements later.

Review the list aloud. As you read each item, ask for a show of hands from the students to signal agreement. If students object, invite them to share their reasons and how they would reword or re-state the agreement.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

"Let's look at our agreements through a systems thinking lens by reflecting on the following questions.

- 1. What unintended consequences (positive, negative, or neutral), if any, might come from us having these agreements?**
- 2. What might the long-term effects be if we adopt this agreement? What might the long-term effects be if we do not follow this agreement?"**

Invite the students to sign the class agreements, then post it in a visible place in the classroom.

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Signing the Agreements (2 minutes)

"Thank you all for your thoughtful work and for the caring ways you made space for each other's ideas and needs. This is a powerful list of agreements.

But the true power rests in actually living up to these, each and every day.

We're going to now formally adopt these class agreements by signing our names at the bottom of the list.

If you are still not 100% sure about all the agreements we have made. That's okay. This is a living document, meaning that we can always change it and edit it as we learn and grow together."

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will explore the concept of Thinking Traps. Through their inquiry they will relate them to well-being and the class agreements.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Experience examples of perceptual illusions
- Understand thinking traps by exploring examples of thinking traps and making connections between Thinking Traps and the principles of Self-Compassion and Compassion for Others
- Discuss the significance of understanding Thinking Traps for keeping the class agreements

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Compassion
for Others



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Perceptual illusions examples on a handout if possible, or on the board
- A playing card or index card for each student
- Thinking Traps handout

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- **“We’re going to take a moment to sit quietly and rest our minds and bodies to help us be ready to focus and connect. [PAUSE]**
- **Maybe you are tired or full of energy; maybe it’s been a challenging day so far, or an exciting one. Either way, it’s helpful to take this moment together.**
- **Let’s each see if we can think of any moments of happiness in our day so far. Maybe something happened at home or on your way to school or while you’ve been at school today. [PAUSE]**
- **Don’t worry if you can’t think of a particular example right now. You can always imagine a moment of happiness instead. [PAUSE]**
- **Let’s sit with your moment of happiness for a little bit. (Timed by facilitator.)**
- **Please open your eyes if you closed them during the settling activity.**
- **We have time to hear from a few people – what thoughts came to mind? (2-4 volunteers)**
- **If the feelings and sensations that came up for you were pleasant ones, you can remind yourself back into them later today. Just thinking about the good feelings you were just experiencing can help you feel better at a completely different time.”**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Think Pair Share

“Do our minds and brains always tell us the truth? Do they sometimes play tricks on us? Have you ever had an experience where something was not as it appeared to be? What do you think?”

Guiding Language

Display or print out the directions for the groups to follow.

- **“While our minds and brains are incredible things that allow us to perceive the world, think about it, and react to it, they sometimes play tricks on us and give us inaccurate information as well.**
- **Not everything is as it seems, and how things appear is not always how they actually are. If we react to appearances, instead of thinking critically, we can fall into “Thinking Traps.” These are cognitive and perceptual distortions.**
- **For a long time now, psychologists and neuroscientists have found that our minds and brains can actually distort reality to make things appear to be different than they actually are.**
- **These can happen on the level of**
 - **perception, (how we see, hear, or experience something through our physical senses);**
 - **cognition (how we build knowledge and understanding based on our thoughts), or**

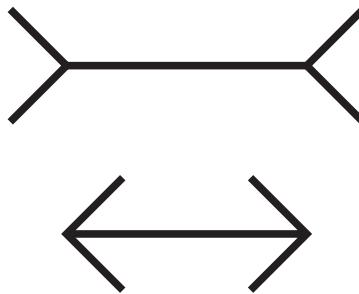
- *emotion (how what we are feeling impacts how we see or experience something).*
- *Understanding Thinking Traps is a powerful tool to explore well-being and human behavior. It may help us to understand why people do not always follow the agreements they make, and why they do not always engage in behavior that is productive for themselves and others.*
- *If we understand Thinking Traps, we can have more compassion towards others (and ourselves) when they (and we) make mistakes. We can use our personal experiences and critical thinking abilities to more clearly understand the world around us.*
- *You may remember, several lessons ago, we were exploring the idea of happiness and recalling a time when we thought an object, event or achievement would bring us lasting happiness, but it didn't."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Perceptual Distortion Visual

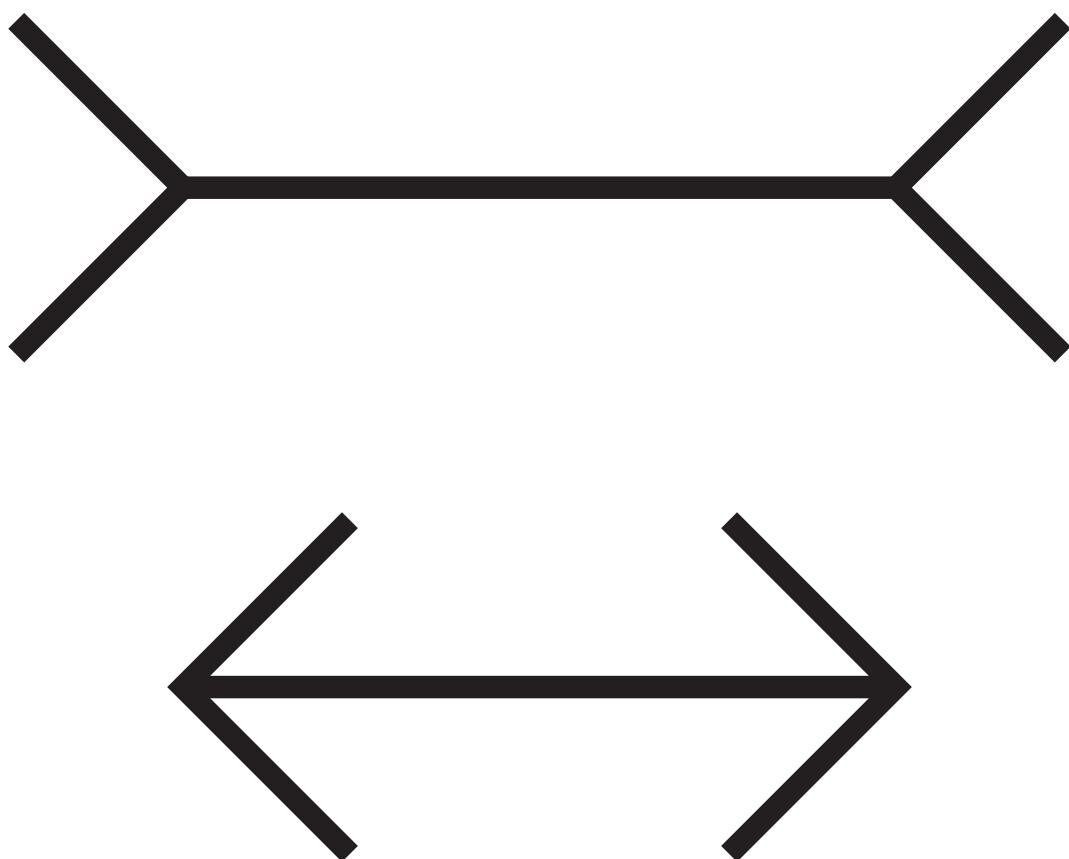
"Take a look at these two lines."

Large version on page 54.



- *"With a partner describe the lines. Which line looks longer?"*
- *To most people, the top line looks longer. But in reality, the two lines are the same length. Take a moment to measure the two lines with your partner.*
- *An interesting thing is that even after we've measured the two lines ourselves, and know that they definitely are of equal length, this doesn't change the fact that the top line will still appear longer to us. It's a persistent perceptual distortion. Our brain and mind sticks with what we think we're seeing, even when we know it's not the case."*

Perceptual Distortion Visual



Playing Card Perceptual Distortion Visual

- *"With a partner, hold a playing card straight in front of you at arm's length. Look at the card and identify it.*
- *Keep your head and eyes looking straight ahead (not turning them to follow the card) and rotate your arm to the left or right, keeping your arm fully extended.*
- *Can you still identify the card at 15 degrees? 30°? 45°? 90°?*
- *What this experiment shows is that our eyes actually only see what they are looking at directly, and very little around them. Yet we don't experience the world as if we were looking through pinholes. We feel like we see a whole range before us of somewhere between 90 and 180 degrees."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 10 minutes

Thinking Traps

Guiding Language

- *"In addition to perceptual illusions, we can also experience cognitive distortions. This is when our mind tells us that something we are thinking is true, but in reality, it isn't true.*
- *Like perceptual distortions, cognitive distortions can be persistent. Cognitive distortions can be dangerous because we may fall for distorted thinking and give up, missing the opportunity to improve the skill. Just because we struggle to play the*

guitar or learn to solve a math equation at first, does not mean that we will not improve with practice.

- *When it comes to cognitive distortions, however, we have more flexibility. We can not only learn to recognize cognitive distortions, but we can potentially change the way we react when they arise.*
- *Once we recognize that our minds sometimes like to play tricks on us, we can catch thinking traps before they cause us too much trouble. We can learn to see, "Oh, this is just a thinking trap. This is just my mind playing tricks on me."*
- *There's no reason to judge ourselves negatively when this happens, because it is a common human experience. We can offer ourselves self-compassion when we notice this happening.*
- *The question becomes, "How can I learn to recognize thinking traps and do something about it when they occur?"*
- *Take a look at your handout that has a description for three different types of thinking traps and decide on one that you think you might be able to come up with a few examples of.*
- *Hold up one, two or three fingers to show which of the thinking traps on your handout you want to talk about. Find a partner with the same number and together create a list of examples of when this could happen.*

- You won't be naming any specific people, just describing a time someone has or could experience this thinking trap. An example of 'jumping to conclusions' might be if I think my friend doesn't like me anymore, if they say they are too busy to do something with me."

Each group will share out the examples they listed verbally or on chart paper.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

- "When we are not aware of cognitive distortions (thinking traps), this can lead to a third category, called emotional distortions. Have you ever seen someone get angry or afraid of something because of a mistake?"

Allow time for students to share (again not naming names) and provide the example below.

- "For example, perhaps a father can't find his keys. He searches all around and gets anxious because he feels he is going to be late for an important appointment. His daughter comes into the room and he shouts, "Did you take my keys again? Why do you keep moving my things?"
- If he becomes really angry, then even if someone else points out that he's made a mistake, he might not be able to hear it.
- He's in what Paul Ekman calls the "refractory period" of intense emotion.

- During this period, people are less open to new information. When that happens, a person might do something or say something that they later regret.
- This can be a challenging but fruitful opportunity to hold compassion for that person, when they are experiencing an emotional distortion.

Written Response/Verbal Share:

- "Reflect on your experience.
- Have you or anyone you know succumbed to thinking traps or heightened emotional responses?
- How can you use self-compassion and compassion for others in a situation like this?"

Thinking Traps

1 Jumping to Conclusions

On the basis of insufficient evidence, we may jump to a conclusion, sometimes with harmful results for ourselves and others. The opposite of this thinking trap is to realize that no one really has a complete understanding of the world around us, and to be humble about making an assumption that I understand everything about what's going on at a particular moment in time. Sometimes this idea is called epistemic humility: being humble about how much knowledge I have and remembering that I might be wrong.

Some questions I can ask myself might be: "What if I was wrong about this?" "What if it were not the case...? What else might be possible?" For example, if someone walks by without saying hello, you might jump to the conclusion that they are angry with you. But you could then stop and ask, "What if it isn't the case that they're angry at me? What other reasons might there be for them not saying hello?" Approaching the situation with a critical thinking lens helps open up a range of other possibilities.

2 Catastrophizing

Catastrophizing means getting lost in a string of "What if?" questions that magnify a problem until it seems disastrous. For example, one notices a small lump on one's skin. This could be a problem, but it could also be nothing serious. Catastrophizing would be to compulsively worry about all the things it could possibly be: "What if it's this? What if it's that? What if I'm going to get sick?"

While it's good to be alert to problems, catastrophizing is rarely helpful or constructive. It can be useful to remind oneself, "That might be true, but the opposite might also be true."

It can also be helpful to think of a quote from the ancient Indian philosopher Shantideva, who said, "If there is a solution to the problem, why worry? And if there is no solution, what good will worrying do?" The point is that it is constructive action and constructive thinking, rather than worrying, which can help us most effectively.

3 Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization means taking a single instance, or a few instances, and turning them into a general rule. For example, if I fail at something once or twice, I may conclude that I will always fail at it. Or if I see someone do something harmful, I may decide that they are always doing harmful things, or that they are a bad person.

Building Compassion Through Reciprocity

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will study scenarios and identify underlying motives for the actions of each character. Students will decide whether they were acts of true genuine compassion or apparent compassion/kindness. Students will reflect on their own actions and motives and finally illustrate/write about a time when they gave or received compassion and kindness.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Define compassion in the context of outer actions, inner intentions and far reaching complex motivations
- Recognize the distinction between real (inner, genuine) kindness and apparent kindness by examining one's personal motivation and intention

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Compassion
for Others



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Scenarios handout for each student (provided)

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Guiding Language

[PAUSE]s can begin with 15 seconds and lengthen incrementally over time.

- **“We’re going to take a moment to sit quietly together and rest our minds and bodies to help us be ready to focus and connect. [PAUSE]**
- **Maybe you are tired or full of energy; maybe it’s been a challenging day so far, or an exciting one. Either way, it’s helpful to take this moment together.**
- **Let’s each see if we can think of any moments of kindness or compassion in our day so far. Maybe something happened at home or on your way to school or while you’ve been at school today.**
- **See what comes up for you, remembering a moment of kindness or compassion that you witnessed or that you felt. [PAUSE]**
- **Picture that moment in your mind and hold onto it. [PAUSE]**
- **Don’t worry if you can’t think of a particular example right now. You can imagine a moment of kindness or compassion. [PAUSE]**
- **Let’s sit with our moment of kindness or compassion for a little bit. Notice how you’re feeling...**
- **We have time to hear from a few people — what thoughts came to mind for you?**

- **What did you notice about how it felt while you were thinking about or trying to remember a moment of kindness or compassion?” (1-3 volunteers)**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

“Because we exist interdependently, human social life depends on reciprocity.

Reciprocity is the ability to give and take with fairness. The principle of reciprocity means that if we want others to respect us and our well-being, we should extend that respect to others in return. In doing so, we create a positive feedback loop of mutual benefit.

Reciprocity also leads us to compassion. Since we all want well-being, we appreciate it when others help us, and we don’t like it if others harm us. Thus, we prefer kindness and compassion over aggression and indifference.

Integrity consists of having an authentic intention that respects and values the common humanity and equality of others.

Doing external actions that look good externally, but that are driven by a hidden motivation to take advantage of others, is not compassion because it is not genuinely kind. It is not reciprocity, because it is not the kind of behavior we want from others. And it is not integrity, because it involves creating a false impression, pretending or lying.”

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Guiding Language

"Today we are going to think about how we can practice compassion and discuss what motivates a person to be kind and decide whether or not this is genuine or ingenuine kindness based on a persons motives and actions.

Step 1:

Independently read through each scenario and think about the underlying motivations that may be behind each characters' actions.

Step 2:

A few volunteers will read/act them out while the rest of the class is thinking about the character's motivation and whether or not they are practicing true compassion or if it is ingenuine by considering the motives of their actions.

Step 3:

In pairs or as a whole class, answer the following prompts to debrief the activity.

- Did you see examples of kindness or compassion in the scenarios?
Why or why not?**
- Were the character(s) from scenario 1 practicing true compassion?
How do you know?
What were their motives?
What about scenario 2?**

- What might be another example of actions that look kind but the intention is not truly compassionate?**
- What might an example be of a time when an action looks unkind in the moment, but is actually reflective of true compassion?**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 1 | 10 minutes

Guided Language

"For our next activity, we will engage in mindful listening.

When practicing mindful listening we learn to listen with full attention and without judgment. We can learn a great deal about each other in a short amount of time.

Being listened to can make us feel heard and seen and can strengthen relationships.

Being able to express our thoughts and feelings can help us reflect more deeply and gain insight. It also supports us in our ability to attune to others and cultivate a compassionate response towards them."

Revisit guidelines for MINDFUL DIALOGUE (3 minutes)

- 1. "Mindful dialogues are confidential.**
- 2. If you do not have time to answer all three questions that's okay, and if the responder has finished early, you can sit in silence until the time is up.**

3. Partner A will be asking the questions and will also be the person who will practice mindful listening. Partner B will be the first speaker answering questions. Each speaker has the option to pass on one or more prompts as long as they are choosing to speak to some of the prompts.”

“In pairs answer the following prompts using the mindful listening protocol.

- Can you think about a time when you had a similar experience that you remembered after hearing the scenarios. Do not name names or point fingers.**
- It is easier to think about how others have practiced “fake” kindness. Can you think about something you may have said or done, that upon later reflection seems like less than genuine compassion or kindness?**
- When we think about compassion as an inner quality, what might we call it? An emotion, a motivation, a thought, an intention? Some or all of these?**
(Note that you are prompting thinking but not seeking a single “right” answer at this point, so welcome all thoughts.)
- What helps us determine whether our own, or others’ intentions are truly based in compassion?”**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 2 | 10 minutes

Remembering and Drawing an Act of Kindness, Compassion and Reciprocity

Introduce the journal/composition book that will be used during each of the SEE Learning Experiences. If you plan to have an ongoing SEE journal, explain that the responses in the notebook/journal will be private. Sometimes we will be asked to share what was written or illustrated, but will not need to show journal entries to anyone or hand it in to the teacher.

- “Today we will draw and/or write about an act of kindness, compassion and/or reciprocity in our journals or on a clean sheet of paper.**
- Remember or imagine a time when you received something from someone else. It could be something very small, like a gift or a smile or a word of encouragement. Or it could be something that was very important to you.**
- Try to choose something that could be seen as an act of kindness or compassion from the other person. You can also draw or write about how you gave back to that person or how you would like to give back to that person in the future — practicing reciprocity.**
- Keep these drawings in a safe place. We will add to these illustrations later on in Chapter 2.”**

Scenario 1

The Rich Person and the Charity

Narrator:

A representative from a charity goes to a wealthy person to ask for a donation to assist people who are homeless.

Charity representative:

"I know you've been very generous to charities in the past. Please, would you give us a donation? It would make a big difference to a lot of people who are in need."

Potential Donor:

"How will I be recognized if I make a donation? It's important that people know that I made the donation, not someone else."

Charity representative:

"The homeless people you help will all be so grateful, and they will all be told that it was you who helped them."

Potential Donor:

"But I want other people to know too, not just the homeless people," she said.

"Will it be in the news?"

Charity representative:

"Oh yes. And if your donation is large enough, you will be specially honored at our annual party celebration with a trophy."

Potential Donor: [smiling]:

"In that case, I agree."

The Basketball Captain and the Recruit

Narrator:

"The captain of the basketball (or another sports) team sees potential in a new student and really wants her (or him) to join the team, thinking it will help the team win the championship that year.

Team Member 1:

"Hey, I wanted to give you this school t-shirt!"

New Student:

"Thanks, but what for?"

Team Member 2:

"Duh, because you're super cool and your basketball skills are awesome!"

New Student:

"Thanks! You really think so?"

Team Member 1:

"Of course! Your form is great and I've never seen you miss a free throw. You're a natural!"

New Student:

"Aw, thanks, you guys."

Team Member 2:

"Imagine just how much more fun you'd have if you joined our basketball team. I might even be able to get you more stuff if you did!"

New Student:

"Hm, that seems cool, but I was planning on focusing more on my art this year."

Team Member 1:

"But think about it; you, us, our other teammates, and our captain. We would be unstoppable!"

Team Member 2:

"Since you're new here, this is a guaranteed way to be popular. People here really show up for our games. And they decorate our lockers! Plus, you shouldn't let your talent go to waste. We could really use your skills."

New Student:

"Thanks, you guys but really, I'm okay with my decision. I'm going to put my energy into my artwork this year."

Team Member 1:

"Oh, come on! We've been pretty nice to you and we're kind of friends now. You can't let us down like that, especially with the championship game coming up."

Team Member 2:

"Yeah, just think about it; winning the championships! Imagine not being there with us, celebrating! Do you really think people are going to want to be your friend if they find out how you let the school down by not joining the team?"



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 2

Building Resilience

Overview

Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness, interdependence, compassion and well-being by exploring what they mean for students. This exploration resulted in the development of class agreements. Chapter 2 explores the important role that our bodies, and in particular our nervous systems, play in our happiness and well-being. It does so by introducing the following:

The Science of Resilience

The structure of the brain gives us insight into how and why we interpret both internal and external experiences. The three part model of the brain helps us to understand the relationship that exists between brain function, nervous system responses, and our ability to experience wellbeing.

The Resilient Zone

A way of describing the regulated state of ourselves and our nervous system (in homeostasis) that is neither hyper-aroused (stuck in the high zone) nor hypo-aroused (stuck in the low zone). You can also refer to this as the "OK zone" or "zone of well-being."

Sensations

A physical feeling or perception within the body that is felt in a particular part of the body, such as warmth, cold, pain, numbness, heaviness, and so on, or the five senses as distinct from emotions and non-physical feelings (like feeling happy or sad).

Tracking

Noticing and attending to sensations in the body in order to build up body awareness or "body literacy."

Personal Resources

Things one likes and associates with greater safety and well-being that can be brought to mind to return to or continue to stay in one's resilient zone.

Grounding

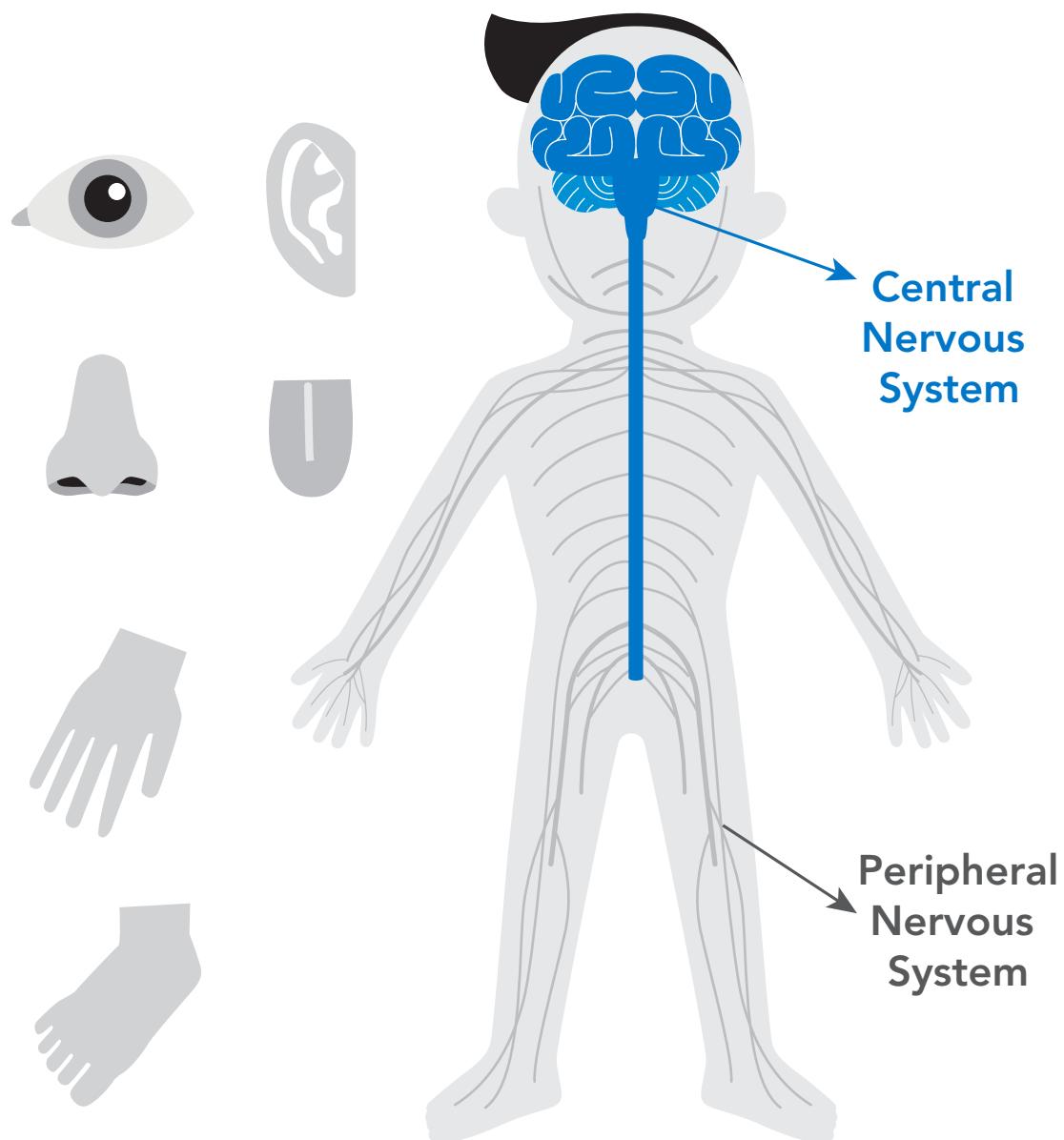
Attending to the sensation at the point of contact of one's body with objects or the ground in order to return to or stay in the resilient zone.

Help Now! Strategies

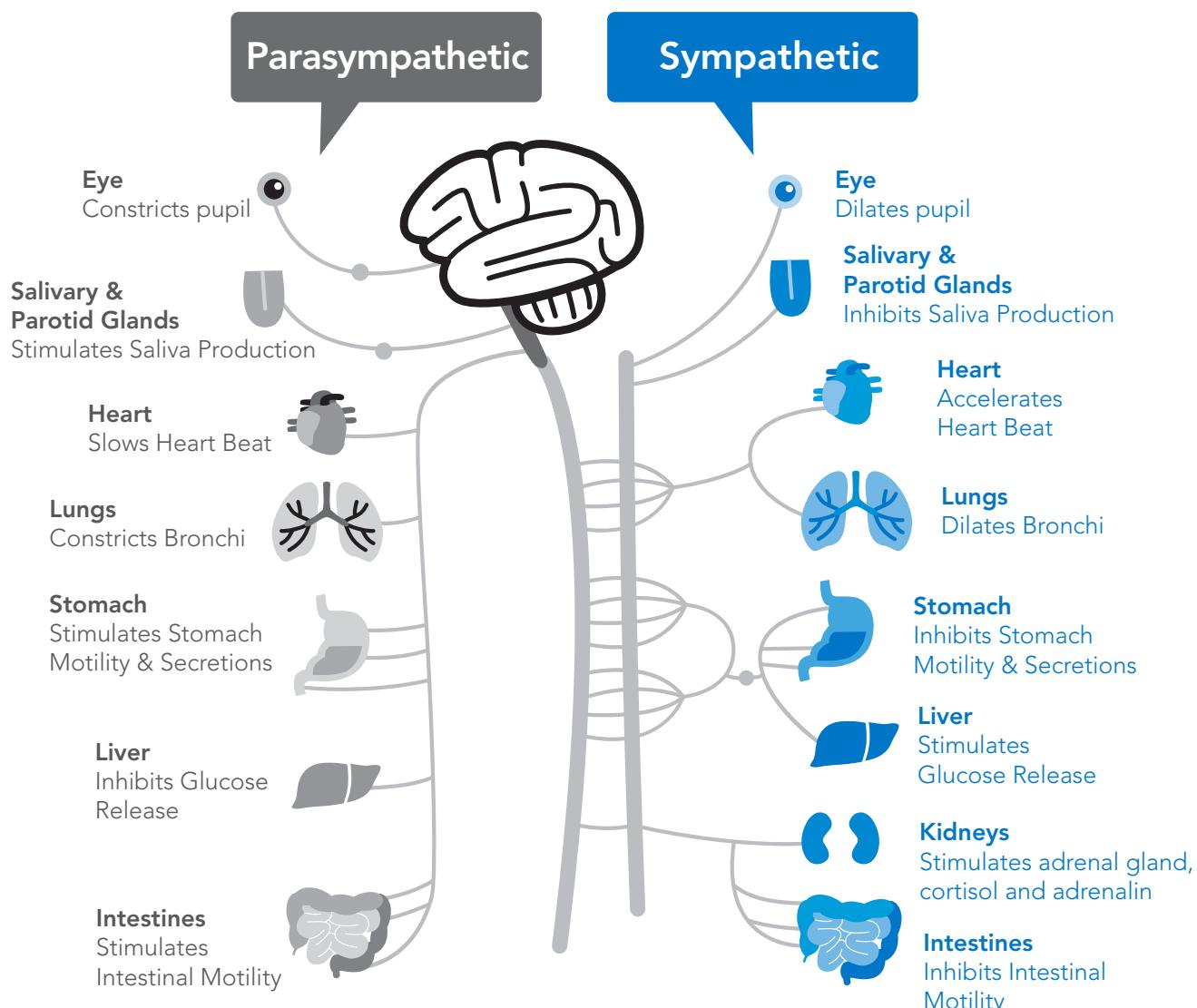
Simple and immediate techniques for helping students return to their resilient zone when they get "bumped out" of that zone.

The Nervous System

The Central and the Peripheral



The Autonomic Nervous System



The Nervous System

Our nervous system is an essential part of our body, and understanding it can be enormously helpful for enhancing our well-being. Our nervous system is made up of our brain, spinal cord and a network of nerves that connect our brain and spinal cord to the rest of our body, including the internal organs and the sense organs. A part of our nervous system runs automatically, without the need for conscious control; this is called the autonomic (literally, “self-governing”) nervous system (ANS). Our ANS regulates many body processes necessary for survival, including our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, and digestion. It also regulates our internal organs such as our stomach, liver, kidneys, bladder, lungs, and salivary glands. Since our nervous system’s chief function is to keep us alive, it reacts very quickly to perceived threats or safety. Our autonomic nervous system has two pathways that get activated based on whether we perceive danger (in a “fight or flight” response) or safety (in a “rest and digest” response). The fight or flight response triggers our sympathetic nervous system, turning off systems of digestion and growth and preparing the body for action and possible injury, while the rest and digest response triggers our parasympathetic nervous system, relaxing the body and allowing for functions like growth, digestion and so on to resume. This is why when we sense danger and have a fight or flight response, our heart rate increases, breathing becomes faster, blood pressure increases, pupil dilates, and so on. When we sense that the danger has passed and we are safe again, we notice opposite changes in these organs. In modern life, our bodies sometimes react to danger when there is no real threat to our survival, or hold on to a sense of danger after the threat has passed. This leads to a dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system, meaning that its regular alternation between parasympathetic and sympathetic activation is disrupted. This nervous system dysregulation in turn leads to inflammation and a host of other problems. It is one of the main reasons why chronic stress is so damaging to our health and well-being. Fortunately, we can learn to calm our bodies and minds and regulate our nervous system. Since our nervous system is what senses things both on the inside (such as tension, relaxation, heat, cold, pain, and so on) and on the outside through the five senses, it is giving us constant information about the state of our body. This chapter focuses on enhancing skills to notice these changes and engage in practices of self-care.

Learning Experience 1, “Exploring Happiness and Wellbeing,” allows students to develop a basic understanding of the complex structure of the brain, the science of stress, and gain insight into the practices that support resilience. Students will also reflect on their level of awareness around body literacy and responding to sensations in the body.

Learning Experience 2, “The Neuroscience of Resilience,” enables students to examine the way our nervous systems react to stressful situations and the way our brains are wired for self-preservation and self-protection when in danger or perceived-danger. Through activities,

students will learn to recognize the physical changes happening due to activation of the sympathetic nervous system as they increase their body awareness and to apply strategies for regulating the nervous system and.

Learning Experience 3, "Reinforcing the Resilient Zone," supports students using the resilient zone graphic to apply resiliency by understanding cues that can bump them out of their "OK Zone" and into the high or low zone. Students will engage in practices that help support resiliency and the ability to return to "Resilient Zone."

In this model, our body can be in one of three zones. Our resilient zone is our zone of well-being, where we feel calm and alert, and where we feel more in control and better able to make good decisions. Although we can go up and down in this zone and may feel a bit excited or have slightly less energy, our judgment is not impaired and our body is not in a state of harmful stress.

Here our autonomic nervous system is in homeostasis, which can be defined as a stable physiological equilibrium. It is able to alternate between sympathetic and parasympathetic activation properly. Sometimes we get bumped out of our resilient zone by life events. When this happens, our autonomic nervous system becomes dysregulated. If we get stuck in our high zone, we are in a state of hyper-arousal. We may feel anxious, angry, nervous, agitated, afraid, manic, frustrated, "amped up," or otherwise out of control. Physiologically, we may experience shaking, rapid and shallow breathing, headaches, nausea, tightness in our muscles, indigestion, and changes to vision and hearing. If we get stuck in the low zone, we experience the effects of hypo-arousal. This can have us feeling lethargic, exhausted, lacking in energy, and not wanting to get out of bed or be active. We may feel isolated or lonely, numb, checked out, unmotivated, lacking in optimism, or uninterested in activities that we would normally enjoy. It's important to note that the high zone and low zone are both states of dysregulation, and are not opposites of each other. They may share physiological characteristics and when dysregulated we may bounce between the two.

Safety Note: When teaching about the three zones, it is safest to use a third-person proxy (such as a story, pictures, or emojis) at first. Be careful not to ask students to "Think of a stressful situation" since some kids will often think of the worst thing that had happened to them.

It is recommended that you do not ask students direct questions such as, "What do you feel like when you're stuck in your high zone?" or "Do you remember a time when you were stuck in your low zone?" Doing so could inadvertently cause the student to experience a traumatic flashback

or to make high-vulnerability disclosures in this public setting. Noticing unpleasant sensations is part of tracking, however, when first introducing grounding, ways to focus on pleasant and neutral sensations can be a helpful way to start to learn about the sensations connected to our resources.

Learning Experience 4, “Exploring Sensations and Help Now! Strategies,” allows students to explore sensations and their relationship to our nervous system. Students will build an expanded vocabulary with which to describe sensations. Students will practice Help Now! Strategies. Help Now! Strategies (as developed by Elaine Miller-Karas and the Trauma Resource Institute and used in SEE Learning with their permission) are readily accessible tools to help students return themselves to a regulated body state when they get stuck in a dysregulated state such as being overly agitated or filled with uncontrolled excitement.

Learning Experience 5, “Resourcing to Address Thinking Traps,” enables students to personally apply self-regulation strategies including resourcing, grounding, shift and stay, and tracking. Students will reflect on possible misconceptions around applying self-regulation strategies.

Learning Experience 6, “The Practice of Grounding,” encourages students to explore a variety of ways to practice grounding. Students will gain insights into what grounding is and how to do it. Students will be asked to examine the benefits of grounding and how they can apply it throughout their life.

Learning Experience 7, “Responding to Harmful Behaviors,” builds understanding of how words and actions impact others. The impact can be positive, negative or neutral. Students will focus on behaviors that are considered harmful. Students will examine their personal responsibility around making responsible choices and owning the impact of the choices they make. They will determine how to respond to harmful behavior using self-agency, self-advocacy and self-regulation. The goal of this lesson is to acknowledge and address peer conflict and harmful social interactions.

Learning Experience 8, “How Compassion and Stress Affect the Body,” enables students to examine the concept of stress contagion. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the shared impacts on the nervous system, levels of awareness, and the personal locus of control people have over sensations, thoughts and feelings. Students will also envision how society would be changed if others understood stress contagion.

Check-ins and Repeated Practice

From Chapter 2 onwards, the importance of practice becomes even more important in SEE Learning. You will note that the check-ins for this chapter build, each incorporating skills and material covered in preceding Learning Experiences. Feel free to select which check-ins work best for your class and then use them on a regular basis even when you are not doing a full session of SEE Learning. Although the learning experiences include “Reflective Practice” sections for developing embodied understanding, the repetition of the check-ins and the repetition of insight activities (with modifications as you see fit) will greatly aid this process of helping students internalize what they are learning to the point where it becomes second-nature.

Time and Pacing

Each learning experience is designed to be 45 minutes. It is recommended that you take longer than this if time allows and if your students are capable of it, spending more time on the activities and reflective practices, especially. If you have less than 45 minutes, you can choose to do only one of the activities or a part of the activity, and finish the Learning Experience in the subsequent session. However, remember that check-ins and insight activities are important to include regardless of time.

Student Personal Practice

This is the stage in SEE Learning where it's important to recognize that your students may be beginning their own personal practice, even in an informal way. As you support them in this, it's helpful to recognize that each student is different, and that images, sounds, and activities that may be calming for some students can be activating for others. Even things such as the sound of a bell, an image of a cute animal, yoga postures, long moments of silence, or sitting and taking long breaths may be experienced as unpleasant by some of your students and may actually hinder their ability to be calm rather than promote it. You'll come to know this by watching your students and by asking them what they like, and then by giving them options so that they can develop a personal practice around what works best for them.

Teacher Personal Practice

Naturally, your own familiarity with the practices will strengthen your teaching. It is recommended that, if possible, you first try these practices on your own or with colleagues, friends and family as you are able. The more experience you have, the easier it will be to do these exercises with your students. All the practices suggested in this chapter can also be done with older children and adults.

Further Reading and Resources

Content for the learning experiences in this chapter has been adapted from the works of Elaine Miller-Karas and the Trauma Resource Institute with their kind permission. Teachers interested in learning more about the content and skills presented in this chapter are encouraged to read *Building Resilience to Trauma: The Trauma and Community Resiliency Models* (2015) by Elaine Miller-Karas, and to visit www.traumaresourceinstitute.com. Also recommended is Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (2015).

Chapter 2: Building Resilience

Learning Experience 1: The Science of Stress and Resilience

Learning Experience 2: The Neuroscience of Resilience

Learning Experience 3: Reinforcing the Resilient Zone

Learning Experience 4: Exploring Sensations and Help Now Strategies

Learning Experience 5: Resourcing to Address Thinking Traps

Learning Experience 6: The Practice of Grounding

Learning Experience 7: Responding to Harmful Behaviors

Learning Experience 8: How Compassion and Safety Affect the Body

The Science of Stress and Resilience

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will engage in an independent reading and a small group activity. Students will develop a basic understanding of the complex structure of the brain, the science of stress, and gain insight into the practices that support resilience. Students will begin to reflect on their level of awareness around body literacy or noticing and responding to sensations in the body.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Develop a basic understanding of the neuroscience of stress and resilience
- Describe rudimentary brain structure and understand that the brain is malleable (it changes)
- Engage in practices that support resilience by exploring their current level of body literacy (noticing physical sensations)

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Our Brain Structure reading handout
- Chart paper/large paper or board
- Writing utensils and paper

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

Guiding Language

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

- **"We're going to take a moment to sit quietly together and rest our minds and bodies to help us be ready to focus and connect. [PAUSE]
Maybe you are tired or full of energy; maybe it's been a challenging day so far, or an exciting one. Either way, it's helpful to take this moment together.**
- **You can close your eyes or keep your eyes open, softening your gaze.**
- **Let's each see if we can think of any moments of kindness or compassion in our day so far. Maybe something happened at home or on your way to school or while you've been at school today. See what comes up for you, remembering a moment of kindness or compassion that you witnessed, or that you felt. It can be a big moment or a small thing. [PAUSE]**

Picture that moment vividly in your mind.
[PAUSE] **Don't worry if you can't think of a particular example right now. You can imagine a moment of kindness or compassion.** [PAUSE]

- **Let's sit with our moment of kindness or compassion for a little bit. Notice how you're feeling...notice your sensations, paying attention to pleasant or neutral sensations.** (Timed by educator. Start with 15

seconds and lengthen incrementally as you notice most students are becoming comfortable with the existing amount of time.)

- **We have time to hear from a few people—what thoughts came to mind for you?**
(2-4 volunteers)
- **What did you notice about how it felt, while you were thinking about, or trying to remember a moment of kindness or compassion?** (1-3 volunteers)
- **What sensations did you notice as you remembered your moment of kindness and compassion?**
- **If the feelings and sensations that came up for you were pleasant ones, you can remind yourself to go back into them later today. Just thinking about the good feelings and paying attention to pleasant or neutral sensations you were experiencing can help you feel better at a completely different time."**

Check-in (2 minutes)

"Reflect and pair up to share your responses to the prompts below:

- **What is one thing that you do to deal with stress?**
- **Do you think this is a healthy way of dealing with stress?**
- **Are the outcomes (long and short term) positive, neutral, or negative?"**

Whole group (2 minutes)

Invite a few students to share thoughts about the experiences that helped bring up some feelings of well-being, sharing a connection or an appreciation for how people interacted during the experience.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 7 minutes

Explain

“Stress is the physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension that comes from being in demanding circumstances. Stress is common to all human beings. In fact, it involves parts of our brain, body, and nervous system that we have in common with non-human animals, such as mammals.

Many circumstances, large and small, can lead to feelings of stress. Everyone experiences stress, and not all stress is bad or large-scale.

Physically or emotionally exciting events will activate our stress response, whether they are good or bad. It's important to recognize that we human beings are social beings. We don't just respond to physical threats, but to emotional threats too.

Someone criticizing us, ignoring us, or telling us we look bad can activate our stress system just as much — or even more — than seeing a bear in the woods and being afraid.

Chronic stress or intense stress (such as adversity or trauma) around negative events,

however, can cause physical, emotional, and relationship problems for ourselves and others, if it is not treated in a healthy way by ourselves and others.

In the case of anxiety, there may be a threat that isn't clearly defined. Because it isn't clearly defined, our body doesn't know if the threat has been dealt with or if it's passed, or whether it's still there.

If we never feel that the threat is gone, we never fully relax. Those chemical processes don't stop, and they start to damage our bodies and disturb our mental state as well.

Even with adversity and trauma, what is most damaging is the chronic nature of them, rather than the events themselves. This is actually why we can heal: because while we cannot undo the event of the trauma or adversity that is in the past, we can change how we deal with the memories and reminders of that trauma.

Sometimes we respond in ways to relieve stress that work in the short term but can be problematic in the longer term.

We might eat or drink substances that make our bodies feel better in the moment but that are unhealthy if overdone.

We might engage in activities that are fun but also risky. Those activities make our bodies feel better and more regulated, so they are

help temporarily, but if they're very risky, they could also lead to other problems for ourselves and others.

Our bodies and minds are already resilient, and have helped us deal with a multitude of stressors.

In addition to the strategies we have already learned and employed up to now, it can be very helpful to learn new strategies, allowing us more options to choose which strategy to use for which occasion.

While resilience is innate, we can also build our skills of resilience, helping us to deal with the challenges of life more effectively, and helping us to experience greater well-being. We can learn to tune our nervous systems!"

Teaching Tip

Understanding that resilience is a skill that can be built and reinforced is encouraging to adults and young people. Knowing some scientific information about anxiety and ways to explain resilience can help students be more confident in their own opportunities to impact the way they feel, think and act.

There are many definitions of resilience. Lead a discussion with the students about the meaning of resilience. You can then have group consensus about what resilience will mean in the context of SEE Learning in the classroom. The video can be helpful in prompting the discussion.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15-20 minutes

Activity Overview

Content about basic neuroscience and the concepts of stress and well-being will be shared through reading, jigsaw and presentation/share out.

JigSaw

Split students up into groups of 3

- Assign one part of the reading *Our Brain: Complex System with a Simple Goal* to each group. The three sections of the reading are
 1. Our Brain: A Complex Structure with One Simple Goal
 2. The Three Part Model of the Brain
 3. Learning to Direct Attention
- **"First silently read the assigned section and independently, highlight ideas and information in the text that are of high interest, that you're curious about, and that you made a connection to. (5 mins)**
- **Share the most important and most interesting aspects of the section you read with the people in your group. (1 min each)**
- **Through discussion agree on the most important aspects that convey the main idea of the section you read. (3 mins)**
- **Create a visual that you can share with the rest of the class. This visual should describe the most important aspects that convey the main idea of the section your group**

read. You can write down a quote or excerpt from the text, draw an illustration or diagram or create a word web. Be creative. (5 mins)

- Each group will have 2-3 minutes to present your visual, conveying the main idea of the section your group read to the rest of the class.”

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Noticing Sensations: The Language of the Survival Brain

Explain (2 min)

“One very helpful model that some neuroscientists have used for understanding how the brain and nervous system work is to divide them into three interconnected networks.

These are the cortex, the limbic network, and the survival network. This simple division can provide an easy starting point for understanding the general structure and function of the brain and nervous system.

Metaphorically, we can say that these three systems speak different “languages”: the languages of thought, emotion, and sensation.

Naturally, they do not literally speak different languages, but this is a simple way of understanding how the brain is functioning.

The survival network speaks the language of sensations. Let’s think about how we have or haven’t learned to direct our attention to the language of sensations that the body communicates to us.”

Partner Debrief (4 min)

1. *“How do you know when you are tired/need sleep?”*
2. *“Describe a time you listened to your body to figure out what it needed.”*
3. *“How might getting better at reading or listening to your body’s sensations be useful?”*

Close (1 min)

“By learning to choose where we direct our attention, we can participate in the process of managing stress and creating positive neurocircuitry consciously, rather than by reacting.

We can recognize when emotions and sensations are heightened and our bodies are in states of distress.

We can learn to notice, name and intentionally return to operating from the cortex, the center of clear thinking, and choosing an action, instead of reacting to distressing emotions and physical discomfort.

This happens through sustained practice.

This process is called “tuning,” the positive experiences which can change the actual structure of the brain by increasing the number of connections between neurons (brain cells).

Another process that is important for brain development is called “pruning”, which is the weakening and often removing of the neural connections that aren’t used—sometimes described as the “use it or lose it” principle. These processes show that the brain can change! Neuroplasticity in action.”

Our Brain: Complex structure with simple goal

While the brain is our most complex organ, its main objective is simple: to keep us alive and achieve our goals. It does this by helping us breathe, eat, walk and talk—the basic essentials to our survival. It is geared to search for any dangers in our environment and primes us to respond quickly. What's more, our brain gives us the ability to plan ahead, solve problems, experience emotions, store memories, and communicate with others...all the things that make us human.

Our brain is the control center of our entire body, driving our every thought, feeling and action. Just how do our brains do this? There are three main regions within the brain that each serve a specific function as we interact with our environment.

At the base of our brain is the **primitive** region, in the middle is the feeling region, and at the front and top of our brain is the thinking region. While these three regions have their own special function, they operate as one connected network to keep us alive and reach our goals.

The primitive or survival region of our brain looks after those basic life functions that happen automatically, like our breathing and heartbeat. It also helps coordinate our basic physical movements such as our balance and posture. And it plays a key role in scanning our environment to search for those things that may threaten our chances of survival. This helps the instinctual part of our brain kick into action automatically.

The **middle**, feeling region of our brain plays a significant part in our emotional and social experiences through life. This is the part of our brain where emotions and impulses such as anger, fear, and pleasure come from. It is activated when our primitive region detects a threat in the environment and triggers our fight, flight or freeze response. This region drives many of our behaviors and habits and helps us form memories and attach feelings to them, particularly when we experience strong feelings such as fear or happiness.

Lastly, the **thinking** region is the largest, and most highly developed part of the human brain. It stores our memories, allows us to plan, enables us to imagine or analyze a situation, find a solution, and communicate with others. It is the part of the brain where we can take control of decision making and emotion and override our automatic responses from our primitive and feeling regions. Our thinking region holds our likes, dislikes, hopes and ambitions, those things that make us uniquely human and different from all other animals on this planet. These three regions of the brain work together to coordinate our every thought, feeling, and action.

The Three-part Model of the Brain

One helpful model for understanding how the brain and nervous system work is to divide them into three interconnected regions or layers. These are the neocortex, the limbic area, and the survival brain. While the brain is highly complex and interconnected, this simple three-fold division can provide an easy starting point for understanding the structure and function of the brain and nervous system.

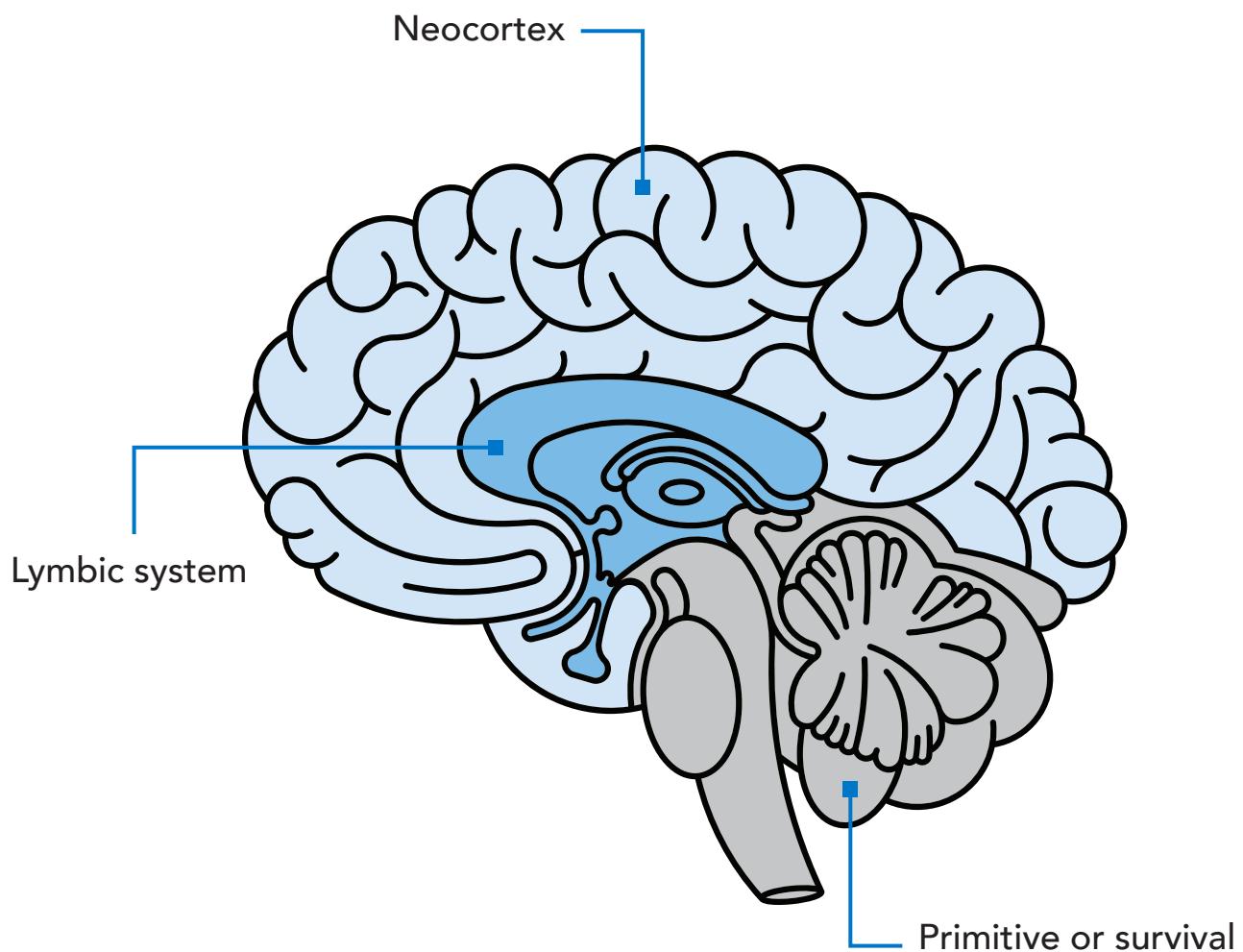
The top layer is the neocortex. The neocortex is the outer surface of the brain, and is responsible for thought, speech, reflection, and decision-making. The neocortex is the most recently evolved part of the brain and is most developed in humans and non-human primates.

The second layer is the limbic system. The limbic system is highly involved in the processing of emotions. It sits in a middle region under the neocortex but above the survival brain. The limbic system is common to humans and non-human mammals.

The third layer is the primitive or survival brain. This refers to a set of structures that lie deeper down, under the limbic system, and that control the automatic functions of our body. This includes breathing, heart rate, body temperature, digestion, blood pressure, and the functioning of the organs of the body. This ancient part of the brain is common to humans, non-human mammals and reptiles.

Metaphorically, we can say that these three brain layers speak different “languages.” The neocortex speaks the language of thought. The limbic system speaks the language of emotion. The survival brain speaks the language of sensations. Since they do not literally speak different languages, why use such a model? One reason is because it shows us that it is hard for the upper layers to override what’s happening in the lower layers. If a person feels a sensation of pain and this is registered by the survival brain, it is not easy for that person to simply “think away” the sensation of pain. That sensation of pain could grow more intense and could trigger an emotion, such as fear, in the limbic system. That emotion, if it is strong, can sway the person’s thinking. Even if the person wishes to be calm and generates the thought or decision, “I will be calm,” this may not work, because the other two layers of the brain are not responding to the language of thought. However, the person could engage in other activities that do help regulate the body and lead to calmness by bringing about pleasant sensations or more neutral emotions, such as doing something that relieves the pain, or if that is not possible, going for a walk, listening to music, or engaging in some other activity that helps the body relax. If the person does this, their stress level can go down. If they don’t, their stress might continue to elevate.

The Three-part Model of the Brain



Learning to Direct Attention

By learning skills such as how to direct one's attention, a person can play an active role in the body and brain's emotional state, and help themselves deal with stress more constructively and healthfully. The body processes information constantly from within itself and from outside, including thoughts, memories, external sensory information, and internal sensations. Our 'attention' selects which sensations to prioritize or emphasize. The limbic system then assesses those sensations and messages the situation as dangerous or safe. This generates an emotional response and also changes in the autonomic nervous system that can be felt throughout the body. By learning to control and direct our attention, we can participate in this process consciously, rather than just reactively, and make choices that help to quiet our nervous system and shift our emotional state.

This is because the limbic system interprets painful sensations as signs of danger, but interprets neutral and pleasant sensations as signs of safety. If a painful sensation is signaling danger, the limbic system may start to focus on it, amplifying that signal. This can lead to an emotional response like fear. The emotion then triggers further activation of the survival brain (called sympathetic activation or the "fight and flight" response) to get ready for danger, resulting in changes to heart rate, breathing, muscle tension, digestion, and so on. It also releases chemicals in the body that are designed to fight disease and tissue damage, but that can harm the body if they are present for a long time. Without effective attention, chronic stress slowly harms the body and disturbs the person's peace of mind.

When attention is redirected to pleasant or neutral sensations, a sense of safety and well-being results. The body responds in the opposite way, with parasympathetic activation, also called the "relaxation response" or the "rest and digest" response. Muscles relax, breathing and heart rate slow, and the body's digestive system restarts.

We are fortunate that our neocortex allows us great flexibility in directing our attention. Even if we are experiencing something unpleasant, we can choose whether it might be useful to direct our attention to something that could lead to neutral or pleasant sensations. If we then focus on those sensations, we can generate the relaxation response throughout our body, helping us to better manage the stress.

Imagine if we do not eat for a long time. Our body recognizes that there is not enough food and we may experience an unpleasant sensation, such as a sensation of pain or hunger in our stomach.

Our body can experience many sensations simultaneously. But if this unpleasant sensation from our stomach is prolonged or intense, it could overpower other sensations and lead the limbic system to generate an emotional response of fear or anxiety. Unlike a sensation, an emotion is a whole-body response to a situation. This emotion will in turn affect our thinking, processed in the neocortex. We might think, "I'm feeling so anxious or unhappy. Why is that? Perhaps it's because I'm hungry."

If we do not pay attention to our sensations, we might not understand why we are feeling a certain emotion or why our thoughts are turning to a particular direction. By learning to control and direct our attention, we can participate in this process consciously, rather than just reactively. We can recognize when emotions are heightened and our bodies are feeling in distress.

Our brain responds to practice and learning. When we practice something — like paying attention consciously to sensations — the neurons (brain cells) that make up our brain develop stronger connections between them. These stronger connections lead to faster processing. A phrase used in neuroscience to describe this is "Neurons that fire together wire together." So, although it may be challenging in the beginning to direct our attention consciously to sensations in the body, we can develop "body literacy" over time through practice. Gradually, like learning to ride a bicycle or catch a ball, learning to notice sensations and direct our attention will become second nature to us. Those neurons begin to 'fire together' more readily and become more automatic more quickly. This helps us regulate emotions and our stress, and enhance our resilience.

References

- Miller-Karas, Elaine. *Building resilience to trauma: The trauma and community resiliency models*. Routledge, 2015.
- Sapolsky, Robert M. *Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst*. Penguin, 2017.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin Books, 2015.

The Neuroscience of Resilience

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will examine how all people have nervous systems that will react to stressful situations. Students will identify that our brains are wired for self-preservation to protect when in danger. However, at times an automatic response occurs, based upon past experiences. This response may be harmful and not be helpful or appropriate to particular situations. Through activities, students will recognize that as we develop our body awareness and strategies for shifting from one mental, sensory, or emotional state to another, we grow increasingly more skillful at being able to rewire our nervous system. The new skills can change the automatic responses, and with greater conscious awareness, stay within our Resilient Zone.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe the concept of the Resilient Zone by applying the graphic to the creation of a relatable fictional character
- Describe cause and effect of events, feelings or thoughts that could take a person out of their Resilient Zone
- Describe ways to stay within the Resilient Zone

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Soft instrumental background music
- Resilient Zone visual
- Notebook or folder
- Colored pencils, crayons, pens, regular pencils, markers
- Emotions Word Bank handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

- **"We're going to take a moment to sit quietly together and rest our minds and bodies to help us be ready to focus and connect. [PAUSE]**
Maybe you are tired or full of energy; maybe it's been a challenging day so far, or an exciting one. Either way, it's helpful to take this moment together. You can close your eyes or keep your eyes open and soften your gaze.
- **Let's each see if we can think of any moments of kindness or compassion in our day so far. Maybe something happened at home or on your way to school or while you've been at school today. See what comes up for you, remembering a moment of kindness or compassion that you witnessed or that you felt. It can be a big moment or a small thing. [PAUSE]**
Picture that moment in your mind and hold onto it. [PAUSE]
Don't worry if you can't think of a particular example right now. You can imagine a moment of kindness or compassion.
[PAUSE]
- **Let's sit with our moment of kindness or compassion for a little bit. Notice how you're feeling... notice your sensations, paying attention to pleasant or neutral sensations.** (Timed by educator. Start with 15 seconds and lengthen incrementally as you notice most students are becoming comfortable with the existing amount of time.)

- **We have time to hear from a few people — what thoughts came to mind for you?**
(2-4 volunteers)
- **What did you notice about how it felt while you were thinking about or trying to remember a moment of kindness or compassion?** (1-3 volunteers)
- **What sensations did you notice as you remembered your moment of kindness and compassion?**
- **If the feelings and sensations that came up for you were pleasant ones, you can place yourself back into them later today. Just thinking about the good feelings and noticing the sensations that are pleasant or neutral can help you feel better at a completely different time.**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

"Being resilient can mean being able to respond in a productive way to challenges, stress, threats and unexpected surprises.

The Resilient Zone is a visual tool for understanding the state of our mind and body.

During the day and throughout life, we experience many ups and downs and a wide array of emotions. When we feel generally in control and generally "ourselves," we say that we are in our "Resilient Zone."

We are able to respond productively to the stresses and challenges of life. We can make healthy decisions; we can choose how we respond to different stimuli.

We can experience a whole range of emotions in our Resilient Zone, but we still feel relatively in control and we can manage even sadness and anger.

Resilience can be cultivated on:

- **an individual level;**
- **an interpersonal level (supportive relationships);**
- **a structural level (policies and institutions that promote well-being and resilience), and**
- **a cultural level (values, beliefs and practices that promote resilience).**

The Resilient Zone can also be called the “Zone of Well-Being” or the “OK Zone.”

- **What do you think the high, low, and okay zone mean?**
- **In the High Zone, our feelings are very escalated and we have big reactions that we may feel unable to control, in that moment.**
- **In the Low Zone our energy is very low, feelings like wishing to withdraw, get away, and/or turning inward may occur.”**

Writing a Microfiction

- **“Using this graph, we are going to write a microfiction.**
- **Everyone is going to make up a story that explains what was happening and how their character was feeling for each of the points on the graph.**
- **You will have 5 minutes to write and you will need to include a minimum of five emotion words and 2 sensory words in your story.**
- **You can use the emotions bank list and the sensory word list to find additional emotion words.**
- **(Show the provided example.) This is how one student your age graphed a microfiction. You’ll see some peaks and valleys within the Resilient Zone. Sometimes when things happened, and feelings and bodily sensations occurred, the character was able to stay within the Resilient Zone.**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Guiding Language

“Let’s look at this Resilient Zone graphic.

- **Take a few moments to see what you notice about it.** (Ask a few volunteers to share by pointing out the important elements of the graphic.)
- **Can someone describe the different parts of this graphic?**

- Do you notice some places where their reactions took them into the High or Low Zone? What types of emotions or sensations may they have been experiencing?
- Think about the character you are going to write about. What's happening to them during the part of the day depicted on this graph? Give each graph point an emotion word label and write a story that brings your graph to life. We'll have five minutes of private writing time now, and then we'll get into small groups and share the graphs and stories. Is there a sensation that accompanies the emotion label?"

Small Group Share

In groups of 2 or 3, students will share the written story they made up to match the graph.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Reflect, Write and Share

- "What are some of the things you noticed, as you shared your stories? (Students respond.)
- What was the same about the microfictions you shared?
What was different?
Did some characters experience the same emotions in different parts of the Resilient Zone?
Did some characters report the same sensations?

Were the events similar or different?
What about the expression of emotions?

- Where did we hear of a challenging time that a character had but still managed to stay in the Resilient Zone?
How did they do that?" (Students respond.)

"People can have a wide variety of responses to the same event.

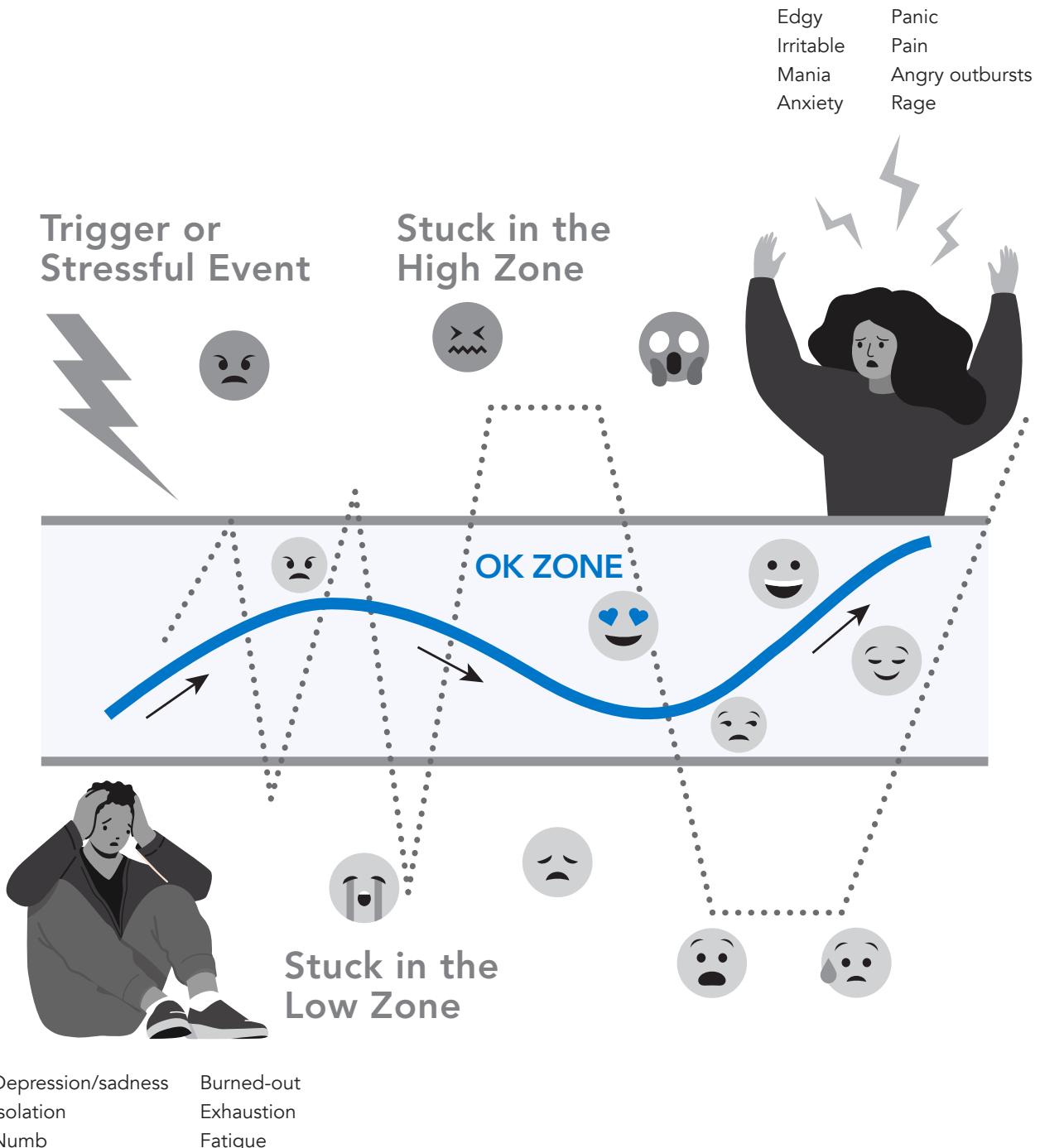
What fills one person with huge energy might make another person want to just go to sleep. As we've seen through our stories, many different life events can have a similar effect.

We heard so many different ideas of what could be happening to your story's character using that same 'ups and downs of the day' graph! What we know for sure is that the ups and downs are part of our common humanity.

We all DO have reactions to things; we all have nervous systems that will react in various situations. People can build the skills and practices that help us have the internal power to notice, name, pause, and to make a choice in how we react to stressful events.

Our bodies absolutely will react. We're all human. We're all in this together. We can build the skills needed to return ourselves to our Resilient Zone, even in very challenging situations."

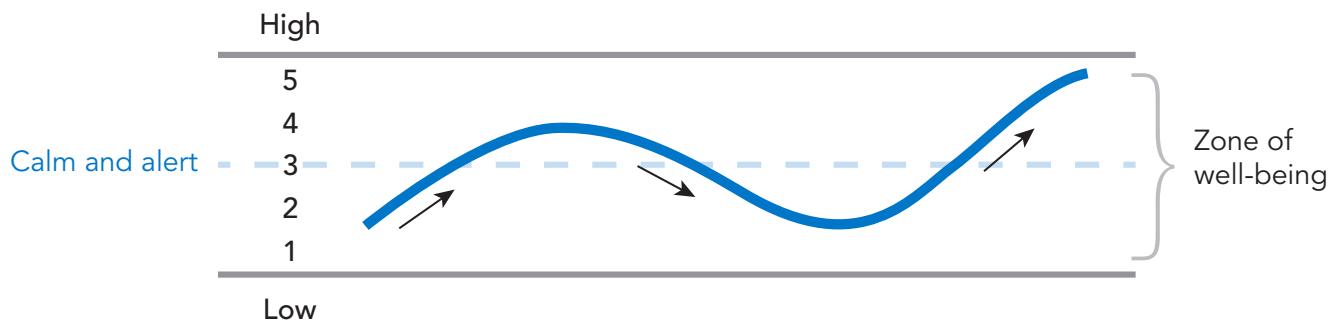
The Resilient Zone



(c) Trauma Resource Institute

Graphic adapted from an original graphic of Peter Levine/Heller, original slide design by Genie Everett

THE RESILIENT ZONE



Emotions

Excited	Indifferent	Exhausted
Anxious	Insecure	Optimistic
Grateful	Impatient	Uncomfortable
Ashamed	Inspired	Worried
Fulfilled	Hurt	Intrigued
Bored	Irritated	Upset
Grumpy	Hopeful	Surprised
Calm	Joyful	Unhappy
Amazed	Happy	Stressed
Comfortable	Lethargic	Troubled
Confused	Guarded	Shocked
Concerned	Lonely	Torn
Amused	Vulnerable	Shaky
Content	Neutral	Tired
Affectionate	Furious	Scared
Delighted	Numb	Tense
Angry	Frustrated	Satisfied
Depressed	Open	Tender

Reinforcing the Resilient Zone

PURPOSE

Students will use the resilient zone graphic to further explore resiliency by understanding cues that can bump us out of our "OK Zone" and into the high or low zone. Students will experience and describe practices like noticing sensations and using personal resources that help support resiliency and the ability to return to our "Resilient Zone."

Safety Note: When teaching about the three zones, it is safest to use a third-person proxy (such as a story, pictures, or emojis) at first. Be careful not to ask students to "Think of a stressful situation" since some kids will often think of the worst thing that ever happened to them. In order to avoid traumatic responses on the part of some students, it is advisable to not directly ask them, "What do you feel like when you're in the high zone?". When first introducing resourcing, it is helpful to focus on pleasant and neutral sensations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Apply the resilient zone (which also may be called the okay zone or zone of well-being), the low zone and the high zone to a fictional character.
- Identify how the resilient zone graphic can frame their understanding of resiliency by understanding triggers that can bump us out of our "OK Zone" and practices that help support resiliency and the ability to return to our "Resilient Zone"

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Blank Zones graphic
- Resilient Zone Partner Brainstorm Note catcher (one per pair)
- Clarifications and Champions handout, one per student

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

"Open to the last page of your notebook or take out a clean sheet of paper and put the date at the top.

Make a brainstorming list. For 2-3 minutes, write down as many memories, places, people or imaginings as you can that bring you a sense of joy and calm. This will be a quick exercise to capture as long of a list as you can of examples to use later. (2-3 minutes)

We just made a list of personal resources. **Personal Resources** are internal, external, or imagined things that can help us feel better, safer or more resilient when we think of them. They are unique to each person and change with time and experiences.

There is value to noticing positive moments in our daily lives. A consistent positive aspect of our life can act kind of like an anchor, that when we think of it — this person, place, object, memory or idea — we feel better, safer, stronger, or more resilient.

When we intentionally bring these aspects to mind and notice the sensations, we are practicing resourcing in an embodied way. It is important to feel the full sensory experience of the resource."

Settling Activity (2 minutes)

Guiding Language

"Let's settle ourselves and be refreshed and ready for learning. Sit comfortably and find a place to rest your gaze or you can close your eyes if you like.

- **Recall a personal resource and intentionally bring it to mind, recalling the details.**
[PAUSE]
- **What sensations do you notice on the inside?** [PAUSE]
- **Can you draw your attention to the pleasant or neutral sensations connected to your resource?**
- **As you notice pleasant or neutral sensations, what else do you notice?**
[PAUSE]
See if the sensations change or if they stay the same. [PAUSE]
- **If at any time the sensations become too unpleasant, you can shift your attention back to the classroom away from the internal awareness.** [PAUSE]
- **When you're ready, shift your attention from this internal awareness back to our group."**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

Further Exploration of Resiliency

- **“What other strategies or practices have we tried out/talked about that might help us build resilience? Last week we practiced noticing sensations/building body literacy and just now, we practiced using personal resourcing.**
- **We can apply both of these practices proactively to help us build resilience and as an in-the-moment practice for when we get bumped out of the resilient zone.**
- **Can anyone remind us what resilience means? What does it mean to be resilient? Being resilient means being able to respond in a productive way to challenges, stress, threats, and unexpected surprises.**
- **Difficulties happen to all of us, in large and small ways. Resilience is something that we have and also something we can develop. By learning to notice what is happening inside us, we can learn strategies that bring us back to our resilient zone when we have been pushed out of it.**
- **The Resilient Zone graphic gives us a visual to help describe when our mind and body are in a state of well-being. When we are in our resilient zone, we can handle the stresses of daily life and can act and react in healthy ways. We can experience a whole range of emotions and thoughts in our resilient zone — some positive and some negative. When we are in the resilient zone we feel relatively in control.**
- **What can bump us out of our resilient zone? Stress can bump us out of our resilient zone and into our high or low zone.**
- **How might a person feel when stuck in the high zone? In the high zone, we may feel anxious, agitated, nervous, angry, or stressed out. Our body is dysregulated, making it hard for us to concentrate, learn new information, or make responsible decisions.**
- **What about the low zone? When we are stuck in the low zone, we may feel tired, lacking in energy, unexcited about things we normally like, unmotivated, or deflated. It becomes difficult for us to learn new things, solve problems, seek the company of others, or make our best choices.**
- **Anyone can get bumped into the low or high zone. It can become problematic for us if we get stuck in the low or high zones. The skills can help us develop greater ability to get unstuck.**
- **Fortunately we all have the ability to recognize when we are bumped into our high and low zones, and we can use skills to get back into the resilient zone. We can use these same skills to stay in our resilient zone, and even to widen our resilient zone, making it less likely for us to be bumped out.”**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will build their understanding of the three zones (high, resilient, low) through creating scenarios. The scenarios will include the identification of a trigger that bumps a character out of the "OK Zone" and a strategy or practice that can be used to support a person in returning to the "Resilient Zone" after being bumped out.

Guiding Language

- *"We are going to use the resilient zone graphic to think further about how a character might be bumped into the high or low zone, and what might help them return to their Resilient Zone. This scenario features a student named PJ, who is your age and goes to a school very similar to ours.*
- *When we are in our resilient zone and experience difficulties, we can often deal with the challenges without being bumped out of our resilient zone. We are not super stressed-out or troubled because our body and mind feel safe enough, and we can readily see ways to respond to the challenging situation. Other times, the experience in the moment can bounce us into our high or low zone, and we can get stuck there.*

Display and describe the Brainstorm Note catcher. Go through the events PJ experiences pointing to the appropriate Zones Graphic

areas to visually reinforce the scenario you're describing.

- *With your partner, complete the bottom half of the handout. Create an experience or event that might bump the character into the high or low zone and then choose an effective strategy for getting back into the "OK Zone." (5 mins)*
- *Pair up with another pair, making a group of four. Take turns sharing the scenarios you've written, including the trigger or stressful event, an example of being bumped into either the high or low zone, and your ideas for the strategy that might be helpful in that situation, and why.*

Habits grow stronger over time. Abilities develop over time. We can practice different strategies to enhance our resilience and see which ones, if any, feel most effective in supporting our resilience."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will continue working in their same groups of four to gain clarity on the LE's concepts and vocabulary.

Guiding Language

Introduce the "Clarifications and Champions Handout."

- *"Silently read the list of terms and concepts*

on this handout. Some of them are from our lesson today and others you may not be familiar with.

- *Put a star by each item you feel confident explaining to others, and a question mark next to those you have some questions about.*
- *Discuss the items that you marked with a question mark. Get clarification by talking it through as a group, and coming to a mutual understanding of what this term or concept means. If everyone in the group has the same question, make a note of that for when we all come back together.*
- *Each group will share their understanding of a term by saying what is important, powerful, or valuable about it and then share a question they have about a term or concept, if any.”*

“The strategies we are learning will not stop us from having uncertainty in our lives, or from experiencing unfairness, unpleasantness, or even hurtful or destructive situations.

What these and other intentional strategies can become, when practiced and practiced over time, is an effective tool for regaining our own power in a stressful moment, so we are able to return to our personal resilience zone. From there, we can make more clear-headed decisions about what to say or do.”

Resilient Zone Partner Brainstorm Notecatcher

This morning, PJ's day got off to a smooth start. Delicious, nourishing breakfast. Feeling great about how they look. Homework done and backpack ready to go. People around PJ are expressing warmth and care, happy to be starting the day together.

Trigger or stressful event:

PJ arrives at school and two good friends walk right past, without speaking or looking at PJ

Bumped to High Zone

PJ feels embarrassed or left out, and a surge of anger rises up inside. PJ starts to yell at them.

Bumped to Low Zone

PJ's spirits sink and some negative self-talk starts. ("They only like being with each other. They don't really like me...")

Stays in Resilient Zone

PJ feels calm and glad to see them, and thinks, "They didn't see me! I'll catch up with them..."

Partner Brainstorm Example

Trigger or stressful event:

What happened:

Bumped to High Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

Possible Help Now!, resourcing, or grounding strategy to use:

Bumped to Low Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

Stays in Resilient Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

Clarifications and Champions Activity

Silently read these terms and concepts from our lesson today, marking a star (★) by each item you feel confident explaining in detail to others, and a question mark (?) next to those you have some questions about.

Resilient Zone

Tracking

High Zone

Resourcing

Low Zone

Grounding

Help Now! Strategies

When you've all had time to read the list and annotate with stars and question marks, discuss the items that have question marks next to them.

Get CLARIFICATION by talking it through as a group, and coming to a mutual understanding of what this term or concept means. If everyone in the group has the same question, make a note of that for when we all come back together.

If there's time, also take turns being a CHAMPION for one of the terms or ideas on the list, saying what you think is important or valuable about it.

NOTES:

Exploring Sensations and Help Now! Strategies

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will explore sensations and their relationship to our nervous system. Students will build an expanded vocabulary with which to describe these nuanced understandings. Students will learn Help Now! Strategies that draw on the classroom environment. Help Now! Strategies (developed by Elaine Miller-Karas and the Trauma Resource Institute and used by permission in SEE Learning) are readily accessible tools to help students return themselves to a regulated body state when they get stuck in a dysregulated state such as being overly agitated or filled with heightened excitement. These strategies provide a platform for learning about the concept of sensations and to build a regular practice of attending to them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to practice self-awareness by noticing sensations, thoughts, and feelings that accompany their experience of practicing each Help Now! Strategy
- Describe how intentionally recognizing inner sensations, emotional and mental states supports the function of the nervous system in keeping the body balanced and calm.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Class agreements written on poster and markers
- Chart paper or board space and markers to record student brainstorm responses
- A handout for each student with the Help Now! Strategies
- Optional: a copy of the Help Now! Strategies to post on the walls

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

- **"Read over our Class Agreements and choose one that's especially important for you today."**
- **Put a checkmark next to that agreement on the poster/board.**
- **In groups of three, share which agreement you chose and why."**

Debrief (5 minutes)

"Let's take a look at the messages we've given one another about what's most important for us to pay attention to during our time together today. [PAUSE]

All of our agreements are valuable, yet we know that we all have different things going on in our lives on any given day. [PAUSE]

What are a couple of messages you're getting from the checkmarks we all placed by agreements today?"

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

- **"We'll all settle in and be as quiet as possible for one full minute. I'll time it and then get your attention so we can share what we noticed."**
- **You can:**
 - **Tune into your hearing, one of your five senses. Pay careful attention to whatever sounds you may hear. See if you can**

identify three sounds inside the room.

(PAUSE 30 seconds)

- **Now see if you can identify any sounds outside the room.** (PAUSE 30 seconds)
- **Pair up and answer the following questions:**
 - **What sounds did you notice?**
 - **Were you able to identify where they were coming from?**
 - **What was making the sound? Or**
 - **Tune in to your vision, your sense of sight. Identify three or more colors or items inside the room.**
- (PAUSE 30 seconds)
- **Pair up and answer the following questions:**
 - **What did you notice?**
 - **As you noticed the colors and items in the room, where you in the high, low, or okay zone?"**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

The Nervous System & Sensations

Display an image of the nervous system.

"The part of our body that allows us to feel sensations both from the outside and inside is called the nervous system.

It sends information from our nerves throughout our bodies to our brain. It also sends information from our brain out to our body to control our muscles, movement,

and the functioning of our internal organs.

The nervous system keeps us alive by regulating our breathing, our heart rate, blood flow, digestion and other important functions.

The nervous system is the part of our body that allows us to feel sensations on the inside as well as sense things on the outside through our five senses. It processes sensory information from the outside and inside to know if we are in danger or in safety, and it responds accordingly.

A sensation is a physical feeling that arises in the body, such as warmth, cold, tingling, loosening, tightening, heaviness, lightness, openness, and so on.

Physical sensation words are different from general feeling words like good, bad, stressed, relieved, et cetera. They are also different from emotion words like happy, sad, afraid, and excited. Just as we can sense things on the outside with our five senses, we can pay attention to sensations inside our bodies as well.

Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

For example, an external sensation could be feeling the warmth of the sun on our face when outdoors. An internal sensation could be the warm rush of blood to our cheeks

when we are feeling embarrassed.

We are capable of increasing our ability to recognize sensations, which in turn gives us critical information about how our nervous system is operating.

Recognizing and identifying sensations as they occur is a practice we can use to support optimal functioning of our nervous system which can assist the body in self-regulating.

Help Now! Strategies are not complicated to learn, and can be used anytime and anywhere to help our bodies become calmer and feel safer. One of those strategies is noticing sensations. When we practice this and other strategies we have agency over our responses, and can regulate ourselves.

Help Now! Strategies were developed to give adults and young people small, doable actions that, when practiced and practiced, can be useful in times of stress or distress, for calming ourselves and regaining our ability to pause, think, and choose how to act.

Help Now! Strategies involve doing a simple physical or mental task that redirects our attention, thereby giving our autonomic nervous system a chance to “reset.”

Research shows that when the nervous system is dysregulated, directing attention to other sensations by doing activities like the Help Now! Strategies can have a regulating

effect on the body, sometimes within seconds.

Help Now! Strategies also tend to work best when coupled with tracking (paying attention to sensations inside our body)."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Help Now Strategies

- *"Think of one or two skills you have, maybe in sports, or related to music or school, any situation where you've practiced something so many times that it's just second nature now, you don't really even have to consciously think about how to do it.*
- *In pairs, share an example of something you've practiced so thoroughly that you can do it without even seeming to stop and think about it. Talk about your process of improvement over time.*
- *The strategies that we are learning about also need to be practiced again and again. For these strategies to be readily available to us in challenging times, we have to practice them many, many times when we are already in our Resilient Zone. This helps build the 'muscle memory' needed for the skill to be readily available when we need it.*
- Introduce and explain the Help Now! Strategies hand out. Come up with one example together as class.

- *With a partner, try these strategies in any order you wish. You can choose to skip some and/or to repeat some. Do at least 5 strategies. Fill out the information and the handout and discuss your findings with your partner. What sensations did you experience? Feelings or emotions? Did you notice any thoughts?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Applying the Practices

- *"How was that activity for you?*
- *Is there a strategy or two that you may want to try out this week?*
- *Which one did you like best, if any?*
- *Is there a time of day or event you have coming up where Help Now Strategies might be helpful?*

Rainstorm

If possible, have the group make a circle around the perimeter of the room so that everyone can see you and one another. Or direct them to go 'up and down each row' if they are seated in desks.

- *"We're going to create a rainstorm together. Has anyone done this before?*
- *I'll start a motion, and you'll all join in with the same motion, one at a time, in the order we've just established.*

- **Continue until the last participant is doing the same motion the leader is. The leader will switch to the next action and continue it while other participants pick it up in order around the group again. We will repeat until the game is done, and the storm has ended!"**

What do you notice on the inside?

[PAUSE for brief sharing. Note that some students may not have enjoyed rubbing their palms together or snapping their fingers. Validate that they are paying attention to their nervous systems and building body literacy by noticing what it finds pleasant, neutral, and unpleasant.]

Leader Actions:

- Rub palms together slowly
- Rub palms together quickly (produces more noise)
- Slow snapping of fingers
- Faster snapping of fingers (produces more noise)
- Slapping thighs with hands
- Faster snapping of fingers (produces more noise)
- Slow snapping of fingers
- Rub palms together quickly (produces more noise)
- Rub palms together slowly
- Stop (and the noise of the 'storm' will die down as each participant finishes in turn)

"So! There were some sensations!"

Touch, sound, movement through space, seeing each other...what a wealth of sensory information we just gave ourselves, reminding us of the importance of having fun together!

Exploring Sensations Through the Help Now! Strategies

With a partner, try the Help Now! Strategies, noting what sensations you feel and if you find them pleasant, neutral or unpleasant. Discuss your experience with your partner.

Station #	Strategy	What sensations do you notice in your body?	Are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral? Circle.
1	Slowly drink a glass of water. Feel it in your mouth and throat.		
2	Name six colors you notice in the room.		
3	Look around the room and notice what catches your attention.		
4	Count backwards from 10.		
5	Touch a piece of furniture or a surface near you. Notice its temperature and texture.		
6	Press your palms together firmly or rub your palms together until they get warm.		
7	Notice different 3 sounds in the room and 3 outside of the room.		
8	Spend a minute walking around the room. Notice the feeling of your feet on the ground.		
9	Slowly push against a wall with your hands or your back and notice any feelings in your muscles.		

Bank of Sensation Words: Add more sensation words that your group came up with!

coolness	looseness	tingling
heaviness	openness	warmth
lightness	tightness	

If you have time, consider how the strategies you try may be useful or not if you used them during a time you wanted to become more alert or to calm down.

Help Now! Strategy

Station 1



Slowly drink a glass of water.
Feel it in your mouth and throat.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Help Now! Strategy

Station 2



Imagine our colors you see...

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Station 3



Look around the room and notice what catches your attention.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Station 4



Count backwards from 10 as you walk around the room.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Station 5



Touch a piece of furniture or a surface near you. Notice its temperature and texture.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Help Now! Strategy

Station 6



Press your palms together firmly or rub your palms together until they get warm.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Help Now! Strategy

Station 7



Notice the 3 sounds within the room
and 3 sounds outside.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Help Now! Strategy

Station 8



Walk around the room.
Notice the feeling of your
feet on the ground.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Help Now! Strategy

Station 9



Slowly push your hands or back
against a wall or door.

What do you notice on the inside?
Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Resourcing to Address Thinking Traps

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will describe and apply self-regulation strategies including resourcing, grounding, shift and stay, and noticing sensations by completing a graphic organizer while visiting information stations. Students will practice resourcing by creating a written or illustrated list of people, places and/or experiences they appreciate. Finally students will reflect on possible misconceptions around applying self-regulation strategies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Apply regulation strategies including resourcing, tracking, and shift and stay to increase awareness and steady the mind-body
- Practice resourcing by creating a written and/or illustrated list of appreciations and reflections that promote self-compassion

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Self-Regulation Skills Gallery Walk (one per class)
- Self-Regulation Terms handout (one per student)
- Paper and drawing materials

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

Settling Activity (5 minutes)

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

"To get settled to be optimally ready for today, let's practice some of the Help Now! Strategies we learned about last time.

Sit comfortably. If paying attention to specific sounds is unpleasant, you can always shift to a sense that is more pleasant for you.

- **Listen for three sounds inside this room.**
[PAUSE]
- **Listen for three sounds coming from outside this room.** [PAUSE]
- **What do you notice on the inside?**
Do you notice any pleasant or neutral sensations? If you notice an unpleasant sensation, remember that you can shift your attention to a part of your body that feels better. [PAUSE]
- **Look around the room for something that catches your attention; an object, a color, the light, a person.** ([PAUSE])
- **What do you notice on the inside?** [PAUSE]
- **What else do you notice on the inside?**
Do the sensations you notice change or stay the same? [PAUSE]
- **When you're ready, shift your attention from this internal awareness back to our group.**"

Check-in (5 minutes)

"Think about someone older than you, who you admire for the way they treat other people. It may be someone you personally know, or someone you've read about or heard about.

Identify three specific ways the person treats people in a way that you admire."

Person I admire _____

3 traits you admire about them:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

"Share your ideas with a partner. As you are describing this person, notice any sensations or feelings that you might be experiencing."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY & PRESENTATION

20 minutes

Self-Regulation Skills Gallery Walk

Cut out and place the Self-Regulation Skills Gallery Walk Station descriptions at different places in the classroom for students to visit.

1. **"Bring a pencil and a copy of the Self-Regulation Terms Handout**

2. Visit each station one at a time and complete the graphic organizer using the information provided at each station.
3. Choose one or more strategies that you would like to practice further and make a plan of when and how you will do that.

Personal Resourcing

4. Return to your seat and begin to make a list of your personal resources (people, places and/or experiences in your life that make you feel better, happier or safer)
5. Choose one resource and make an illustration including as many details as you can
6. As you write and draw, tune in and notice how you're feeling. Notice any sensations. Noticing feelings and sensations provides us with helpful information about the state of our mind and body which over time can increase awareness and well-being."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Explain

"There can be thinking traps that are misconceptions, which can prevent us from seeing the benefit of practicing self-regulation skills and strategies. When this happens, we have to analyze the value closely and see what it involves.

Misconceptions around practicing self-regulation could include the idea that it

is a weakness, that it won't actually work, or that you don't have time for it.

Let's think about that for a bit."

Writing Prompt

"What's coming to mind for you about the idea of a thinking trap or a misconception about self-regulation?"

What advice would you give a close friend when they fall prey to a thinking trap?

How could you extend that same advice to yourself?"

Whole Group Share

"Choose a prompt below to share with the rest of the group.

- Share a strategy/skill you plan to practice. When and how will you do it?**
- What is a personal goal or benefit you would like to cultivate from practicing your strategy of choice?**
- Share a misconception about practicing these strategies or skills."**

Sensations

Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. The same sensation (such as warmth) can be experienced in any of these three ways by different people, and by any individual at different times.

When people focus on pleasant or neutral sensations, our bodies tend to feel more present and comfortable. People can use resources and attention to sensations to intentionally help relax, center, our bodies and calm our minds.

Resourcing

Bringing to mind something that evokes greater well-being, safety, or security is called **resourcing**.

Personal resources are internal, external, or imagined things that can help us feel better, safer or happier when we think of them. Personal resources are unique to each person.

Thinking about a personal resource in detail is called resourcing. Just as bringing to mind a stressful thought or a painful memory can cause our body to tense, bringing a resource to mind can do the opposite — it can help our body feel safe, feel greater well-being, or feel more energy and positivity. Resourcing can therefore lead to sensations of well-being in the body.

Tracking

When we then direct our attention to those sensations that are pleasant or neutral we are practicing **tracking** or reading the sensations. This can enhance the body's experience of well-being and help it return to (or go deeper into) our resilient zone.

Ideally, resourcing and tracking should be practiced together. Both resourcing and tracking are skills that develop over time with practice, and lead to what can be called "**body literacy**" since we are learning about our own bodies and how they respond to stress and well-being.

Shift and Stay

Although having a nervous system is a universal human characteristic, there will be great variety in terms of what functions as a personal resource for any given individual, as well as what sensations arise in us related to wellbeing or stress. One of the challenges of tracking is that when we begin to pay attention to sensations in our body, we will notice unpleasant or painful sensations. When our attention goes to these unpleasant sensations, they can lead us to become tense, stressed or uncomfortable, because unpleasant sensations can be interpreted by our brain as signs that we might be in danger. A key skill in dealing with this is called **shift and stay**.

When tracking leads us to noticing an unpleasant sensation, we can learn, over time, to shift our attention so that it does not become fixated on the unpleasant sensation. For example, we can notice a place in the body that feels better, and shift our focus there instead.

Alternatively, we can shift to grounding, resourcing or another Help Now! Strategy. However we choose to shift our attention, we then pause and allow our attention to stay with the new object of focus for several seconds (unless that new area of focus is causing unpleasant sensations, in which case we can shift again). This is called **shift and stay**.

So after shifting our attention, when we notice a pleasant or neutral sensation in the body through tracking, we can keep our attention there for a few moments, increasing the calming benefits of this resourcing strategy.

Shift and Stay

(continued)

This silent attention tends to deepen with experience, signaling to the body that we are safe, and the body typically responds with relaxation.

Shift and stay is also important because when learning and practicing resourcing, it is always possible for a student to experience a “mixed resource.” A resource is “mixed” when one part of it makes one feel better, but another part of it makes one feel worse.

For example, a student may think of a loved one, such as a grandparent, who showed them much affection. That grandparent can serve as a resource for the student. But perhaps the grandparent has died or lives far away. When the student thinks of this aspect of their grandparent, they may become sad. In this case, the thought of the grandparent is acting as a “mixed resource.” If a student experiences this, you as an educator can help them practice shift and stay. That might mean shifting to the positive part of the resource (the love that their grandparent showed them) and focusing on that rather than focusing on the fact that the grandparent is gone or inaccessible. If that’s not possible, it might mean shifting to a different resource, or to a grounding activity.

Graphic Organizer

Self-Regulation Strategies, Benefits & Terms

Visit each station, answering the questions below. Put a star next to one or two strategies/skills you would like to try. **Include the following vocabulary words in your answers below:**

- mixed resource
- personal resource
- body literacy
- sensations

RESOURCING	
What is it? How do I do it?	When/why use this strategy?

GROUNDING	
What is it? How do I do it?	When/why use this strategy?

TRACKING	
What is it? How do I do it?	When/why use this strategy?

Graphic Organizer

Self-Regulation Strategies, Benefits & Terms

(continued)

SHIFT & STAY

What is it? How do I do it?

When/why use this strategy?

REFLECTION

What are the benefits of practicing these strategies?

PURPOSE

In this learning experience students will explore a variety of ways to practice grounding. Students will gain insights into what grounding is and how to do it. Students will illustrate the process and benefits of grounding through a collaborative art project.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Practice a variety of grounding strategies and observe how our bodies feel when we move them in certain ways
- Describe that grounding practices are a strategy that can be used to remain and/or return to the resilient zone/OK zone and bring balance and well-being back to the body and mind.
- Identify that the body and nervous system respond to physical touch, and that they can use this to regulate the nervous system.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper or board space and markers
- Printouts of grounding stations (optional)

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

Guiding Language

"As we settle ourselves today, take out your Personal Resourcing list.

Take a moment to add to the list through written words or illustrations. (3 min)

Sit comfortably and either close your eyes or find a place to rest your gaze.

Choose a resource on your list to focus on. Do your best to keep your attention on the resource of your choice. (2 min)"

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

"The human nervous system responds to the physical contact of our bodies with objects and surfaces.

When we touch certain objects or surfaces, our body can respond by relaxing or regulating itself. This is called grounding.

Then when we pay attention to that response by attending to pleasant or neutral sensations in the body (through tracking), we can allow that response to deepen and spread throughout the body.

Each person has particular grounding techniques that will work best for them.

Practicing grounding can make it easier and more effective over time.

Grounding can help the body feel better, safer, more secure, and more stable. In that sense it is similar to resourcing, except instead of thinking of a resource, grounding involves using physical contact and your sense of touch to achieve a comfortable state.

Sometimes touching a surface or changing the way we are sitting or standing can help our bodies feel better.

Researchers have learned that the human nervous system responds to the physical contact of our bodies with objects and surfaces.

Paying attention to pleasant or neutral sensations in the body when grounding can lead to feeling more relaxed and regulated.

Every person has particular grounding techniques that will work best for them. Like all of our other strategies, grounding is a practice and becomes more effective, over time.

We're going to be trying out different grounding postures today, like standing, sitting, pushing down on a desk, leaning against the wall, pushing against the wall.

We'll be pausing briefly during each posture to track our sensations, as we've done before, to help us be very intentional."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

This activity can be led by the teacher, students, or through stations. Students will practice the skill of grounding by trying out different stances and noticing which ones bring about the greatest sense of well-being in their bodies.

The students or teacher will read through and practice a variety of grounding postures. The practices will include standing, sitting, pushing down on their desk, leaning on and pushing against the wall and holding an object.

Guided Language

"When we focus on what our body is in contact with, and how our body feels supported we are practicing grounding.

Let's experiment with the idea of seeing if we feel differently depending on what our body is doing.

We'll be moving around today, but it'll be kind of a quiet time because we'll all be trying to tune in and notice our internal sensations."

Sitting

"Since we're sitting already, let's notice the sensations in our bodies that come from sitting. Feel free to change the way you are sitting to one that is most comfortable for you. [PAUSE]

Now, if you like, take a few moments to pay attention to the contact of your body with the seat or the floor.

Just notice how the chair is supporting your body, or how the floor is supporting your legs and feet. Track your current sensations. If this grounding activity is uncomfortable for you, feel free to shift to a resource or a Help Now! Strategy." [PAUSE]

Standing

"Now let's all stand. Stand in the way that is most comfortable for you.

Try several different stances if you want to. Each time, see how your body responds by noticing what happens on the inside. [PAUSE]

Let's track what sensations we notice in our body now that we're standing. Notice and name what you're feeling on the inside."
[PAUSE]

Pushing Down on the Desk

"Let's try something different. You can sit down or stand up for this. Choose for yourself whether you'd like to close your eyes, if that helps you concentrate. Let's

push down on the (table/desk/floor) with our hands. It doesn't have to be too hard; you decide the level of pressure that feels best to you. [PAUSE]

And now track what sensations you feel on the inside as we do this. [PAUSE]

Leaning Against/Pushing Against the Wall

"Let's try leaning against the walls with our backs. And let's track while we do this, paying attention to our sensations on the inside and noticing the place where the body meets the wall. [PAUSE]

What sensations are you noticing now?

Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

(Invite students to share.)

Let's push against a wall with our hands. While we're doing that, let's do tracking. Let's notice what sensations are in our body when we push against a wall, and where in our body we feel those sensations. [PAUSE]

Holding an Object

"Hold an object of your choice in your hands. Close our eyes or keep them open. Feel the weight of the object in your hand. Notice where the object is resting against the palm of your hand.

What do you notice?

Are any sensations, thoughts or feelings coming up for you?"

Grounding Practice of your Choice

"Now choose the grounding strategy of your choice, intentionally standing or sitting, pushing down on a hard surface with your hands, or pushing against or leaning on a wall, or holding an object of your choice.

As we begin this practice, remember that what makes this a skill that can be used to shift how you are feeling is to track while you are grounding, noticing and naming what you're feeling inside.

Let's take a minute to pay attention to the place that our body is meeting the object of choice. What sensations are you noticing?

Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

(Invite students to share.)

There are no right or wrong answers to these reflection questions. Whatever is true for you, is your right answer."

Debrief

"Because our nervous system is constantly monitoring the posture of our bodies and the contact of our bodies with objects, including whatever is currently supporting us — such as the floor, a chair or couch, a bed, the ground — simply changing our stance can help the nervous system regulate itself better.

Tracking sensations supports a deepening of the experience and the building of body literacy.

We use grounding to help our bodies feel more safe, strong, secure, or happy.

This works because our nervous system always pays attention to the position of our bodies and what we're in contact with. The body senses our position in space, and in relation to other objects.

The body responds and it senses whether we are feeling better or worse, depending upon our position and what we're touching."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

"Choose one grounding strategy and create a visual representation of that strategy in your small group.

This illustration can include the strategy itself, sensations it may have brought up for you, locations or times it can be practiced and where a person might be in the resilient zone before, during or after the practice. Think of this as a teaching tool that we'll be able to use to reflect back on today's learning.

Do a mini gallery walk. Talk to at least one person in the room, pointing out something you especially enjoy or value on one of the posters."

Teaching Tips

As your students grow more familiar with **grounding**, keep this activity fresh by adding other postures including sitting with one's

back against the wall or lying down if your space permits.

Arm positions, such as folding one's arms, can also be used. Remember to encourage students to use **tracking** to notice and name the sensations in their bodies. This will help individuals see which postures are most helpful to them.

Suggest to students who are of shorter stature to try a position where their feet are touching the floor or ground. If their feet do not touch the ground, stack books or something that can help them sense their feet against a surface.

Some students who have experienced traumatic events, may have sensations of floating or spinning at times. Giving a choice to put something heavy (like a book or their backpack) on their lap, if sitting, can help some of those students experience being grounded for the first time.

Grounding Station 1

Sitting

Notice the sensations in your bodies that come from sitting. Feel free to change the way you are sitting to one that is most comfortable for you.

Now, if you like, take a few moments to pay attention to the contact of your body with the seat or the floor. Just notice how the chair is supporting your body, or how the floor is supporting your legs and feet.

Track your current sensations. If this grounding activity is uncomfortable for you, feel free to shift to a resource or a Help Now! Strategy.

Grounding Station 2

Standing

Stand in the way that is most comfortable for you. Try several different stances if you want to. Each time, see how your body responds by noticing what happens on the inside.

Track what sensations you notice in your body now that you're standing. Notice and name what you're feeling on the inside.

Grounding Station 3

Pushing Down on Desk

You can sit down or stand up for this. Choose for yourself whether you'd like to close your eyes, if that helps you concentrate. Push down on the (table/desk/floor) with our hands. It doesn't have to be too hard; you decide the level of pressure that feels best to you.

And now track what sensations you feel on the inside as we do this.

Grounding Station 4

Leaning or Pushing Against the Wall

Try leaning against the walls with your back. Try tracking while you do this, paying attention to our sensations on the inside and noticing the place where the body meets the wall.

What sensations are you noticing now? Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

Try pushing against a wall with your hands. While doing that, remember to do tracking. Notice what sensations are in your body when you push against a wall, and where in your body we feel those sensations.

Grounding Station 5

Holding an Object

Hold an object of your choice in your hands. You close your eyes or keep them open.

Feel the weight of the object in your hand. Notice where the object is resting against the palm of your hand.

What do you notice? Are any sensations, thoughts or feelings coming up for you?

Grounding Station 6

Grounding Practice of Your Choice

Now choose the grounding strategy of your choice: intentionally standing or sitting, pushing down on a hard surface with your hands, or pushing against or leaning on a wall, or holding an object of your choice.

As you begin this practice, remember that what makes this a skill that can be used to shift how you are feeling is to track while you are grounding, noticing and naming what you're feeling inside.

Take a minute to pay attention to the place that your body is meeting the object of choice. What sensations are you noticing? Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

There are no right or wrong answers to these reflection questions. Whatever is true for you, is your right answer.

Responding to Harmful Behaviors

PURPOSE

Students will discuss and understand that words and actions have an impact on others. The impact can be positive, negative or neutral. We will examine our personal responsibility around making responsible choices and owning the impact of the choices we make. We will determine how to respond to harmful behavior using self-agency, self-advocacy and self-regulation. The goal of this lesson is to acknowledge and address peer conflict and harmful social interactions.

Teacher Tip

Be very explicit about centering the discussion around small to medium sized harmful behaviors. The script below will provide specific examples.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe small to medium sized “harmful behaviors” and the impact and intent that may be connected to the behavior. Discuss practices that can support a person on the receiving end of a harmful behavior like bullying.
- Describe productive and healthy ways to respond to harmful behaviors including self-advocacy, self-agency, and self-regulation. Discern which practice is most appropriate as a means to working through specific unwanted social behaviors.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Responding to Harmful Behaviors Brainstorm handout
- Writing utensils and paper

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

Guiding Language

- **“Let’s settle ourselves so we are focused and ready for learning. Sit comfortably and either close your eyes or find a place to rest your gaze.**
- **Recall an appreciation you have for a person or learning process in the classroom.** [PAUSE]
- **Notice any sensations you feel on the inside as you recall this appreciation.** [PAUSE]
- **If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, allow yourself to stay with it for a moment. If you notice an unpleasant sensation, allow yourself to shift to some place that feels better.**
- **You can also shift to grounding.** [PAUSE]
- **When you’re ready, shift your attention from this internal awareness back to our group.”**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Harmful Behavior, Impact and Intent

- **“How do our words and actions have an impact on others?**

Provide time for students to reflect and share with a small group or partner. Ask a few groups to share their insights.

- **The impact of our behavior can be positive, negative or neutral. Today we are going to focus on small to medium behaviors that are considered harmful. Harmful behaviors have a negative impact on others. There are many different kinds of harmful behaviors. They can be expressed through words, actions, or inactions.**

- **One example of a harmful behavior is bullying which is something that is done intentionally and repeatedly. Other harmful behaviors can be brief, hostile manipulations, or derogatory comments. An example of a brief harmful behavior couple be a one-time negative slight such as pointing out a person’s differences in a negative light. For example: Johnny, why are your ears so big? Can you hear noises from the other side of the building with those ears?**

- **How do harmful behaviors impact others?**

Provide time for students to reflect and share with a small group or partner. Ask a few groups to share their insights.

- **When a person or group of people are on the receiving end of harmful behaviors they can experience feelings of pain and a lack of safety. They are negatively impacted by the behavior and are very likely to experience higher levels of stress.**
- **Sometimes these behaviors are done on purpose, with the intention to be hurtful or disparaging. Sometimes they are**

thoughtless and not intentional, and the impact of the behavior does not match the intent.

- ***How might practicing resiliency skills help the intent of our actions and behaviors match the impact of them?***

Provide time for students to reflect and share with a small group or partner. Ask a few groups to share their insights.

- ***When we practice resiliency skills it is easier for us to make choices with more awareness and compassion which allows the intention of our behaviors to more closely match the impact they have on others."***

How to Work Through and With Harmful Behavior

Activate prior knowledge by asking students what they know about the terms self-regulation, self advocacy and self agency. Provide the definitions below.

- ***"Practice Self-Regulation. Self-Regulation is the ability to navigate one's emotions, one's nervous system, and one's behaviors so as to promote well-being and avoid harm to oneself and others.***
- ***Self-Advocacy is the ability to communicate one's needs and to speak up for oneself. Self-advocacy supports individuals in being able to make personal decisions that promote their wellbeing.***

- ***Having Self-Agency means you have the capacity to take action. It is often viewed in terms of "personal agency" which is the ability to control personal actions and assume responsibility for the consequences of our actions."***

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Below is one example of a harmful behavior a person might experience. Please feel free to use an example that is more relatable to your students.

Trigger or Stressful Event

In a conversation with a group of students, some friends, and others acquaintances, PJ is asked: "No, where are you *really* from?"

Bumped to the High Zone possible reaction

PJ feels insulted and set apart, and a surge of anger rises up inside. PJ responds rudely to the questioner and walks away, seething.

Bumped to the Low Zone possible reaction

PJ feels all of their energy draining away and negative self-talk starts. ("I don't truly belong anywhere..." or "Why aren't my friends speaking up? Maybe we aren't really friends at all...")

Return to the Resilient Zone possible action

After realizing they felt sick to their stomach, their throat was tight and dry, and that they felt insulted, PJ uses the grounding strategy of

pressing their feet firmly against the floor, and brought a personal resource to mind, picturing their grandfather who is skilled at giving direct responses. PJ pauses to decide whether they want to respond in the moment, whether it feels safe to do so, and how they think they'll feel later, if they don't. PJ looks directly at the questioner and in a calm and firm voice says, "Like I've already told you, I'm from (our city)."

Debrief Question

"Why might being asked where you're really from feel like a harmful or aggressive comment to some people?"

Are there other productive ways PJ might also have responded that represent self-agency and self-advocacy?"

Information and Guidelines for Today's Group/Partner Work

- **"Every one of us has probably unknowingly said or done something that was harmful or hurtful to another person(s)."**
- **Feelings may come up as we're brainstorming these examples for both you and your partner.**
- **We are coming up with general ideas of unkind acts. We are not sharing something we've personally been involved with.**
- **We are not trying to solve the underlying problem of harmful behavior.**
- **We are focusing on identifying strategies that can help people get out of the high**

or low zone, and return to the Resilient Zone.

- **Be kind to one another. Be respectful. Be open to hearing what your partner is saying.**
- **If you notice feelings and sensations connected to being defensive, give yourself a moment to shift to a skill to be solidly in your Okay Zone, and then return to the conversation.**
- **If you notice feelings of anger or resentment, give yourself a moment to honor where those come from, shift your awareness to a skill that helps you come back to your Okay Zone and then return to the conversation."**

Instructions

Part 1

- **"Work together to identify examples of small to medium-sized harmful behaviors a person might encounter by writing a short statement.**
- **Name how a person might recognize they are getting bumped out of their Resilient Zone.**
- **Identify several strategies for how to return to the Resilient Zone in an intentional way.**
- **Record your findings on this document.**
- **Pair with another group and share your statement, scenarios and insights."**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Grounding

- *"Before we come back to the whole group, take a moment to check in with yourself through silent reflection. How are you feeling, physically [PAUSE], emotionally? [PAUSE]*
- *What thoughts are running through your mind? Notice all of this sensation information without judgment. Join me if you'd like to, in taking a minute to ground or to resource." [PAUSE]*

Reflective Prompt (Written and/or Verbal)

- *"How do the practices of self-regulation, self-advocacy, and self-agency compliment one another?*
- *How can we be more effective in dealing with stressors when we use a combination of all three?"*

Closing Statement

- *"The strategies we are learning will not stop us from having uncertainty in our lives, or from experiencing unfairness, unpleasantness, or hurtful or destructive situations.*
- *What these and other intentional strategies can become, when practiced and practiced over time, is an effective tool for reclaiming our own power in a stressful moment to return to our personal resilience zone."*

Graphic Organizer

Responding to Harmful Behaviors

Harmful words and actions can be subtle behaviors or can be straightforward and intense. Harmful behaviors can be verbal or non-verbal, conscious or unconscious. The person doing the harmful act may or may not be aware of the effects of their action or behavior. Being on the receiving end of a harmful social interaction can negatively affect the recipient's health and wellbeing.

With a partner or in a small group, write a short fictional scenario/statement below.

Examples of harmful behavior a person might encounter	How might a person on the receiving end recognize they are getting out of their Resilient Zone/being negatively impacted by the situation?	How can the person use self-regulation, self-advocacy and/or self agency to deal with the harmful behavior in a proactive way?

How Compassion and Stress Affect the Body

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will read, annotate, and discuss the Stress Contagion Article to develop a deeper understanding of shared impacts of our nervous systems, our levels of awareness, and our personal locus of control over sensations, thoughts and feelings. Students will also envision through reflection how society would be changed if others understood stress contagion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Examine their understanding of interdependence
- Define the concept of stress contagion
- Describe examples of mirror neurons in action

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Interpersonal
Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Help Now! Strategy images in Chapter 2, Learning Experience 4
- “Stress Contagion Article”
(1 copy per student)
- 4As Note Catcher
(1 copy per student)
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 9 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- Refer to the Help Now! Strategy Chart.
- **“Look at the “Help Now! Strategy” pictures. We will practice 4 strategies of your choice.**
- **Choose a strategy and practice it for about one minute. After a minute is up, you can choose another one.”**
- Repeat this process until students have practiced 4 strategies of their choice.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

“Different parts of the nervous system relate to stress and well-being. Some allow us to feel sensations. Those sensations are connected to our body’s ability to get ready for action (sympathetic activation) or to get ready for relaxation, digestion and sleep (parasympathetic activation).

Stress is universal. We all get stuck in our high zones or low zones at some point. What activates us differs from person to person. We can’t access this information directly through thought or emotion, but can through being attentive to the sensations of our body.

Humans and animals get stuck in the high zone or low zone and naturally want relief. We want to find a way to feel better. But sometimes we make choices that are less productive or less healthy than others. We

might shout at someone, or criticize someone. We might engage in risky behavior or consume a substance or take an action that makes us feel better temporarily, but that isn’t good for us in the long run.

Some stress responses are healthier, or more appropriate in certain circumstances than others. Some behaviors continue the cycle of stress; others bring us back into our resilient zone. By learning about our nervous system, we gain awareness about ourselves and others. We can work to make intentional choices for ourselves, and can hold compassion for others.”

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will read, annotate, and discuss the “Stress Contagion Article” to develop a deeper understanding of shared impacts of our nervous systems, our levels of awareness, and our personal locus of control over sensations, thoughts and feelings.

Review

“The state of our nervous system directly affects our stress levels and well-being. We can identify sensations and name our own inner state by using the “Resilient Zone” graphic.

We can use strategies to stabilize the nervous system and return to and/or maintain an inner state of resilience and well-being.”

Introduce New Information

- *"Our nervous system isn't just an individual matter.*
- *Scientists have long noticed that we have "emotion contagion." Emotion contagion describes the way in which we pick up on each others' emotions because we resonate with each other, even on an unconscious level.*
- *When someone is outside of their resilient zone, the people around that person will be affected. If someone is solidly in their resilient zone, feeling a lot of safety and well-being, we feel that too and experience our own increased sense of calm and well-being from being connected to them.*
- *Our individual nervous system picks up on and responds to the state of other people's nervous systems. The state of our nervous system impacts those around us and vice versa."*

Independent Reading and Annotating Exercise

- *To further explore this topic, we will read the "Stress Contagion Article."*
- *While you read, fill out the 4As protocol, to capture your thoughts under the categories of Assumptions, Agree, Aspirations, Argue.*
- *In the assumptions box, make note of what you think the author's point of view or biases may be.*

- *Under Agree and Argue, write down several points from the article that fit those categories for you.*
- *For Aspirations, make note of anything in the article that moves you to action.*
- *We'll read and make notes for about 8 minutes and then share our findings in small groups."*

Small Group Work

- *"Take turns sharing what you found using the following prompts. All group members should speak to the prompt before moving on to the next prompt.*
- *Be mindful of air time and practice equity of voice/equal talking time.*
 - *Did you notice any assumptions or biases from the author?*
 - *What did you agree with?*
 - *What points would you question or argue against?*
 - *Was there anything in the article that was especially motivating for you?*
- *Notice if any of your insights and findings were similar, and how were they different?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions

Read the script below and ask students to relax, reflect and listen mindfully.

Resilience for All Reflective Practice Script

(6 min)

"Adjust your posture to one that is most comfortable and take a moment to ground — becoming aware of the way your body is supported — or to resource — bringing something to mind that makes you feel better, safer or stronger.

Now, spend a moment to become aware of your natural wish for well-being and to be free of distress and unwanted hardship. Remember that everyone goes through difficult times, but things are always in a constant process of change.

Consider if you are pushing yourself too hard, or having unrealistic expectations for yourself. For example, expectations that you might not have for a good friend. What kind and wise thing might you say to help such a friend if they were in your situation right now?

Take a moment to send yourself that message, and positive, healing thoughts and energy in any way that feels best for you.

Notice what you feel on the inside as you do this. [PAUSE]

Now, bring to mind a person to whom you'd like to send resilience and strength.

Picture them sitting or standing before you, if this is helpful.

Take a moment to recognize them as a human being, just like yourself, who wants happiness and doesn't want distress or unwanted hardship.

Take a moment to recognize whatever hardships they are going through, have been through, or will go through in the future.

Recognize that despite these hardships, they are resilient, because they have made it through thus far, and they've kept on going.

Now, send them resilience, strength, support, and compassion in whatever way feels best to you.

If you like, you can picture something that represents this, like sending them a warm, healing light that emanates from your heart and gradually fills their entire body with wellbeing.

If you like, you can also imagine saying to them, "I wish you happiness and freedom from all suffering."

Notice what you feel on the inside. [PAUSE]

Now let's take a moment to imagine what society would be like if everything supported the resilience of every person.

You can imagine small changes if you like. Or you can imagine larger, fundamental changes.

Picture in your mind the way people would treat each other, the way they would feel supported, the way they would feel safe to express themselves and their creativity. Take a moment to imagine what this would be like.

[PAUSE]

Notice what you feel on the inside. [PAUSE]

Let's conclude by taking a moment to recognize that we all have the potential to cultivate resilience in ourselves and others.

In small and large ways, we have the ability to bring about a change for good in this world. If you'd like to, bring to mind a sense of that ability and commitment to help make the world a safer, happier, and better place.

[PAUSE]

Thank you."

Written or Verbal Reflection

- Answer one or more of the prompts below.
- **"What would it mean if our society had this knowledge?"**
- **"What might awareness about resilience and the nervous system mean for us when we think about an entire classroom, school, community, country or the world?"**

Stress Contagion Article

We know stress is universal. We all get stuck in our high zones or low zones at some point. Yet we also know that what activates stress differs from person to person.

We know that if we get stuck in our high zone or low zone, we want relief. We want to find a way to feel better. But sometimes we make choices that are less productive or less healthy than others. We might shout at someone or criticize someone. We might engage in risky behavior or consume a substance that makes us feel better temporarily, but that isn't good for us in the long run.

Science shows us that animals do the same thing. They have nervous systems very similar to ours. Like us, they have an autonomic nervous system that responds to danger and safety and that responds to sensations. One thing scientists have noticed is that animals can exhibit displaced aggression when they are threatened or stressed.

Let's say a rat or a chimpanzee is being bullied by a larger rat or larger chimpanzee. It can't fight back, because it's smaller. So what does it do? Its body is getting so stressed out. It's getting stuck in its high zone. Its body is being flooded by stress hormones. And it's feeling powerless, helpless, frustrated or angry.

One thing the rat or chimpanzee might do is go and find a smaller rat or chimpanzee. Then it bullies that smaller rat or chimpanzee. It couldn't fight against the bigger one, but by picking on the smaller one, it feels less helpless, less powerless. It feels more powerful, more in control. That makes it feel safer. "See? I'm not so weak! I can bully someone else!"

You might think that animals can't feel this way. We don't know what that animal is thinking when it goes and bullies a smaller animal. But we do know that it relaxes a bit after doing that. It has let off some aggression. Scientists call this "displaced aggression." That's because it's not aiming at the target that caused the problem; it's aiming at someone or something else.

But what's the problem with this? Now that smaller animal is also being bullied and is feeling stressed, helpless, and angry. If it goes and bullies another smaller animal, then the chain of violence goes on and on.

But scientists have also noticed that there's something else the first victim animal can do. Instead of exhibiting displaced aggression, it can find an animal it likes — like a mate or a member of its family.

Stress Contagion Article (continued)

The animals then groom each other by. Both rats and chimpanzees groom each other. In fact, most mammals do. By grooming, they relax each other. The animal still lets off steam, but it hasn't gone and harmed anyone else.

We don't use the term "grooming" for this behavior with people. But maybe you've noticed friends combing each other's hair. Probably you've received a hug when you were feeling down, or you've offered a hug to someone else. These are activities that we do as human beings that fall into the same category. Even if we show displaced aggression towards something like a pillow, by punching it, that can be a lot better than displacing it onto another person. (Mister Rogers often said he would bang on piano keys when he got angry, and that that helped him.)

We know certain responses are healthier or more appropriate in certain circumstances than others. Some behaviors continue the cycle of stress; others bring us back into our resilient zone.

By learning about our nervous system, we now have awareness. That awareness gives us more choice. But what happens when we see others who do not have awareness? Let's say we see someone who has been bullied. They are stressed. They're stuck in their high or low zones. Their bodies are uncomfortable. But they don't realize what's going on.

Then we see them engage in displaced aggression. They go and bully a smaller child at school. They've never heard about the resilient zone. They've never learned to pay attention to their body. They don't know that there are other things they could do to calm themselves down and make themselves feel safer. All they know is that showing aggression to someone else is making them feel better right now. But by doing so, they're only creating more problems for themselves. If they continue, they could lose friends or even be kicked out of school.

Does our awareness change the way we view that person? Does it allow us to have more compassion for them?

Our first question was about how awareness changes the way we view others' behavior. Let's turn to the second question: does our awareness change the way we behave towards each other, when we realize we're impacting each other's nervous systems?

Stress Contagion Article (continued)

If I'm stressing you out, I know I'm pushing you towards your high or low zone. I know that by causing you stress, I'm causing your body to flood with the stress hormone cortisol. I'm causing your immune system to activate, increasing inflammation and releasing proteins (cytokines) that are meant to fight disease, but that can damage your body. I'm pushing you to a place where you won't be making good decisions, where you could feel confused, agitated, upset. Do I really want to do that?

Even if I'm not intentionally stressing you out, if I am out of my resilient zone, just being stuck in my high zone or low zone could impact you. If you take a stringed instrument, like a guitar, violin, or piano, and you strike one string, it vibrates. But what happens to the strings next to that one? They start to vibrate a bit too. The movement in one string affects those other ones nearby. This is sympathetic resonance.

Our nervous systems are like that too. We share this same kind of sympathetic resonance. Can you think of someone who makes you feel calmer just by your being with them? What about someone who tends to make you feel agitated, because they seem so agitated themselves? When someone's really angry, does it make you feel relaxed to be with them? Or do you feel a bit tense?

Scientists have long noticed that we have "emotion contagion." We pick up on each other's emotions because we resonate with each other, even on an unconscious level. When someone is outside of their resilient zone, we've learned that it affects every organ of their body. So their eyes will look different, their breathing will be different and their tone of voice will be different. The way they're standing will be different; their muscles will be tensed differently. Our own body's nervous system picks up on all of that, and it affects us.

Conversely, if someone is really in their resilient zone, feeling a lot of safety and well-being, we feel that too. Their groundedness can help ground us. Their voice sounds soothing to us. Their face is welcoming. Their smile is encouraging. We feel more at ease and we ourselves feel safer just being beside them. Have you ever felt that way about someone?

So our awareness can impact the way we behave towards each other. And we notice that by taking care of ourselves, and making sure we are in our resilient zones, we are having a positive impact on others, even without "trying."

Graphic Organizer

Four "A"s Protocol Template

Assumptions	Aspirations
What assumptions does the author of the Stress Contagion article hold?	What parts of the Stress Contagion article did you find personally meaningful and that you would want to engage in?
Agree	Argue
What do you agree with in the Stress Contagion article?	What do you want to argue with in the Stress Contagion article?



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 3

Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

Overview

Chapter 3 builds on the first two chapters of SEE Learning. The logic of Chapter 3 becomes apparent after a brief reflection on what we did in the previous two chapters. In the first chapter, “Creating a Compassionate Classroom,” students explored how we all share a natural inclination towards well-being and happiness, and that because of this, we all wish to be treated with kindness, compassion, and mutual respect.

In Chapter 2, “Building Resilience,” students learned how to understand and regulate their autonomic nervous system. Self-care and kindness towards others go hand in hand. When students experience dysregulation, they are more likely to cause difficulties for oneself and others and less likely to act kindly and attentively.

In addition to “body literacy” and awareness of the nervous system, self-compassion and compassion for others are supported by “emotional literacy” and an understanding of how our minds work. In order to regulate their bodies and emotions, students need to be able to observe their minds and experiences carefully and with close attention. Hence, Chapter 3, “Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness.”

Attention training has numerous benefits related to executive functioning for both students and educators. Executive functionings are skills that help students to plan, focus attention, prioritize goals, and manage multiple tasks. Attention training facilitates concentration, readiness for learning, and the retention of information. It allows one to better control one’s impulses. It calms the body and mind in ways that promote physical and psychological health. Yet, while often told to “Pay attention!” students are rarely taught the methods for cultivating stronger attention. In SEE Learning, attention is not cultivated through force of will, but by repeatedly and gently cultivating opportunities for practice, just like any other skill.

Students have no trouble paying close attention to things they find interesting. The problem is paying attention when things are less stimulating or when there are distractions that appear more worthy of attention. Therefore, this chapter takes a multi-pronged approach to attention training. First, it introduces the idea of attention training and its potential benefits. Second, it shows students that when we pay attention to things, we may find them more interesting than we initially thought. Third, it introduces attention exercises that are a bit more stimulating and likely easier. Lastly, it introduces attention training with objects of attention that are more neutral and less stimulating, like the simple act of walking or breathing. Throughout, students are invited to notice what happens to their minds when they are able to pay attention with calmness, stability, and clarity.

Learning Experience 1, “Exploring the Mind,” engages students to develop knowledge of concepts related to attention training. Students will engage in a focusing practice and reflect on the benefits this practice can have on the mind and body. The purpose of exploring the mind is two-fold in SEE Learning. The first is that students can have an understanding of mental processes and emotions. The second is that students can understand what it means to pay attention to our minds and cultivate attention as a skill in order to gain insight into mental processes.

Learning Experience 2, “Exploring Attention,” allows students to understand the benefits of attention and focus. By learning to pay attention to attention itself, students can discover that they can strengthen attention much like building a muscle or developing a skill. While it takes practice, it gets easier over time. The learning experience concludes with a reflective practice for using a resource to strengthen attention.

The objective here, if attention training is to support cognitive control, is to develop both clarity and stability. Here, stability means that one’s attention stays on the chosen object of focus and is sustained over time without being pulled away by distractions. Clarity means that the mind is not dull, lax, or lethargic, but rather engages its object of attention with alertness and vividness. One can have stability of attention without clarity (like listening to a lecture but with a foggy or sleepy mind), and one can have clarity without stability (being very alert to what is happening but having one’s attention flitting from thing to thing due to distraction and an inability to focus).

As students cultivate their attention to a greater degree, these concepts become important to address. Otherwise, students can inadvertently start to cultivate a dull state of mind when they do their reflective practices, akin to taking a nap. This would be a lack of clarity. Or students could be daydreaming, which would not lead to stronger attention. This would be a lack of stability. Neither is conducive for learning or for cultivating emotional literacy.

For many students, mindful attention to activities or the breath can lead to relaxation. For some, however, the attempt to maintain focus on a single activity or object can feel unpleasant and can increase anxiety. It is therefore recommended that you wait to implement these learning experiences until after your students have developed a degree of familiarity with the practices covered in Chapter 2, “Building Resilience.” Those practices can lead to a greater relaxation in the body that then makes the cultivation of attention easier, and they also give students valuable tools for self-regulation should focused attention lead to anxiety. As noted in Chapter 2, the resilient skills also become part of students’ toolkits to assist them when they are experiencing difficulties. Teachers

are encouraged to always provide choice, so that students can disengage from specific practices if necessary or choose activities that are most helpful to them.

Learning Experience 3, “Heedfulness, Mindfulness, and Monitoring Awareness,” promotes in students the development of attention. Attention incorporates three concepts: (1) “heedfulness” of what is risky or harmful; (2) “mindfulness” of the object of focus and (3) “monitoring awareness” of stability and clarity of mind. These aspects of attention not only allow students to maintain their focus and learn better, they also help them catch emotional impulses before they create problems for themselves and others.

Learning Experience 4, “Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 1,” enables students to use real world scenarios to review the analogy of how an impulse can lead to behaviors that cause harm. They relate the scenarios to mindfulness, heedfulness and monitoring awareness, or lack thereof, and learn to use them as tools or practices to help them to catch a spark before it gets too big. Through reflection, they relate the learning to their own lives.

Learning Experience 5, “Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 2,” supports students in practicing sustained attention in everyday activities including walking, eating, listening and writing. Applying attention to these everyday activities helps students to develop the skill of mindfulness and increase stamina to focus and pay attention. It is important to cultivate attention using neutral or “boring” things because it improves students’ ability to be present, pay attention for longer periods of time. It also helps to address tendencies toward negativity bias. One reason is that learning to pay attention to our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors helps us catch emotional impulses before they become problematic, thus preventing the emotional spark from becoming a forest fire. This leads to the realization that attention training, while of great help in learning in general, is also especially important in supporting self-care. The learning experiences therefore introduce students to three facets of attention training that are especially important for self-care: (1) Awareness, (2) Heedfulness, and (3) Mindfulness.

In SEE Learning, “mindfulness” means retaining the object of attention in one’s mind—not forgetting or losing it to distraction. If one wants to concentrate on study, say for a test, but is becoming distracted by a song or a daydream, then one is no longer mindful of what one set out to do. If one commits to doing something, but then forgets about it, then one has lost mindfulness of that commitment. Mindfulness is therefore important not only for attention, but also for one’s ethical values and one’s well being. SEE Learning defines “mindfulness” in a specific way that may differ from other programs. Here it means a precise focus or placement of the mind for the purpose of retention.

"Heedfulness" means being cautious and careful with regard to things that could cause problems for oneself or others. If one becomes aware that the stovetop becomes very hot when cooking, then one will be heedful and take measures to avoid getting burned. Similarly, if one becomes aware of one's tendency to hurt others with sarcasm or ridicule, one can become heedful of one's speech. Supporting both of these is "awareness": being aware of what is going on in the mind, in the body, and in one's surroundings in the present moment. Without awareness of what is going on in one's mind, one may not notice what is about to happen and may react in a harmful way. Therefore, without awareness one cannot retain mindfulness or practice heedfulness.

Learning Experience 6, "Cultivating Attention on an Object," engages students to connect with attention training through the metaphor of training a puppy. The students will practice an attention training exercise by placing their attention on the breath or other chosen object of focus to build the muscle and capacity for sustained attention.

Learning Experience 7, "Observing the Mind," encourages students to discuss and practice meta-awareness. This will occur by having students examine the metaphor of the sky and the clouds and engaging in a practice of watching the mind with open curiosity. Meta-awareness is the practice of directing attention inwardly to the mind without getting caught up in thoughts, emotions, and feelings.

This learning experience introduces the practice of paying attention to the mind itself, but non-judgmentally. It also starts students on the journey of developing a "map of the mind," whereby they create for themselves the categories of their experiences and how they relate to each other: attention, awareness, sensations, emotions, thoughts, reactions, and behaviors. Learning to observe one's thoughts and emotions without immediate judgment and reaction serves to help create a "gap" between stimulus and response. This is very important for impulse control. As Viktor Frankl, author of the classic work *Man's Search for Meaning*, writes, "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

A Note on the Term "Mindfulness"

The term "mindfulness" has become very popular over the past decade and is now applied to a variety of things and a variety of practices, many of them quite distinct from its historical usage. One of the most popular definitions of mindfulness describes it as a type of non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Many have argued over whether mindfulness is a spiritual practice, a secular one, or both; or whether it necessarily involves meditation or can be cultivated without meditation.

Because of this ongoing debate, SEE Learning chooses to focus more specifically on attention, a faculty that everyone has, and that has been closely studied by psychology and neuroscience for decades. While some may question the universality of the term “mindfulness,” there is no question about the universality of attention.

In some mindfulness programs, mindfulness is described as present-moment non-judgmental awareness. In SEE Learning, mindfulness refers to the ability to remain mindful of something of value, to keep it in mind, and to not forget it or be distracted from it. It is similar to the idea of retention.

For example, if one needs to remember one’s keys, it is mindfulness that helps one do so; if one forgets one’s keys, it is because one had a lapse of mindfulness. More importantly, students will later learn that one can also be mindful of one’s values and commitments; indeed, this is vital to developing ethical literacy. Mindfulness is one of the key things that helps us stay true to our values and act accordingly, whereas “forgetting ourselves” is a common cause of acting out of alignment with our values.

SEE Learning also retains the term “mindfulness” in describing well-known practices such as “mindful listening,” “mindful walking,” etc., because they are common conventions. If your school prefers, however, you can substitute other terms such as “active or attentive listening,” “attentive eating,” or “attentive walking.” Whichever term you find best for your situation, you can use that. What is important is that students come to understand the value of cultivating attention, and use attention to develop discernment with regard to their internal and external situations.

Student Personal Practice

Like any skill, attention training takes time and repeated practice. This practice can be informal, such as having an intention to pay attention to what one is doing in general, or they can be more formal. A number of reflective practices are included here as examples of formal practice, and you can focus on the ones that your students enjoy most. You can start with very short sessions of only a few minutes each and then gradually build up as appropriate for your class. It is likely that the more familiar your students are with the practices in Chapter 2, “Building Resilience,” the easier it will be for them to engage in the attention training practices of this chapter. It is suggested that you begin your practices first with a grounding/resourcing activity and then move into an attention training activity. Remember that just as with the practices of Chapter 2, student preferences with regard to individual practices may differ. Be open to students choosing an attention training practice that fits them best.

Like any skill, attention can be cultivated but it will take time. Although there are 7 learning experiences in this chapter, your students are unlikely to gain proficiency in the skills and practices in only 7 sessions. Repetition is essential, and patience is a virtue. Be on the lookout for students sharing their experiences of insights or gained proficiency that may come from the practices you are doing with them. For example, a student may share that they reacted differently to a tense situation or noticed something different in their emotions or thoughts. These are common experiences when one begins to cultivate attention and pay more attention to one's mind.

Teacher Personal Practice

Your own personal practice of attention training and mindfulness will give you more confidence when leading your students, particularly when it comes to the reflective practices. There are a host of resources online for cultivating a personal mindfulness or focused attention practice, and the SEE Learning website will include recommendations of such resources.

Further Reading and Resources

For further reading on neuroplasticity and attention training, we recommend Sharon Begley's book, *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain*.

Chapter 3: Strengthening Self-Awareness and Attention

Learning Experience 1: Exploring the Mind

Learning Experience 2: Exploring Attention

Learning Experience 3: Developing Heedfulness, Mindfulness, and Monitoring Awareness

Learning Experience 4: Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 1

Learning Experience 5: Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 2

Learning Experience 6: Cultivating Attention on an Object

Learning Experience 7: Observing the Mind

Exploring the Mind

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will engage in a vocabulary mixer through the structure of a jigsaw activity. Students will illustrate and describe a concept and share their findings with the rest of the class. Students will engage in a focusing practice and describe the benefits this practice can have on the mind and body.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore what is meant by “mind” and the ways we can study the mind
- Learn that people can calm and stabilize their mind by using strategies that help them to relax and settle
- Explore the similarities people share, with regard to our minds and mental experiences

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Vocabulary Mixer
- Writing utensils and paper
- Markers

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Settling Activity

Guiding Language

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- **“Let’s settle ourselves and be refreshed and ready for learning.”**
- **“Sit comfortably and either close your eyes or find a place to rest your gaze. [PAUSE]**
- **“You can choose to focus on a resource or do grounding.”**
- **“If you do grounding, notice where your body is meeting the chair, floor, wall or object/surface of your choice.”**

PRESENTATION | 15 minutes

The Mind Jar

“The “mind” is a broad category that involves our first-person experiences of the world, which can include feelings, emotions, thoughts, memories, hopes and fears, and our imagination.”

A “mind jar” is a visual representation of the mind.”

Show the mind jar.

“The glitter/sand/rocks/material in the mind jar represents how our minds take in and process experiences, thoughts, and feelings all day long.”

When we don’t pause to check in with and clear the mind our thinking can become cloudy.

By considering the metaphor of the mind jar we can learn that our mind can be relatively clear or cloudy, making it easier or harder to discern what is happening within us and around us; that the way we perceive things is affected by the state of our own mind.

By pausing and focusing our attention on something, we can help to clear the mind and therefore work with the mind to support it in clear optimal functioning.

Another way we can work with our mind and support a healthy mind is by understanding it.

There are a few methods we can use to study the mind and we will explore those today.

When we have a better understanding of how the mind works, we can use this knowledge to increase our focusing skills and create productive neural pathways in the brain. This will also help us evaluate what thoughts, emotions and feelings are beneficial, and what are harmful, for our and others’ wellbeing. Thus, helping us cultivate ethical discernment.”

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

The Mind Jar

"Step 1:

Individually review/skim the Chapter 3 Vocabulary Mixer

Step 2:

Hold up the number above the paragraph you would like to study further. (Make sure all paragraphs are covered)

Step 3:

- *Pair up.*
- *Highlight key ideas in your paragraph.*
- *Create a visual representation and write key words.*
- *Add as much detail to your illustration as possible.*

Step 4:

Do a whole group share or a gallery walk so that the whole class is exposed to the information."

Debrief

"The best way to understand our own and others' minds is to use all three approaches:

1. *to learn to observe our own and others' behavior;*
2. *to learn about the brain and nervous system; and*

3. *to learn about our minds by directly observing them with attention, meta-awareness, and meta-cognition.*

When we put information from all these together, we can develop our own models of the mind, and we can evaluate other people's mental models to see if they hold true to our own understanding.

Right now we are going to practice learning about our mind through direct observation through an attention practice."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Settling the Mind

Guiding Language

- *"I'm going to talk you through a reflective practice, and then those who wish to can share out at the end. Remember that you can always adjust your position to one that is better for you, and you can always think about a resource or do grounding, instead of focusing on the mind jar, if you ever feel uncomfortable.*
- *For the next few moments we will focus on the "Mind Jar"*
- *The Mind Jar settles if we leave it alone and allow it to return to its natural state. I'm going to shake this jar and then we'll quietly watch as it settles.*
- *When we watch (or listen) to something closely we call that "paying attention."*

- *If we keep watching for a longer time, that's called "keeping our attention" on whatever it is we're watching.*
- *See if you can keep your attention on the jar as it settles. [PAUSE]*
- *What do you notice in your body as you watch the mind jar, and keep your attention focused on it? [PAUSE]*
- *If you find a neutral or pleasant sensation in your body, you can shift your attention to that if you like. [PAUSE]*
- *If you notice an unpleasant sensation, you can do resourcing or grounding as we watch the mind jar. You can think about one of your personal resources and maybe you'll find that it helps your mind settle a bit, just like the mind jar is settling. [PAUSE]*
- *Notice how the mind jar slowly settles and becomes clearer when nothing is stirring it or disturbing it. [PAUSE]*
- *Remember that you can always adjust your position to one that feels better to you, and you can always think about a resource or do grounding if you ever feel uncomfortable. [PAUSE]*
- *Consider and record current sensations, thoughts and feelings.*
- *Consider the idea of 'cloudy mind' and 'clear mind' in general, or something connected to yourself."*

Debrief (3 minutes)

Whole Group or Pairs:

- *"What did you notice, in your mind or in your body, as you watched the contents of the jar settle?*
- *How might engaging in attention practices affect what zone we are in?*
- *Who had a strategy or a way that helped you stay focused on the Mind Jar that you'll share with the group?*
- *What do you think are some of the benefits when our minds are calmer and more settled?*
- *What are some examples of times people might want to actively clear and stabilize the mind?"*

Journal Entry/Writing Prompt

- *"Write down how that experience was for you. Was it challenging or Easy?*

Vocabulary Mixer

1 Mind

The “**mind**” is a broad category that involves our first-person experiences of the world, that can include feelings, emotions, thoughts, memories, hopes and fears, and our imagination. Unlike physical things like chairs, rocks and our bodies, our minds and our mental experiences (such as thoughts and emotions) do not have size, shape, weight or color. We can’t buy or sell them, we can’t see them with our eyes or hear them with our ears. Yet we still have direct experience of our thoughts and emotions, and we are directly impacted by them. We can learn to navigate our inner world of thoughts and emotions so that we can play an active role in our mental life. In this way, we are an active agent of our mental life, rather than simply being subject to whatever arises in our mind.

2 Psyche

The Greek word for mind is **psyche** from which we get the word **psychology**, the scientific discipline of the study of the mind. Since we can’t see the mind directly, how do we study it scientifically? There are a few methods we can use. Since we can’t see how a person is thinking or feeling directly, one way we can study their mind is by paying attention to their behavior. What is their facial expression? What are they saying? What are they doing? From this we can make inferences about their inner states, such as thoughts and emotions.

3 Neuroscience

A second way to study the mind is to study the brain itself. Since we know thoughts and emotions are highly connected with and dependent on brain activity, we can use **neuroscience** to study brain activity. Technology that allows us to look at varying levels of brain activity allow us to see that brain activity can differ depending on what mental activities we are engaged in. Neuroscientists have discovered that imaging of a person’s brain who is feeling sad and distracted looks different to that of a person who is feeling happy and focused. We also know that chemicals in the brain can affect our mood and behavior, which is why medications that affect neurochemistry are often used in the treatment of mental disorders and mental illness, such as depression.

Vocabulary Mixer

4

Phenomenology or Introspection

Another way to study the mind is to look at one's own mental experience directly. This is called **phenomenology**, which is the study of mental phenomena by examining them directly through one's own experience. It can also be called **introspection** — the act of looking inward into one's own mind, experiences, and emotions.

Although we cannot directly see the mental experiences of others, we can directly experience our own inner world of thoughts, emotions and feelings. In Chapter 2, we already explored directly observing sensations in the body. We can also directly observe thoughts and emotions.

What do we use to pay attention to the mind and to learn to navigate it? We use the mind itself. The mind is what we use to pay attention to — or to be mindful of — what's happening around us and within us.

5

Self-awareness

One thing psychologists and neuroscientists have learned, however, is that we can be mistaken about our inner, mental life. Sometimes we don't know what we are feeling. Sometimes we think things that are wrong. Sometimes we learn that beliefs we held in the past were really biases or prejudices that turned out to be unfounded. Sometimes we struggle with inner conflict and we don't know how to resolve it. Without clarity in our minds, our introspection may be flawed and we may lack **self-awareness**. Often it is easier to recognize these mistakes in others when they make them, than in ourselves.

For this reason, a few important tools can support our direct understanding of our own minds: attention, meta-awareness and meta-cognition. **Attention** is the ability to direct our mind to a specific target and keep it there while minimizing distractions that might pull our awareness elsewhere. Without attention, our mental processes can occur so quickly that we may not be able to get a sense of what is happening internally with our thoughts and emotions. Increasingly, psychologists and neuroscientists are recognizing that attention is a skill that can be cultivated through practice.

Vocabulary Mixer

6 Meta-awareness

Meta-awareness is a word scientists use to mean “being consciously aware of what is going on in one’s mind and body.”

For example, a person can get lost in a daydream of being at the beach. Then suddenly they realize that they are daydreaming. When the person realizes that they are daydreaming about the beach, the person is using meta-awareness. They realize “Oh, I am thinking about the beach right now.”

Similarly, a person may feel angry without knowing that they are angry. When they realize they are angry, they think “Oh, I am angry right now.” That is meta-awareness.

One might think we are always aware of what our thoughts and emotions are at any given moment, but it seems that this is not the case. Fortunately, we can train ourselves to have more meta-awareness simply by paying more attention to our inner world of thoughts and emotions. Once we’re aware of our emotions, we can discern how best to manage them in this instance.

For example, one teacher noticed that drinking too much coffee resulted in him becoming anxious and his body even started shaking. After that, he decided to drink smaller amounts of coffee.

Another noticed that watching exciting television shows right before bed made it harder for her to go to sleep peacefully.

Noticing the state of our body and mind is important so that we can adjust our behaviors and take care of ourselves properly.

Vocabulary Mixer

7

Meta-cognition is a similar term that means “thinking about thinking.” We have already explored this a bit with regard to “thinking traps.”

These are traps that can lead us into mistaken beliefs. Recognizing common thinking traps and learning how to avoid them is an important part of developing meta-cognition.

We learn that our minds can play tricks on us sometimes; it can lead us to believe things that are not actually true or in accordance with reality.

Learning to tell the difference between how things appear and how they really are is an essential skill that supports a direct understanding of our own minds.

Exploring Attention

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will be introduced to the concept of attention by using the visual metaphor of a flashlight. After discussing attention and its benefits, students play a game called “I notice, I wonder.” During this, they pass around a novel object while sharing what they notice about it, and then things they wonder about it. This activity highlights how paying close attention reveals details that could make even a simple object interesting, and also that each of us may experience the same object in different ways. The learning experience concludes with a reflective practice for using a resource to strengthen attention.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the skill of “attention” by studying related vocabulary and the benefits that come from developing attention
- Explore the strengthening of attention as a skill
- Learn that people often perceive things differently, even when looking at the same object or situation

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Relationship
Skills



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Several small objects of curiosity, preferably ones that students are unlikely to have encountered or paid close attention to before. (Examples: seedpod, tool, seashell, interesting textile, wooden mask, honeycomb, bone, piece of unusual fruit, photograph, art, etc.)
- A bag (Optional: if you want to do a version where students don't see the object)

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 5-7 seconds each

Standardized Resourcing, Grounding & Tracking Practice

Note: Resourcing, Grounding, Tracking and Shift and Stay were introduced in Chapter 2. If you have not already introduced these skills, please do so first. Otherwise, this settling practice will not be familiar to students.

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- **"For you, it may be settling into your chair, leaning against a wall, or sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger. A person, a place, a thing, something about yourself, or a memory. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations that come with it. [PAUSE]"**
- **"When you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? [LONGER PAUSE]"**
- **"Next, if you like, I invite you to ground. Bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on**

your leg. Possibly you feel the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]

- *If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]"*
- *If you become aware of an unpleasant sensation, you can always shift your attention to another place that feels better and let your attention rest there. Or you can also re-focus on your resource. [PAUSE]"*
- *If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]"*
- *As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.*
- *Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I invite you to open them. Thank you for settling in with me."*

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

Exploring Attention

- The teacher or a student volunteer can verbally read the paragraphs below.
- The teacher or a student volunteer can create a word map with “benefits of attention training” in the middle.

“Benefits of attention training include enhanced concentration, learning, and retention of information, as well as strengthening one’s ability to control our impulses by calming our body and mind.

Attention training also supports the cultivation of compassion for self and others, body literacy (gaining awareness of and language for describing bodily sensations) and emotional awareness (recognizing and understanding emotions in self and others).

The skill of attention is cultivated not through force of will, but rather by repeatedly and gently cultivating opportunities for practice, and by learning to notice what happens to the mind and body when one is able to pay attention with calmness and clarity. Another benefit of attention cultivation is ethical awareness—awareness of what contributes to our and others’ flourishing.

Can anyone help explain one of the benefits listed?”

Reflective Question: **“Consider and write down 3 benefits you might want to cultivate.”**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

I notice, I wonder

Guided Language

“Today we will continue to practice the concept of non-judgmental attention as a skill.

We will be keeping our attention on our chosen object in order to strengthen our attention.

We will study the object carefully as if encountering it for the first time and then say something we notice or wonder about it.

Each of us will have a chance to describe the object. The challenge is to not repeat anything someone else has already said.”

- Form one circle as a whole group or break up into smaller groups with a few circles.
- Pass around one object at a time, giving each student a chance to hold and observe the object and then describe it by noticing and wondering about it without naming it. (I notice_____, I wonder_____.)

Repeat this process with a few different interesting and varying objects (something from nature, something human made, photos, artwork, etc....)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

In the circle or in pairs, ask students to debrief choosing from the following questions:

- Who heard someone else say something that you were thinking too?
- What did someone say that you hadn't yet noticed or wondered about?
- Who can add one more thing they notice? Or wonder?
How long do you think we could keep finding new observations or wonderings, and why?
- We didn't have any wrong answers.
Why do you think that is? [We're describing our own experiences, not opinions or judgments.]
- Who got distracted at some point?
Who lost attention for a moment?
How were you able to bring your attention back to the group and the object?
- What sensations did you notice feeling during this activity?
Where did you feel sensations in your body?

Guided Language

"When we pay close attention to something, we keep noticing new things about it.

Everyone has their own perspective.

We notice different things about the same object.

When we look closely and carefully, observe before making a judgment.

It's easier to see that there are no "right" answers, just different experiences."

Heedfulness, Mindfulness, Monitoring Awareness

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will cultivate attention. Attention incorporates three concepts:

1. “heedfulness” of things that could be dangerous or harmful;
2. “mindfulness” of what we are trying to do or accomplish without distraction and without forgetting what we are doing and
3. “monitoring awareness” of what is going on in our mind, our bodies, and around us.

These aspects of attention not only allow us to maintain our focus and learn better, they also help us catch emotional impulses before they create problems for ourselves and others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Engage in the practices of heedfulness, mindfulness, and monitoring awareness
- Describe the experience of paying attention to things on the inside (our body, sensations, and mental experiences)
- Describe strategies for catching impulses before they cause us problems

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- A cup filled with water

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

With a partner, choose something in the immediate environment and without naming it, describe it to your partner. Your partner will have one minute to guess what you are describing.

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- *"Let's take a moment to get comfortable in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"*
- *"For you it may be settling into your chair, leaning against a wall, or sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]"*
- *"Now I invite you to think of a resource. A resource is something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger."*
- *"Your resource can be a person, a place, a thing, something about yourself, or a memory. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations that come with it. [PAUSE]"*
- *"When you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body?"* [LONGER PAUSE]
- *"Next, if you like, I invite you to ground. Bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your*

leg. Possibly you feel the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside?

[PAUSE]

- *If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]"*
- *If you become aware of an unpleasant sensation, you can always shift your attention to another place that feels better and let your attention rest there. Or you can also re-focus on your resource. [PAUSE]"*
- *If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body.* [LONGER PAUSE]
- *As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.*
- *Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you for settling in with me."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

What is attention and what is it for?

In small groups ask students to take turns responding to each prompt. Students will not respond to each other's comments. Each person will answer the prompt or say pass and then move on to the next prompt.

- What do we mean when we say "pay attention"?
- Can another person make us "pay attention"?
- What are some things on the outside that we pay attention to?
- What are things on the inside that we pay attention to?
- What do we use to help us pay attention and how do we do it?
- What does it look and feel like when we are paying close attention?
- Why is it important to pay attention to things on the inside? What value does it add to our life?
- Why is it important to pay attention to things on the outside? What value does it add to our life?
- What might it be like if we couldn't/didn't have ways to focus our attention?
What could happen?

Guiding Language

"In our previous lessons, we've been noticing how we can pay attention to outside things by using our senses.

Similarly, we can pay attention with our mind to what's going on inside us, our sensations, thoughts, and feelings.

This skill of attention supports our ability to learn and can be strengthened through practice. What are some things on the inside that we have already been placing our attention on? (tracking sensations)

What else might we notice if we pay attention to what is going on on the inside? (a piece of music stuck in one's head; daydreaming, imagining, worrying)

We're going to explore this concept of attention more deeply today."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Introduce new vocabulary by telling a story

Guiding Language

"In ancient times, a King noticed that their lamp was almost empty of oil. This oil was needed to maintain the candle wick through the night.

On this particular night the King needed the light to study important documents. The King collected the vessel required to hold

the exact amount of oil needed to keep the candle burning through the night.

The King called an attendant and asked them to bring them the required cup filled to the top with oil. The King told the attendant that not one drop of oil could be spilt from the top of the cup. He then told the attendant that if one drop did spill, serious harm would befall him and his family.

The attendant gathered their courage and understood the task before them. They very carefully filled the cup to the brim and began walking to the lamp in order to fill the reservoir needed to light the candle through the night.

*The attendant was very aware that if they made a mistake harm would befall them and their family. The attendant was **Heedful** of not spilling a single drop as they knew it would be harmful.*

*As the attendant walked down the hall with the cup of oil filled to the top they maintained complete and total **Mindfulness** of the cup of oil to ensure that they did not bump it or change their movement in any way that might cause a drop of oil to spill.*

*As they were walking, they noticed different things in the hallway and immediately utilized **Monitoring Awareness** to bring their attention back to the object of the cup filled to the top with oil.*

*In this story, we can see that **Heedfulness** helped the attendant recognize what was at stake to ensure that no harm occurred to them or others. The attendant was also **mindful** of the task and the object of focus. The attendant also used **monitoring awareness** to bring their attention back to the object of the cup filled with oil.*

Heedfulness being cautious and careful with regard to things that could cause problems for oneself or others. If we do not maintain heedfulness we might not have a reason to be **mindful** or have **monitoring awareness** in experiences such as riding a bike or driving a car. If we lack heedfulness we can easily cause harm to ourselves and others.

Mindfulness in SEE Learning consists of retaining something in our mind and not forgetting it. It also means not getting distracted or losing sight of it. We can cultivate **mindfulness** through attention training.

Monitoring Awareness refers to having the ability to notice as to when the mind wanders from the object of focus or attention, allowing us to bring it back to our intended point of focus.”

Pass the Cup

- Form a circle
- Fill up a cup of water almost to the brim
- Pass the cup around the circle, trying not to spill any of the water.
- ***"As the cup goes around the circle, try to keep your mind on the cup and see if you can notice how your body and mind reacts as it gets closer to you. Notice what you feel on the inside as you watch the cup move around the circle. If there are any thoughts or feelings in your mind, notice those too."***
- **Challenge/Extension** As an option, you can try this activity with two cups going in opposite directions at the same time.

Debrief

In pairs or as a whole group discuss the following:

"During this activity, how were we practicing mindfulness? Heedfulness? Awareness?"

Give students a moment to write down ideas and then invite them to share their ideas.

"By keeping our attention on the cup and on our inner state, we are practicing mindfulness."

Noticing what's going on inside us (our bodies reactions, thoughts, feelings, sensations) is awareness. By being careful not to spill, we're practicing heedfulness."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Writing Prompt/Verbal Share

"Choose one or more prompts to write and/or share about.

- ***When and how can you apply heedfulness to your own life?***
- ***How can we use the skills of heedfulness and awareness to improve our wellbeing?***
- ***How do you think this concept of heedfulness is related to the skill of attention?***
- ***How would being heedful connect to developing the 'muscle' of attention?"***

Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 1

PURPOSE

Students use scenarios to review the analogy of the spark and the forest fire as representations of feelings. They relate the scenarios to mindfulness, heedfulness, and awareness as tools and practices that can help us to catch a spark before it gets too big. Through reflection, they relate the learning to their own lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Notice that the training of attention can be involved in any activity we do
- Learn strategies for catching impulses before they cause us problems

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Spark and forest fire images
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

"In the resourcing section of your journal, answer the following question using words and illustrations.

What's something, some place, or someone that helps you feel better, safer, happier or stronger?"

Settling Activity

- **"Let's take a moment to get into a comfortable position.**
- **Bring the resource you just wrote/drew about to mind. [PAUSE]**
- **See if you can keep your attention on this resource. Noticing the details and nuances of the resource. [PAUSE]**
- **Become aware of your inner state, noticing sensations, thoughts or feelings. If you become distracted, invite your attention back to your resource. [PAUSE]**
- **Now return your attention to your journal. If you would like, add details to your resource."**

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

Guiding Language

Display the visual of the forest fire.

- **"Describe this picture. What are some ways a forest fire can get started? [e.g., lightning, unattended campfires, carelessness with smoking materials...]**

Display the spark visual.

- **"How big is the fire when it first starts?**
- **How could someone put out the spark or small flame when it's just getting started? What would it take to do that?**
- **Who all might be able to put out a spark?**
- **What about when it's really big like a forest fire? How would you put it out?**
- **Why is it harder to put out when it's a big forest fire like that?**
- **We are using the metaphor of a spark and a forest fire to understand our emotions and how they can be contained safely or get out of control.**
- **Once a forest fire reaches a certain size, it can't be put out, even through collective efforts. So it just burns until it burns itself out.**
- **Similarly, emotions at an early stage are things we can become aware of and can then intentionally and bravely take action towards (like frustration or mild anger). However, once that emotion reaches a certain level, it takes over (all-consuming rage, hatred, or jealousy).**
- **At that level, we lose awareness, we lose reason, we are thrown out of our comfort zone, and we lose our capacity for bravely or compassionately taking action, because we are so consumed by the destructive emotion.**

- **At that moment, we may say or do something harmful to ourselves or others, that compromises our well-being and violates our basic human values, that we can never take back.**
- **Later, we wonder why we acted in that way, and say things like "I don't know what I was thinking" or "I couldn't control myself."**
- **So the point is, if one can still be aware and can still take brave, intentional, productive action, then the emotion has not reached the forest fire level yet — and that's precisely why we want to catch those emotions and mental states before they reach that level."**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

The Spark and The Forest Fire Scenarios

Independently, with partners or as a whole class, read the scenarios and respond to the questions.

Option 1

"Robin looked across the lunchroom and saw several friends laughing and looking in their direction. "They're making fun of me!" Robin thought.

"They think I'm not cool enough to be friends any more."

Robin could feel a rising heartbeat and heat in their face. "They are such jerks! I'm going to show them what it feels like to be laughed

at! I don't ever want to be friends with them again!"

Option 2

"Ronan's teacher handed their math test back with an "F" at the top. "I failed a test!" Ronan thought.

"I don't understand this kind of math problem at all. I'm no good at math. I'm never going to be good at math."

Ronan felt sweaty and anxious. "I'm just not a good student. I'm never going to get into college, or get a job I care about. I may as well just quit school right now..."

Debrief Questions

- **"What happened in the story?"**
- **"What was the spark for the main character?"**
- **"What might they do to catch their spark?"**
- **"Where did you notice someone getting caught in a thinking trap in the story?"**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

- **"Can you think of a time when you caught a spark before it became a forest fire? What did you do to help yourself?"**
- **"How can we benefit from catching our sparks?"**
- **"How can we help others by catching our sparks?"**

Share one or more of the points below, if they weren't already surfaced in the student discussion.

"Emotions are things we feel, and they also involve physical systems in the body and brain.

Unlike unemotional thoughts, in emotion there is a sense of investment: we, or our bodies, care about something.

If we think about something we don't care about at all, or have no investment in, we're unlikely to get emotional about it. The more we care about something, the stronger our emotional response tends to be.

Feelings and impulses can be like sparks that quickly grow to a forest fire if we don't catch them in time by paying close attention to how we are feeling and noticing what's going on around us.

It is important to notice our sparks and address them before they become fires, which we can do by strengthening our attention and awareness muscles.

When it's still a spark, a fire is easy to put out and even a child can do it. Once it's a forest fire, the consequences increase, and it lasts until it burns itself out."





Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 2

PURPOSE

Students will practice sustained attention in everyday activities including walking, eating, listening and writing to develop the skill of mindfulness and increase stamina to focus and pay attention. It is important to cultivate attention using neutral or “boring” things because it improves our ability to be present, pay attention for longer periods of time, and address tendencies toward negativity bias.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Engage in the practice of sustained attention in everyday activities including walking, eating, listening, and writing to develop the skill of mindfulness and increase stamina to focus and pay attention
- Determine how being aware of negativity bias can be helpful in fostering self-compassion.

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A clear open space
- Healthy snack and a napkin for each student
- Writing utensils and paper

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Introduction

"Today we're going to try three more mindful attention activities so that we have several options to choose from when we're working to grow our attention skills. A few things that are important to remember about why we are practicing mindful listening, walking, and eating today are:

- **We can choose to pay attention while we do any activity.**
- **We notice more when we slow down and pay close attention: things become more vivid and interesting.**
- **Paying close attention can balance and stabilize our body and mind.**
- **When we practice paying attention we can maintain focus for longer periods of time."**

Mindful Listening

"First, we will practice mindful listening by bringing our attention to the sounds we are hearing around us. Do your best to keep your attention on the sounds you hear.

If you become distracted, that is natural and okay. Simply invite yourself to bring your attention back to the sounds you hear.

- **Find a comfortable place in the room.**
- **Close your eyes or leave them open. Take three breaths if that feels**

comfortable to you.

- **Begin to focus on things that you can hear that are far away from us. Expand your listening field as widely as you can. Can you find the farthest away sound? It is not important to identify the sound, just notice it. [PAUSE]**
- **Now we are going to find the sounds happening inside the building. [PAUSE]**
- **And let's bring it in even closer — notice the sounds happening inside the room. [PAUSE]**
- **Finally, bring your hearing in as close as possible, what sounds do you hear inside your own body? [PAUSE]**
- **Open your eyes, and write in your journal:**
- **How do you feel?**
What zone do you feel in right now?
[PAUSE]
- **What sensations do you notice in your body? Has your breathing changed? [PAUSE]**
- **Stand and take a good stretch. We'll start mindful eating in just a few moments."**

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY 1 | 10 minutes

Mindful Eating

"Now, we will practice mindful eating by bringing our attention to the food we are eating and the process of eating itself.

Do your best to keep your attention on the activity. As a reminder, if you become

distracted, that is natural and ok, you can to bring your attention back to the mindful eating activity.

I will ask questions that you can ponder but we will not be sharing aloud at this time.

Before Eating

- **“Notice the food in front of you.**
What does it look like, smell like, feel like? Use your senses to describe the food. Place it in your hand, notice the weight and texture. What else do you notice?
- **Review Interdependence.** Consider what it took to get this food to us today. Where did the food originate? What are the ingredients? What people helped to grow or produce this food?
- **When you think about eating it, what thoughts do you notice?** Your mind might be telling you “Oh boy, I can’t wait!” or “Yuck, I don’t want to eat that!” You might feel a little curious or just neutral.

While Eating

- **“Slowly take a bite. Hold it in your mouth.**
- **Notice the process of chewing, the jaw, tongue, saliva and taste buds.**
- **How does it taste? Does the taste change? What are the textures? Consider the digestive process.**
- **Finish eating your snack silently and continue to notice the process.”**

Choose a few questions to discuss with your class.

- **“What do you notice on the inside?** [Ask specifically about sensations and where they are in the body, reinforcing learning from Chapter 2].
- **What zone do you feel in right now? Resilient zone, high zone, low zone?**
- **Did you notice any acts of kindness when we were doing mindful eating or passing out the snacks?**
- **We each received the snack from someone else, and they received it from someone else, didn’t they? How many acts of kindness can you count from receiving your snack?**
- **What would help you do mindful eating with other foods or at other times?**
- **Where do you think it would be easiest to do mindful eating, and why? Where might it be a challenge right now, and why?**
- **What other activities could we do together mindfully?**

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY 2 | 10 minutes

Mindful Walking

“Finally, we will practice mindful walking by bringing our attention to the process of walking itself.

Do your best to keep your attention on the activity.

As a reminder, if you become distracted, that is natural and okay.

You can bring your attention back to the mindful walking activity."

Before Walking

"As you are walking, think about the movement of your body, your knees, hips, feet, arms, etc.

Notice your feet hitting the ground as you walk.

Take note of the environment around you. What do you see and hear?

We will do our best to walk in silence and keep a reasonably even pace with the rest of the class.

When you are ready, silently stand up and we will begin our mindful walking exercise."

Choose a few questions to debrief.

- **"What did you notice about walking that you haven't before, if anything?"**
- **Do you notice anything in the environment that you appreciated?**
- **What do you notice now on the inside?**
[Ask specifically about sensations and where they are in the body, reinforcing learning from Chapter 2].
- **What zone do you feel in right now?**

- **What else do you notice from doing mindful walking?"**

Mindful Walking Variations

It is recommended to do these activities more than once.

- Rise from your seat in silence as you join the line. Return to your seat in silence after the activity.
- A student can volunteer to be the "leader," they can start and end the activity and set the pace.
- You could invite a few students to begin and then allow students to join the line or circle as they feel ready. In these cases, you would join last.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY 3 | 10 minutes

Guiding Language

"We have been practicing paying attention to things that we do all the time.

We walk all the time, eat and listen everyday, so it's hard to pay attention to these things.

It's easier to pay attention when something is new, exciting, or fun.

These activities can feel less stimulating and even boring.

It's important to cultivate attention using neutral or "boring" things, because we

naturally pay attention to fun and stimulating things.

It is important to cultivate attention using neutral or “boring” things because it improves our ability to be present, and pay attention for longer periods of time.

One of the benefits of being present in the current moment is that it helps us to shift awareness from a negativity bias. When we are in the present, we do not ruminate about the past or a future we cannot control.

Present moment awareness provides us with a powerful self-compassion strategy as it enables us to turn off the doubting and worrying mind. It also promotes our ethical literacy by helping us recognize our emotional and physical well-being and take measures when needed.

If you were more present, how would it benefit your life, relationships, and personal wellbeing?

Reflection Prompts

“We will end with a journal entry.

Do this as mindfully as you can, noticing the subtleties of writing.

You may notice the pen or pencil in your hand, the movement of the hand and wrist, the pressure of the pen or pencil on your paper,

the quiet sound the writing utensil makes, etc.”

Journal/Reflect/Verbally Share

“What was challenging for you today, if anything?

When might you practice mindfulness throughout your day?

Can you think of any other neutral activities that you would like to try this with?

PURPOSE

The class will discuss a visual metaphor of training a puppy to attention training. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups or in pairs. The students will then practice an attention training exercise by placing their attention on the breath or other chosen object of focus.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe mindfulness and awareness through metaphors and direct experience.
- Engage in the practice of cultivating focused attention on a single object.
- Identify how mindfulness and awareness support healthy relationships with others

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Relationship
Skills



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Picture that contains all of the elements of the lesson story (one handout per student)
- Blank paper for drawing
- Colored pencils, crayons, skinny markers and/or pens
- Background music (optional)

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- **“What’s something you saw, heard, remembered, or imagined recently that helped you feel better or feel stronger in that moment? Write or draw about it in the resource section of your journal.”**
- **“Put your pencil down and take a quiet moment to focus on this resource. Bring your attention back to the resource if your mind wanders or you get distracted.”**
- **“You can also choose to ground, if that is what you prefer today.”**

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

Guiding Language

“As we become skillful in focused attention, it can help to bring about greater calm and well-being in our bodies and minds, and help strengthen our ability to pay attention the same way we can build muscle.”

With increased attention we can learn better, focus better and pay attention better. We can redirect our attention more easily when necessary, and we can also use our attention as a tool for examining our own minds and mental processes, including our thoughts and emotions.

Today we’re exploring the practice of focusing on a single object and sustaining our attention there over time. To do this, we put our

intentional focus on a neutral object of focus (like our breath) and then bring our mind back to it whenever we notice that our mind has wandered or has become sleepy (lethargic or dull).

It can be even more challenging to do this kind of focusing than the others we’ve done before, since the object of our attention is deliberately neutral, and could be perceived as less interesting.

Enhanced attention training involves learning how to pay attention even when something is not that stimulating, because we already naturally pay attention to things that we find interesting.

We’re going to use the metaphor of a compassionate owner training a puppy today, to think about cultivating focused awareness.

Let’s look together at this drawing and think about what you know about training a puppy, from your own experience, or what you know or imagine from others’ experience, what you’ve read or seen.

Pass out handout.

You’re welcome to label or make notes on your handout if you wish, and put it into your SEE Journal to reflect on at other times.”

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Cultivating Focused Awareness

Activity Overview

The class will discuss a visual metaphor of training a puppy to attention training. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, or in pairs. Choose some or all of the questions below to facilitate a dialogue with/between students. Possible responses are provided but surfacing these particular responses is not the goal.

Discussion Prompts

- **"What do you think is happening here?"**
- **There are a lot of things you might want a puppy to learn to do. What is the puppy being trained to do in this picture?** (Stay on the path. Walk along the path. Not run away.)
- **How do you train a puppy?**
Do you see anything in this picture that's being used to train the puppy?
- **What is the leash for?** (Keeping the puppy on the path. Not letting it run away. Keeping it safe.)
- **Why do you think the compassionate owner has to watch the puppy?** (It might stray off the path. It could get into danger.)
- **What should the owner do if the puppy wanders off the path?**
- **How do you think it could affect training the puppy if it is very excited? Or very sleepy?**
- **How might training a puppy be similar to training our attention?** (It takes time and

practice. We keep our mind on one thing, like the trainer keeping the puppy on the path. We are training our mind.)

- **If we're trying to pay attention to something, like the puppy is trying to stay on the path, and our mind wanders off, what could we do?**
How can we bring our mind back to what we're intending to focus on, like the kind owner bringing the puppy back to the path?
- **Why is it important for the owner to be kind and patient when training the puppy?**
(Learning takes time. The puppy could get discouraged.)
- **If the compassionate owner keeps walking the puppy and keeping it on the path every day, what do you think will happen eventually?** (It will get used to it. It will get trained. It may be able to walk without a leash one day.)

We know from building our SEE vocabulary that mindfulness is being able to keep one's mind on a chosen object without forgetting it, and awareness is noticing what is taking place in the mind (such as when it gets distracted or sleepy).

How might training a puppy to walk along a path be seen as a metaphor for training and strengthening our attention? (The mind is the puppy. The path is the object of focus or what we are paying attention to. The leash is mindfulness: our capacity to keep our focus and attention on a chosen object. The kind

owner is awareness who sees if the puppy is staying on the path and if the puppy is alert, distracted, or sleepy.)"

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 1 | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

This reflective practice introduces the more formal practice of attention training on a single neutral object, such as our breath.

The key strategy to sustain attention is to bring the mind back when it wanders or keep attention crisp if one becomes sleepy.

Guiding Language

- *"Now let's try to train our attention in the way we'd train a puppy.*
- *Let's take a comfortable seat and use what we just learned.*
- *Just like the puppy, if we're too excited or too sleepy, or if we're not in our resilient zone, it will be hard to train our attention.*
- *So first we'll use resourcing and grounding activity to help us be in our resilient zone.*
- *Let's think of one of our resources in silence. Or if you prefer, you can do some grounding where you are sitting. [PAUSE]*
- *As we think of our resources, let's notice any pleasant or neutral sensations in the body. [PAUSE]*

- *If you find a pleasant or neutral sensation, just keep your focus on that. That can be your object of focus for now. [PAUSE]*
- *Maybe now our bodies are feeling more relaxed. Let's focus on our breath now. We'll use that as our object of focus. For some people, focusing on the breath can be uncomfortable. So if you don't want to use your breath, you can choose a resource, a part of your body to ground with, or a neutral sensation.*
- *It can help to close your eyes. If you don't want to close them, then lower your eyes to the floor. Let's be careful not to distract anyone else, because we're all trying to pay attention.*
- *Bring your attention to your breath as it enters and leaves your body and allow your attention to remain with the breath. If you've chosen another object of focus, bring your attention to that.*
- *You may notice the breath in your nose. If so, you can pay attention there.*
- *You may notice the breath in the rise and fall of your belly. If so, you can pay attention there.*
- *You may notice the breath somewhere else. Then you can pay attention there.*
- *Wherever you choose, we'll just keep our attention there on the breath. [PAUSE]*

- **Let's just breathe in a very natural and relaxed way, and keep our attention with the breath or other object of focus.**
- **We should be relaxed when doing this, but if instead you feel uncomfortable, you can stop paying attention to the breath and instead go back to doing resourcing or grounding. Or if you need to, just stop and relax on your own quietly.**
- **Otherwise let's keep our attention on the breath. [PAUSE]**
- **If we get distracted or if the mind wanders, just bring your mind back to the breath or your chosen object, just like bringing the puppy back. And see if we can hold the breath in our mind a little longer. [LONGER PAUSE]**
- **Now we can open our eyes.**

Just like a compassionate owner knows that their puppy will need and deserve many chances to practice training before they can easily know what to do, we also need and deserve many opportunities to practice training our attention. So that down the road, we can return to being present and sustain our attention in the ways we want."

Teaching Tip

Since students who have experienced trauma, adversity, or illness may have trouble sitting still or focusing on the breath, and may even find the experience unpleasant, it is very important to remind students that they can always return

to doing grounding or resourcing or can stop the practice entirely. This is especially true for those who experience dysregulation when trying to sit still or focus, and for whom it may take more time before they can do practices like this with ease. Be clear that there is no judgment attached to this comfort level or state of readiness, and avoid forcing students to do practices that bring them discomfort.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 2 | 10 minutes

Drawing Attention Training

"Open up your journal and respond to one or more of the prompts below.

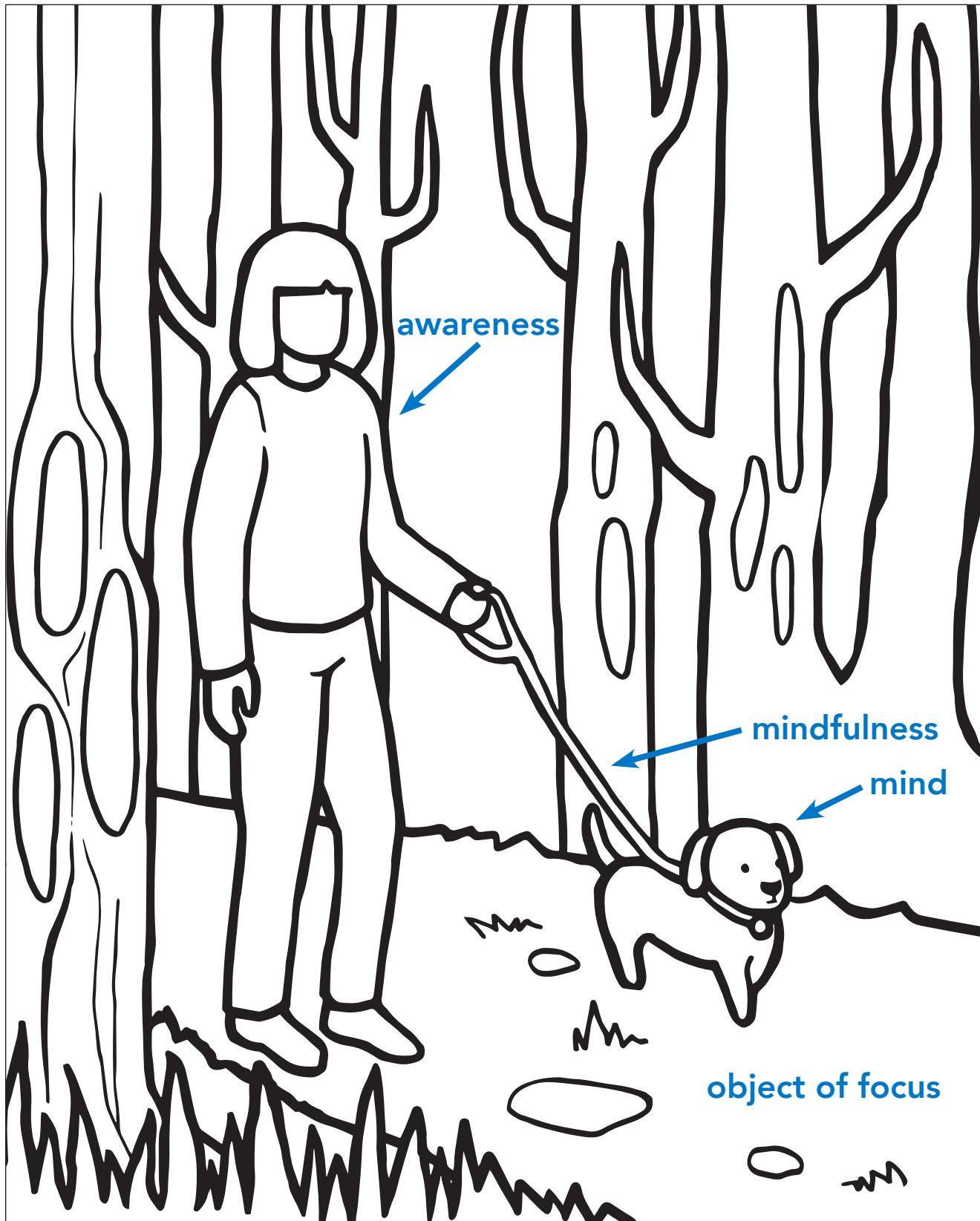
- **How was that experience for you?**
- **How easy or difficult was it for you to keep your attention on the breath with mindfulness?**
- **Were you able to use awareness to bring your mind back when you got distracted or sleepy?**
- **What sensations do you notice in your body now?**

As you reflect on these prompts, allow yourself to envision how the skill of mindfulness and awareness supports you in developing healthy relationships with others. Please use the following prompts to guide this reflection.

Attention Training



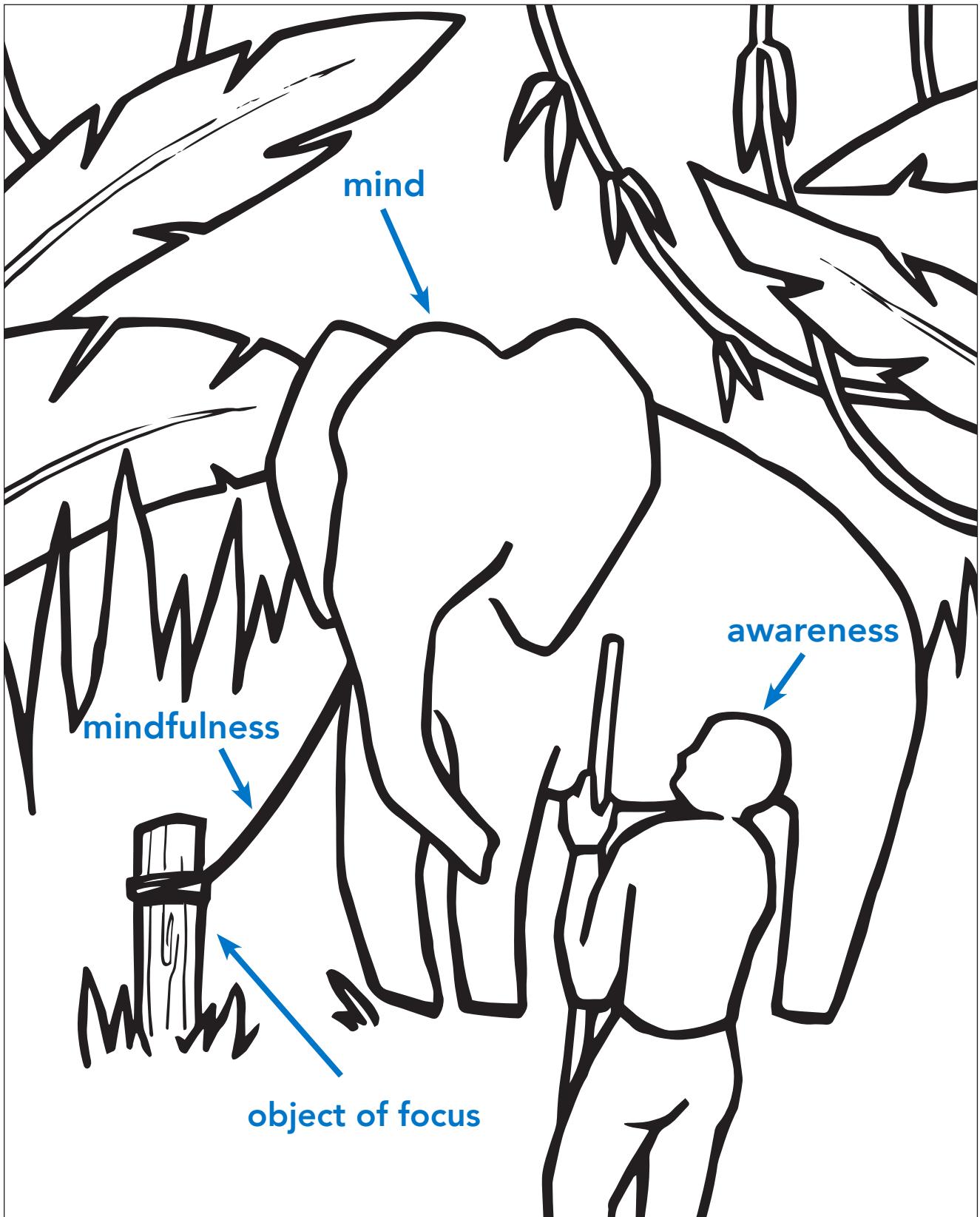
Attention Training



Attention Training



Attention Training



What would it mean for your relationships if you are able to be more present, more attuned to the internal and external experiences of friends, family members, and others?

Extension

- *Draw something you connect to 'attention.'*
Draw anything that brings to light something about attention, something you felt or experienced, anything you're inspired to create when you think about attention.
- *Reflect for a moment on your drawing and prepare to share a word or phrase that connects your art to the concept of attention.*
- *We'll do a zip-around to close our time together, holding up your art and saying your word or phrase."*

Observing the Mind

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, we will discuss and practice **meta-awareness** by discussing the metaphor of the sky and the clouds and engaging in a practice of watching the mind with open curiosity. **Meta-awareness** is the practice of directing attention inwardly to the mind without getting caught up in thoughts, emotions, and feelings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Engage in the practice of observing their own thoughts and feelings
- Demonstrate the ability to notice and cultivate a gap between stimulus and response in order to facilitate personal impulse control

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

LENGTH

45 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The mind jar created in Chapter 3, Learning Experience 1
- Printed copy of image of sky (provided resource in this section)
- Writing utensils and paper
- Recorded instrumental music

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each
"What's something that has made you laugh or smile recently?"

Write or draw about it in the resourcing section of your journal.

Share your experience with a partner."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 7 minutes

Can we watch the mind?

A poster or slide with this information, for reference, as you lead this activity.

- We can place our attention on our mind itself.
- We can notice thoughts, emotions, sensations, memories, and images as they come and go.
- We can pay attention to our thoughts and emotions in our mind.
- When we watch and simply observe our thoughts, we get less caught up in them. Watching our thoughts helps us learn about what's going on inside us and helps us be less reactive.
- The practice of neutrally observing the thoughts creates space between thoughts and the ability to pick and choose which thought you give attention to.

Metacognition Intro

Use the prompts below to engage the class in a discussion.

- **"What do you remember about the mind jar?**
What does the jar represent?
What about the contents of the jar?
What have we done over the past few weeks to strengthen our attention?
- **What are things we can pay attention to on the inside? Where do our thoughts reside?**
- **When I have an idea or think of something, is that idea or thought on the outside or inside?**
- **What about when I feel an emotion?**
Like when I feel happy?
Or when I'm upset?
What about when I feel a sensation?
Where are my thoughts?
Where are my emotions?
Do they have physical shape or color or size?
- **What comes to mind when you investigate this idea that we can pay attention to our thoughts and what's going on inside us?**
- **All these things like our thoughts and feelings come up in our minds.**
How many thoughts and feelings do you think you or someone else have each day?
- **Try to think back and count yours, during the last few minutes. You might remember images, thoughts, feelings, sensations."**

Getting caught up in thoughts

- *"Sometimes when we have a thought we get all caught up in it and it can carry us away. For example, I might think of ice cream and then suddenly it starts a train of thoughts that can lead me on and on."*

Let's take a moment to do this right now.

Let's close our eyes and think about ice cream and watch where our mind goes.

(Pause 15 seconds)

What happened for you? Share with a partner.

- *If you remember what happened in your mind after that first thought of ice cream, this means you were paying attention to your mind. That means you were using meta-awareness.*
- *What might happen if we just watched that first thought about ice cream? What do you think would happen?"*

Sky and the clouds metaphor

Display or pass out the image of the sky and the clouds.

- *"Look carefully at this picture. What details do you notice?"*
- *How is this picture of the sky like the clear mind jar?*
What do the clouds represent?
What other things could appear in the sky?

(A rainbow, birds, or an airplane, a storm or lightning bolt...)

- *When any of those things come up in the sky, what does the sky do? Does it change? Does it try to hold on to anything that appears? Does it try to push anything away?*
- *I wonder if we can watch our thoughts and feelings as though we were this sky. Do you think we can watch thoughts come and go without holding on to them or pushing them away?*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 1 | 10 minutes

Thinking Trap: There is no space or time to choose a more constructive way.

Key Concepts

- *"Does anyone remember what a thinking trap is? A Thinking Trap is a way of thinking that tends to distort reality, making it harder for us to think and act constructively.*
- *Developing an ability to watch thought processes in the mind is a great way to catch thinking traps. Sometimes when we are experiencing distressing thoughts or challenging feelings, we might feel that there is no space or time to choose a more constructive way to deal with the challenge. Our ideas or feelings could be so intense, paralyzing or compelling that it seems to us we have no choice to think, feel, or*

act differently.

- ***We do often have more choice than that, however. We can pause to remember: "I do not have to act on each emotional impulse or thought. I can navigate emotional experiences in healthy ways, to the benefit of myself and others".***

Journal Entry

"We're going to do a 2-minute private write to capture whatever you're thinking about this idea right now. What thinking traps came to mind?"

Share out and Debrief

- ***"Would anyone like to share an insight or idea they wrote down?"***
- ***We all have personal power over how we react to emotional impulses or challenging thoughts. We do not have to act on each emotional impulse. We can navigate emotional experiences in healthy ways to the benefit of ourselves and others. Observing the mind helps us notice potential thinking traps."***

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 2 | 10 minutes

Observing the Mind/Meta-Awareness practice

Activity Overview

This is a reflective practice similar to the focused attention on the breath, except that instead of a single object of focus, students will be sitting quietly, noticing what arises in their mind,

without getting involved with the contents of their thoughts and feelings.

The aim of this practice is to watch and observe whatever thoughts and feelings come to mind with open curiosity and without getting too involved.

Guided Language

Introducing the activity

- ***"During this reflective practice we will try to watch our own thoughts."***
- ***We are "just noticing" like we did with the object in the "I Notice, I Wonder." activity.***
- ***There aren't any right or wrong thoughts here. A distraction of the mind is just something to notice. Not judge. Just notice and let it drift by, like a cloud.***
- ***There are some practical strategies that can help strengthen this personal pause-power.***

One is noticing and naming our mind's activity. Sometimes people do that by naming thoughts, ("That's a thought... that's another thought" or "I'm thinking about x..." and "Now I'm thinking about y...").

You can also name specific emotions or sensations ("I'm feeling anxious..." or "I'm feeling restless..."). Once you've labeled the thought or feeling, you can return your attention to the breath or other object of focus."

Meta-Awareness Practice

- **"Let's take a comfortable, alert posture. You can choose to lower your eyes to the ground or close them.**
- **First we'll do a resourcing and grounding activity to help us be in our resilient zone. Let's think of one of our resources in silence. Or if you prefer, you can do some grounding where you are sitting.** [PAUSE]
- **Bring your attention onto the breath now or another chosen object if you don't want to use the breath.**

Remember if you start to feel uncomfortable, you can go back to your resource or to grounding. [Pause for 30 seconds or longer if your students are comfortable doing so.]

- **Next let's practice just watching our mind.** [PAUSE]

Instead of focusing on our breath, we're going to watch to see whatever comes up in our mind.

- **Rather than getting caught up in our thoughts, we're going to see if we can just watch them.**
- **Let's be silent and pay close attention. See if we can do that, just notice any thoughts or emotions that enter our mind.** [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds, or more if your students are comfortable doing so.]
- **If we get distracted or caught up in our thoughts and emotions, remember that**

we're just watching them, like clouds moving across the sky. We're seeing them come, stay, and go. Let's try to do that just a little bit more. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds or more.]

When you are ready, open your eyes and open your journal."

Teaching Tip

- You will notice that this practice combines resourcing and grounding, attention on the breath or single chosen object of focus, and then observing the mind. Each of these practices have been built up sequentially, so if your students are not yet able to do this full practice, provide additional experiences with the shorter practices before returning to this more complex practice. Scaffolding their experiences will build ease and confidence over time.
- Once they can do this combined practice, consider making this your main practice, and repeat it many times with your students, ideally twice or more each week. You can then gradually lengthen the pauses until they are 30 seconds to a minute in length. As your students build this skill, they will be engaging in very significant attention training and their progress will be an encouraging sign to them that they are strengthening their muscle of attention. These skills will serve as a foundation for practices in future chapters that deal with noticing and regulating emotions as they arise.

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

“Choose one or more of the following questions to write or draw about in your journal.

- **What did you notice?**
- **Was anyone able to watch some thoughts coming and going? What was that like?**
- **Did anyone notice a time when there were no thoughts? Maybe a pause or a break or gap between thoughts?**
- **What have you learned about the mind that you find most interesting or most helpful?**
- **How might it help us if we learned to watch our minds?**
- **How would this skill help cultivate ours and other’s well-being?**
- **What would be the impact on our ethical engagement if we can create that gap?**
- **I invite you to spend a few moments watching your own mind sometime in the next few days and share what you notice.”**

Can we watch the mind?

We can place our attention on our mind itself.

We can notice thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories, and images as they come and go.

We can pay attention to our thoughts and emotions in our mind.

When we watch and simply observe our thoughts, we get less caught up in them.

Watching our thoughts helps us learn about what's going on inside us and helps us be less reactive.

The practice of neutrally observing the thoughts creates space between thoughts and the ability to pick and choose which thought you give attention to.

Observing Thoughts Like Objects in the Sky





A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 4

Navigating Emotions

Overview

Adolescence and Emotions

In *Building Resilience from the Inside Out*, Linda Lantieri writes of adolescents: "If there is one word that characterizes adolescence, it would be 'change.' Adolescents are changing quickly—emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Central to this metamorphosis is the young person's sense of his emerging self as an adult, not a child."¹ She goes on to write, "Adolescents have many sources of stress in their lives. At the same time that their bodies are changing in bewildering ways, they are feeling self-conscious about the judgment of others—especially of their peers, who may not always be so kind. Furthermore, they are measuring themselves against yardsticks provided by a culture with often unrealistic ideals about appearance and achievement. Added to this is the confusing pressure of conformity, which often involves risky behaviors that may be associated with adulthood, but for which they may not yet fully understand the consequences."²

All this means that adolescence is a good time to explore the inner world of emotions and the mind: both in terms of the students' developmental abilities and in terms of the usefulness of such material and skills to manage stress, expectations, and relationships.

What is an Emotion?

Paul Ekman, one of the leading researchers on emotions, writes in his book *Emotions Revealed*, "Emotion is a process, a particular kind of automatic appraisal influenced by our evolutionary and personal past, in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring, and a set of physiological changes and emotional behaviors begins to deal with the situation."³ Emotions are things we feel, but they also involve physical systems within our body and brain. Unlike unemotional thoughts, there is a sense of investment in emotion: we, or our bodies, care about something. If we think about something we don't care about at all, or have no investment in, we're unlikely to get emotional about it. The more we care about something, the stronger our emotional response tends to be. This chapter therefore focuses on what can be called "emotional hygiene." First of all, this means developing a basic literacy about emotions, such as being able to identify and name them, as well as their characteristics. On a deeper level, it means cultivating practices of emotional discernment and emotion regulation for the benefit of both oneself and others.

¹ Lantieri, *Building Resilience from the Inside Out*.

² Lantieri, *Building Resilience from the Inside Out*.

³ Ekman, *Emotions Revealed*.

Learning Experience 1, “Exploring Emotions,” engages students to differentiate between emotions, thoughts and sensations. While both sensations and emotions can be considered “feelings,” sensations are physical and tend to be located in specific parts of the body. Emotions, on the other hand, are not localizable, and are mental and not just physical. For example, we can feel pain in our left hand and not our right hand, but we can’t feel anger in one hand and not the other. When we feel an emotion like anger, we feel it in ourselves as a whole. In a similar way, students will explore differences and similarities across thoughts, sensations, and emotions. Throughout this chapter, emotions will be explored in two ways: first by thinking about and discussing emotions from the outside (taking a third-person approach) and second by watching the emotions and states of mind directly (taking a first-person approach). For the latter, the students will use the attention skills developed in Chapter 3, particularly the final skill of watching and becoming aware of what arises in the mind (called meta-cognition or meta-awareness).

Learning Experience 2, “Emotion Families,” invites students to start with a few common emotions and then build out “families” of emotions by adding more emotion terms that are related to the starting term. By doing so, they learn which emotions are related to each other and start to develop a richer vocabulary of emotion terms. Psychologists also use the idea of “emotion families” to discuss how emotions are related to each other, and students can then compare the emotion families charts they create to those created by scientists.

Understanding Emotions

Emotions are triggered by (external or internal) stimuli, which leads to changes in our bodies and minds. In the third learning experience, “Sparks of Emotion,” a story is used to illustrate moments when a trigger can elicit an emotional reaction and how these emotions can build up over time. Students listen to the story and snap their fingers when they notice something that could spark an emotion (connecting back to the idea of the spark and the forest fire from Chapter 3). They then stand on a map of the three zones on the floor to indicate where the character in the story might be and share what emotion the character might be feeling and what strategy could be used at that moment to regulate the emotion. Emotions often arise when our needs are met or go unmet.

Learning Experience 3, “Sparks of Emotions,” enables students to identify the different ways in which emotions can arise. This can be from current or past events. The emergence of emotions can escalate depending on various factors. Students will see how they are similar to others through their shared experiences of changing emotions. Students will practice how to become aware of their nervous system and how through that they can get better at noticing ‘triggers’ or ‘sparks’ of emotions, and of the level to which they’ve developed skills at containing harmful or elevating healthy emotions.

Learning Experience 4, “Emotions and Needs,” supports students in their examination of the relationship between needs and emotions. This helps students to build understanding about how emotions often arise as a result of personal needs being met or going unmet. Students will engage in activities that allow them to identify needs and reflect on how met or unmet needs affect their feelings.

Learning Experience 5, “Emotion Timeline,” encourages students to examine how emotions may seem to ‘come out of the blue,’ arising in the moment and happening automatically. Students will examine the scientific basis for emotions arising from a process that occurs along a timeline. Learning the stages of this emotion timeline can help students map out their emotions and recognize where they can build greater awareness so that they can intervene in the process to regulate their emotion should they wish to do so.

The timeline of emotions starts with a stimulus, because emotions always occur in response to stimuli, external or internal. These stimuli always occur in a context within which they are evaluated, called an “appraisal.” Appraisals are typically judgments of something as positive or negative, and they are often so fast that we are not consciously aware of them. Appraisals of things as positive or negative then give rise to emotions, which can in turn create impulses for behavior. If the emotion happens to us and we have little awareness of what is happening, we may act in ways that cause unintended problems, whereas if we have more awareness, then we may be able to create a “gap” between the stimulus and response, and act more appropriately.

Learning Experience 6, “Emotion Timeline in Action,” enables students to recognize and intervene in the timeline using heedfulness, mindfulness, and monitoring awareness, thereby turning potentially problematic outcomes into less harmful and even beneficial ones. Through awareness of the body, students will gain insights and important information regarding their emotional state. Exploring the “activation/feeling tone” chart is one way of doing this. The chart contains an axis of feeling (from unpleasant to pleasant) and an axis of activation (from deactivated to highly activated). Activation refers to the level of energy one feels (lethargic or low in energy as opposed to highly excited or agitated).

Learning Experience 7, “Mapping Emotions and Core Affect,” guides students to continue working on developing emotional awareness through a mapping activity. Graphing emotions and experiences along these two axes provides a clear visual model for mapping what is happening in our body and mind. This in turn helps students cultivate meta-awareness and interoception, two terms for our ability to notice what is happening in our body and mind.

While all emotions are natural, some emotions can become risky if they get out of control, because they can lead to very strong impulses to behavior that could be destructive. It is important for students to decide for themselves which emotions may be risky for them. They will do so by asking questions and investigating the emotion closely: what impulses does it lead to? What would society or our school look like if people had more of this emotion? What if they had less of it? Students will then examine what strategies they have for dealing with emotions they have identified as potentially risky. They will examine how some strategies can help with a variety of risky emotions, while others are specific to certain emotions.

Learning Experience 8, “Cognitive Restructuring to Promote Wellbeing,” enables students to continue an exploration of thinking traps and discuss ways we can successfully reframe our thinking trap engaging in “cognitive restructuring,” meaning a reframing and reappraisal of a situation. Students will apply components of self-compassion to reframe thinking traps that may arise from challenging situations and emotions. In discussing risky emotions, it is important to stress that everyone has these emotions, and that having an emotion, even if one identifies it as potentially risky, does not mean that there is anything wrong with oneself. Furthermore, the point of emotional awareness is to navigate emotions skilfully without suppressing emotions unduly but also without expressing them in unhelpful ways that harm oneself or others. When students recognize how risky emotions can become destructive if left unattended, they will understand the value of cultivating good “emotional hygiene.” This does not mean suppressing uncomfortable emotions. Rather, it means developing a healthy way of dealing with one’s emotions.

Learning Experience 9, “Exploring the Ethical Dimensions to Emotions,” helps students identify when emotions can become risky. If unchecked, some emotions can cause harm to ourselves and others. Students will see that they can cultivate the skills of recognizing emotions. With this recognition they can decide whether or not to give more “fuel,” to the emotions and thus manage their emotions in ways that align with their values. This requires a basic emotional literacy, such as the ability to identify and name them, to know their characteristics, and differentiate emotions from other types of feelings, like physical sensations. It also means exploring the relationship between emotions and needs. This is because emotions — especially negative emotions — often arise from unmet needs. Seeing this clearly can help students be more patient with themselves and others. As such, the first four learning experiences explore the idea of needs and what feelings (sensations and emotions) arise when a need is met or goes unmet. Since unmet needs can lead to emotions that are destructive, learning how to regulate emotions when possible, and if not, then to find a gap between stimulus and response can be very healthy. This leads to the final concept of the chapter, the idea of an “ethics of restraint,” restraining from doing harmful things under the influence of

emotions. Students will learn that such ethical restraints must come from their own judgment of what is beneficial to themselves and others.

Student Personal Practice

The reflective practices in this chapter are important for integrating students' conceptual understanding of emotions with their own personal experience and ability to recognize emotions in themselves. The final two reflective practices focus especially on connecting "third-person" knowledge of emotions with their own meta-awareness (noticing thoughts and emotions) and interoception (attending to sensations and the internal state of the body). Repeat these last two reflective practices especially when you have time.

Teacher Personal Practice

It is recommended that you engage in the final two reflective practices yourself before leading your students in them. Although we tend to take our understanding of emotions for granted, it can be surprising how much our ideas vary from person to person. While teaching this chapter, ask your friends, family members and colleagues how they would define emotion and whether they think things like hunger, pain, hope, surprise and so on are emotions, and if so why or why not. You can also pause during moments of the day to check in with yourself and see which emotion, if any, you are feeling at that moment.

Further Reading and Resources

- *Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children* by Linda Lantieri.
- *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication and Emotional Life* by Paul Ekman.
- *All the Way to Lhasa: A Tale from Tibet* by Barbara Helen Berger.
- *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, illustrated by Jules Feiffer.

Chapter 4 - Navigating Emotions

Learning Experience 1: Exploring Emotions

Learning Experience 2: Emotion Families

Learning Experience 3: Sparks of Emotions

Learning Experience 4: Emotions and Needs

Learning Experience 5: Emotion Timelines

Learning Experience 6: Emotion Timelines in Action

Learning Experience 7: Mapping Emotions and Core Affect

Learning Experience 8: Cognitive Restructuring to Promote Wellbeing

Learning Experience 9: Exploring the Ethical Dimensions to Emotions

Exploring Emotions

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will describe the difference between emotions, thoughts, and sensations. This will occur through reflection, using personal and small group activities. Students will then use a graphic organizer to help clarify the similarities and differences between emotions, thoughts, and sensations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe the difference between emotions, thoughts, and sensations.
- List some of the basic characteristics of emotions and develop a working definition for emotions.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Sensations/Thoughts/Emotions Graphic Organizer handout
- Process of Mental Experience
- Chart paper and markers for “General Qualities of Emotions” word map
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 12 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- **"Open your journal, review your list of personal resources — a person, place, thing, idea or memory — that, when you think about it, helps you feel better, safer, stronger, or more resilient.**
- **Choose an existing resource or add a new one and add details with words or illustrations.**
- **Your art can be representational (intended to look like the idea and be recognizable in some way) or you may want to use colors, shapes, movement to capture the feelings. The idea is that when you look at this again, the resource you named will come alive for you again, bringing back the feelings, the memory, the sensations of that experience.**
- **You can choose to share your work with another person or continue to work independently.**
- **Put your pen and marker down and with this resource in mind, we will turn our attention inward. [PAUSE]**
- **You can continue to focus on your resource or begin grounding —bringing your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils.**

What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]

- **Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it.**
- **Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."**

PRESENTATION | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

After providing students with information about emotions, students will pair up and discuss the exploring emotions prompts. As a whole group, the class will create a word map describing emotions and create a working definition for "emotions."

Guiding Language

"Today we are going to learn more about how emotions compare to thoughts and sensations.

These are three useful categories when we talk about our inner experiences. We will be thinking together about the characteristics of emotions in general. The more we understand about emotions, which are a natural part of being human and are common to all humans everywhere, the more we can build our personal power around how we respond to emotions.

Sensations are physical and tend to be experienced directly in the body, and often in just one part of the body.

Emotions, on the other hand, are not localizable in a specific part of the body, and are generally considered both mental and physical. For example, we can feel pain in our left hand and not our right hand, but we can't feel anger in one hand and not the other.

When we feel an emotion like anger, we tend to feel it in ourselves as a whole. Today we will explore differences and similarities across thoughts, sensations, and emotions.”

Discussion Prompts

Display the prompts on the board. Ask students to pair up and take turns discussing each prompt before moving onto the next one.

- Emotions and thoughts are different. How?
- Emotions and sensations are different. How?
- Emotions cloud our mind or affect our judgment. How?
- Emotions influence us to behave in ways that we might not, if we weren't experiencing that emotion. How?
- Emotions can be powerful or mild. Describe.
- Emotions can help us. How?
- Emotions can cause problems for us. How?
- We can develop our awareness of our emotions. How?

- We can cultivate certain emotions in ourselves so that they become stronger. How?
- Some emotions can be related to each other. What are some examples?

Debrief

On the board write the word emotions and circle it. Create a word map with the students using the prompts below.

- **“What are some words we could use to explain emotions?”**
- **“What words come to mind when we think of emotions?”**

As a group, create a working definition of an emotion.

- **“If you were trying to explain to someone what an emotion is, what would you tell them?”**
- Record the preliminary definition of emotion on the board.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

Learners use the “Sensations/Emotions/Thoughts Graphic Organizer” and work in groups of three to agree upon examples that fit into each of these three categories. Students complete a Venn Diagram to identify the similarities and differences between thoughts, sensations and emotions.

Group Work

- ***In groups of three we will complete this graphic organizer to look at similarities and differences between sensations, thoughts, and emotions.***
- ***Together, come up with five words that each person in your group agrees belong under that heading. If there's a word that you discuss without coming to agreement, write it in this 'unresolved' section and we will return to it during our discussion time.***
- ***Choose a group member(s) to be the recorder in your shared document.***

Whole Class Share

Ask each group to choose one question to speak about with the rest of the class.

- ***What does each category have in common with another and how do they differ from each other?***

As students share, you can choose to record answers with a Venn diagram on the board.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5 minutes

Activity Overview

Ask each group to reflect on and discuss the prompt below.

"Let's look at the characteristics of emotions more deeply. Describe some characteristics that are specific to emotions."

Record answers on the board under the heading "General Characteristics of Emotions."

A list of examples for "General Characteristics of Emotions" is provided below. If students have trouble coming up with ideas use questions and the list below to scaffold and elicit responses.

- They are usually involuntary responses to a stimulus.
- They involve an appraisal of the stimulus as positive or negative. (Often this appraisal is unconscious and seems automatic.)
- They tend to drive behavior/compel action.
- They are not neutral: they have a pleasant or unpleasant feeling tone (valence) and a level of activation in our bodies (energizing or depleting).
- While we experience sensations in particular parts of the body, emotions tend to be whole body/mind experiences, not contained in one part of the body.
- They can be attended to in mind and body, because they are often paired with sensations in the body and/or changes in our mind or thinking.
- They are usually triggered by things we value and care deeply about, and are not evoked by matters we care little about.
- They often have signals like facial expressions or tone of voice that others can observe, especially when they become strong.

Check Out

- **"After engaging in this discussion, is there anything we would like to add to our definition of emotion?"**
- **"To close share an appreciation for another person, your small group, or the learning process/content."**

General Characteristics of Emotions

They are usually involuntary responses to a stimulus.	They involve an appraisal of the stimulus as positive or negative. (Often this appraisal is unconscious and seems automatic.)
They tend to drive behavior/compel action.	They are not neutral: they have a pleasant or unpleasant feeling tone (valence) and a level of activation in our bodies (energizing or depleting).
While we experience sensations in particular parts of the body, emotions tend to be whole body/mind experiences, not localizable in one part of the body.	They can be attended to in mind and body, because they are often accompanied by sensations in the body and changes in our mind or thinking.
They are usually triggered by things we value and care deeply about, and not by matters we care little about.	They often have signals like facial expressions or tone of voice that others can observe, especially when they become strong.

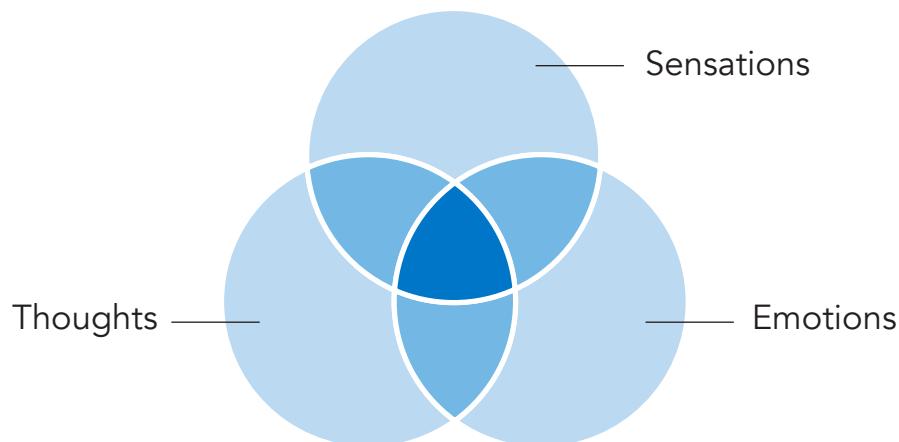
Graphic Organizer

Sensations/Thoughts/Emotions

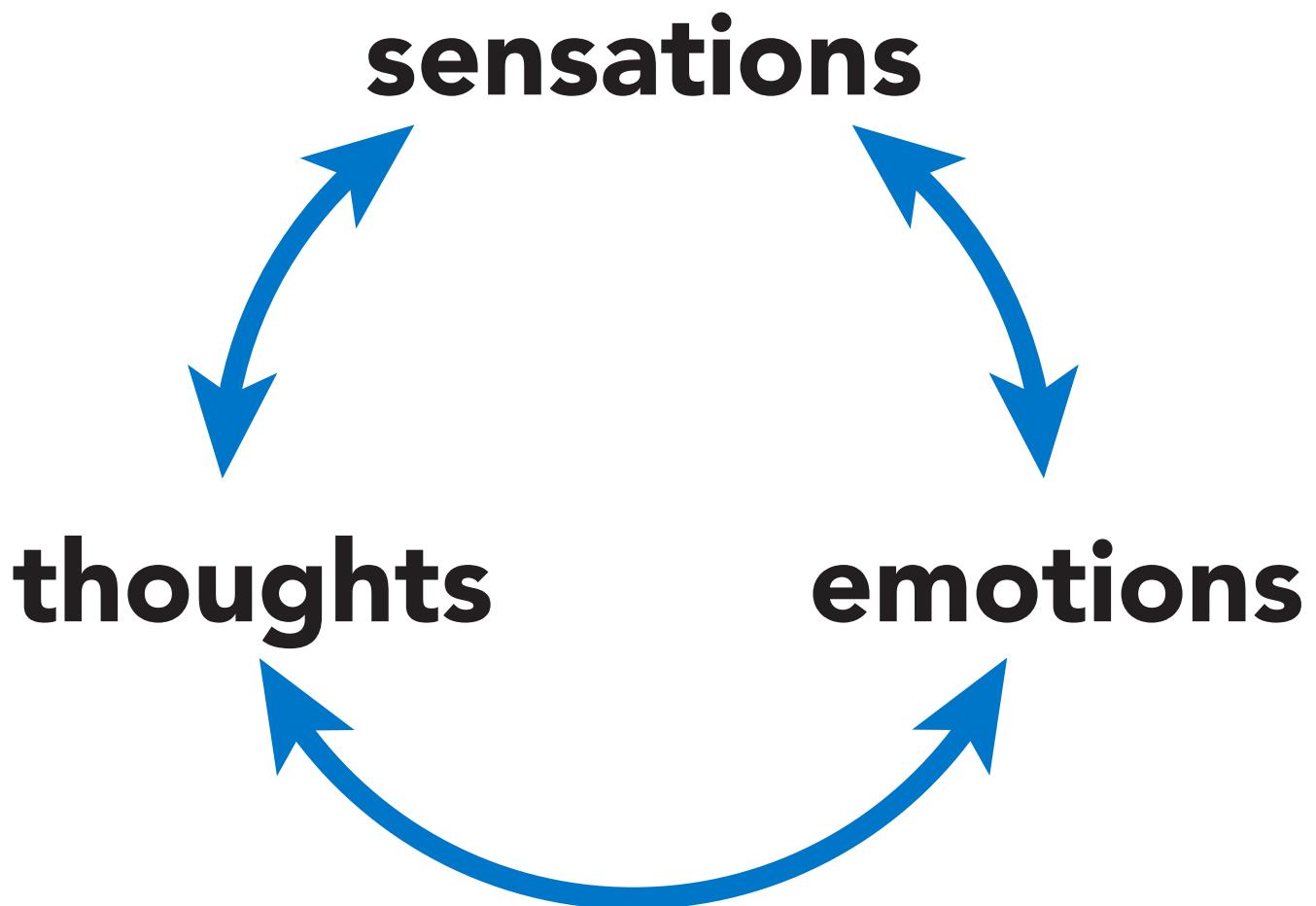
Part 1: Complete the chart below, describing and providing examples for all three categories.

Sensations	Thoughts	Emotions
Define:	Define:	Define:
List examples:	List examples:	List examples:

Part 2: Use the Venn Diagram below to find similarities and differences between thoughts, emotions and sensations.



Process of Mental Experience



Emotion Families

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will identify how some emotions are related to others and can be grouped into 'emotion families.' Students will determine that emotion vocabularies can be expanded by creating charts of "emotion families" and recognizing how emotion terms can help describe how emotions vary in specific ways, such as intensity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Construct charts of "emotion families" around six common emotion terms (happiness, sadness, compassion, fear, anger, and jealousy)
- Describe different ways that emotion terms are related to one another and contribute to their wellbeing

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard or chart paper with markers
- Emotion Words resource in Chapter 2, Learning Experience 2
- Six pieces of chart paper each headed with one of the emotion words listed below:
 - Happiness
 - Sadness
 - Compassion
 - Fear
 - Anger
 - Jealousy
- Markers or pens for each group

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- ***For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger.***
- ***It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]***
- ***Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]***
- ***Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]***
- ***You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]***
- ***If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]***
- ***As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.***
- ***Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."***

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20-30 minutes

Creating Emotion Families

Activity Overview

Learners will create Emotion Family posters for one of the 6 emotions (Happiness, Fear, Sadness, Anger, Compassion, and Jealousy) by contributing emotion words content and observations to other posters.

- **"Today we're going to explore Emotion Families. Emotion Families are emotions that are related or similar to each other in some way. When we group emotions together it helps make it easier to understand what impacts they may have.**
- **Emotion words that are related to each other often describe variations of how strongly the base emotion is being experienced.**
- **Today we're going to use this list of common emotions to brainstorm Emotion Families."** [Reference the six emotions you wrote on a chart or board.]

Group Example

- **Before we split up into groups we will do one together as an example. We will look at fear and answer the following prompts.**
 - **What are other emotion words that are similar to FEAR or that describe a feeling related to FEAR?**
 - **What might we call it if some felt a tiny bit fearful? Extremely fearful? Think of some circumstances in between those two and some words that might describe those feelings."**

Small groups co-create their Emotion Families posters. (10 minutes)

- **"In small groups, you will create an Emotion Family poster for one of these six emotion words.**

- **Choose the poster with the word you would like to help illustrate and when everyone has a group, write down as many words as you can come up with that relate to your chosen word.**
- **You can make a list, use drawings, facial expressions, emojis and representational art that connect to the emotion word.**
- **As you are creating your Emotion Family poster, you may want to ask each other questions like:**
 - **What is this emotion like?**
 - **What would we call a little bit of this emotion (or a spark of this emotion)?**
 - **What would we call a lot of this emotion (or a forest fire of this emotion)?**
 - **What might this emotion make a person think?**
 - **What sensations might this emotion make a person feel inside their body?**
 - **What might this emotion make a person want to do?**
 - **How might this emotion affect a relationship between two people?**
 - **How might this emotion affect a group of people?"**

Gallery Walk

- **"In your small groups, you will have 2-3 minutes to visit each Emotion Families poster.**
- **Look at the words and illustrations and respectfully add any additional words or pictures to describe each Emotion Family.**

- **Think about body sensations that may be connected to this Emotion Family. How might a person be feeling physically when they are experiencing this emotion?**
- **How does understanding your emotional experience help you to cultivate personal wellbeing?"**

Examples

If students are struggling to come up with emotion words connected to the word family of their choice, use the examples below to help students generate ideas.

Happiness:

Joy, Excitement, Relieved, Peaceful, Excited, Satisfied, Feeling Good

Sadness:

Sorrow, Discouraged, Disappointed, Lonely, Helpless, Hopeless, Feeling Low, Grief

Compassion:

Love, Kindness, Liking, Affection, Endearment, Friendship, Trust, Feeling Close, Feeling Connected

Fear:

Anxiety, Worry, Nervousness, Horror, Shock, Desperate, Panicked, Dread, Feeling Small

Anger:

Frustration, Annoyed, Bitterness, Rage, Exasperated, Furious

Jealousy:

Envy, Resentment, Begrudging, Feeling Rivalry, Feeling Competitive

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Grounding Practice

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **"Talking about emotions can sometimes influence the body and mind. Let's do a brief reflective practice in silence to check in with ourselves. You are welcome to close your eyes or lower them to the ground in a restful way.**
- **Take a few deep breaths and bring a resource to mind or do a grounding practice, noticing where your body is meeting a surface.** (PAUSE for 30 seconds)
- **If your eyes were closed, open them and answer one or more of the prompts to complete an exit ticket."**

Exit Ticket Options

- **"What stood out for you when we made our Emotion Families posters?"**
- **What is something you learned about emotions?**
- **How does emotional literacy promote your personal wellbeing?**
- **Are there any thoughts or questions you have about emotions?"**

Teaching Tips

- If students share that they experienced disturbing thoughts, sensations, or emotions, remind them of the skills they have already learned to help regulate themselves: Help Now! Strategies, grounding, resourcing, or shifting attention to a neutral or pleasant sensation in the body.
- If you have internet access in your classroom, your students can compare the charts they created to the “Emotion Families” available on Paul and Eve Ekman’s website “Atlas of Emotions,” available at www.atlasofemotions.org. As of 2020, this website is only available in English and Spanish.

Happiness

Fear

Sadness

Anger

Compassion

Jealousy

Sparks of Emotions

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will identify the different ways in which emotions can arise. This can be from current events or be influenced by past events. The emergence of emotions can escalate or change depending on a variety of factors. Students will see how they are similar to others through their shared experiences of changing emotions. Students will practice how to become aware of the present state of their nervous system in order to better notice 'triggers' or 'sparks' of a particular emotion, and the level to which they've developed skills at containing or elevating the emotion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe how emotions can arise from events and can escalate
- Identify how past experiences can influence current emotions
- Explain how and why emotional responses are shared human experiences and also vary from person to person

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Recognizing
Common Humanity



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Images previously used for the "Spark and Forest Fire" story in Chapter 3, Learning Experience 4
- Colored tape or string to map out the "Resilient Zone" on the floor.
- "Rafi and Ronan" story and questions (provided)
- "Robin's Difficult Day" story and questions (provided)
- Copy of blank Resilient Zone

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- **"For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger."**
- **"It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]"**
- **"Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]"**
- **"You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]"**
- **"If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]"**
- **"As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better."**
- **"Now we'll finish the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **"Today we'll be exploring emotional reactions: what contributes to them, and what can be done to empower ourselves in response to them. We recently talked about sparks and forest fires as a metaphor for how emotions can arise. Think for a moment about what you remember from that conversation. What are some ideas that you remember about the 'spark and**

forest fire' metaphor and how it relates to human emotions?

- ***Something all human beings have in common is that we all experience emotions connected to the experiences we have. It's interesting and important to understand that while we all experience emotions, we don't all experience the SAME emotions during any given experience. People can be in the same place, sharing an external (outside) experience, yet have a very different internal (inside themselves) experience.***
- ***Individual past history contributes to how we experience a situation. In many cases, we didn't have control over our past experiences when they were occurring. Also, the current state of our nervous system impacts how we experience a situation, and that is something we do have some control over. And the element we may have the most control over is how we respond to the emotions we are feeling during a situation. This is a skill we can develop."***

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 5 minutes

Exploring Emotional Reactions

Activity Overview

Revisiting the spark and forest fire metaphor helps to introduce the idea that past experience can influence individual reactions to the same event. Different people can and do have very

different reactions while in the same situation based on their own personal histories.

These scientific findings are useful for explaining and understanding our emotional reactions:

- Current and past experiences can trigger emotions
- People can get better at noticing and responding to emotional triggers
- All people are united in their changing experience of emotions
- What triggers emotions varies from person to person
- The state of our nervous system influences how we appraise (judge or evaluate) a situation

Group Work

"In pairs or small groups, read the Scenario 1: Rafi and Ronan resource and verbally answer the accompanying questions."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 15 minutes

Scenario 2: Robin's Difficult Day

Instructions and Guiding Language

Read "Robin's Difficult Day" aloud or ask students to read it together in small groups.

- Point out the zones on the floor or ask students to sketch a visual of the zones on a piece of paper.
- ***"As you listen to or read the story together, notice where the character may be***

experiencing a “spark” by pausing and discussing it with your group, snapping your fingers or placing an asterisk on the paper.

- Each time you notice a spark, move along the zones that are mapped out on the floor or identify where Robin might be on your paper copy of the resilient zone.
- At each spark move along the “resilient zone map” on the classroom floor. Discuss what zone you think the character is in and why. Use the questions below to prompt discussion.
 - What was the spark?
 - Why did you choose to stand where you are?
 - What emotion(s) might Robin be feeling at this moment?
 - What might happen if Robin had more awareness right now?
 - If Robin has worked to decrease the spark in the moment, how do you know that?
 - What might Robin do to help themselves at this moment?”

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

- “We all experience difficult days sometimes. Each little thing can add up until we feel overwhelmed or stressed out. Then we might do things that we wouldn’t ordinarily do, like lose our temper. That’s why we practice methods for balancing our body and mind, like resourcing, grounding, training our attention and cultivating our awareness.
- That way, anytime there is a spark, we can notice it and maybe we can relax ourselves or help ourselves feel calmer or more settled.
- Let’s do a practice in silence now. [PAUSE]
- If someone did something kind for you recently, or if you were kind to someone else, you may want to use that as your resource. If you’d rather do grounding, you can find a comfortable way to sit or something comfortable to hold or touch.
- Let’s now take a few moments to think about our resource or pay attention to our grounding. [PAUSE at least 30 seconds.]
- Now let’s do tracking and pay attention to the sensations inside our bodies. [PAUSE]
- If you find a pleasant or neutral sensation, pay attention to that and watch it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]
- If you haven’t found a pleasant or neutral sensation, see if you can shift to another

part of your body to find a place that feels better. [PAUSE]

- *If you'd like, focus on your breath as you breathe normally. Count your breaths if you wish. If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, make your own choice to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break, thinking your own thoughts in the way that's comfortable for you. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]*
- *Reflect for yourself: What did you notice on the inside?"*

Debrief (4 minutes)

Invite volunteers to share their thoughts, using one or more of these questions as a guide:

- *"What are some things that were happening for you during the story about Robin's difficult day? Any sensations in your body at particular times? What were they and when did they arise?"*
- *What about feelings? What were some emotions you felt and when did they come up?*
- *Any thoughts that went through your mind as you were hearing this story?*
- *How are you like Robin and how are others like Robin?*
- *Have you learned anything about emotions that you hadn't thought of before?"*

Scenario 1

Rafi and Ronan

Rafi and Ronan go to the same school. One day when they are on the playground, they hear a dog barking. Rafi's family has a dog at home that they love very much.

The barking makes Rafi's heart beat faster and Rafi hopes the dog might want to play.

Ronan was once bitten by a dog. When the barking begins, Ronan's heart starts beating faster and Ronan's body tenses, thinking there might be a dog nearby.

Questions:

- What emotion or emotions might Rafi be feeling? What about Ronan?
- What kind of 'spark' is the dog's bark for Rafi? For Ronan? Why?
- Some of their sensations are the same, like their hearts beating faster, but other sensations in their body might be different. Why might that be? (Increased heartbeat can accompany heightened emotions whether pleasant like excitement or unpleasant like fear.)
- What do you think is happening in Rafi's nervous system? Where might Rafi be in the three zones?
- What about Ronan?
- It's the same dog, making the same bark, but Rafi and Ronan judged or evaluated it differently. Rafi didn't evaluate it as dangerous, but maybe Ronan did. Our nervous systems are constantly evaluating what is going on around us. This is called "appraisal."
- Pause for a moment and think about Ronan's racing heart and tightening body...notice what you're feeling in your own body [PAUSE], in your heart [PAUSE]. Notice if some feelings of care and compassion are coming up for you. This often happens even in stories, as well as in real life, that our personal response is one of empathy and compassion for someone who is struggling or afraid.

Navigating Emotions



Scenario 2

Robin's Difficult Day

Robin, who is 15 years old, woke suddenly, realizing it was late. Why hadn't the alarm gone off? "Robin, get up! You're going to be late for school!" Robin's mother shouted.* Her voice was so loud!

"Okay, okay, I'm coming," Robin grumbled, but too softly for Mother to hear.

"Robin!" Mother's voice was inside the room now. Her voice sounded even louder, like a horn blasting the ears, hurting them. "Get up right now!" she shouted.*

Robin stumbled out of bed and began to get dressed. Still feeling tired and irritated, Robin looked out the window and could see it would be cold outside. Robin reached for a favorite piece of clothing, a soft knitted scarf that Grandma had given as a present. Robin loved how it felt so smooth and nice. Grandma's smiling face came to mind. Suddenly, Robin felt a little bit happier.

"Wait, you forgot your cell phone, and I can pick you up today so you don't have to ride the bus," Robin's mother said as Robin passed her. Robin grabbed the cell phone and put it into the side pocket of their backpack.

As Robin approached the school, there was a group of students standing near the door. They were a couple of years older than Robin and often were rude and sometimes kind of intimidating. Robin tried to avoid them on the way into school, but one of them called out. At the instant of hearing that familiar voice, Robin felt a chill running down the spine and legs going numb.

One of the older kids started towards Robin and got near enough to grab out, but Robin quickly dodged away and hurried into the school building.

Slipping into the classroom just in time, Robin was glad to see Bailey who was a good friend. It felt a little better now to be sitting down next to a good friend but Robin's heart was beating so fast and hard it was hard to hear the words of the teacher.

Scenario 2

Robin's Difficult Day

(continued)

Robin realized the teacher was handing out a sheet of paper and felt their eyes open wide. What was this? A test?

"Do we have a test?" Robin asked Bailey.

Bailey nodded. "Yeah, didn't you study for it?"

"No, I completely forgot. I didn't study at all!" Robin grimaced.

Robin was feeling even more frustrated now. When did the teacher even mention the test? Robin felt angry with the teacher and also was personally upset for not having remembered it.*

As the teacher placed the tests on the students' desks, Robin felt afraid about failing the test. With a stomach that felt all tight and knotted, Robin reached for the scarf, since sometimes its softness helped with feeling better.

But the scarf wasn't there! Robin realized that it must have fallen off in the dash to get away from the older kids. Now Robin felt completely deflated and even more sad and angry. There was no way to concentrate at all on the test now.

Finally the school day ended and Robin went outside to where parents came to pick students up from school. "Please don't let those students that hang out in front of the school entrance be out here," Robin thought. "That's the last thing I need today."

But sure enough, there they were and they were heading Robin's way.

"Where's my mother?" Robin wondered, watching them get closer.

"Hey, Robin!" one of the kids called out.

Scenario 2

Robin's Difficult Day

(continued)

Just then Robin's mother arrived. Quickly opening the door, Robin jumped into the car.

"Where were you?" Robin shouted at her. "You're late!"

Robin's mother looked surprised. "Robin! Why are you shouting?" Robin dropped the backpack onto the car floor and gave it a hard kick, yelling, "I hate this school!"

"Robin! Calm Down!" Mother said sharply.

Then Robin looked down and saw that the stomping had broken their cellphone which was in the side pocket of their backpack. The screen was completely broken. Anger turned to sadness, and Robin started to cry.

"Oh honey, I can see you're very upset," said Mother. "It looks like you've had a really difficult day. Maybe you want to rest on the way home, and then we can talk whenever you are ready."

Navigating Emotions



Emotions and Needs

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will examine the relationship between needs and emotions. This helps students to build understanding about how emotions often arise as a result of personal needs being met or going unmet. Students will engage in activities that allow them to identify needs, reflect on how met and unmet needs affect feeling states.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe their emotions and explore their underlying needs.
- Explore how difficult feelings, setbacks, and limitations are common features of everyone's life.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- "Shared Human Needs" handout (2 copies: one copy per student and one per small group)
- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- "Robin's Difficult Day" handout (one per small group)
- An index card or small piece of paper and writing tools for each student

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- ***For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger.***
- ***It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]***
- ***Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]***

- ***Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]***
- ***You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]***
- ***If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's ok to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]***
- ***As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.***
- ***Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."***

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

By co-creating lists of "Shared Human Needs" students build a foundation for deeper conversation about how some emotions that may arise when needs are met and some emotions may arise when needs are not met, and how this affects daily life.

All human beings have basic needs that are common for most or all people. Although some

of our needs may be specific to ourselves, many are needs that others share, too. We often experience emotions when our needs are met or when our needs go unmet.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **"Today we will discuss basic human needs. These include what we need to survive, to flourish, and to be happy. Here's a graphic organizer that you'll use in pairs or small groups to brainstorm needs that could fall under each category. (Surviving / Flourishing / Happiness / Other). Take a look now at the starter list that you'll be adding to. What do you notice about the headings? Can you think of an example that can go under one of the headings? Is the example a shared need or a personal need?"**
- **"In pairs or small groups, make a list of needs under each category. Put a star next to any need that your group considers to be a "shared need," something that all people need."**

Exploring the connection between needs and emotions

- **"Let's explore the connection between needs and emotions"**
- **"In pairs, choose two or more needs from your list, and discuss the following:**
 - **"What emotions might arise if this need is met?"**

- **"What emotions might arise if this need is not met?"**
- **"Write those emotion words on your list, by that need."**
- **"Let's do an example together first."**
- **"Take a look at the need for "safety." If I have a need for safety, and if my need for safety is not met and I feel unsafe, what emotions might I experience? [fear, anxiety] If my need for safety is met and I feel safe, what emotions might I experience? [contentment, happiness, joy]"**
- **"Now select the two needs you will think about and what emotions might come up if that need is met or unmet."**

Debrief

Invite teams to share examples they generated of emotions that may arise from met/unmet needs.

- **"What have you noticed about needs and emotions?"**
- **"If someone who didn't study emotions said to you "Emotions just come and go. I don't think there's any relationship between my emotions and my needs," what might you say to them?"**

Teaching Tips

Consolidate the entries from all of the small group brainstorms onto a large chart that is publicly posted in the classroom. Use the

sample list provided to round out the chart, as desired by you and your group.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 15 minutes

Exploring Needs

Activity Overview

Using the familiar story “Robin’s Difficult Day,” learners will examine Robin’s needs and explore how those needs are being met or unmet and what related emotions are surfacing.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **“In small groups or pairs, we will revisit the story “Robin’s Difficult Day”.**
- **The last time you read the story, you noticed and discussed sparks. This time we will revisit the sparks and emotions that go with them, and also focus on looking for met and unmet needs that accompany those emotions.**
- **We will share one finding with the rest of the group by sharing one of Robin’s needs that you identified, the emotional response connected to it, and what (if anything) Robin did to address it.”**

After each group shares, ask the class to reflect and respond to the prompt below.

- **“Have you learned anything about the relationship between needs and emotions that you hadn’t thought of before?”**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

My Needs Inventory

Overview

In a brief reflective practice, each person will identify a need they feel is very important to them right now, what is helping them meet it, and what it would feel like if their need was completely met. They will then combine this with tracking (noting sensations of the body). Be sure to pause between verbal directions to give students enough time to write and reflect.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **The needs that are most important to a person can vary from time to time, and needs also vary from person to person. It is valuable to think about how our needs being met or unmet affects our emotional state and our nervous system.**
- **We’ve been thinking about this idea from the perspective of needs that people share. Through a private write, we will make it more personal, and apply this idea to ourselves.**
- **Write your name on an index card and then identify for yourself one particular need that is especially important to you right now.**
 - **Reflect silently on what in life is helping meet this need right now, and write that on your card.**
 - **If you can’t think of anything helping to meet that need, write what you can imagine happening that would help you meet it.**

- ***How would it feel to have that need completely met? Write down anything that comes to mind.***
- ***Notice what this feels like on the inside, do you notice any sensations? Can you track them? [PAUSE]***

Our List of Shared Needs

Compassion

Physical Well-Being

Freedom

Equality

Safety

Meaning

Play/Fun

Trust

Other

Sample List of Shared Needs

Compassion

acceptance
affection
belonging
closeness
community
empathy
friendship
inclusion
love
nurturing
respect
self-respect

Physical Well-Being

air
exercise
food
nature
rest
relaxation
shelter
sleep
water

Freedom

choice
confidence
education
independence
knowledge
self-expression
space

Equality

equal rights
fairness
justice
reciprocity

Safety

home
peace
security
stability
shelter

Meaning

direction
mattering to others
purpose
self-worth
understanding

Enjoyment

beauty
creativity
fun
games
humor
play

Trust

acceptance
consistency
honesty
integrity
openness
order

Other

Emotion Timeline

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will examine how emotions may seem to 'come out of the blue,' arising in the moment and happening automatically. Students will examine the scientific basis for emotions arising from a process that occurs along a timeline. Learning the stages of this emotion timeline can help students to map the stages of emotions and recognize where they can build greater awareness that can allow them to intervene in the emotion timeline should they wish to do so.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Recognize that emotions occur as part of a process
- Describe the stages of emotion processes
- Engage in practices that can create a beneficial 'gap' or 'pause' between stimulus and response

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Emotion Timeline (2 copies)
(one for the Rafi and Ronan story and one for personal reflection)
- Rafi and Ronan story handout in from Chapter 4, Learning Experience 3
(one handout per pair)
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity

- **“Let’s take a moment to get in a comfortable and alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]**
- **For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]**
- **Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger.**
- **It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]**
- **Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]**
- **Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]**
- **Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that**

and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]

- **You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]**
- **If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it’s okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you’re distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]**
- **As we do this, we’re learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.**
- **Now we’ll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you.”**

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

Emotional Timeline Description and

Vocabulary Development

Instructions and Guiding Language

When initially picturing an emotional timeline, it can be helpful to use the terms “beginning,” “middle” and “end.” An initial stimulus and appraisal is the “beginning”; the emotion and impulse is the “middle”; and the response/behavior and result is the “end.”

- Pass out a copy of the emotion timeline to each student and ask them to make notes on the handout as you describe its components.
- **"You've seen timelines before, used as a tool to help understand the stages of a process. A process is something that has stages and that takes place over time.**
- **Where have you used or seen timelines already?** [PAUSE for input.] **Like most timelines, you'll notice that this one has a beginning, middle and end.** [Show sample timeline.] **What else do you notice about the timeline? What do you notice, wonder, or want to clarify?** [PAUSE for input.]
- **Today we'll be looking at timelines as a way of understanding the stages of a particular process — the process of how an emotion arises and influences behavior.** We're going to examine emotions and slow that process down a lot so that we can look at each stage. It's as if we were placing an emotion under a microscope to investigate it.
- **Please join your work partner for today.** [PAUSE for students to be settled into pairs.] **First, let's review a few vocabulary terms together. Talk with your partner about what you think the definition of these terms are: stimulus, response, context.** [PAUSE for paired discussion.]
- **Thumbs up if you have heard of the word "stimulus"? What is a stimulus?** [PAUSE for input.]
- **Emotions begin with stimulus. Stimulus means something that causes a response. Usually this is something novel (new, different, unusual) in the environment (like seeing something, or hearing someone saying something), but stimuli can also be internal (thinking about something or remembering something).**
- **For Example: One day, I heard a loud sound, and I jumped up in fright and surprise. What was the stimulus? What was my response?** [PAUSE for input.]
- **The stimulus can also be called a trigger but this word is more specific and is generally only used for negative stimuli.**
- **Who has heard the word "context" before? What are some ideas of what "context" might mean in terms of the emotion timeline?** [Allow time for sharing.]
- **Context here means "the current state of things based on what's come before."** We have an inner context and an outer context. The outer context is what is going on around us at that moment.
- **Our inner context might include how we're feeling that day or thoughts and feelings about what just happened or connections we are making, intentionally or 'automatically' to something that happened a long time ago.**
- **Let's think about my example. The loud sound was the stimulus and my response was jumping in surprise or fright. After I**

looked around, I saw that the loud sound came from some nearby construction work. When I heard the loud sound again, I didn't jump and I wasn't afraid. Why? That's because of context. Now I already knew what the sound was and that it was nothing to be afraid of. The stimulus was the same, but the context was different, my knowledge and understanding about what was currently going on was different — so my response was different.

- *Who found the word "appraisal" new to them? You may not have heard of it before, or may have heard it in another context, like getting an appraisal on a car or house. This definition of appraisal is a very important concept for understanding emotions. Based on where it is in the timeline, what do you think it means? It comes between "stimulus" and "emotion."* [Allow time for sharing.]
- *Appraisal means to assess, judge, or evaluate a situation. In the context of emotions, appraisals often happen really fast, so we're going to slow the process down and really think about that as we look at the Rafi and Ronan story.*
- *So the first time when I heard the loud sound, my appraisal was that it could be dangerous and I felt scared. But the second time I heard the sound, I was aware that it was from the construction work. So my appraisal the second time was that the sound was not dangerous to me. And I*

didn't feel scared. Since I didn't get scared, I didn't jump. I had a different response."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Creating Emotion Timelines

Use the Rafi and Ronan Story to map out an emotion timeline.

- *"In pairs or small groups, each student will get a copy of the story and choose to highlight either Rafi or Ronan's name to decide whose perspective you will base your timeline on. Complete the emotion timeline based on the character you are focusing on."*
- When partners have grappled with the ideas and made notes on their paper timelines, match pairs who developed Rafi's timeline with a pair who developed Ronan's timeline. Invite them to share their insights and then discuss the similarities and differences they notice and why they think those exist.

Take time to Debrief with students:

- *"What were some of the reasons you decided the differences existed between the two emotion timelines?"* [Allow time for sharing. There are differences because they have different contexts; because they have different prior experiences; because they have different personalities; etc.]
- *And the similarities?* [Allow time for sharing. There are similarities because they are both human beings; they both have bodies and nervous systems; they are both children; etc.]

- *Was anything interesting about the idea of an emotion timeline, did it help create any new thinking for you? Explain.*
- *How does awareness fit in, if at all? Being aware of what's happening in our bodies and in our minds. What role do you think awareness plays in the emotion timeline?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Personal Emotional Timeline

Activity Overview

Using a blank emotion timeline, students will record a moment when they experienced happiness, kindness, or compassion. They will then engage in a resourcing or grounding practice.

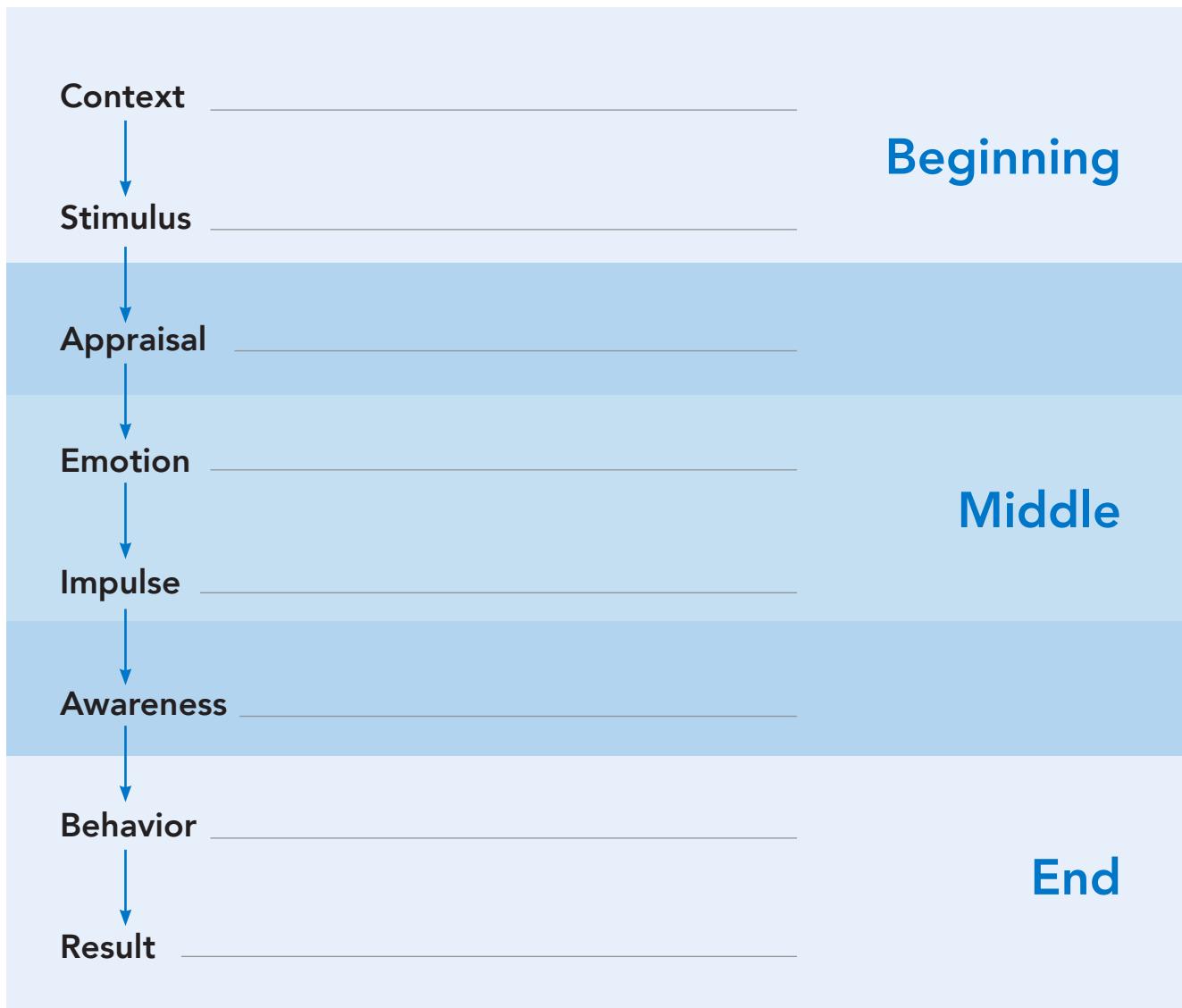
- *"Using a blank emotion timeline, we are going to independently map out a process of our own.*
- *You will choose a time you experienced happiness, kindness, compassion or some other positive emotional state.*
- *Complete the timeline adding as much detail as you can. (7 minutes)*
- *Now let's sit for a moment and be intentional about using this memory as a resource.*
- *Pay attention to how your body feels in space right now, moving to find a position that is comfortable.*

- *Track any sensations in your body, particularly positive or neutral ones. [Pause 30-60 seconds.] Think to yourself: what do you notice on the inside right now?*
- *Open up your journal and respond to the following prompt(s):*
 - *What would happen if more people in our society had more awareness of emotions?*
 - *What's something that you learned today that you'd like to be sure to remember later?"*

Graphic Organizer

Emotion Timeline

Name _____ **Date** _____



List of Tools to Use

Emotion Timeline in Action

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will learn how to recognize and intervene in the timeline using heedfulness, mindfulness, and monitoring awareness, thereby turning potentially problematic outcomes into less harmful and even beneficial ones. Students will examine emotion timelines by applying the process to fictional characters and to their own personal experiences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Construct an emotion timeline to identify ways that emotions are generated and unfold
- Describe the ways emotions exist within a complex context of causes and conditions.
- Identify ways in which they can manage emotions and behaviors

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Emotion Timeline handout from Chapter 4, Learning Experience 5
- Emotion Family posters previously created in Chapter 4, Learning Experience 2
- Print-outs of example scenarios
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- ***For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger.***
- ***It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]***
- ***Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]***
- ***Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]***

- ***Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]***
- ***You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]***
- ***If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]***
- ***As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better.***
- ***Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."***

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Activity Overview

Thoughtful discussion can be an effective way of making sense of the world around us. Creating scenarios and imagining what those experiences might be like can help to increase empathy and deepen understanding of different perspectives.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **“We’re going to work in teams to create emotion timelines based on the different emotion families we generated together last time we met. Please quickly get settled into your small group, with one person picking up your group’s poster paper and markers.”**
- **First, take a moment to decide which emotion family your group wants to create an emotion timeline for. When your group has decided, raise your hand please and keep it up until I catch your eye to show I know you’re ready.**
- **Your team will build two emotion timelines that showcase the Emotion Family that your group is illustrating.**
- **The scenarios and structure will remain the same (context, stimulus, emotion, etc.). One timeline will show what happens when people use their tools of mindfulness, awareness, heedfulness, tracking etc., and another one will show what happens when people are not using those tools.”**
- If your students are having trouble creating a story or scenario, you can use the Example Scenarios to help them generate ideas.
- When each group has finished creating their timeline, have them take turns presenting their timeline to the rest of the class. Then you can hang the timelines up in the classroom or elsewhere in the school.

Debrief With students

- Begin with a partner share so that all voices are heard and then invite volunteers to share their own thinking with the whole group.
- **“There are predictable paths to the ways emotions can build and be responded to. What are some thoughts you’re having about this right now?”**

Teaching Tip

As an alternative activity, students can role play the scenarios they created. The audience will identify what skill (awareness, mindfulness, heedfulness) if any, the character applied.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Personal Emotion Timelines

Activity Overview

Using the emotion timeline sheet, students will recall a time when they experienced a challenging stimulus or an emotion and reflect on how they responded and how they would respond differently, if at all.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **“Developing awareness skills — like mindfulness and heedfulness — allows us to prevent responding immediately to a stimuli. People can always develop deeper levels of awareness through intentional practice.**

- *Reflect on a time when you experienced a challenging stimulus and when you felt an emotion that could have ended up with acting in a destructive way that you might later regret, but you were able to react in a neutral or more productive way.*
- *Write about how you responded and what you might do differently, if anything, if it happened again.*
- *If you prefer, think of a challenging situation that could happen in the future to which you might be able to respond productively and with awareness. How might you increase the chances of responding productively?" [PAUSE]*

Debrief

- *"What are we learning about emotions that you may not have thought about before?*
- *What's something that you learned today that you'd like to remember later?"*

Emotion Timeline Scenarios

1. On his 13th birthday, Desmond comes home after school. He's feeling a bit low because no one wished him happy birthday during the day at school. When he opens the door and walks into his house, suddenly his whole family and a lot of his friends shout "SURPRISE!" He looks around and sees they have planned a big party for him.
2. Imani sees a group of girls she doesn't know playing a game that looks interesting. "Can I join you?" she asks. "Of course!" they say, and invite her over.
3. During recess, a classmate with muddy shoes steps on Marianne's foot, dirtying her brand new shoes. Her family doesn't have much money, but her father had bought her these shoes just last week as a present.
4. Leonard loves his little sister Lisa very much. Lisa has been teased badly at school. One day, Leonard sees a kid the same age as his sister being teased during lunch and Leonard feels his chest tighten.
5. Kimball is very excited for a trip his family is going on to see relatives. A few days before they are supposed to leave, his parents tell him that the trip has been canceled and they aren't going, but they don't explain why.
6. Each day while walking to school, Lewis passes a man asking for money for food. One day, Lewis sees that the man has a crutch and a cast on his leg. Lewis feels tears come to his eyes. He brings his mother to the man and they give the man several sandwiches and water.
7. Michelle's parents have been arguing lately. This morning on her way out of the door, she heard her dad say he's going to work late tonight. She's never heard him say that before, so she is not sure what that means and she notices a chill go through her body.
8. Carlos's group of close friends are used to going to the movies every Friday night. This Friday, though, Carlos's mom says it's getting too expensive so he can't go with them. He has to stay at home, knowing his friends are at the movies.

Emotion Timeline Scenarios

(continued)

9. TC wakes up and checks her phone. She sees that a friend has posted an unflattering video of her on TikTok.

Her brother Marty knocks on her door to make sure she's awake, and she screams at him to leave her alone. Marty says, "Are you ok? Can I come in?"

TC says, "I don't care."

Marty walks in and says, "What's going on?"

He sees TC completely covered by the blanket, head to toe. He sits next to her and pulls the blanket off her face.

Her eyes are open, but her face looks blank, and she seems numb. Marty sees the phone and the video replaying. He understands why she is upset and feels unsafe.

He asks her if she wants to talk about it, and she doesn't answer. Marty knows that one of the strategies that helps TC let her body know she is safe is to look for 6 colors around the room.

He asks her, "Maybe we can talk about the video after we get back into the resilient zone. Would you like to look around the room to find 6 colors with me?" TC nods slightly.

10. Ray is waiting for the bus. He is on his way to his grandmother's house, with some groceries she needs.

A car drives by really fast through an old mud puddle and sprays him with dirty water. He is instantly irritated and closes his eyes.

He feels the ground beneath his feet, the weight of the grocery bags in his hands, the water on his face. He brings his grandmother's face to mind, and she smiles at him. He opens his eyes and takes a deep breath.

The bus rolls up and stops. The door opens and the bus driver stares forward without acknowledging Ray.

Ray reaches into his pocket to look for money but realizes he used it at the grocery store. He hears another person behind him telling to hurry up.

Ari is getting off of the bus and sees that Ray is frustrated and looking for money. She remembers a time that someone helped her when he needed it.

She offers to pay for the bus fare for Ray. Ray accepts the offer and gets on the bus. He takes 5 deep breaths and thinks about the kindness that a stranger just showed him.

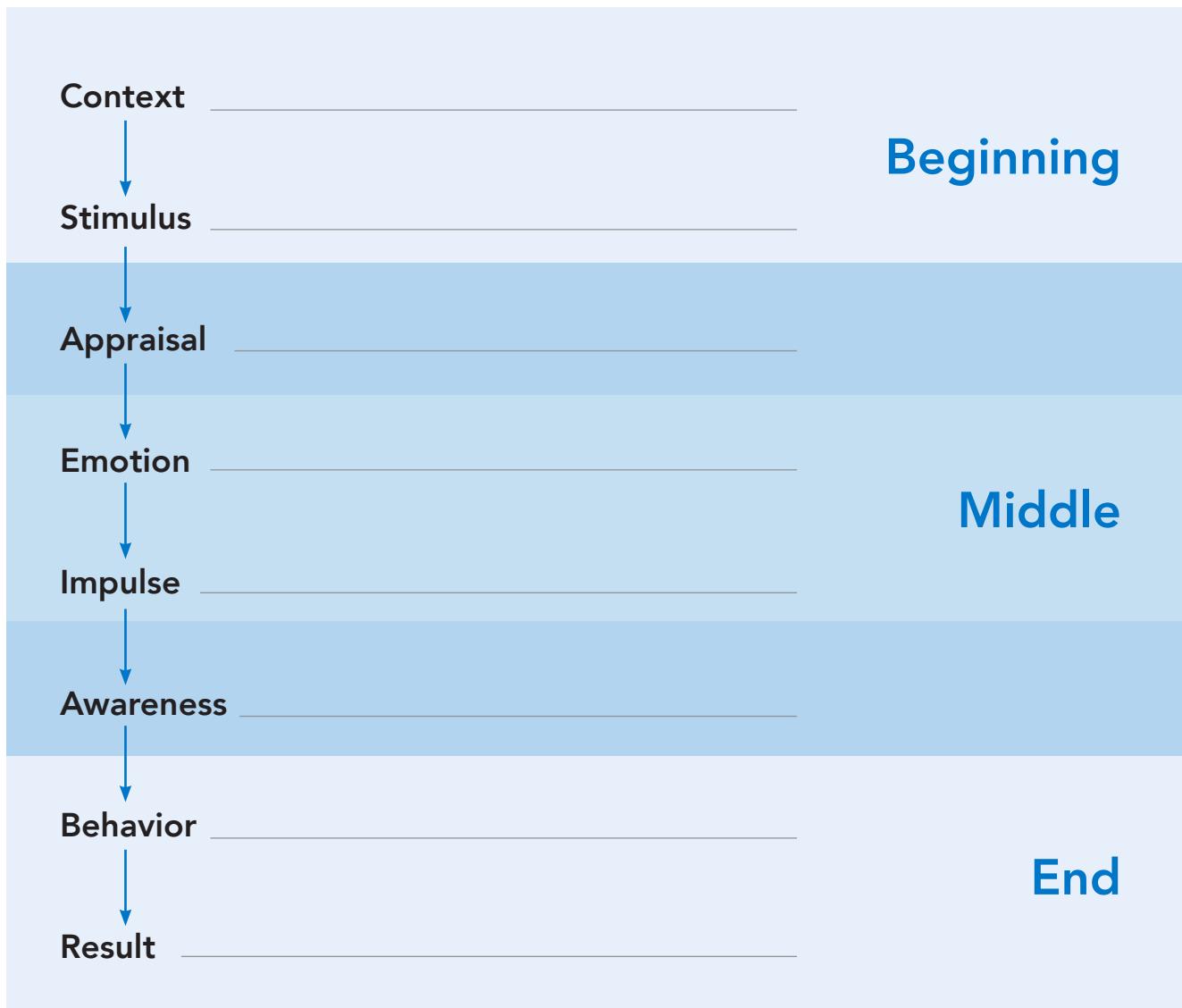
Scenarios created by students

Scenarios created by students

Graphic Organizer

Emotion Timeline

Name _____ **Date** _____



List of Tools to Use

Mapping Emotions and Core Affect

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students continue working on developing emotional awareness through a mapping activity. Graphing emotions and experiences along these two axes provides a clear visual model for mapping what is happening in our body and mind. This in turn helps us cultivate meta-awareness and interoception, two terms for our ability to notice what is happening in our body and mind.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Label where experienced emotions can be placed on the “activation/feeling tone” core affect chart
- Explore which emotional states may be more or less compatible with others and why that matters for interacting with others and shaping their communities

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Community &
Global Engagement

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Activation and Feeling Tone Chart handout
- Emotion Families in Chapter 4, Learning Experience 2
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

- *"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"*
- *"For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]"*
- *"Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger."*
- *"It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]"*
- *"Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]"*
- *"Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]"*
- *"Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that*

and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]

- *"You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]"*
- *"If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]"*
- *"As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better."*
- *"Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."*

PRESENTATION | 5 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

- *"Today we're going to explore a tool for mapping emotions and what they feel like in our minds and bodies. Why are we doing this? Consider the benefits of having a map when you're traveling. You're much more likely to reach your destination. Instead of being surprised by obstacles like rivers or lakes, you'll know how to navigate around them. You won't run into dead ends. You'll know how to prepare for your journey."*

- *Similarly, we can develop maps of our own mind and emotions. Since each of us is different, our maps may vary. But since we're all human beings and have bodies, brains and nervous systems, there will likely be a lot of overlap too.*
- *Just like a map for traveling the outside world, a map of the mind helps us identify, understand and navigate emotions, feelings and thoughts. If we take the time to create these maps, we might not be so surprised when inner emotional obstacles arise for us. Instead, we'll be better equipped to deal with them. They can even help us understand other people's emotions better too, thereby helping us to navigate our relationships with others.*
- *By better understanding emotions, we can develop greater emotional hygiene. This means we develop better awareness about our emotions, and this in turn allows us to manage them more proactively, rather than letting them control us. This allows us also to better choose our behavioral responses to situations, rather than having such behaviors be driven purely by our emotions with little discernment or deliberation from our side.*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Understanding Emotions Through Mapping

Activity Overview

Learners will map examples of how they perceive a particular emotion falling on the graph. An important purpose is to listen to one another and gain insights on how the same emotion words bring up different feelings and thoughts, depending on people's backgrounds and current inner states. This helps build the skills of self-awareness, of not making assumptions, and of seeing a variety of perspectives that are all valid although they differ.

Guided Language

"Graphing emotions and experiences along an axis of low to high energy and along a continuum of strongly unpleasant to very pleasant, can provide a clear visual image that reinforces our opportunity to examine emotions and body states through meta-awareness (the state of deliberate attention towards what you are experiencing) and interoception (the ability to perceive what's going on inside your body).

A single emotion can exist across different levels of activation and feeling tone.

Emotions vary in levels of activation in the body (high to low energy, or neutral) and in feeling tone (pleasant, neutral, unpleasant). We can learn about our emotional state by tracking our level of activation and sensations."

Instructions

- Distribute the Activation Feeling and Tone Chart handout (1 for each student).
- Give students time to look over the map and familiarize themselves with the visual and corresponding vocabulary.
- Map a few emotion words on the Feeling and Tone Chart.
- Place the emotion word with a simple image on the graph and explain your reasoning. Remind students that we will all have varying answers and ideas about where the emotion words belong on the map. Some words to choose from are carefree, curious, excited, happy, anxious, grateful, lonely, tired, disappointed, angry, relieved, etc...
- Use specific examples to show how the same emotion word can appear in different places on the map. For example: I am feeling tired because I just played two games of soccer or I am feeling tired because I haven't had a chance to eat yet today.
 - ***I'm feeling carefree because the sun is shining and I'm out for a walk.***
 - ***I'm feeling a little curious because I'm hearing a sound and I don't recognize it.***
 - ***I'm feeling very excited and happy because I just found out that someone I care deeply about is coming for a visit.***

- ***I'm feeling anxious because there is an important test I'm supposed to take in a few hours.***
- ***I'm feeling grateful because someone just helped me with a problem that I was really worried about.***
- ***I feel lonely and I want to be with people.***
- ***I'm having unpleasant feelings but not overwhelmed. I feel just a little tired because something that's been bothering me for a while.***
- ***I'm feeling slightly disappointed because I couldn't get something I wanted.***
- ***I'm feeling angry because someone was slightly rude to me.***
- ***I'm feeling very relieved because something I was really worried about turned out to be no problem at all.***
- ***I feel a lot of fear of rejection because I want to join a particular group but I don't know if they'll accept me."***

- Ask the following debrief questions:
 - ***"What benefits might come from mapping emotions in this way?***
 - ***What is revealed by this chart?***

- **What's left out by this chart?**
- **Could the same emotion exist at different places in the chart? Why or why not?**
- **If someone realizes where they are on the chart, what might they do to move themselves to a different place on the chart?"**

Individual Mapping of Emotions

- **"Using the emotion family lists and any other emotion words that come to mind, independently graph emotion words and symbols on your map.**
- **The same emotion can appear in multiple places on the chart. So choose a specific example of that emotion to help you place it on the chart. For example, "Someone is feeling X because Y." You can use "Someone" or "I" for these statements as you prefer. Write down your example for that emotion, then map it with a point or a shape that illustrates it."**

Next, invite students to participate in Small Group Sharing (5 minutes)

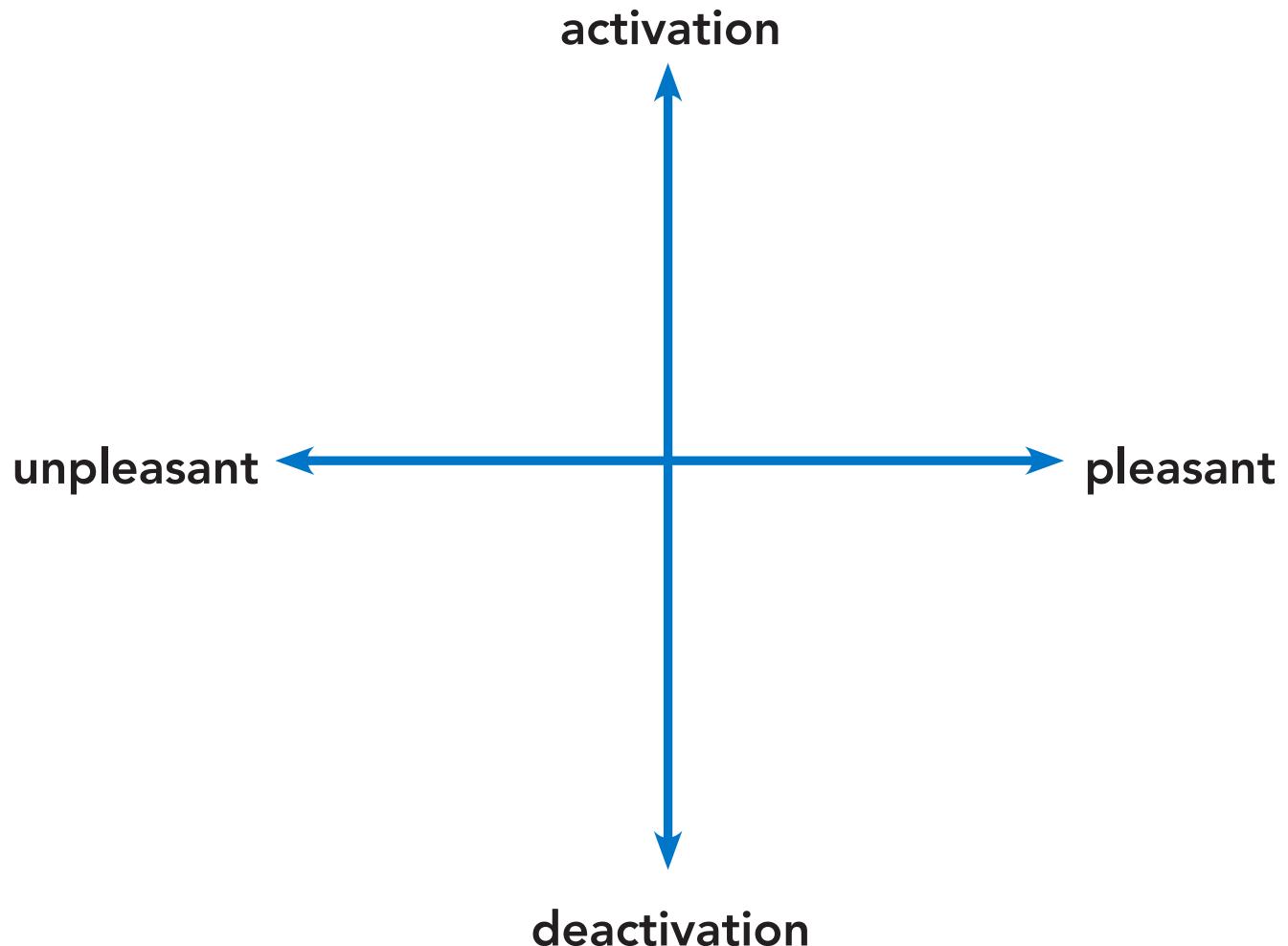
- **"Choose one emotion word and take turns sharing where you placed it on the graph and why.**
- **Notice the similarities and differences in each individual's reasoning.**
- **Repeat the process using a new vocabulary word until time is up."**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Writing Prompt

- What strategies do you think work best for you when you are experiencing challenging emotions?
- How might developing emotional awareness help you to have more self-agency and self-advocacy?

Activation and Feeling Tone Chart



Cognitive Restructuring to Promote Wellbeing

PURPOSE

To continue an exploration of thinking traps and discuss ways we can successfully reframe our thinking trap by engaging in “cognitive restructuring,” meaning a reframing and reappraisal of a situation. Students will apply components of self-compassion to reframe thinking traps that may arise from challenging situations and emotions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore thinking traps around feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, or hopelessness
- Engage in “cognitive restructuring,” reframing thinking traps by applying components of self-compassion

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Personal Reflections for Self-Compassion handout (one per student)
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Share Story of Compassion

- Share the definition for compassion.
- **“Compassion is an emotion involving the wish to relieve or prevent the suffering of another out of a genuine concern for their well-being and a sense of tenderness and care for them.”**
- Ask students to reflect and discuss on the prompt below.
- **“Think about a current event in the local, national or worldwide news that caused you to have a feeling of compassion.”**

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

Revisiting Thinking Traps

- **“We’re going to revisit the idea of the thinking trap. Thinking traps happen when our minds play tricks on us and make things appear in ways that are not really true. A thinking trap is a distortion that makes things appear differently to how they really are. It exaggerates or minimizes. It hides important truths.**
- **When strong emotions arise, we can examine the thoughts that are connected to our emotions. We fall into a thinking trap when we try to make sense of, or justify, those emotions as evidence of a truth, such as “I feel helpless, so I must be powerless.”**

- **We can’t get ourselves out of a thinking trap just by telling ourselves to stop thinking or feeling that way. It’s important to look at the evidence in the situation, engage in analysis, and challenge the thinking trap. If we try to push away upsetting thoughts, or try to just not think about them, the thoughts often just come back into our mind. Or if we try to push them down and suppress and ignore them, pretending they don’t exist, we may notice an unhelpful result in our body or emotions that can even grow over time.”**

How to Debunk a Thinking Trap

- **“Building the skills to “notice, pause, reflect, and choose” can help us recognize and avoid falling into thinking traps. When I notice I am having a strong emotion that might be problematic, I can pause and reflect: What thoughts did I just have? How might those thoughts be fueling this emotion? Then I can examine those thoughts and choose: Do I accept these thoughts as true? Is this an emotion that I want to let grow?”**
- **Another way of recognizing and dealing with thinking traps is by expanding our perspective by asking the question “What else is true?”**
- **We can also reframe negative thinking traps by practicing and using a lens of compassion and self-compassion.”**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Activity Overview

Students continue to build their understanding of Thinking Traps (also known as 'cognitive distortions') and their ability to get out of them (also known as 'reframing' or 'cognitive restructuring') by reviewing and reflecting on the components of self-compassion and using this practice/tool to reframe negative thinking traps.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Example of a Thinking Trap

- **"Think about and relate to a student who is not getting good grades in school. What might they think about and how they might get caught in negative thinking traps?"**
- Turn to a partner and discuss the following prompts.
 - **"What challenging emotions might a student who is failing feel?"**
 - **"What thoughts or thinking traps might they develop as a result of the challenging experience (failing) and emotions (hopeless, helpless, powerless) that come with that experience."**

Small Group or Partner Work

- **"Today we will practice approaching and reframing negative thinking traps by using a lens of compassion and self-compassion."**
- **"Take a look at the Steps to Self-Compassion document. Independently, look at the**

headings, descriptions, and accompanying quotes.

- **Which component of self-compassion as outlined in this document do you think would be helpful to apply to the challenging emotions and negative thinking traps that might arise out of the experience of receiving a failing grade?**
- **Share your responses within your small groups. Be sure to tell why you choose that particular component of self-compassion."**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Reflection/Debrief

- Take an informal poll, asking students to raise their hand if they chose (component 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 of self-compassion)
- **"Quietly reflect on the following:**
 - **Did you all share the same responses?**
 - **Were your reasons similar or different?**
 - **What can you conclude about the variety of strategies chosen?"**

Writing Prompt

"Choose one component of self-compassion that you do really well and one that you would like to try and improve. Write about it."

Personal Reflections for Self-Compassion

Reflection 1 | Making visible and embracing our human condition

- Accepting our limitations and imperfections as part of the shared human experience.
- "I am not alone."

Reflection 2 | Making our strengths and blessings visible

- Understanding that we are more than any one mistake.
- "I may fail now and then but I am not a failure."

Reflection 3 | Aligning our expectations with reality

- Understanding that each outcome in life is dependent on multiple conditions and no one has full control over all those conditions.
- "I am a human – not a 'superhuman.'"

Reflection 4 | Seeing our adversities as opportunities for growth

- Understanding our mistakes and failures are opportunities for growth.
- "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Reflection 5 | Making visible one's purpose and meaning in life

- Driven by purpose, not by comparisons to others.
- "My success does not depend on the failure of others."

Reflection 6 | Assessing one's core values

- Distinguish between our wants and our needs
- "Mother Earth can fulfill the needs of everyone in the world but cannot fulfill the greed of a single person." (Attributed to Mahatma Gandhi)

Reflection 7 | Having confidence in one's decisions and good qualities

- Trust in your intention and to act with confidence.
- "I can trust my good qualities and my personal intention when I act."

Exploring the Ethical Dimensions to Emotions

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will identify when emotions become risky. Emotions can cause harm to ourselves and others when they grow very strong. Students will learn that they can cultivate the skills of recognizing emotions. Through this recognition they can decide whether or not to give those emotions more “fuel,” and to manage their emotions in ways that align with our values.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Identify the connection between emotional wellbeing and ethics
- Describe the ethical dimensions of emotions
- Examine how ethical responses can promote wellbeing and support compassionate responses

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Compassion
for Others

LENGTH

45 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- “Cultivating the Stance of Opposition” reading
- Four A’s Protocol
- Writing utensils and paper

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Settling Activity

- **"Let's take a moment to get comfortable and in an alert position. What does your body need right now? [PAUSE]"**
- **"For you it may be settling into your chair, or if you feel like it, leaning against a wall, sitting or lying on the floor. Please take a moment to make yourself comfortable in an alert position. Feel free to move if you need to. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, safer, happier, or stronger."**
- **"It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary. Notice the details of this resource and any sensations associated with it. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Now, when you think about this resource, what do you notice happening inside your body? Notice the sensations. [PAUSE]"**
- **"Next, I invite you to bring your attention to your body and what it is in contact with. Perhaps you feel the chair against your back, your hand on your leg. Possibly the coolness of the table, the softness of your shirt, maybe the air going in and out of your nostrils. What sensations do you notice on the inside? [PAUSE]"**
- **"Scan your body for a pleasant or neutral sensation and just pay attention to that and observe it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]"**
- **"You can always shift your body and your focus to another place that feels better. You can always focus on your resource. [PAUSE]"**
- **"If you get distracted, remember that you are human and it's okay to get distracted. Just acknowledge you're distracted and try to bring your attention back to your resource or a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body. [LONGER PAUSE]"**
- **"As we do this, we're learning more about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel better."**
- **"Now we'll conclude the practice. If you closed your eyes, I now invite you to open them. Thank you."**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Revisiting Thinking Traps

- **"Open up your journal to our "personal core affect maps" Take a look at how you mapped the emotional terms according to how they could be felt or experienced. Refresh your thinking on your process."**
- **"Turn to a nearby partner and share your thoughts about a couple of emotion terms"**

that you graphed. Think now about which ones you'd like to share.

- What are some of the factors that contribute to how different people might graph the same emotion term?"

New Information

- "We can experience more than one emotion at a time.
- These two emotions are focused on different aspects of the event of moving away.
- We can also experience more than one emotion at a time when we feel a "mixed resource." A person might think of their best friend and how happy they are when they're together, but then in the next moment, think of how their friend has moved away, and feel sadness that they can't be together as often. Happiness and sadness are opposing emotions, but here they come from focusing on two different aspects of the resource.
- Only one of the two emotions can be deeply felt at the same time. For example, a person can't feel sad at missing their best friend and happy at missing them at the same time. Another example is rage and tenderness. If I'm filled with rage towards someone, it's unlikely that I will be feeling tenderness toward the same person. For me to feel tenderness towards them, my rage has to pass."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

- "We're going to read a short article about cultivating a stance of opposition that helps us gain more agency and empowerment over the emotions we are feeling.
- As you read the article, use the note catcher to capture your thoughts, in preparation for small group discussions.
- With a partner or in small groups, discuss one section that you found interesting and one section you found challenging. Take turns discussing your findings."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Reaching for Opposing Emotions

Activity Overview

Students will make self-to-text connections, contextualizing their ideas about developing the Stance of Opposition to their own circumstances. They will record their thinking in their SEE Learning Journal.

Writing/Reflection Prompt

- "What is an emotion and when do I feel emotion?
- When I get into a particular emotional state of mind, how could identifying this emotional state or experience be helpful to me for understanding my current reality and for creating a change that I desire?

(For example, "I'm feeling sadness and am highly activated and it's very unpleasant.")

- *How might reaching for an 'opposing emotion' help me with that? What's a specific action I could take?"*

Guiding Language

- *"We can identify certain emotions as "risky." Emotions are risky when, if left unattended or allowed to grow very strong, they prompt us to engage in behaviors that would harm ourselves and others. We can cultivate (intentionally develop) the skills of recognizing emotions, deciding whether or not to give those emotions more 'fuel', and manage our emotions in ways that align with our values.*
- *Understanding emotions and mindsets in this way will also help us develop within ourselves a "stance of opposition" towards those emotions and mindsets that we believe are harmful to ourselves and others.*
- *Identify a 'risky' emotion that if we don't pay attention, can lead us toward harmful ways of acting toward ourselves or one another and identify a paired emotion that we can cultivate so that when we feel the risky emotion gaining strength, we can concentrate on that opposing emotion. Write them down (on our shared chart/in your journal)."*

Oppositional Emotions and “The Stance of Opposition”: Exploring the Ethical Dimension to Emotions

In SEE Learning we identify certain emotions as “risky.” Emotions are risky when, if left unattended or allowed to grow very strong, they prompt us to engage in behaviors that would harm ourselves and/or others. Since SEE Learning is about our own personal experience, what is most important is discerning for ourselves what counts as a “risky emotion” for us.

In chapter 1 we explored the idea that generally no one wants to be hurt or harmed. Instead, we prefer being treated with kindness and compassion. This appears to be universal even among non-human animals. It is no surprise then that many philosophers, scientists, and religious thinkers have come to the conclusion that not harming others is an important foundation of ethical behavior. We can call this “the ethic of non-violence.” This is a foundational concept that is also often called “the Golden Rule”: to treat others as you yourself would want to be treated. This means treating others with kindness, compassion, honesty, integrity, generosity, and forgiveness, since this is how we would like others to treat us.

If ethics is about how we treat others and want them to treat us, then we can see that emotions can play a role in ethics. This is because our emotions and feelings have a large impact on how we behave. For example, we have explored that if we are stuck in the high zone or low zone, we are less likely to engage in productive ways, and more likely to engage in unproductive ways.

We can learn to identify emotions in different ways. We can study them objectively from a third-person perspective (*what we observe in the world as an objective outsider, like a scientist studying it*). We can also study them in our own subjective experience from a first-person perspective (*what we experience and observe about ourselves*). And thirdly, we can study emotions in others from a second-person perspective (*what we observe about another and what we think about that*). Why would we study emotions in so many different ways? Because the better we can identify risky emotions, the better we can manage them. We are dealing with harmful behavior at a fundamental level: in our own minds and hearts.

In addition to just recognizing risky emotions, we can also cultivate emotions and mindsets that are opposed to them. For example, what is the opposite of jealousy? What is the opposite of compassion? What is the opposite of anger?

Oppositional Emotions and “The Stance of Opposition”:

Exploring the Ethical Dimension to Emotions (continued)

We can even develop a “stance of opposition” towards those emotions and mindsets (including thinking traps) that we believe are harmful to ourselves and others. For example, if we decide that prejudice towards others on the basis of their gender, religion or ethnicity is wrong, then we identify prejudice as a risky mindset that we do not want. We then commit ourselves to opposing that risky mindset whenever we see it in ourselves or others. Similarly, we commit to cultivating its opposite (or antidote). We may decide that the opposite to such prejudice is a feeling of common humanity and the fundamental equality of all persons, and a commitment to fairness, justice, and impartiality. If so, we commit ourselves to cultivating that in ourselves and others. We cultivate a “stance of appreciation” for these good qualities.

When we develop these stances of opposition and appreciation, we have taken up a commitment to lead an ethical life. We are not merely stating outwardly that we are opposed to prejudice, we are inwardly watching for prejudice within ourselves and opposing it when it arises. Like any skill that we regularly practice, we should get better at this over time. Our internal tendency towards prejudicial thinking should weaken, and our commitment to, and conviction in, the fundamental equality of all persons should grow and become ever firmer. Over time, our understanding of prejudice can become clearer, as will our understanding of common humanity and equality.

The basis of this ethical life is a stance of nonviolence or non-harming. That means refraining from harming others or, if that is impossible, minimizing the harm that we do to others. If others do harm us, we will rarely see those actions as ethical. By the same token, others will not see our actions as ethical if we are harming them. Since we live in communities where we are interdependent, trying to refrain from harm can serve as a foundational ethical principle for our individual and collective well-being. The stance of opposition helps us to do this, because we are on the lookout for those mental states and emotions that might lead us to harming ourselves and others, advertently or inadvertently.

The stance of opposition also helps us maintain “emotional hygiene.” Physical hygiene means the ability to identify what is healthy from what is not. Learning about physical hygiene tells us about things like germs and pathogens so that we can be on our guard against them. It also tells us how to engage in productive behaviors that maintain and bolster our physical health. Emotional hygiene does the same, except on the level of emotions and mindsets. Without understanding the pitfalls of risky emotions left unchecked, and without having a stance of opposition, our practice of emotional hygiene could be limited. If we do develop a rich understanding of our own and others’ emotions, we can practice emotional hygiene in a way that promotes our own and others’ well-being.

Graphic Organizer

Four "A"s Protocol Template

Assumptions	Aspirations
What assumptions does the author of the Stress Contagion article hold?	What parts of the Stress Contagion article did you find personally meaningful and that you would want to engage in?
Agree	Argue
What do you agree with in the Stress Contagion article?	What do you want to argue with in the Stress Contagion article?



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 5

Learning About and From One Another

Overview

With this chapter, the SEE Learning curriculum progresses from the Personal to the Social domain, with learning experiences that seek to help students turn their attention towards others. Many of the skills that were cultivated in Chapters 1-4 for the Personal domain are directly applied in Chapter 5-7. The major shift in the second half of the curriculum occurs with the orientation of the focus — from inward towards outward, from self towards others—classmates, family, and people the students encounter on a daily basis.

Changes in brain development mean that students in adolescence become increasingly oriented towards their peers, and gain much more developed capacities for perspective-taking and empathy. Far more than at any previous time in life, their identity comes to be formed relationally with peers, and not just with family members. Students at this age are ready to be taught specific skills and concepts to help them understand and navigate this tricky period of development. Adolescence is a perfect time for introducing the topics of empathy and perspective-taking, and the skill of mindful listening. Moreover, since adolescence is also a time of considerable stress for many students, exploring the ways in which they are like one another, and understanding their differences alongside shared commonalities, can help them feel less alone in their struggles. These are the topics of Chapter 5, which focuses on interpersonal awareness — becoming increasingly aware of the other people with whom one interacts.

The Science and Benefits of Interpersonal Awareness

A major assumption of SEE Learning is that human wellbeing is often achieved through prosocial attunement. Our capacity to connect and feel connected with others is the foundation of our personal happiness and sense of purpose. Helping students to understand this is a critical step in their ability to engage in decision making that promotes their wellbeing and minimizes their experiences of distress and adversity. Training in the cultivation of interpersonal awareness begins with an acknowledgement that humans are social animals. Not only do we feel good when we connect with others, our basic survival depends on our connections with others. Becoming aware of this reality is supported by the acknowledgement that our identity and the identities that others hold is shaped by many factors. Being able to meaningfully connect with others sometimes takes focus and the application of different tools. As students cultivate these tools they become more adept at fostering a sense of shared common humanity. The awareness that others are exactly like me in their desire for happiness and the desire not to experience distress enables students to cultivate empathy and an appreciation for others' needs.

Learning Experience 1, “Exploring Our Social Identity,” provides students with an opportunity to shift their attention toward others and become more aware of their social realities. It does this through two activities that explore what they know and don’t yet know about each other. This leads to

reflecting on identity and the assumptions we make about one another. They also do an activity called “Who Are You?” that helps reveal the multiple aspects of our identities that can be explored, most of which are not visible upon first meeting.

Learning Experience 2, “Mindful Engagement,” introduces two practices: mindful listening and mindful dialogue. “Mindful listening” means to listen respectfully and empathically with full attention, without interrupting the other person, without being distracted, and without focusing on oneself or one’s judgments. It is a communication skill that connects with both parts of empathy: the attentive listening allows one to better understand the situation of the other and how they are feeling (cognitive empathy), while the act of respectful listening can help create a resonance with the other person and show that one cares (affective empathy). This kind of listening builds on and reinforces students’ attentional skills because it requires focusing solely on what the other person is saying, rather than on what one wants to say in response. Mindful listening also provides an opportunity for students to be listened to, without judgment, by their classmates, thereby creating safety. Students are asked to consider the ways in which mindful listening affects the speaker and the listener, as well as how these practices might impact the classroom community.

A “mindful dialogue” is a type of paired reflective practice supported by mindful listening that can be used to explore a number of issues. In it, each student poses a set of provided questions to their partner, and then listens mindfully, without comment or judgment. The mindful dialogue format allows each student to both reflect personally on what they are learning and how it applies to their own life, and share their thinking with another student. Mindful dialogues can help students achieve critical insights and deepen their understanding while learning about and from each other.

Learning Experience 3, “Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities,” allows students to explore the ways in which they are different from and similar to others. Through an insight activity, students discover that although they are individually unique, being unique is also something they share in common with all other human beings.

Learning Experience 4, “Exploring Empathy,” enables students to examine the concept of empathy and practice its associated skills. Empathy has two main components: being able to take another’s perspective (cognitive empathy) and being able to feel an emotional resonance with them (affective empathy). Without perspective-taking we can misinterpret the motivations and actions of others. Through sharing the perspectives of characters in stories and listening to their peers, students can experience more deeply the complexity of one person’s perspective, and how it is itself an expression of that person’s needs, feelings, and prior experiences. Listening to and appreciating different

perspectives can lead to greater humility and willingness to learn, better problem-solving, and more positive relationships.

Student Personal Practice

Developing a deeper understanding of oneself and others is an ongoing process. Through the application of skills previously introduced and worked on, such as attention and emotional awareness, students can expand their appreciation of themselves, their classmates and other people who share our planet. Specifically, the skills of mindful listening and mindful dialogue that are introduced in this chapter can be reinforced throughout the week, especially when students have opportunities to talk with and listen to each other. This is a practice that students can apply readily in their daily life.

Teacher Personal Practice

While teaching this chapter, reflect on your own experience with mindful listening. Is this the kind of listening that you regularly engage in at work or home? If you think listening more mindfully with empathy could be beneficial, try to catch yourself in the act of less mindful listening, and see if you can adjust your behaviors. Make note of the impact on yourselves and others when you are able to listen mindfully and with empathy. If you are having difficulty listening to someone with mindfulness and empathy, see if reminding yourself of your shared common humanity helps: we all want to be happy and avoid suffering.

Additionally, see if you can find another adult willing to practice mindful dialogues with you. Use the provided questions or come up with a set of your own three questions. Make sure your partner understands the activity and is choosing to participate. Make it a safe experience by letting them know that if they do not want to answer the questions you have provided, they can answer a question they wish you had asked instead.

Chapter 5: Learning About and From One Another

Learning Experience 1: Exploring our Social Identity

Learning Experience 2: Mindful Dialogues

Learning Experience 3: Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities

Learning Experience 4 Exploring Empathy

Exploring our Social Identity

PURPOSE

“Exploring Our Social Identity” provides students with an opportunity to shift their attention toward others and become more aware of their social realities. It does this through two activities that explore what they know and don’t yet know about each other. This leads to reflecting on identity and the assumptions we make about one another. They also do an activity called “Who Are You?” that helps reveal the infinite aspects of our identities that can be explored, most of which are not visible to others upon our first meeting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe assumptions about others and how those assumptions can be inaccurate.
- Recognize that there are many things we don’t know about one another until we take the time to find out.
- Determine how every person, including oneself, has a vast number of aspects to their identity, most of which are not visible upon first seeing or meeting a person.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Timer

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Engage in a Grounding Practice

Overview

Lead students in a grounding practice of focusing their attention on the pleasant and neutral sensations resulting from noticing how the body is in contact with an object or surface. They will be invited to focus on either the point of contact with their feet on the ground or a point where their body is in contact with an object or surface that feels pleasant or neutral.

Guiding Language

- *"It can help you to focus if you close your eyes. If you don't choose to close them, it can be helpful to lower your gaze to the floor. Let's help each other out by paying close attention to our own experience, noticing the sensation of the weight at our feet or pressure of our legs or back against the chair we are sitting in. [PAUSE]"*
- *"If it feels comfortable, bring your attention to your feet or legs; otherwise choose another point of contact. Notice what it feels like on the inside. When you notice your mind wandering, bring it back to your focus area. [PAUSE]"*
- *"If you begin to feel uncomfortable, you can stop paying attention to your focus area and focus instead on your breathing. You can also always choose to stop and relax quietly in your own way, or choose an alternate Help Now! Strategy and remain*

with any pleasant or neutral sensations that may bring about.

- *So, let's begin by focusing our attention on the experience of weight or pressure or gravity being enacted on the body, our feet or legs or back. [PAUSE]"*
- *"When our mind wanders, bring it back, and notice what arises on the inside. By focusing on pleasant or neutral sensations, we can generate greater well being in our bodies and regulate our nervous systems."*
- *"Now we'll open our eyes. [PAUSE] And reflect: what was that like? Let's hear from several people. Were you able to maintain your feeling of being grounded? Did anyone notice anything new about their sensations today? What else did you notice during that activity? What do you think brought that into your awareness?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 15 minutes

Two Truths and a Lie

Overview

In this Insight Activity, students share two things about themselves that are true, and one that is not true. The goal is to help students learn about one another and to connect in a relaxed way, with humor.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can learn about one another and from one another.

- There are many things we don't know about one another until we take the time to find out.
- Often our assumptions about others are incorrect or incomplete.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- Take a poll: ask students how well they think they know others in the group.
- ***"On a fist to five, fist being 0, and 5 representing 5. How well do you think you know your classmates?"***
- Tell students you are going to play a game called "Two Facts and a Fiction". The challenge is to see if others can figure out which items are true and which are false.
- Make sure they understand what is meant by "fact" (something that is true) and "fiction" (something that is false/made up).
- ***"We're going to do an activity called "Two Facts and a Fiction." This is a game that some of you may have played before. It's for learning about each other.***
- ***In this game we write down two things that are true about ourselves, two facts, and one thing that is not true, a fictional statement. Then the rest of the class will guess which things are true and which one is not true.***
- ***Now, we don't want it to be super easy. We want to think of things that are less obvious. Things that other people might not know about us. Things that are parts***

of our identity but are not visible from the outside. This could include interests or skills you have, places you've traveled to, it could be about your family or pets, causes or ideas that are important to you. You choose what you'd like others to know about you.

- Write the words "Something someone might not know about me is..." on the board or a piece of chart paper.
- Point to the board or poster with this prompt on it.
- ***"Each of us will write three things that answer this question on your index card: two that are true and one that's false, but in mixed up order. Then we will share and other people will have to guess which ones are true and which is false. And after they have guessed, we will reveal which ones were true and which were false.***
- ***Do you have any questions about how to play this game?***
- ***Let's take a few minutes to write down our three statements on our index card, and make sure your name is on your card.*** [Give them a few minutes.]
- After their time is up, collect all the index cards. Pull cards at random to share, and call individuals labeled on the card to read it. (Students can choose to pass, and you will just pull the next name.) You should keep all index cards so they can share responses throughout the week, as there is not enough

time to go over everyone's in this session. Pick as many as you have time for the remainder of the activity.

- Have students share their three items, one at a time. After a student shares, the rest of the class can discuss which statements they think are true and which one is false.
- **“What three things did you write?”** [Have the student share their three statements.]
- **“What do the rest of you think? Which ones are true and which is false? Why do you think that? What are you basing your guess on?”**
- After one or two classmates have guessed, the student reveals which were the facts and which was the fiction.
- **“Now let’s find out if we are right. Which ones were true and which was false?”** [Let the student reveal.]
- **“Okay let’s hear from the next person.”**
(Continue through as many students as you have time for in this allocated activity.)
- Then debrief the activity, asking one or more of the following questions as time allows:
 - **“What was that activity like for you? What surprised you?**
 - **What did you learn about the people in our group?**
 - **Let’s talk about assumptions. What are some assumptions that came up for you?**

Were these assumptions challenged or validated by the exercise? What might be some risks of making assumptions based on our first impressions of someone? What might be a benefit of asking more questions or getting to know someone better?

- *What can happen when we make assumptions based on our first impression of someone? How can these assumptions affect how we perceive others, our relationship with the person, and our wellbeing?*
- *What can happen when we get to know each other better?*
- *What are some other ways we might get to know each other better during our class time? What kinds of activities or strategies have you experienced in other classes, or club or team type situations, that helped people get to know one another better?*

Teaching Tips

Students may know this activity as the game “Two Truths and a Lie” and may have played it before. That is fine, since there are endless facts and fictions that can be used in this game.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 15 minutes

Who are you?

Overview

In this insight activity students will explore the multiplicity of their own identities and gain insights about the complexities of others' identities.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Every person has many aspects to their identity, most of which are not visible upon first seeing or meeting them.
- There are many things we don't know about one another until we take the time to find out.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- Tell students you will all be playing a game that involves learning about others and about ourselves. Tell them that you'll all be sharing what you learn about each other during the debrief, so keep that in mind as they share with their partners.
- Organize students so everyone who is able is standing and each person has a partner. You should participate if there is an odd number of students.
- Explain the rules of the game. Each person will take a 30-second turn asking their partner one question "Who are you?" The speaker's challenge is to try not to repeat the same answer and to be confident sharing only what they wish to share about themselves. Then switch roles and repeat.

- **"Now we're going to play a game that helps us learn about each other and ourselves. It's called "Who are you?"**
- **Everyone finds a partner. Partner 1 will be the questioner. The questioner will ask "Who are you?" to their partner. Partner 2 will then answer by saying something about themselves.**
- **When they're done. Partner 1 will say "Thank you. Who are you?"**
- **Partner 2 gets to answer again, but this time giving a different answer. We can't repeat something we've already said.**
- **Then Partner 1 says again, "Thank you. Who are you?" Partner 1 doesn't comment on the responses or make additional conversation. They are in the listening role only.**
- **You'll do this for 30 seconds until the alarm goes off. Then you'll switch roles, and the person who was asking the question, "Who are you?" will get to be the one who answers.**
- **Remember to say "Thank you" each time, before asking "Who are you?" again.**
- It's good practice to model the activity first, with an adult playing the part of the respondent, answering authentically. You can also provide a few examples of how someone might answer the "Who are you?" question, including both low-vulnerability responses and more revealing ones, to show that

students can answer in a variety of ways. (I am (full name). I am named after... I am a person who likes the color blue. I have a dog that I love. I'm scared of heights. I'm an immigrant. I am an individual who believes in liberation and fighting for social justice ...)

- **“Let’s practice by asking me “Who are you?” and I’ll respond. Ask me “Who are you?”** [Have them all ask you this question as a class, then respond by saying something about yourself.]
- **Now say, “Thank you. Who are you?”** [Have them ask you, and reply again.]
- Ask students to face their partners and choose who will go first as the questioner. Tell them when the timer goes off, they should switch roles and partner will begin asking “who are you?” They will repeat this, beginning with “thank you” as many times as possible until time is called.
- Let them do this for 30 seconds. When the alarm goes off, have them switch roles.
- After another 30 seconds, explain that they should now find a new partner. Remind them that the challenge is to try not to repeat an answer, even with new partners.
- Repeat the activity with new partners. Do this for several rounds, as time permits.

Debrief Activity

After the rounds are complete, invite them to return to their seats and debrief with some or all of the following questions:

- **“What was this activity like for you?”** [Be prepared to receive comments from those who did and did not find this a comfortable experience. Anticipate that it may be challenging for people who identify themselves as introverts; who find it stressful to reach out to make partnerships; who don’t like having their interaction interrupted or who don’t prefer structured protocols. That’s okay. You are asking this question to surface whatever comes up for participants, not as a judgment of the value of the activity. Notice, nod, and validate with “Thank you for sharing” every time so that no one has a sense of whether you agreed or disagreed with the speaker.]
- **“Show of hands: Who learned something you didn’t know about someone else? Did anything surprising happen?”**
- **Was it hard to keep going? If so, why?”**
- **How does this activity relate to the idea of identities?”**
- **What did you notice about how many aspects of our identity there are?**
- **Our sense of identity often influences the way we see other people and relate to them. And we often develop a feeling of an in-group when we identify others with ourselves. How can this activity help us develop our empathy and compassion?”**

- **“How many aspects of our identities do people become aware of when they first see or meet us?”**
- **“What difference did it make when we said “Thank you” in between asking “Who are you?” How did that affect you as a questioner and as an answerer?”**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Have students journal on the following prompt:

- **“What is something new you learned about yourself?**
- **Were there moments of hesitation in sharing, what makes us feel comfortable sharing and what are some challenging things about sharing?**
- **What is something that you or your classmates could do that would help people feel comfortable sharing who they are?”**

Mindful Engagement

PURPOSE

“Mindful listening” means to listen respectfully and empathically with full attention, without interrupting the other person, without being distracted, and without focusing on oneself or one’s judgments. Attentive listening allows one to better understand the situation of the other and how the other person is feeling (cognitive empathy), while the act of respectful listening can show that one cares (affective empathy). “Mindful listening” reinforces students’ attentional skills because it requires focusing solely on what the other person is saying, rather than on what one wants to say in response. Students are heard without judgment by their classmates which creates a sense of safety. In “mindful dialogue” each student poses a set of provided questions to their partner, and then listens mindfully, without comment or judgment. The mindful dialogue format allows each student to both reflect personally on what they are learning and how it applies to their own life, and also to briefly share their thinking with another student.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Describe the different parts of our personal identity.
- Engage in the practice of mindful dialogue.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Timer

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Engage in a Resourcing Practice

Guiding Language

- **"Let's do a short attention practice. Let us invite our attention to a place in the body that's relaxed and comfortable.**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close yours or look at the ground. I invite you to choose what is comfortable for you.**
- **Now choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can think of a new resource if you like: something that makes you feel better, safer, happier.**
- **Let's bring our resource to mind and focus on it for a few moments quietly. You can also do grounding if you prefer. [PAUSE]**
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that. If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a place in your body that feels better. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**
- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]**

- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath.**

You can also count your breath. [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]

- **Now let's end the practice and open our eyes.**
- **Let's take some time to reflect on that experience.**
- **What was that like? Let's hear from several people. Were you able to maintain your feeling of being grounded? Did anyone notice anything new about the sensation today? What else did you notice during that activity? What do you think brought that into your awareness?"**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 30 minutes

Mindful Dialogue

Overview

In this reflective practice students form pairs and use guiding questions to engage in personal reflection and to experience listening and speaking mindfully.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can learn to listen mindfully with full attention, withholding judgment.
- We can learn a great deal about each other in a short amount of time if we listen mindfully.
- Being listened to mindfully can make us feel

truly heard and seen and can strengthen relationships.

- Being able to express our thoughts and feelings to someone who is listening mindfully can help us reflect more deeply and gain insights.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Explain the format of the mindful dialogue.

- A mindful dialogue involves the class dividing into pairs. Each pair decides who will go first. That person will be the questioner and will also be the person who will first practice mindful listening. The other student in the pair is the responder. Explain that it's okay if the questioner has not had time to ask all three questions during the allotted time. Thinking about the question and responding fully and thoughtfully is the goal.
- If the responder has finished early, they may choose to add more thoughts directly related to the questions. Or the pair may sit together in silence until the time is up.
- The mindful listener asks a set of questions, which are posted on the board or on a piece of chart paper where everyone can see them. The responder answers each question one by one, taking as much of the allotted time as they like. The mindful listener gives full attention and doesn't speak except for asking the questions. As the responder finishes speaking to each question, the listener thanks the responder and moves on to ask the next question. When you are in the mindful

listener role, try to notice if you find it difficult not to speak, and how that shows up in your body and mind. You may wish to remind yourself that the goal is to focus on what the partner is expressing, and that you'll have an opportunity to speak when the time comes to switch.

- Before one actually begins a mindful dialogue, it's important that people have time to read and think about the questions they will be answering. Since everyone will take both roles, the whole class shares a few quiet minutes of reflection, reading the publicly posted list of questions.
- Mindful dialogues are confidential. What happens in your partnership stays in your partnership. Whatever you hear should not be shared with the class during the debrief or with anyone outside of your partnership.
- When you are the responder, if there's a question you don't want to respond to, you may choose to respond to a question you wish had been asked instead.
- Model a mindful dialogue with a volunteer student acting as the mindful listener. Have the questions for this mindful dialogue visible for all to see on a piece of chart paper. Give everyone a few moments to read and think about the questions. Then begin the mindful dialogue using these questions:

- **Mindful Dialogue Questions**

- **General inquiry:** What do you think are the most important aspects of a person's identity?
- **Personal connection:** What is an aspect of your identity that you wish people understood better about you?
- **Application to others:** What could you do to better understand the identities of people around you?
- When modeling the mindful dialogue, the student asks the posted questions and the adult answers them in front of the class, modeling appropriate disclosure. When you each have taken a turn and have completed modeling the mindful dialogue, ask the observing students what they noticed about your dialogue.
- Explain that mindful dialogues are meant to be safe, so if they don't want to answer a particular question, they can answer a question they wish had been on the list instead. Or they can pass, and stay in comfortable silence together until the round ends.
- **"We're going to practice listening in a mindful dialogue. A dialogue means two or more people are taking turns speaking to one another using mindful listening."**
- **May I have a volunteer to practice with?**

We'll model this mindful dialogue process for the class, using these same questions that everyone will use when we connect in partnerships.

- *[Student's name] and I are going to demonstrate how to do a mindful dialogue. Here are the questions. You will be the questioner and I will be the one who answers, then we will switch. So you're going to ask them all first, one by one. Then when we switch, I can ask you.*
- *When you ask me, you're going to listen mindfully to my responses, and not interrupt. Then when it's my turn to ask you, I'll do the same. Everyone else, please watch; you'll have an opportunity to do this next.*
- *Let's first take a moment to read the questions in silence.*
- *Okay let's start now. Start asking me the questions, and say thank you for sharing between my responses."*
- [Student asks] **"What is a piece of your identity that you value or enjoy about yourself?"**
- [Student listens and models mindful listening while you share, nodding and paying full attention but not interrupting.]
- [Student says] **"Thank you"** and asks the next question **"When did you first become aware that this was a part of your identity?"** [Student listens mindfully.]

- [Student says] **"Thank you. How has your identity changed over time?"** [Student listens mindfully.]
- [Student says] **"Thank you. Have there been parts of your identity that have gained or lost significance/importance to you over time?"** [Student listens mindfully.]
- [Student says] **"Thank you. What is something you wish others knew or understood about your identity?"** [Student listens mindfully. When the timer goes off it's time to switch]
- **"We're going to switch. Now I will ask the same five questions one by one. When you're sharing, I'll be doing mindful listening. When you finish each response, I will say "Thank you for sharing" and then I will ask you the next question. Okay?"** [Engage fully.]
- After the timer goes off, ask students to answer the following questions as a class.
- **"What did you all notice about the mindful dialogue?"**
- **What did you notice about our mindful listening?**
- **How do you think mindful listening is a way of being kind to someone? What contributes to that?**
- **How might mindful listening affect our sense of safety or our nervous system?**
- **What if I didn't want to answer a question.**

Let's say I felt uncomfortable about answering one of the questions. What could I have done?" [Allow for suggestions, or provide a model by demonstrating this with your partner.]

- **"Because mindful dialogues are designed to be safe, if I don't want to answer a question, then I can answer a question I wish the other person had asked. I can say, "I wish you had asked me about something else, so I'm going to share that instead." And then you can share. So in that way too, we can see that mindful dialogues are all about practicing kindness and respecting the way we talk to and listen to each other."**
- Next, have the students practice with each other. Divide the class into pairs and have them stand or sit comfortably side-by-side such that everyone can see the mindful dialogue questions, turning to face each other when they begin. Explain that they will wait until they hear the timer go off to begin and again when it is time to stop and switch roles. It's effective to use your timer/alarm to bring the room to silence at the end of the first round, pause for a few seconds, and then to signal the start and end of the second round in the same way. Then everyone begins at once, with their partner's full attention.
- Set the timer to have them begin. Pay attention to the time and allow them to engage in the activity for between 90-120 seconds, depending on how you perceive

the group's comfort level and engagement to be. After the timer has gone off, ask them to switch. Remind them that it's okay if they didn't finish all the questions. Also reinforce the skills being built, reminding everyone what it means to listen mindfully.

- Give them the same amount of time as the first round to complete the activity after they have switched, then when the timer goes off, signal the end of the mindful dialogue. If you like and have time, repeat the whole activity a second time with new partners. Note that the 3 minutes are for all five questions and it's okay if they do not complete all the questions in time. This way an entire round of a mindful dialogue lasts only 6 minutes or so, with each person being responder and questioner for one set of five questions.
- **"Let's all practice this mindful dialogue now. As you find a partner to stand with, make sure you can see the questions here on the chart paper.**
- **Decide which of you will go first. The person who goes first will be the questioner. If you're the questioner, you're going to ask these questions and practice mindful listening while the other person shares.**
- **Remember the questioner will ask the first question and then will mindfully listen. When the person answering is done, the questioner will say "Thank you for sharing," and will then ask the next question.**

- **When you hear the timer go off, it'll be time to switch. Don't worry if you're not done with all the questions yet. That's okay. Everyone will be answering at their own pace. Any questions?**
- **Turn and face each other. Let's begin!"**
- [When the round is finished and both people have had the chance to share and listen mindfully, debrief the activity with one or more of the following questions:]
- **"What did you notice as you were the listener? What did you notice as you were the speaker?**
- **What does it look like or feel like on the inside to be listened to mindfully?**
- **What would it be like if people listened to each other more mindfully in relationships? In society? How would this impact our relationship and our well-being? Would this affect how we react, respond and behave?"**

Teaching Tips

- It is often helpful to precede the actual mindful dialogue with a moment of reflection or a fast write or drawing on the given topic of the dialogue. This provides think time for students prior to the actual dialogue and can make the sharing richer. For example, prior to doing a mindful dialogue on students' resources, you might have them draw or think about a resource they already have identified as valuable, or a new resource. Prior to having

them do a mindful dialogue on kindness, you might have them spend a minute thinking of a moment of kindness they experienced or witnessed recently.

- Mindful dialogues, as done in SEE Learning, are brief yet concentrated. Each round should only last 6 minutes. You can use this mindful dialogue technique to explore a range of questions, but since mindful dialogues can be personal and intense, always be sure to remind students that if they prefer not to answer a question for any reason, they can instead answer a question they wish had been asked, or stay together in comfortable silence. Mindful dialogues can be great ways to prompt reflection and the personalization of knowledge in students.
- If you are unfamiliar with mindful dialogues, it is important to practice it with another adult first, outside of class, to see how it feels and how the timing works. Although it may take several tries for your students to get used to the format of a mindful dialogue done in this way, it will create an effective practice that you can continue to use to reflect on in other situations as the SEE Learning curriculum progresses.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

"In a think-pair-share with your shoulder buddy, answer and discuss the following questions:

- ***What did you learn today that you'd like to remember?***
- ***When could you practice mindful listening between now and our next time together?"***

Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities

PURPOSE

In "Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities," students explore the ways in which we are different and alike. Through an insight activity, students can discover that although they are individually unique, being unique is also something they share in common with all other human beings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore things we all have in common as human beings
- Recognize that one thing we share as human beings is that we are each unique

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Recognizing
Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Tape

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Engage in an Attention Practice

Guiding Language

- **"I invite you to do a short attention practice.**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close yours or look at the floor.**
- **Now choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can think of a new resource if you like: something that makes you feel better, safer, happier.**
- **Let's bring our resource to mind and focus on it for a few moments quietly. You can also do grounding if you prefer."** [PAUSE]
- **What do you notice on the inside? If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, you can rest your mind on that. If you notice an unpleasant sensation, you can shift to a place in your body that feels better.**
[PAUSE]
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing.**
Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.
- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to resourcing or grounding practice.** [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]
- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath.** [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]

- **Now let's end the practice and open our eyes** [PAUSE] **and reflect: what was that like? Let's hear from several people. Were you able to maintain your attention? Did anyone notice anything new about their sensations today? What else did you notice during that activity? What do you think brought that into your awareness?"**
[Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 25 minutes

Overview

In this Insight Activity students explore the ways in which we are different and alike. Through the activity, students can discover that although they are individually unique, being unique is also something they share with other human beings.

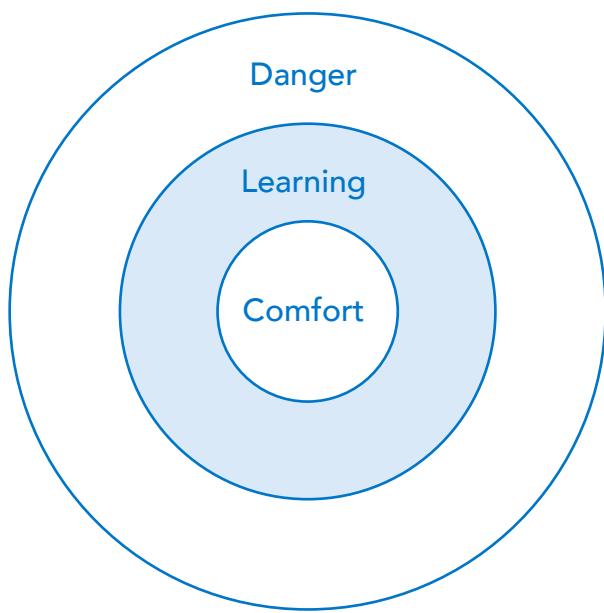
Content/Insights to be Explored

- Exploring things we all have in common as human beings
- Recognizing that one thing we share as human beings is that we are each unique

Instructions and Guiding Language

Zone of Comfort

- Draw the following diagram on the board, using three concentric circles. The innermost circle is labeled "comfort", the middle circle is labeled "risk or learning", and the outermost circle is labeled "danger."



- As a group, briefly define each area:
 - ***"Take a look at this visual. Look at each concentric circle and the corresponding label. Talk with a partner about what you think these zones might mean based on their location on the visual and their label."***
 - Explain. ***"The center circle is labeled comfort. Within this zone, a person feels comfortable and a task or experience would feel easy and natural. The middle circle is considered the risk zone. Within this zone, a person is uncomfortable***

but can get through the experience and probably learn something new. The outermost circle is considered the danger zone. When a person identifies with the danger zone, they may experience feelings of fear or inability to do the task at hand. As individuals, we experience feelings of comfort, risk or danger when opportunities and experiences present themselves. We all experience the world differently. For example, while one of us may feel comfortable with algebra, for another, it feels like a healthy stress, we can learn about it. For others it is completely out of our comfort level and we feel fearful of the task or experience."

- Identify the zones spatially on the floor. You can use a piece of tape and identify the middle of the room as the comfort zone and space by the walls the danger zone. Any place in between can be varying levels of the risk/learning zone.
- Ask the group a series of prompts that will reveal commonalities and differences among the group.

Examples:

"Where in the zone would you stand if:

- ***You were asked to walk into a new school/program where you do not know anyone else in the room?***
- ***If you were asked to do the morning announcements (over the loudspeaker)?***

- **If you were invited to travel to a foreign country where you do not know the culture or the language?**
- **If you were asked to sing a solo?**
- **You were asked to present your project in front of the whole class?**
- **You were asked to meet your significant other's parents for the first time?**
- **You were given a job interview?"**

After each prompt, ask one or two students standing on the most inner and outer edges of the circle to share why they chose to stand there.

Ask students to return to their seats and choose one or more prompts to think/write about.

- What did you learn about yourself as a person in this group?
- How are you unique in this group?
- How are you similar to those you share this space with?
- Why might it be important to learn about our commonalities and differences?
- How is cultivating this kind of awareness beneficial to us on a personal, social, or community level?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Group Work

In small groups or with a partner, talk about diversity.

- **"What is diversity and what does it mean to you?"**
- **Why might it be important to learn about our commonalities and differences?**
- **Once we learn about our shared commonalities we might develop a sense of appreciation for another or a sense of concern when they experience harm. When we feel this sense of concern, how does that shape our attitudes and behaviors towards others?"**

Ask each group to share what they discussed, write ideas on the board and create a shared definition of diversity (what and why).

Graphic Organizer

Exploring Diversity

What is it?	Why is it important to explore?

Exploring Empathy

PURPOSE

“Exploring Empathy” enables students to examine the concept of empathy and practice associated skills. Empathy has three components: being able to take another’s perspective (cognitive empathy), being able to feel an emotional resonance with the person (affective empathy), and the capacity to respond either through aspiration or action to alleviate another’s distress (empathic concern). Empathic concern becomes the pathway for felt and embodied experiences of compassion. This learning experience focuses on building the skill of perspective-taking. Without this skill we can misinterpret the motivations and actions of others. Through sharing the perspectives of characters in stories and listening to their peers, students can experience more deeply the complexity of one person’s perspective, and how it is itself an expression of that person’s needs, feelings, and prior experiences. Listening to and appreciating different perspectives can lead to greater humility and willingness to learn, better problem-solving, and more positive relationships.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Define empathy through its three components (cognitive, affective, and empathic concern)
- Engage in the practice of perspective-taking by reflecting on a character’s needs, feelings and thoughts
- Determine how to listen to different points of view
- Provide examples of the value of perspective-taking in building positive relationships and solving problems

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Compassion
for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Timer

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Engage in a Resourcing Practice

Guiding Language

- **"As we begin our attention practice, let's pay attention to our body, taking a comfortable and upright posture, closing our eyes or resting them by gazing at the ground.**
- **As we begin to strengthen our attention today, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to steady our mind and body. Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can give our full attention to our resource for a few moments quietly. Of course, if you'd rather do grounding, you can always choose to do that. Whichever you decide, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments.** [PAUSE]
- **What are you noticing on the inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you have unpleasant feelings, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground yourself. You can also change your posture, taking care that others' focus isn't interrupted. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource.** [PAUSE]

- **Now let's become aware of our breathing.**

Let's pay attention to the natural way our breath enters and leaves our body.

- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, you can always make a choice to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break.** [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]
- **When our mind gets distracted, and it will, we return our attention to our breath.** [PAUSE]
- **We can also count our breaths if that's helpful.** [PAUSE] for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]
- **People strengthen our attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice - it's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice?"** [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 30 minutes

Circle of Truths

Overview

This activity helps to fully develop the concept of empathy and its associated skills. Empathy has three components: being able to take another's perspective (cognitive empathy), being able to feel an emotional resonance with the person (affective empathy) and the capacity to respond either through aspiration or action to alleviate another's distress (empathic concern). Empathic concern becomes a measure or

indicator of the desire a person has to address another person's duress. Without perspective-taking we can misinterpret the motivations and actions of others. Through sharing the perspectives of characters in stories and listening to their peers, students can experience more deeply the complexity of one person's perspective, and how it is an expression of their needs, feelings, and prior experiences. Listening to and appreciating different perspectives can lead to greater humility and willingness to learn, better problem-solving, and more positive relationships.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Exploring the meaning and components of empathy.
- Practicing perspective-taking by reflecting on a person or character's needs, feelings, and thoughts.
- Practicing listening to different points of view.
- Sharing examples of the value of perspective-taking in building positive relationships and solving problems.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Check-in

"In the last lesson, we explored ways in which we are diverse and are similar to one another, recognizing that we are each unique and that being unique is something that we all have in common. In addition to having unique experiences and identities, we also have unique perspectives."

Introducing Empathy

Display talking points on the board for student reference.

- ***"Empathy is understanding and resonating with another's emotional state. It is an umbrella term that can mean multiple things. However, in SEE Learning, we understand empathy to mean either experience sharing, thinking about others' feelings, or caring about others' feelings. It can be the capacity to resonate with others' emotions, or engage in perspective taking, or it can be the aspiration to help another out of concern for their wellbeing. The first kind is called affective empathy, the second cognitive empathy, and the third empathic concern.***
- ***Each person has a unique perspective that is informed by our life experiences, our personality and attitudes, our habits and goals, our passions and interests.***
- ***We can't fully know someone else's perspective, but we can imagine what we might need, think or feel if we were in their shoes. This imagining, along with direct input from the person, whenever possible, helps us build empathy.***
- ***Empathy involves knowing what another person is feeling (cognitive empathy) and caring about what they are feeling (affective empathy)."***

Pair Up

Ask students to describe why empathy is important and/or what they think can help build empathy.

Circle of Truths Activity

In this insight activity, students will take the perspective of multiple people or characters in a literature story, current event story, pop culture story, or video clip. When choosing the story to be explored, be sure that there are at least 4 people/characters and that the content of the story or current event is not too controversial and will be interesting for the students. Students will put themselves in each person's/character's shoes by rotating in a circle to an assigned person/character so that they can consider what each character might be thinking or feeling. This activity focuses specifically on perspective taking.

Examples for Reference

Considering different perspectives is a key part of many classic literature texts. Authors such as Morrison, Shakespeare, Alcott, Dickens, Orwell, Steinbeck, etc., work to create different unique and varied perspectives from the characters within their stories. Those perspectives broach personal, societal, and systemic issues and outlooks. Many current and historical events can also be viewed from different perspectives, such as the World Wars, colonialism, the enlightenment, the industrial revolution, etc. When considering perception and experience, we must create the capacity to recognize how perspective is conditioned, shaped, and formed.

How Stories Evoke Empathy

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair is a story set in the early 1900's in America that highlights the difficult and unsafe working conditions of the meat-packing industry. This story is important because it represented the workers' perspectives on factory work and industrialization. Until this point, that perspective had rarely been shared.

Summary of *The Jungle*

The story focuses on Jurgis Rudkis and his family who were recent immigrants from Lithuania. The book provides a portrait of the brutal working conditions of the factory and the lack of safety, hygiene, and care that were afforded to the workers of the factory. Unfair practices were highlighted that demonstrated the abuse that workers experienced on a daily basis.

Impact of *The Jungle* and its Connection to Empathetic Concern

The Jungle was an international best-seller and has been published in seventeen languages. Due to direct action on the part of readers, who were outraged at these conditions, a federal commission was created to investigate that eventually led to the enactment of laws to safeguard workers and the public. For generations, students have read *The Jungle* and experienced significant feelings of cognitive empathy, affective empathy, and empathic concern. Throughout the story, Jurgis experiences major misfortunes and his life is devastated as he loses his family, his home, and his job.

Through this story we see the perspective of another through a very powerful manner. Due to this rich and emotive description, it is possible to use empathy (cognitive, affective, and empathic concern) to help develop a sense of common humanity as we reflect on the commonalities shared between the characters and between ourselves and the characters. On the basis of this identification it is possible to see how a compassionate response emerged from fictional characters that results in an entire industry being transformed.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Step 1:

Choose a story with at least 4 characters in it. It should be a story that students are aware of, have some knowledge about, and is of interest to them. Choose from current events, pop culture, video clips, or literature. Use your discretion to think about classroom dynamic and culture when choosing the material.

Step 2:

As a whole class, read the story/article, or watch the video clip. Identify the characters. Choose the main person/character and discuss what that person/character was thinking and feeling and what they might need.

Step 3:

Identify the rest of the characters. Write each character's name down on a sheet of paper and place the papers on the floor in a circle. Ask all students to independently write down what each character may have been thinking or feeling.

Step 4:

Fishbowl: Ask for 5 volunteers to stand in the "Circle of Truths" to do a perspective-taking exercise using the story we just listened to/read together. As we just explored, taking someone's perspective means you place yourself in their shoes and imagine what they might need or want, or what they might be feeling or thinking.

Try to engage the students to consider if cognitive, affective, or empathic concern was demonstrated by the characters from their story. The rest of the group will be an active audience. After each round, you will ask the students in the audience if they have anything else to add that was not stated.

Explain the role of the volunteer students who are engaging in a fishbowl activity.

- **"Each volunteer please stand in front of one of the persons/characters' names in the "Circle of Truths".**
- **You will have a minute to think again about what that person/character may have been thinking (cognitive empathy) and what they may have been feeling (affective empathy).**
- **You will each have a turn to speak from your assigned person/character's point of view as if you are the character. Take this opportunity to consider and identify evidence from the story of your character demonstrating cognitive empathy, affective empathy, or empathic concern**

- Please bring forward the person's/character's feelings and ideas without using a different kind of voice or "acting." This helps build an environment that is respectful of demonstrating a variety of perspectives. When we use our own voice, it helps us demonstrate that it is possible to relate to another person's view of a situation even when it is not necessarily the same as your own.

- Once the timer goes off or I give the attention signal, each speaker will have a minute of private thinking time. Please reflect on how you think that character would feel during that event and to what degree they demonstrated any of empathy (cognitive, affective, or empathic concern).

- Next, volunteers decide on two sentences that explain the perspective, from that person's point of view, of what was happening and why. Possible sentence stems:

- I was thinking _____.
- It made me feel _____.
- I needed _____.

(It could be of value for the teacher to model this process.)

- "There is no discussion during this activity. You will each briefly share your perspective while the others listen with an open mind, and then that round will end.

- When you hear the timer go off that says it's time for the next round to begin, everyone will rotate one spot clockwise, so that each of you is standing in front of a new role. Again, you will have about a minute of private thinking time to generate 1-2 sentences to share. Then, you will share your perspective with the group.
- As you listen to each other and move around the circle to take varying perspectives, challenge yourself to share a different perspective than what a classmate may have already said."

Repeat the directions until each volunteer has had the opportunity to take the perspective of all of the characters in the story.

After each round ask the students in the audience if they have anything new to add.

- "Do any observers from the audience have any new perspectives to add?
- Would the character/s have more empathic concern if they had perceived the common humanity of the other characters?"

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Whole Group Discussion

- *"What evidence did you find of either cognitive empathy, affective empathy, or empathic concern?"*
- *Which characters'/people's perspective was it easiest for you to speak from? Why? What contributed to that?*
- *Which were most challenging? Why? What contributed to that?*
- *What feelings or sensations did you notice arising as you tried to take another's perspective?*
- *How did you experience that resistance (physically, in thoughts, or in feelings?) What do you think factored into that?*
- *Voltaire writes that 'appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.' How does cultivating different perspectives help enhance a sense of appreciation for others?"*



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 6

Compassion for Self and Others

Overview

Teenage students are undergoing rapid and at times seemingly uneven development. This makes for a time of great opportunity, and also potentially great stress. While 95% of brain structure has been developed within the first six or so years of life, the stage of adolescence sees further growth and reorganization of the prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain is associated with reasoning, impulse control, and decision-making. While this development allows for greater perspective taking and consideration of others, it is also associated with greater emotional reactivity and risk taking. As students' social identities mature, their relationship circle expands to include their peers as well. With this can come a fear of social rejection and social isolation, and a heightened susceptibility to peer influence and social comparisons. As a result, a high number of students at this age struggle with anxiety about academics, body image, and other pressures. Other issues such as social anxiety, self-esteem and self-worth can become very impactful for teenagers.

Adolescence is also a particularly important time for identity formation. A central part of identity formation is how we relate to ourselves and how we view ourselves: our self-concept. Do we treat ourselves with kindness, understanding, and compassion? Are teenagers aware of their limitations but also aware of their capabilities and the fact that we are always growing and changing? Or do they look on at their current state with frustration, impatience, and disappointment, comparing themselves unfavorably to others and to the idealized images presented in society and on social media? This time of development is therefore a crucial stage. Despite the challenges they face, students at this age have greater resources for caring for themselves and others than at any time before in their lives. It is therefore an especially opportune time to explore empathy, forgiveness, compassion, and self-compassion with them. This is the focus of Chapter 6.

In *Building Resilience from the Inside Out*, Linda Lantieri writes, "Adolescents no longer inhabit a world defined by grownups, but rather one defined by their peers. While they push us away, they in fact still need the guidance and understanding of the significant adults in their lives to help them navigate this tumultuous time. Young people also need time for self-reflection and to turn inward in order to define their own sense of meaning and purpose for their life, yearnings which are inherent in this developmental stage."¹

What is Self-Compassion?

Psychologist Dr. Kristin Neff, one of the world's leading experts on the topic, writes that self-compassion means being "kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings."²

¹ Lantieri, *Building Resilience from the Inside Out: A Teaching Guide for Grades K-8*.

² <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2>

In SEE Learning, self-compassion has two critical components. The first is self-acceptance, which, as Dr. Neff notes, involves being kind and understanding to oneself when one encounters setbacks, difficulties, or failures, or when we do not live up to our own or others' expectations. The second is the confidence and courage that one can bring about inner change that can facilitate greater personal happiness and opportunities for flourishing. Both elements, and especially the second, benefit from critical thinking. For example, if a student has internalized the idea that they have to be the best at everything in order to feel happy and accepted, or that they could never be happy unless others found them more physically attractive, self-compassion would involve recognizing that these attitudes are untrue and unhelpful, and feeling empowered to be able to shift to more productive and constructive attitudes. Both external and internal environments affect the well-being of students and their ability to flourish personally and academically. Yet students often have less choice regarding their external environment (such as location, school, family situation, and so on) than their internal one, especially once they cultivate a greater ability to observe their mind, direct their attention, regulate their nervous system, and navigate emotions. Teaching students that they can cultivate self-acceptance, self-compassion, patience, and perseverance can be empowering. When combined with practical skills, these internal messages can bolster their resilience and enhance self-efficacy as they move through the evolving external environments they encounter.

Self-Compassion as a Developed Skill and Approach to Life

Students that embody self-compassion are capable of putting into practice the following personal insights:

1. Accepting our limitations and imperfections as parts of the shared human experience.
2. Making visible our strengths and fortunate circumstances by understanding that we are more than any one mistake.
3. Understanding that each outcome in life is dependent on multiple conditions and no one has full control over all those conditions.
4. Seeing our mistakes and failures as opportunities for growth.
5. Guided by a sense of purpose and not by comparison to others.
6. Determining one's core values by distinguishing between our wants and needs.
7. Finding confidence in our choices and personal self-agency.

What is Compassion?

Dr. Thupten Jinpa, a noted scholar on compassion, defines compassion as “a sense of concern that arises when we are confronted with another person’s suffering and feel motivated to see that suffering relieved.”³ Compassion depends on awareness of the other’s situation and an ability to empathize with them, combined with a sense of affection or endearment towards that person, at even the most basic level of human connection.

These insights are cultivated as students engage in the learning experiences that are summarized below.

Learning Experience 1, “Exploring Self-Compassion,” introduces the concept of self-care and self-compassion. To generate interest and motivation for the exploration of self-compassion, students will discover (a) what self-compassion is and why it is beneficial; (b) how students are already exhibiting self-compassion; and (c) areas where students feel their self-compassion can grow. Students will explore internal (their own minds, attitudes, perspectives and emotions) and external factors that contribute to self-compassion.

Learning Experience 2, “Practicing Self-Compassion,” enables students to reflect on their current use of self-compassion. It also asks them to explore how to collectively evaluate common barriers to self-compassion. Through the learning experience, students identify ways to overcome the barriers to self-compassion. Finally, students will make plans to take actionable steps to practice self-compassion in the near future.

Learning Experience 3, “Exploring Attitudes and Expectations,” enables students to examine the attitudes and ideas they have about themselves and others. Students will engage in an analysis of how different messages within their culture or society shape their attitudes and ideas about what happiness is or should be. This learning experience allows students to examine how they turn those attitudes and ideas on themselves. Self-compassion helps students to accept our shortcomings or failures as a normal part of the human experience and an opportunity for growth. Students can also learn to accept that not everything is within their control. Sometimes, even with the best efforts students may not achieve what they had hoped for. There may be things beyond them that contribute to this reality. When students exercise self-compassion they can set expectations for themselves out of a desire to be healthy and flourishing rather than from a place of self-criticism

³ Jinpa, Thupten. *A Fearless Heart: How the courage to be compassionate can transform our lives* (Avery, 2016).

Learning Experience 4, “Exploring Forgiveness,” begins with students defining and establishing the personal benefits of forgiveness by examining the science of forgiveness and the impacts it has on our physiology. Students participate in insight activities that are grounded in the personal experiences that students have with forgiveness. Students will examine how to practice forgiveness without necessarily approving of the action that led to harm. Students will define and reflect on experiences they may have had in which they let go of anger and negative emotions towards others and themselves. Finally, students will develop a classroom and personal plan to relate with forgiveness towards themselves and others.

Learning Experience 5, “Practicing Forgiveness,” allows students to engage in the practice of forgiveness as they apply strategies for forgiveness to themselves and others. Students will construct examples that identify how forgiveness is and can be applied. Students will create a personal plan to engage in the practice of forgiveness.

Learning Experience 6, “The Science of Compassion,” engages students in an examination of the science of compassion. Students will explore the benefits of compassion for themselves and others. Students will develop insights into how compassion can be practiced towards oneself and others.

Learning Experience 7, “Exploring Active Compassion,” asks students to explore more deeply the concept of active compassion, which involves taking responsibility for another and acting to protect them. This two-part lesson engages students in developing an understanding of compassion based on examples from their life. In the second part of the learning experience, students will create a Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) statement to identify where they can cultivate acts of compassion in their own lives.

Learning Experience 8, “Applying Compassion to One’s Life,” encourages students to apply compassion to their own lives through student-constructed examples. Through these insights, students will gain experience with the three main components of active compassion: having affection for someone, understanding their needs and wants, and taking responsibility to help them. They will also explore how active compassion needs to be coupled with critical thinking, systems thinking, and ethics. Students will also examine the need to sometimes say no in order to set personal and social boundaries.

Student Personal Practice

Many of the skills and practices that have been taught in SEE Learning are actually practices of self-compassion and compassion for others. For example, the resilience skills of grounding, resourcing and Help Now! Strategies in Chapter 2 are practices of self-compassion. Navigating one's emotions can also be a practice of self-compassion, as is forgiveness, since it releases one from strong negative emotions that disturb one's happiness and peace of mind. Similarly, mindful listening and paying attention to others can be acts of compassion and kindness. By pointing out the skills students are already developing and naming them as acts of self-compassion and compassion, you can help your students to recognize how they are already practicing self-compassion and compassion for others. This builds a strong foundation, helping them find ways to explore the more complex material presented in this chapter, giving them opportunities to reflect on how their expectations and attitudes contribute to or hinder their flourishing and well-being.

Teacher Personal Practice

The expectations on educators, and those that educators place on themselves, can sometimes be extraordinarily high. The facilitation of learning experiences on the topics of forgiveness, self-compassion, and compassion for others is greatly aided by educators who have cultivated personal insights and applied practices in those areas. You may wish to take this time to explore your own self-talk. When do you encourage yourself and when do you notice instances of negative self-talk? Are there unrealistic expectations that you place on yourself or your students, and if so, how could you make them more healthy and do-able? What practices of self-compassion and compassion for others are you already engaged in, and how could you build on these, practicing them more, or adding to them?

Many of the learning experiences in Chapter 6 involve small group and whole group discussions on topics and concepts related to self-compassion. Helping students to cultivate self-compassion and compassion for others requires much more than having them memorize a list of strategies. How a teacher models and embodies self-compassion through forgiveness and compassion for others through their actions does a great deal to create a compassionate classroom culture and to reinforce essential SEE Learning competencies.

Further Reading and Resources

- *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*, by Dr. Kristen Neff (William Morrow, 2015)
- *A Fearless Heart: How the Courage to Be Compassionate Can Transform Our Lives*, by Dr. Thupten Jinpa (Avery, 2016)

Chapter 6: Compassion for Self and Others

Learning Experience 1: Exploring Self-Compassion

Learning Experience 2: Practicing Self-Compassion

Learning Experience 3: Exploring Attitudes and Expectations

Learning Experience 4: Exploring Forgiveness

Learning Experience 5: Practicing Forgiveness

Learning Experience 6: The Science of Compassion

Learning Experience 7: Exploring Active Compassion

Learning Experience 8: Applying Compassion to One's Life

Exploring Self-Compassion

PURPOSE

This learning experience introduces the concept of self-care and self-compassion through prompts for critical inquiry and reflection. To generate interest and motivation in exploring the topic of self-compassion, there is a focus on (a) what self-compassion is and why it is beneficial; (b) how students are already exhibiting self-compassion; and (c) areas where they feel their self-compassion could grow. The concept of inner environments and outer environments is then introduced: just as we want an outer environment of people exhibiting kindness and consideration to us, so too do we want an inner environment (our own mind, attitudes, perspectives, and emotions) that is conducive to happiness and flourishing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Define the concept of self-compassion
- Describe ways in which they are exhibiting self-compassion already
- Identify areas where their self-compassion could grow

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Copies of prompts
- Timer
- Chime or bell
- Chart paper
- Guided Self-Compassion Worksheet
- Mindful Dialogue Protocol Instructions
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?"**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll keep our eyes on the ground or close them.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies. Mentally select one of your resources from your list of resources, or add a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's bring our resources to mind. And let's see if we can pay attention to our resources with our mind for a few moments quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments.** [PAUSE]
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you have an unpleasant feeling, you can shift to thinking about a different resource, or you can ground yourself in a different way. You can shift your posture. Keep your attention resting with your chosen focus.** [PAUSE]
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**

- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice — it's always up to you.**

- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, make the choice that's right for you: go back to your resource or grounding, or inwardly take a quiet break from this attention practice.** [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]
- **If you get distracted, return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath if that's a helpful attention focus for you.** [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]
- **What did you notice?"** [Invite students to share aloud or make a note in their journal.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Practicing Compassion with Friend

Activity Overview

In this insight activity, students brainstorm and practice some ways to show compassion to a friend who is discouraged, using positive talk or other acts of compassion such as helping them reframe their experience, helping them recognize thinking traps, or recognize they are not alone. This will happen through a mindful dialogue protocol.

Instructions

Lead a discussion about how we show compassion toward others.

"We've been learning a lot about why it's important to show kindness and compassion. And we've learned different ways of being kind to each other. Remember, in SEE Learning, we define compassion as "an emotion involving the wish to relieve or prevent the suffering of another out of a genuine concern for their well-being and a sense of tenderness and care for them"

Compassion is way of relating to oneself, others, and humanity as a whole through kindness, empathy, and a concern for one's own and others' happiness and suffering. We can show compassion to ourselves and others in many ways. Moreover, in SEE Learning, we use compassion as the foundation for our ethical engagement, especially in connection with others.

During this activity, we will be exploring things we can do and say to support others who may be struggling. Let's review now.

Let's say we have a close friend or family member and they try to do something but it doesn't work. How many of us have experienced a time when a friend or family member was frustrated, felt stuck and did not know what to do? [Students raise hands.]

Are there things that you did or observed someone else doing or saying that helped the other person feel better? [Students share ideas.]

What might it feel like for both the person who acted kindly and the person who received the kindness? [Students share ideas.]

By contrast, it is likely that we have observed or experienced someone doing or saying something that did not help someone else who was upset. Perhaps the person was genuinely trying to help, but in the end, what was done or said was unsupportive. What comes to mind when we think of the impact of doing or saying something that we thought may be helpful, but turned out to be unhelpful or unkind?

Having shared some ideas, what are some ways to share compassion that you heard or noticed? What are some helping actions we've learned that could be useful in a situation like this? [Allow students to generate a list of ideas.]

Allow students to guide the discussion, but you may want to point out some common ways of showing compassion such as the following ideas:

"I am hearing some great ideas on how to extend compassion to our friends. I want to point out some of what I heard and add a few ideas. Here are some ideas we've lifted up and a few others as well:

- Positive talk - This means saying things that are compassionate, kind, helpful and true. This can help others and ourselves counter**

negative talk, or when we are talking about things in unhelpful and unkind ways. For example, by being overly harsh. If we were to discourage someone or say things that are mean or not helpful to them, we would call that "negative talk."

- **Attentive listening**
- **Offering comforting touch or just being present**
- **Offering a different perspective to help a friend reframe their experience in a more compassionate way such as:**
 - 'We all make mistakes.' or 'You aren't alone, I have done that too.'
 - 'I wonder if there is anything to learn from this experience?'
 - 'Sometimes things are out of our control and can impact our outcomes.'
 - 'What are some good things happening right now?'
 - 'Is there something you can do to feel better right now?'"

In pairs, students will practice using positive talk and extending compassion in response to selected mindful dialogue prompts. Assign two of the prompts to each group, making sure the prompts given to each group are varied.

"Let's practice extending compassion and using positive talk as though we're talking to a friend. You'll do this with a partner. You'll be using scenarios to explore ways you can extend compassion. As you do this, keep in mind the different ways we can extend compassion. You may also want to keep an eye out for when you notice thinking traps arising. Remember, a few key points about thinking traps are:

- **Our minds and brains can provide us with both accurate and distorted information.**
- **Not recognizing the difference between appearance and reality can impact our well-being by leading us to behaviors that are unproductive and even harmful to ourselves and others.**
- **We can use our personal experiences and critical thinking abilities to understand the world around us more clearly, and thus support our well-being.**

To begin, we'll get in pairs and I'll give you some prompts to explore. First, Partner A will say their prompt and Partner B will reply using positive talk knowing that compassion can enable this. When responding to the prompt, the partner who is speaking can consider these questions:

- **What do you think the student in this scenario is feeling? What sensations is he experiencing/feeling?**

- **If this student were your friend, what could you say to make your friend feel encouraged?**
- **What tone of voice or body language might you use?**
- **What could you say that would help him see the situation in a different way?**
 - **For example, consider some of the language of reframing or looking at the situation differently that we just discussed.**
- **If you can't think of something compassionate and helpful to say, what else could you do to let them know you hear them?**

After listening to your partner respond, the person who was listening can now offer feedback on what they heard. The following questions may be helpful in framing your response:

- **Would your partner's words have been helpful or encouraging to you, if you were in that situation?**
- **Which of the statements that your partner said was most helpful? Why?**
- **Are there other things that could have been helpful?** [2 minutes to reflect]
- **Partners switch roles and repeat the process using a new prompt.”** [Allow time to repeat the process.]

Mindful Dialogue Discussion Prompts for pairs:

- What in society prompts me to fall into the thinking trap? What in society helps me to be more realistic and see through the thinking trap?
- Examples from life:
 - I got my biology test grade back and it was terrible. I am going to fail this class, and now I'll never get into college.
 - Everyone I know got invited to the party this weekend except me. Nobody likes me.
 - I have three papers due this week. There's no way I can finish them. I'm just not as smart as other people.
 - I completely forgot about the test today. I just don't think I'll ever be organized.
 - Sarah made fun of my picture on social media. She's right, I'm such a loser.
 - I looked at my phone this morning and my (significant other) broke up with me!
 - I overreacted to something my parents/ sibling said at the dinner table last night. I wish I would think before I speak.
 - I forgot my best friend's birthday and now she's mad at me. She's not going to want to be my friend anymore.

You can also ask student to provide scenario suggestions if that feel appropriate

When students have finished, bring them back for a group share out.

"Ok, now let's share out some examples of the positive talk we used." [Allow students to share, as you record their positive talk on the board or chart.]

Teaching Tips

- Write discussion prompts on chart paper or provide handouts with prompts and instructions provided here.
- Use a timer to help students track their turns. You can signal or make an announcement to indicate their time is over.

DISCUSSION | 15 minutes

Overview

This discussion explores the idea of whether one can be compassionate to oneself in the same way that one is to a friend. Students will share what common themes or ideas came up in their dialogues and how we can use that in extending compassion to ourselves. Invite students to explore how extending compassion helped shift their perspective on the situation or to notice and name their emotions and sensations as they were engaging in the conversation.

This discussion will be broken into the following segments:

- Overview of the discussion ahead

- Student debrief discussion with 3 student sharing opportunities
- Teacher talk on self-compassion followed by another opportunity for students to share
- Closing comments

Instructions

Lead a discussion with your students about what they discovered in their pairs. What were some ways partners offered compassion? This might include positive talk or helping Partner B to reframe their experience? What were some verbal and non-verbal things their partner tried that felt especially effective?

Next, turn the discussion towards self-compassion and how they might use those same ideas with themselves.

- Invite students to explore how extending compassion helped shift their perspective on the situation or
- Invite students to notice and name their emotions and sensations as they were engaging in the conversation.
- Encourage students to think about how we are able to use positive self-talk with ourselves when we face difficulties, treating ourselves as kindly as we would a friend.
 - Explore the relationship between positive and negative self-talk and our perspectives (how we see things) on various things.

- Encourage students to think about how looking at the situation from another perspective might help them to feel better. This could include:
 - Recognizing they are not alone in their distress, or the only one who makes mistakes
 - Recognizing opportunities to grow from experiences of failure or disappointment
 - Recognizing some things are outside of their control.
 - Recognizing what strengths they have or good things are happening.
 - Recognizing what they can do to help feel better in a situation.

“You’ve just explored ways to support a friend who was feeling sad or discouraged. What if it was us, ourselves, who had not succeeded and we were the ones feeling bad?

What are some examples of positive and negative ways that people sometimes respond towards their own setbacks?

[Students share ideas.]

Sometimes it can be challenging at first to offer the same compassionate response to ourselves as we do our friends. Self-compassion is when we show kindness and compassion to ourselves in the same way we do for others. Like we did for our friends, we can offer ourselves kindness or time to

practice self-care. We can use positive self-talk. We can catch ourselves when we fall into thinking traps, or take time to look at our situation from a broader perspective. Doing so can help us find ways to shift what we’re thinking and take steps to feel better.

Below is an example of how a person might respond non-compassionately to themselves. For you it might be more effective to reference a time when you were younger by using an authentic personal story.

“For example, if it was me, I might say or think things to myself, like “I’m no good. I’ll never be able to do this!” And then it might get even worse. I might start to think, “I’m no good at anything!” Then, instead of trying harder or practicing more so that I can succeed, I might just give up. I might even feel like a failure for a while. This can happen for anybody sometimes.”

How might a perspective of self-compassion help a person to manage or counteract this type of self-talk or mental experience?

[Give students a chance to share ideas.]

When I am kind to myself, the way I’m kind to a friend who is having problems, it can reshape an experience. When I’m kind to myself, I’m practicing self-compassion.”

Teaching Tips

- Compassionate talk with others and positive self-talk when we are discouraged are a

demonstration of our common humanity: "I am not the only one who has had this experience. We are all worthy of kindness and support."

- When we utilize self-compassion, it can shift how we see things. We can reappraise the things that occur in our life, in the lives of others, and it helps us to create a more realistic outlook.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

In this reflective journaling practice, students apply what they have been learning to their own lives by reflecting on how they are already practicing self-compassion when discouraged. They then think of additional ways they believe they could be kinder to themselves.

Instructions

Lead students in a guided journaling time where they reflect on the past week (or longer if needed). Students will start by first recalling times where they have felt overwhelmed but were able to use positive self-talk, reappraisal, or other forms of self-compassion. If they can't think of any specific examples, they can choose a situation where they sometimes have had difficulty in the past.

Self-compassion could also include times of self-care like attending to their needs for food or rest, seeking help, or other actions to help them shift their perspective and alleviate distress.

On their worksheet, students write down each event. Invite them to recall the event itself and what sensations they experienced. Then write about how they engaged in self-compassion under each event on the list. Beside each event on their list in the second column, invite them to reflect further by writing about what was helpful and recalling what shifted in their feelings and their bodies.

If students feel comfortable, they can also reflect on any times they didn't offer self-compassion and write how they might do so next time.

Next, invite students to think ahead to their coming week.

What opportunities for self-compassion might be in their future (a stressful test, social interactions, or other times they may experience challenges).

On the back side of the worksheet they will create another list of these coming opportunities.

"Now we're going to do our personal reflective practice. This is independent work, so you'll have your own private time to think, write and draw about your own ideas. I'll ask for volunteers to share, if you'd like to, in a few minutes.

Look at the handout I gave you. We're going to start by reflecting on the last week and

make a list of times we were facing a difficult situation and practiced self-compassion.

- **Take a few moments to reflect and write down the events on your worksheet where indicated. If you are having trouble recalling a time, you can think back further, or just think of an imaginary situation that you often encounter.**
- **Spend a few moments journaling about each event underneath it. As you recall the event, what sensations or emotions come up? You can note those if you would like. Then write about how you engaged in self-compassion.**
- **You can reflect further by writing about what was helpful and recalling what shifted in your feelings and your body when you exercised self-compassion. Write those in the next column beside the event.**
- **If you would like to, you can also reflect on any times over the last week you didn't offer self-compassion and write how they might do so next time.** [Allow time for journaling]
- **Next, we're going to turn to the back of the worksheet and reflect on opportunities we have coming up to practice self-compassion.**
- **Think ahead to your coming week. What opportunities for self-compassion might be coming up for you in the next week. This could be something like taking a stressful**

test, social interactions, or any times you may experience challenges. Make note of those opportunities on the worksheet.

- **As you look to these experiences in their future, in what ways might you exercise self-compassion? Make a list of ways you can be compassionate towards yourself.**
- **It may help to reflect on what you wrote about this past week and notice what has helped you before? Or, are there other ideas we talked about today that you might try?**
- **We are going to allow time to share if anyone would like to share an example of self-compassion. Would anyone like to share?** [Allow students to share with the class. It is okay if no one wants to share. A teacher can also share to model an example.]
- **What other ways of speaking positively to yourself in the future can you add? Go ahead and do that now.** [Allow time to write.]

Ask students to keep this list about their plans for being compassionate in the future. We will return to it in the next learning experience.

- **"What are some challenges and benefits of extending compassion toward yourself, as we would to a friend?"**
- **"What did you learn that you would like to remember?"**

Teaching Tips

- The teacher authentically models the exercise first to alleviate confusion, gain experience and awareness and to model vulnerability and curiosity when learning about a new topic.
- When modeling, it's important to use appropriate self-disclosure. Teachers should choose an example that is not overly personal, and one they feel comfortable sharing.
- This practice invites students to reflect on experiences that may have been challenging or difficult. It is important to use invitational language so they know they have choices on how they want to reflect and on what experiences they choose to reflect on.
- If it will be more than a week before you engage in the next lesson, ask students to think about their next two weeks in the future.

Graphic Organizer

Self-Compassion Journal

Recalling the last week, reflect on times you practiced compassion:

Times I Used Self-Compassion	My Reflections
Journal on the experience/event.	Reflect on the experience and what was helpful.

Mindful Dialogue Protocol Instructions

1. In pairs, Partner A will read one of the prompts and ask partner B to respond to the following questions:
 - What do you think the student in this scenario is feeling?
 - What sensations might they be feeling in their body?
 - What would you say if this student was your friend to make them feel encouraged?
 - What tone or body language would you use?
 - What would you say that would help them see the situation a different way?
 - If you can't think of something compassionate and helpful to say, what else could you do to let them know you hear them?
2. While Partner B responds for 2 minutes, Partner A listens.
3. After the 2 minutes, allow for 2 minutes of discussion. Partner A can reflect on Partner B's words:
 - Would they find them helpful or encouraging if they were to receive them?
 - Which of the statements that Partner B gave was most helpful?
 - Are there other things that would have been helpful here?
4. Repeat this for the second prompt, then swap roles. Partner B will listen as Partner A responds to each prompt.

Guidelines

- Use positive talk that is helpful, compassionate, true, and useful.
- Try NOT talk about yourself or your own experiences.

Discussion Prompts

1. I got my biology test grade back and it was terrible. I am going to fail this class, and now I'll never get into college.
2. Everyone I know got invited to the birthday party this weekend except me. Nobody likes me.
3. I have three papers due this week. There's no way I can finish them. I'm just not as smart as other people.
4. I completely forgot about the test today. I just don't think I'll ever be organized.
5. Sarah made fun of my picture on social media. She's right, I'm such a loser.
6. I looked at my cell phone this morning and my boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other broke up with me.
7. I overreacted to something my parents/sibling said at the dinner table last night. I wish I would think before I speak.
8. I forgot my best friend's birthday and now she's mad at me. She's not going to want to be my friend anymore.

Practicing Self-Compassion

PURPOSE

This learning experience engages students in reflecting on their current use of self-compassion, on how to collectively evaluate common barriers to self-compassion, and will brainstorm ways to overcome them. Finally, students will make plans to take actionable steps to practice self-compassion in the near future.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Evaluate common barriers to practicing self-compassion
- Describe solutions to barriers to self-compassion
- Identify one's personal use of self-compassion
- Construct a personal plan to practice self-compassion

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Completed "Guided Self-Compassion Journal" worksheet (see Chapter 6, Learning Experience 1)
- Writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Resourcing or Grounding Practice

- **“Let’s take a moment to calm our bodies and minds so that we can be ready to explore self-compassion further. Take a comfortable posture, one that is relaxed but that will help you keep your attention here. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let’s do grounding or resourcing. If you’re doing grounding, notice how your body is touching the floor or chair or some other surface. Then notice pleasant or neutral sensations and keep your attention there for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- **If you’re doing resourcing, bring your resource to mind and see if you can keep your attention there for a few moments.**
- **Think about the details of the resource as vividly as you can. [PAUSE]**
- **What’s happening inside? Notice your sensations. If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, just attend to it. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]**
- **If you haven’t found a pleasant or neutral sensation, see if you can shift your attention to another part of your body to find a place that feels better. [PAUSE]**
- **If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can shift to a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body and focus on that instead, or just quietly rest your body and mind.”**
[PAUSE 15-30 seconds or longer as your

students are able.]

- **“What did you notice this time?”**

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Obstacles to Self-Compassion

Overview

In this activity, students will explore common barriers we face in practicing self-compassion. This activity will begin with an initial brainstorming, followed by a gallery walk of student-generated ideas.

Instructions

- Facilitate a discussion of why students think anyone might not practice self-compassion. Write themes on the board, grouping in topics or themes that will be part of the gallery walk exercise.
- Have students write one theme per poster paper and place them around the room. Invite students to spread out, 2-3 at each of the posters, to write suggestions on how people might overcome those obstacles, moving to subsequent posters at their own pace, as time permits.
- Students then complete a gallery walk where they reflect on each station. Small post-it notes may be used to add questions or comments during the silent gallery walk. Discuss the findings as a group.
- **“Sometimes we don’t practice self-compassion, even if we feel it would be beneficial to us. What are some reasons**

why you think you or others don't practice self-compassion?" [Listen for answers and write them on the board', offering an example if needed.]

- **"Your brainstorm shows that sometimes it's challenging to practice self-compassion. Now we are going to look at these barriers to self-compassion that you've identified and write down some actions that could help people move past them. We'll post each possible barrier on a piece of chart paper around the room, to gather ideas about how to move beyond them."**
- **As you walk from poster to poster, spend some time reflecting on actions you could take to help move through these barriers."**
- Have one round where students go from poster to poster at their own pace, writing in their own thoughts on each. Then a second allotment of time is given to 'gallery walk' all of the writing, view what's there, reflect, and write questions or comments on post-it notes to add to the posters.
- **"Let's learn from one another. Take another walk around the posters, a silent 'gallery walk'."**

1 minute: Instructions

6 minutes: Round One: Have small group conversations, generating ideas for overcoming the brainstormed barriers.

1 minute: Instructions

4 minutes: Round Two: The silent gallery

walk to absorb what's been generated, adding comments/questions if you decide to add that, to prepare for whole group discussion.

3 minutes: Whole group discussion.

• "While we understand intellectually that we can be compassionate to ourselves the way we would be to others, however often people are not, why is that? What may contribute to this struggle to be self-compassionate?"

- Possible reasons that may come up:
 - Gender stereotypes related to compassion, love and kindness
 - The idea that other's opinions of us are more valid than our own
 - The idea that being compassionate to ourselves will make us "lazy," "unmotivated," or self-indulgent
 - The idea that others are weak or I am weak
 - I don't have time to practice self-care
 - I am undeserving of self-compassion
 - I need to be perfect

• "Let's share what we noticed."

- Engage students in a discussion about what they noticed.
- Possible questions to use:
 - **"What did you notice in your classmates' responses?"**

- **Did you notice any common themes?**
- **What ideas did you see that you had not thought about?**
- **Was there anything that stood out to you, that you think would be helpful for you to practice more self-compassion?"**

Teaching Tips

Spend some time learning about how self-criticism does not actually successfully motivate people. Include this element in your group's facilitated discussion. Remember, unlike self-criticism, self-compassion motivates us to be our best selves due to a desire to be healthy, happy, and thriving rather than seeing ourselves as undesirable or not enough.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Make a Plan to Practice Compassion

Overview

In this learning experience, students will return to the list of future events where they may need self-compassion. Students will pick one upcoming opportunity and construct a WOOP Statement (Wish, Outcome, Obstacles, Plan) to make a plan for engaging in self-compassion and moving past any obstacles.

Instructions

Invite students to review the list they previously created of opportunities to practice self-compassion in their up-coming week. Students

will choose one that feels challenging but doable and construct a WOOP statement. Teacher should explain the process and give examples. If helpful, teacher may model this with an appropriate example from their own life.

Process for creating a WOOP Statement

- **Step One**

Wish: What is your wish for how you exercise self-compassion for this opportunity?

Example: I want to be compassionate to myself in preparing for my math test.

- **Step Two**

Outcome: Write down the best outcome if you fulfill your wish. Imagine that as vividly as possible. How would it feel to fulfill your wish?

Example: I will feel good about myself and the work I did, regardless of the grade I receive.

- **Step Three**

Obstacles: What might hold you back from achieving your wish? It could be something within yourself or something external, like time constraints.

Examples: Procrastinating on studying (part of self-compassion is taking care of our needs); Self-Criticism (I'm not good at math.); or Striving to be perfect (I have to get an A, nothing else is good enough.)

- **Step Four**

Plan: What can you do to overcome this obstacle? Name one or two actions you can take to move past it.

Examples:

- I will allow extra time to study, so I will know I have truly done my best.
- I will reach out to a classmate or adult who can help me understand the work better.
- I will consistently use positive self-talk to help keep my courage and spirits up.

"To start, we're going to look at the worksheet we used last session where we listed opportunities coming up this week to practice self-compassion. [PAUSE while students review their list.]

We know that we want to pay attention to practicing self-compassion, and we also know sometimes things come up that get in the way. We're going to use some of the ideas we've already talked about to make a plan to practice self-compassion, even when it's difficult.

A plan consists of a set of detailed and sequential steps that help us to achieve a goal.

To do this we'll be writing a WOOP statement. This stands for "Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan."

You'll start by picking one of the events or opportunities you have coming up to practice self-compassion. Then you'll write out a few phrases to make your WOOP statement.

Ok, start by picking one opportunity or event from your list. [Allow time to choose.]

Now, start by writing down your wish for how you exercise self-compassion. For example, I want to be compassionate to myself in preparing for my math test.

Next, write down what the Outcome would be of fulfilling your wish. Imagine that as vividly as possible. How would it feel to fulfill your wish? For example, I will be kind to myself and appreciate the work I did, regardless of the grade I receive.

Now, let's look at the Obstacles. What might hold you back from achieving your wish to be self-compassionate? It might be something within yourself, or something external like time constraints.

Examples: procrastinating on studying (Part of self-compassion is taking care of our needs.); Self-Criticism (I'm not good at math.); or Striving to be perfect (I have to get an A or it's not enough.)

Finally, construct a Plan. What can you do to overcome this obstacle? Name one or two actions you plan to take toward practicing self-compassion. [Allow time.]

Thank you for taking these steps to plan for your well-being. We all want to promote our well-being and this may be one effective way to do that. Practicing anything that benefits

both your and others' well-being is an ethical engagement. By taking care of ourselves this way, we are in a better position to take care of others. Hold on to this statement and look back at it when you need to remind yourself of the plans you made, to help you build the habit of self-compassion.

Now that you have explored how you can be self-compassionate, I would like you to explore how you can extend your ability to be self-compassionate to others. How can you use the same strategies that foster self-compassion to have forgiveness towards others.

Take some time now to do a quick pair-share with the person next to you regarding how you can extend the skills of self-compassion towards the practice of forgiveness and compassion for others? Before you engage in this pair-share activity, it is important to note that forgiveness is not condoning. We need to hold others accountable, but can we also separate the actor from the action to recognize their humanity and to connect with our shared human condition.

Can you:

- *Extend empathic concern and compassion to those who are not like you?*
- *See that others just like you share in the same human conditions (not having total control of all factors, making mistakes, learning from mistakes, etc.)?*

- *Put the behaviors and attitudes that others convey that you don't agree with in a broader context?"*

Teaching Tip

- Students could help each other with their statements.
- Teachers could model this process with an example from their own life that's appropriate to share in class.

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) Statement

Instructions

As individuals please develop a WOOP statement that addresses how you plan to engage in forgiveness. Please complete the following prompts to create your WOOP statement.

Wish: Think about something in your life you want to work toward: your career, schoolwork, relationships, or anything personal.

Outcome: Think about what it would look and feel like to have your goal fulfilled. Take some time to deeply imagine, see, and feel what it would be like to attain the best possible outcome.

Obstacle: Just thinking positively about the best outcome isn't enough, though, because there are obstacles that inevitably get in the way of your goals. Imagine an obstacle that you can control from within—such as thoughts, feelings, bad habits, or actions—that might prevent you from working toward your goal. Take some time to deeply imagine what it might feel like to encounter that obstacle.

Plan: Finally, devise a plan to overcome the obstacles you identified. This plan involves "when...then" statements known as "implementation intentions." You might think, "WHEN (obstacle), THEN I will (effective plan)." Repeat this for each obstacle you identified. Using "when...then" statements helps you deliberately connect your plan to the obstacles you've identified ahead of time.

Goal: Exercise after school	Goal: Meditate for 10 minutes before bed
<p>W To be healthy and strong.</p> <p>O Feel good about myself. Have a sense of accomplishment. Proud I'm doing something healthy for my brain and body.</p> <p>O Forget to take my workout clothes to school.</p> <p>P If tomorrow is workout day, then I pack my exercise wear the night before.</p>	<p>W To have a calm mind and to sleep well.</p> <p>O Fall asleep faster. Feel rested. I can focus and pay attention better.</p> <p>O I feel unmotivated, tired and sleepy.</p> <p>P If I'm about to go to bed at night, then I remind myself of all the amazing benefits, set a timer, and meditate for 10 minutes.</p>

Graphic Organizer

Develop Your Own WOOP Statement

What is your **WISH**?

What are your **OUTCOMES**?

What are your **OBSTACLES**?

What is your **PLAN**?

Exploring Attitude and Expectations

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will explore the attitudes and expectations they hold for themselves. Students will begin by examining the messages about happiness they receive from society. Then they will reflect and evaluate their ideas about happiness. When we exercise self-compassion we can set expectations for ourselves out of a desire to be healthy and flourishing rather than from a place of self-criticism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Analyze societal messages about happiness
- Evaluate their ideas about happiness
- Identify the factors and conditions that lead to happiness and flourishing

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion



**Appreciating
Interdependence**

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Slides or print copies of examples of cultural messages (ie: magazine or online ads, memes, TV shows, music lyrics or videos, culturally relevant texts, news media)
- Chart paper and markers or whiteboard
- Writing utensils and paper
- Examining Our Ideas About Happiness handout
- What Do I Expect of Myself handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Lead students in a short attention practice.

- **"We've been working on extending compassion to ourselves. Who can remember some of the ways we can do this?"** [Invite answers]
- **Thank you for sharing the ways we can be compassionate to ourselves. Today we are going to look at some of the ideas and expectations we hold for ourselves and how they may or may not be helpful for nurturing our self-compassion.**
- **Let's prepare ourselves by doing a short attention practice.**
- **First, we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll rest our eyes on the ground or close them, whichever feels most comfortable.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to help calm our bodies. Choose one of your resources you have used before, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's bring our resource to mind and see if we can fully pay attention to our resource for a few moments, quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and focus for a few moments.**

[PAUSE]

- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You may also want to change your posture. Settle yourself and keep your attention resting with your resource."** [PAUSE]
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**
- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, take yourself back to your resource or grounding, or take care of yourself with a private, silent break.**
[PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]
- **When your mind becomes distracted, you can return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breaths, if that's helpful for building focus.** [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]
- **We can strengthen our attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's a personal choice — it's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice?"** [Invite students to share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 30 minutes

Examining Ideas About Happiness

Overview

In this insight activity, students will examine examples of images or messages presented in society or by those around us. These can come from media like advertising, cultural stories/books, or other external messages like social media. Students will explore the role of interpretation and what meaning or meanings might be conveyed by messages. In particular students will notice what they suggest regarding what makes people happy or what is needed to be happy. This may include: health, nutritious food, wealth, success, particular beauty or attractiveness standards, personal safety, gender roles and norms, popularity, and more. Students will evaluate the ways these messages may be healthy and helpful or not healthy or not helpful, as well as how such messages fall into or resist common thinking traps.

Instructions

Present a series of slides/print copies of sources for review and/or invite students to find examples and share them with the class. This could be done in advance as homework if you think students have access to resources, or during this lesson by providing sources for them such as magazines or online time. You can capture the examples through screenshots or by noting the site for reference. If expecting students to find examples, also have some prepared examples to ensure a wide range of options.

In preparing for the lesson, pay particular attention to ideas that seem relevant to your students and their contexts.

Some possible themes could be messages related to body image, the value of financial success/wealth/prestige, race, social relationships, technology and social media, alcohol or drug uses, stress, and job/school success.

"Today we're going to think together about expectations, perfectionism, and growth mindset. Throughout this learning experience it will be helpful to consider the difference between needs and wants. What is a need and what is a want, and how do those classifications change over time and between people?"

"We'll begin by looking at some things that society, the media, and those around us present as what we need to be happy. Some of these messages are helpful. Some we might find are not helpful. We'll look at examples of these messages and then discuss them. Let's begin."

Present a few images or other messages and explore what they suggest to us about happiness. [If students have prepared images to share, include those in this exploration time.]

After each image, explore what it suggests to us about happiness. Some possible questions to consider in your discussion:

- **“Who made this image/message?**
- **Who is the intended audience?**
- **What might it be saying? And what else?**
- **What does this image suggest is necessary for happiness?**
- **Does it provide any support or evidence for what it suggests? Is it credible?**
- **How does this image make you feel? Does it seem helpful or harmful?**
- **How might this image connect with common thinking traps that people might fall into? (Such as thinking traps around perfectionism, happiness, etc.)**

Now that we have looked at these examples, let's make a list of "External messages about what makes people happy." What do these messages suggest will make us happy?"

[Invite responses and write them on the board.]

“Let’s examine these ideas.” [Use these or other questions to discuss the ideas.]

(5 minutes)

- **“Are these things likely to bring us lasting happiness? Why do you think that?**
- **Is everybody who is [example: wealthy] happy?**
- **Do you think if you had any or all of these things you would be completely happy? Why or why not?**

- **Can you think of a time when you or someone else got something they thought would make them happy, but that turned out not to be the case?**
- **Could any of these expectations people might have for themselves cause them problems?**

Let students guide the discussion as they evaluate these external messages.

“We have a lot of messages around us about what will make us happy. It’s important to recognize which messages are helpful for us and which may place undue distress on us, or are unrealistic expectations. Next, we’ll look at some of our own ideas about happiness as well.

We receive many messages about what will make us happy from the media, ads, our society, our communities, and families. We all also have our own ideas about what will help us be happy. Some of these may come from these external messages and others may be ideas we have created ourselves, as we reflect on what’s important to us in life.

We’ll be writing down some of our own ideas about happiness and then discussing them with a partner.

Here are a few prompts that you can respond to. You can respond to any of them or all of them. This is to get us thinking about what

helps to make us feel happy. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.”

Provide independent work time for students to make lists, filling in the blank for these statements: “To be happy I need____” ; “I will be happy when_____.” I am happy when____” or “Right now, some things that make me happy are____.” Encourage students to think about small things like their current favorite song, or things they may already have such as good health, or can look forward to, like summer break. [Students write for 5 min.]

“Now that we have had time to reflect, we’ll pair up for 5 minutes, to discuss our answers. As you share your responses, explore together what makes each statement feel true?

You may wish to consider the following questions:

- Which of your ideas about happiness might be coming from an external source like the media or people around us?***
- If you are gaining messages about happiness from external sources, are those messages helpful? What about those messages feel true for you? Do they feel attainable? What are the benefits and costs to us, and to others, of thinking of happiness in this way?***
- What else might contribute to them feeling happy?”***

After allowing discussion in pairs, invite students to share any insights with the group. (5 minutes)

“Who would like to share something they noticed? Remember to share only for yourself and not for your partner.”

Possible questions to prompt discussion include:

- “What things did you notice in the example messages that were helpful in understanding your outlook on how you see yourself and your happiness?***
- What insights did you discover about what can contribute to people feeling happy?***
- What comes to mind when you think about short-term happiness and long-term happiness?***
- What are some things you learned about how popular opinion messages can impact our ideas about happiness? Which ones do you agree with? How can you evaluate if a message is helpful or not?***
- How has your reflection on media messaging deepened your insights on personal happiness and how you can work to foster it on a daily basis?***
- Are there new ideas about what makes us happy that resonate with you?”***

Teaching Tip

In choosing images to evaluate, pick ones that will be relevant and challenge your students, but be aware that some images or topics may be too activating for your specific context and

students. For example, examining body image can be a powerful discussion, but may be activating for some students. If you see students becoming activated due to a particular topic, feel free to employ a Help Now! Strategy for the class.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Setting Expectations for Ourselves

Overview

In this reflective practice, students examine expectations they have for themselves and how these may be helpful or unhelpful.

Instructions

Using the handout "What Do I Expect of Myself," model at least one helpful expectation and one unhelpful expectation for yourself.

Allow students to brainstorm responses on their handout for two minutes. Set a timer for this step. Invite students to select one unhelpful and one helpful expectation from their brainstorm and answer the questions on the worksheet. Then invite them to explore an unhelpful expectation and reframe it as a helpful one.

If time allows, provide opportunity to share in the whole group, for those who want to, or to pair and share with a partner.

"You will work on your own for the first part of this reflective practice and there will be time to share at the end.

Using the reflective practice handout, "What Do I Expect of Myself", you'll think about some helpful and unhelpful expectations you have for yourself. This will be private writing, for your eyes only. You'll be invited to use the ideas from this reflection during our sharing time, but the writing is just for you.

For example, for me, under the heading "helpful expectations," I might write, "I will try to get at least 15 minutes of exercise every day." In the column under "unhelpful expectation," I might write, "I will try to make everybody in my family get along all the time."

What questions do we have about doing this?

Go ahead and begin. We'll do individual brainstorming for two minutes. Capture whatever ideas pop up for you, writing them in the columns without judging the idea or yourself. Don't move to the next section yet—give yourself time to see what surfaces during this private silent writing time.

[Allow time for reflection and writing.]

Next, select one expectation from each column and answer the questions on the handout for both of them. Again, this writing is your own.

[Allow time for reflection and writing.]

Finally, turn to the next section of your worksheet. Choose at least one unhelpful

expectation to reframe. It can be what you just reflected on or a new one. Reframe that expectation to be a helpful one. For example, an unhelpful expectation might be: "I need to make perfect grades so I can be successful." A more helpful one might be: "I need to try my best in school, so that I can learn the skills I need to be my best self."

Take a moment to finish just the thought you're writing right now. And then look over your ideas."

[Debrief as time allows] Share in partners and/or volunteers for the whole group, as appropriate to your group.

"What do you notice about your list of "helpful expectations"? Do they seem doable? Do you see any themes or generalities?

What do you notice about your list of "unhelpful expectations"? What do the items on this list have in common, if anything? What impact might these "unhelpful expectations" be having on you?

What do you notice about feelings or sensations that arise in you as you think carefully about these lists of expectations you're holding for yourself today?"

Teaching Tip

Teacher can model this activity first.

Graphic Organizer

Examining My Ideas About Happiness

To be happy, I need _____.	I will be happy when _____.
I am happy when _____.	Right now, the following things make me happy

Graphic Organizer

What Do I Expect of Myself?

<p>Helpful Expectations: Help me grow and encourage me</p>	<p>Unhelpful Expectations: Cause me to be hard on myself and create negative feelings about myself</p>
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1. Select one unhelpful expectation you have for yourself and put a star by it.

- Why is this expectation unhelpful for you?
- What impact might these unhelpful expectations be having on you?
- What do you notice in your body or your feelings as you look at this expectation? How might that help you recognize this expectation as not helpful?
- What do you think might contribute to holding this unhelpful expectation? Recall our discussion on what society tells us makes us happy. Do any of these messages contribute to this expectation?
- What can you do to reduce this unhelpful expectation, or to begin thinking about it in a different way?
- How might others help you to reduce or reframe this unhelpful expectation?
- Who do you think could be helpful to you?

2. Select one helpful expectation you have for yourself and put a star by it.

- What is this expectation based on? Reflect back to our discussion on what society's messages are to us — where do you think these sources of helpful expectations come from?
- Why is this expectation helpful for you?
- What feelings arise or what do you notice in your body when you think about this expectation? How can this serve as a guide for knowing what is helpful?
- What can you do to make this helpful expectation a reality for yourself?

What Do I Expect of Myself?

(continued)

- How might others help you to make this helpful expectation a reality for yourself?
- Who would be a helpful resource as you develop this helpful expectation more fully?
- What would they do?

Choose at least one unhelpful expectation to reframe. It can be what you just reflected on or a new one. Reframe that expectation to be a helpful one. How can you use self-compassion to reframe or rewrite these expectations?

Example: An unhelpful expectation is “I need to make perfect grades so I can be successful.” A more helpful one might be “I need to try my best in school, so that I can learn the skills I need to be my best self.”

Defining Forgiveness

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students explore the science of forgiveness and the impacts it has on our physiology, as a strategy for letting go of anger and negative emotions towards oneself and others. Students will examine how to practice forgiveness without necessarily approving of the action that led to harm. Students will define and reflect on experiences they may have had in which they let go of anger and negative emotions towards others and themselves. Finally, students will develop a classroom and personal plan to relate with forgiveness towards themselves and others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Identify how the practice of forgiveness can serve as a release of negative emotions towards oneself or another person
- Understand the scientific basis for forgiveness
- Understand how seeing another person's behavior and emotions in context may help us understand others and have compassion for them and oneself

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal
Awareness



Compassion
for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Provide enough space for students to move around an imagined continuum line
- Science of Forgiveness reading handout
- Sign that reads "Total Forgiveness"
- Sign that reads "No Forgiveness"
- Drawing/writing utensils and paper

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. Find a posture that feels both alert and comfortable.**
- **One way to find an alert and comfortable posture could be to sit up right with our feet on the ground. We want to feel comfortable but not sleepy. If it helps to keep focused, you can close your eyes or look with ease at the ground, but if that feels uncomfortable feel free to leave them open.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies. Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can just pay attention to our resource with our mind for a few moments, quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**
- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break, making sure not to disturb anyone else. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]**
- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath. [Pause for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]**
- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice. It's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice? [Invite students to share aloud.]**
- **Please take a moment to bring to mind an experience in which you helped a family member or friend when they experienced adversity, distress, and hardship.**
- **How did you support them, provide mentoring, encouragement, perspective taking, etc?**
- **Now remember a time when someone gave you words of comfort or support when you needed it. If it helps you can bring to mind a few reflections:**

- ***Are you in control of every outcome or factor that occurs outside of you?***
- ***Can you learn and grow through experiences that cause hardship and adversity?***
- ***Who among us has never made a mistake? Are you unique in your setback or is it part of the human condition?***

[Close out practice]

human and essential in helping us to learn and grow?"

To set this activity up, have students engage in a written reflection using the following prompts:

"You will work independently to reflect on a time that you offered forgiveness to another person or received forgiveness from another person. If you can't think of a time of forgiveness, you can imagine an instance of forgiveness: what it would be like to forgive another, or to be forgiven by another.

If you are having a hard time imagining one you can think of a time you read about or saw an act of forgiveness on TV, in a movie, or other media sources.

How did it feel to offer or receive forgiveness? What did you notice on the inside as you thought about this?

What benefit did it provide yourself and others?"

After students have constructed their responses in writing, they can then engage in a pair or triad to share. The student groups will be asked to identify key attributes of forgiveness within the examples of forgiveness that they generated. Use the following prompts:

"What were similar traits regarding how forgiveness felt, among the examples you identified?

"Remember in our last learning experience we explored how attitudes and expectations shape our outlook of self and others.

How is happiness defined by society and how does that differ or align with our lived experience? Why is it important to recognize that we are not perfect and that making mistakes is both a natural extension of being

Why do you think people engage in forgiveness?

What benefits are associated with forgiveness?

What problems might arise with forgiveness?"

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will identify the benefits of forgiveness on themselves (personal), others (social), and the systems that they impact and that are impacted by them.

Instructions

Ask students to read the Science of Forgiveness reading. Present on topics and various research studies that explore the topic of forgiveness and outline the physical, psychological, emotional, and relationship benefits of forgiveness.

Students will be provided with a list of scenarios and will identify where they would respond to scenarios, using a continuum from "no forgiveness" to "total forgiveness."

"Now that we've explored the topic of forgiveness, we are going to review a few scenarios and use responses ranging from "no forgiveness" to "total forgiveness, to identify where we stand. You will physically move along the line we have created."

Prompt students to respond on the continuum, using the following examples:

Example 1: A person bumps into you and causes you to spill your drink all over yourself.

Example 2: A family member says something critical of you that triggers a strong response.

After each scenario ask a couple of students why they chose to stand where they did.

Scenarios

- A drunk driver hits another car and injures a person who was in it.
- A woman hits a pedestrian while driving, as she was trying to help her crying baby in the back seat.
- An old man loses consciousness while driving and runs into a house.
- A teenager hits a deer with their car while checking a text message.
- A corporation is caught dumping waste into the local waterway.
- A protester destroys a bulldozer that had been creating a logging road.
- A boyfriend cheats on his girlfriend with a stranger.
- A girlfriend cheats on her boyfriend with his best friend.

Allow for the relative experiences of forgiveness to highlight key enduring traits that contribute to our capacity to forgive. Please reflect on the below listed traits in the discussion:

- Intention
- Impact
- Resolve not to Commit the Action Again
- Remediation

After the activity, asks students these prompts and have them respond or reflect as you transition to the reflection activity.

- ***"How does our ability to relate to others influence our capacity to see things from their perspective?***
- ***How does our ability to see things from their perspective promote a compassionate response?***
- ***What is the relationship between feelings, a sense of connection to another and having a compassionate response towards them?"***

Teaching Tips

Before engaging the students in this activity you can share an example in which you as the classroom teacher engaged in forgiveness. If that is challenging for you, feel free to share the following examples provided:

- Speaking harshly to a loved one or friend
- Breaking something due to being absent minded
- Getting agitated and losing one's patience
- Forgetting something important
- Offending someone either intentionally or unintentionally

Please remember to share with students that although there are many benefits to forgiveness and downsides to not engaging in forgiveness, it is not always necessary or possible to forgive another, which is perfectly all right. It is a very personal decision.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

In this reflection experience, students connect forgiveness for oneself, personally, to the broader practice of forgiveness by identifying the benefits for self and others.

Instructions

Guide students through a reflection of the learning experience in which they identify once again with the benefits of forgiveness for themselves and others.

"What are the benefits of forgiveness for yourself and others?

- Personal
- Social
- Systems

developing self forgiveness towards ourselves when we make mistakes.

What prevents forgiveness?

Are there thinking traps involved in unforgiveness? What role might trauma play in struggling to forgive, and how might one deal with that?

What evidence do you have from your personal experience or observations that forgiveness has a benefit for us and others?"

What's one thing you could do to help explore forgiveness more in your daily experience?"

Explore possible classroom applications of forgiveness. Prompt students to determine how they and the class as a whole can carry these intentions for forgiveness as an applied practice within the classroom.

Let the students know that you are going to compile a list of the examples that they provided, and that in the next lesson we will review them. Make a commitment to apply forgiveness in key areas of your life. This could be cultivating patience and understanding towards people you find annoying or

The Science of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a basic trait of healthy relationships. Like other competencies within SEE Learning, forgiveness can be viewed as a skill that can be developed, practiced, and strengthened overtime.

On its most basic level, forgiveness involves letting go of a feeling of hurt or harm that you experience regarding another person or group of people. When an experience of harm occurs a person can hold on to that experience with a sense of anger, resentment, or even thoughts of revenge. Or a person can practice forgiveness and move beyond feelings of anger, resentment, or revenge.

The choice to forgive someone or a group of people has significant health benefits. These include reduced anxiety, depression, and major psychiatric disorders. It also correlates with improved physical health symptoms such as decreased inflammation, overall heart health, stronger immune response and overall mortality rate. In synthesizing the benefits of forgiveness the Mayo Institute identified the list below as beneficial outcomes of forgiveness.

- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- A stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Improved self-esteem

What is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is the act of letting go of anger, resentment, or feelings of hurt that a person experiences specific to another person or group of people. Forgiveness is not an all or nothing proposition. The experience that hurt or offended you might always stay with you. However, forgiveness can lessen the impact that experience has on you and can allow you to become liberated from the control that person or experience has over you. Forgiveness can lead to feelings of understanding, empathy, and compassion for those who hurt you or others.

The Science of Forgiveness

(continued)

What Forgiveness is Not

Forgiveness does not mean that you forget or excuse the harm that was done, rather it provides a sense of perspective and inner peace about the situation. Also forgiveness does not necessarily have to occur just once or as a one time experience. Forgiveness can be something that is worked on and deepened over time. Forgiveness is also not an act of weakness. It takes a lot of courage to engage in forgiveness and requires inner strength.

The Difference Between Conditional and Unconditional Forgiveness

When it comes to forgiving another person, we often think that forgiveness requires that the other person express that they are sorry. This is called conditional forgiveness: we forgive on the condition that the other person express remorse or regret for what they have done, or that they commit to making amends. Unconditional forgiveness, on the other hand, is when we forgive another person from our own side regardless of what that person feels or does to warrant our forgiveness. Scientists have found that those who practice unconditional forgiveness have better health and even may live longer than those who only practice conditional forgiveness. Also, sometimes conditional forgiveness is not possible, because the other person is no longer around to express remorse.

Similarly, it is important to distinguish between forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation involves two sides agreeing to remain in relationship with one another. This can happen with or without forgiveness. Forgiveness, however, does not require that we continue to be in a relationship with another person. Sometimes the other person is gone and outer reconciliation is impossible. But forgiveness from one's own side can be considered an act of "inner reconciliation."

What Are the Downsides of Not Forgiving

As you engage in the process of forgiveness, it can sometimes be helpful to remember the downsides of not forgiving. When you lack forgiveness it is possible to bring anger or bitterness into other relationships that are either established or newly formed. This is because there is a lack of trust or a feeling of safety. One of the most significant downsides is that a lack of forgiveness plays directly into our negativity bias. In short, we become so wrapped up in the harm that others have caused us that we forget about the good things that are also true. A lack of forgiveness has been shown to contribute to experiences of anxiety and depression. It also correlates to a lack of meaning or purpose in our life. Finally, a lack of forgiveness hinders our ability to feel connected with others.

The Science of Forgiveness

(continued)

How to Practice Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a skill that can be practiced and developed. One of the best ways to cultivate forgiveness is to recognize the value it has for you and the role it could play in improving your life. It is important to become clear on what and who is being forgiven. Identify what needs to be healed and who needs to be forgiven. Sometimes forgiveness is not a strictly personal process; it may involve family members, friends, or others. Through SEE Learning you have developed the ability to recognize the emotions you are feeling, and returning back to this competency is critical for engaging in the process of forgiveness. Ultimately the process of forgiveness occurs when you choose to forgive the person who harmed you. This can only occur when you shift away from one's direct experience, let go of the power the offending person has over you, and that the situation has over your life.

What if Forgiveness Does Not Come Easy?

If forgiveness does not come easily, it is all right to not engage in forgiveness right now. To lessen the impact that feelings of anger and resentment have on you, try the following strategies recommend by the Mayo Institute:

- Practice empathy. Try seeing the situation from the other person's point of view.
- Ask yourself why he or she would behave in such a way. Perhaps you would have reacted similarly if you faced the same situation.
- Reflect on times you've hurt others and on those who have forgiven you.
- Write in a journal, pray or use guided meditation — or talk with a person you've found to be wise and compassionate, such as a spiritual leader, a mental health provider, or an impartial loved one or friend.
- Be aware that forgiveness is a process, and even small hurts may need to be revisited and forgiven over and over again.

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Practicing Forgiveness

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students engage in the practice of forgiveness as they apply strategies for forgiveness to themselves and others. Students will construct examples that identify how forgiveness is and can be applied. Students will construct a personal plan to engage in the practice of forgiveness.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Identify how forgiveness can become an applied skill
- Construct a personal plan to practice forgiveness

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Compassion
for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) Statement worksheet

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll keep our eyes on the ground or close them.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies.**
- **Now let's bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can pay attention to our resource with our mind for a few moments quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**
- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding, or rest quietly as a small break. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]**
- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath. [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]**
- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice — it's always up to you.**
- **Please take a moment to bring to mind an experience in which you offered forgiveness to another or received it. If nothing comes to mind, or if it feels more comfortable, you can imagine this on an aspiration basis: imagine a situation in which you would like to offer forgiveness or have someone forgive you.**
- **How did forgiveness or would forgiveness shape this experience?"**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

This activity gives students the opportunity to make a connection between attitudes and expectations and forgiveness by exploring examples in literature.

Instructions

Ask students what they are currently reading in their literature class or have read in the past couple of years. Create a list for the students to reference.

Examples

These examples are from the American education system and are presented here to provide a basis for you to guide students to make connections with the novels they have or are currently reading. These works were selected because they represent how forgiveness or a lack of forgiveness shapes characters and plots. If it is helpful you can use these examples for your students or reference them as you develop your own examples for students.

Gatsby

This novel is brimming with corruption and greed. Many people tolerate being poorly treated. Tom, for example, is perfectly ready to forgive Daisy for her transgressions, and she tolerates his infidelity throughout the novel. What would the novel be like if either of them held the other up to any kind of standard? The main act of forgiveness that would change things is if George Wilson would forgive the man who had an affair with his wife. At first he thinks that is Tom Buchanan before he is corrected by Tom and realizes that it is Gatsby. George's anger and grief lead to Gatsby's death and George's suicide.

Frankenstein

The original sin in this novel (aside from Dr. Frankenstein trying to play God by creating his monster) is that he does not forgive his monster's imperfections. His ill treatment of the monster from the beginning sets up the stage for all of the tragedy that follows.

Othello

The great tragedy in this play is one of misunderstanding and miscommunication, but it all starts with Iago's anger over getting passed over for promotion. If he could forgive Othello for promoting Cassio instead of him, then he would not try to get revenge, and Othello would not kill Desdemona or himself. The racist language in the play makes it clear to me that Iago also hates Othello because he is black. Perhaps he would find a different justification for taking revenge on Othello for that reason alone.

Alice in Wonderland

This is a more comic example. If the Red Queen would forgive people and playing cards for their small and perceived errors, then there would be many fewer executions.

Lord of the Flies

Jack's group, representing freedom and fun, cannot forgive Piggy who represents civility, order, and reason, a threat to their lifestyle. He also supports Ralph, Jack's enemy. The group kills Piggy because they cannot forgive his different ideology.

"As we make the connection between our attitudes and expectations and forgiveness, let's explore examples of forgiveness, or the absence of forgiveness, in literature. Think about the books you have read recently or are reading now. Remind yourself of the main elements of the plot and of the character dynamics that occurred. (5 minutes)

Now we will construct present day or real-life examples of forgiveness based on your literature examples. (5 minutes)

You'll meet in small groups to share the story you thought of and how a character or scene from the book could be revised to reflect something current in the media or news. Then we'll take turns guessing what the original piece of literature was."

Model how students would change the names or context from their literature examples. You might reference the examples provided. For example, Lord of the Flies could be transformed to be a survival reality series or examples of survival that have taken place recently locally or been featured in the news.

After developing their examples the small groups will share their examples out to the whole group.

Students will share the examples they identified of forgiveness.

Facilitate a whole group discussion and exploration that highlights the benefits of forgiveness and the detriments of a lack of forgiveness on the characters and stories that were presented.

Teaching Tips

Through discussion, support the students in making connections between the benefit of

forgiveness and the harm of non-forgiveness. This can be achieved by referring back to the benefits of forgiveness and the drawbacks of not engaging in forgiveness.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will create a Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) statements and create a plan to engage in forgiveness. The goal is for students to understand how they can foster and support the ability to forgive.

Instructions

The teacher will share what a WOOP statement is and the research that supports it. A WOOP statement is an abbreviation of Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan. Students will create a personal plan to engage in forgiveness.

"As we continue deepening our understanding of forgiveness, we will learn about WOOP statements. A WOOP statement is an abbreviation of Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan.

Now we will have an opportunity to create our own WOOP statements. This will assist us in strengthening our ability to forgive."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

In this reflection, students experience

connecting forgiveness personally to the practice of forgiveness by identifying the benefits to self and others.

Instructions

Guide students through a reflection in which they identify once again with the benefits of forgiveness for themselves and others, noticing what they remember about this from our previous Learning Experience .

"What are the benefits of forgiveness for yourself and others?

- Personal
- Social
- Systems

Let's explore possible personal applications of forgiveness in our own lives."

Guide students through how they can apply forgiveness in their everyday experience. This guidance can occur through sharing personal examples of how forgiveness has benefited you, people in history, or others. One practical strategy for engaging students can occur through reviewing the benefits of forgiveness and the drawbacks of not engaging in forgiveness.

Explore possible classroom applications of forgiveness. This could occur through recalling situations or events that occurred with you personally in which a mistake was made either on the part of the students as you navigated your classroom and learning experience.

What, if anything, are they willing to commit to when it comes to forgiveness: learning about it more, thinking about it, none of the above, etc.

From the examples that students provide, create a list of ways they've identified as ways to bring their intentions into daily practice. Foreshadow to students that in the next lesson we will review these activities and then make a commitment to engage in 2-3 of the more essential practices.

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) Statement

Instructions

As individuals please develop a WOOP statement that addresses how you plan to engage in forgiveness. Please complete the following prompts to create your WOOP statement.

Wish: Think about something in your life you want to work toward: your career, schoolwork, relationships, or anything personal.

Outcome: Think about what it would look and feel like to have your goal fulfilled. Take some time to deeply imagine, see, and feel what it would be like to attain the best possible outcome.

Obstacle: Just thinking positively about the best outcome isn't enough, though, because there are obstacles that inevitably get in the way of your goals. Imagine an obstacle that you can control from within—such as thoughts, feelings, bad habits, or actions—that might prevent you from working toward your goal. Take some time to deeply imagine what it might feel like to encounter that obstacle.

Plan: Finally, devise a plan to overcome the obstacles you identified. This plan involves "when... then" statements known as "implementation intentions." You might think, "WHEN (obstacle), THEN I will (effective plan)." Repeat this for each obstacle you identified. Using "when...then" statements helps you deliberately connect your plan to the obstacles you've identified ahead of time.

Goal: Exercise after school	Goal: Meditate for 10 minutes before bed
<p>W To be healthy and strong.</p> <p>O Feel good about myself. Have a sense of accomplishment. Proud I'm doing something healthy for my brain and body.</p> <p>O Forget to take my workout clothes to school.</p> <p>P If tomorrow is workout day, then I pack my exercise wear the night before.</p>	<p>W To have a calm mind and to sleep well.</p> <p>O Fall asleep faster. Feel rested. I can focus and pay attention better.</p> <p>O I feel unmotivated, tired and sleepy.</p> <p>P If I'm about to go to bed at night, then I remind myself of all the amazing benefits, set a timer, and meditate for 10 minutes.</p>

Graphic Organizer

Develop Your Own WOOP Statement

What is your **WISH**?

What are your **OUTCOMES**?

What are your **OBSTACLES**?

What is your **PLAN**?

PURPOSE

Students will explore compassion as an area of scientific study as well as personal inquiry, investigating their own motivations for cultivating compassion in a specific area of life.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Define what the Science of Compassion is and determine the different fields it draws from
- Identify one field or area of life domain of inquiry within the Science of Compassion to explore further (physical health, mental health, relationship health, societal health, emotional health, sense of purpose, and wellness)
- Construct a personal plan to explore compassionate responses in a specific area (health, wellness, purpose, relationships, etc.)

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Compassion
for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Applying the Science of Compassion to One's Life reading handout
- Benefits of Compassion handout

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?"**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll keep our eyes on the ground or close them.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies. Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can just pay attention to our resource with our mind for a few moments, quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that instead. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments.** [PAUSE]
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture but try not to disturb anyone else if you do that. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource.** [PAUSE]
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**

- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break, making sure not to disturb anyone else.** [Pause for 15-30 seconds.]
- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath.** [Pause for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]
- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice — it's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice?"** [Invite students to share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

The teacher will present on some of the benefits of compassion that have been explored in science. Students will rank these benefits based on what is meaningful to them. Topics covered can include health benefits, relationship and social benefits, psychological benefits, cultivating a sense of purpose or life meaning and societal benefits.

Instructions

"Remember last week we explored forgiveness and self-compassion? Let's review.

What is self-compassion?

Why or when might it be important for our well-being?

How might self-compassion be related to being compassionate towards others?

In recent years, scientists have been increasingly interested in exploring the potential benefits of compassion, particularly for health, relationships, and social well-being. Today we will learn about some of the benefits of compassion as suggested by this research."

Present science of compassion from the student handout/reading.

- **"What benefits did you expect to see but didn't see on the list of benefits?"**
- **What additional research would you like to see done on compassion?**

Next we will break into pairs or triads based on what you listed as most meaningful to you.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

In small groups, students review reflection questions from the Science of Compassion Benefits worksheet. They then synthesize and record their responses on the worksheet

provided or on a piece of paper that is divided into three rows.

Instructions

Pair/divide students into groups. Provide time for students to review the reflection questions and then discuss in their groups. Students will record their group and individual responses on their sheet.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

In this reflection students will personally connect with the benefits of compassion. Through an interpersonal reflection students will answer prompts to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of compassion.

Instructions

Review the benefits of compassion and allow time for reflection.

We are continuing to deepen our understanding of the benefits of compassion. To review, what are the benefits of compassion for yourself and others? Let's think about it in the context of:

- **Personal**
- **Social**
- **Systems**

Now, let's look at these prompts and reflect deeper.

If everyone were to act with compassion today, what might that do to shape the feeling or climate of a classroom?

[Allow time for discussion]

How might students interact with one another? [Allow time for discussion]

How might students respond if someone came into the classroom and was either looking or acting distressed?

[Allow time for discussion]

How might the teacher respond to students who expressed needs?

[Allow time for discussion]

How might students respond to each other when they appeared to need help or asked for help? [Allow time for discussion]

What could we do to make the fostering of a compassionate classroom a reality?

Teaching Tips

It can be helpful to ask clarifying questions to invite students into deeper reflection.

Applying the Science of Compassion to One's Life

Overview

In order to act compassionately we must first define it and make sense of what it means to us. The goal of SEE Learning is to create a more aware and compassionate world through the education of the heart and the mind. The below referenced enduring capabilities help us to move from a conceptual understanding to engaging in compassionate activities.

Understanding Others' Feelings and Emotions in Context

Understand others' feelings and reactions in relation to the situations in which they occur, and understand that, like oneself, others have feelings caused by needs.

Appreciating and Cultivating Kindness and Compassion

Value the benefits of kindness and compassion and purposefully nourish them as a disposition.

Appreciating and Cultivating Other Ethical Dispositions

Value and foster development of ethical dispositions and prosocial emotions such as forgiveness, patience, contentment, generosity, and humility.

The first capability is **Understanding Others' Feelings and Emotions in Context**. When an individual sees another person act in a way they do not approve of, it is natural to react with judgment. However when we seek to understand that another person's actions are spurred by an emotion this can lead to empathy and compassion rather than anger and judgment. The intention, of course, is not to excuse inappropriate behavior but to understand others and their emotions on a human level.

The next capability is **Appreciating and Cultivating Kindness and Compassion**. Compassion serves as a powerful guiding principle for ethical behavior that benefits oneself and others. In order for compassion to serve as a guiding principle we need to understand what compassion is and what it is not. We also need to value compassion as something that they wish to cultivate.

The third capability is **Appreciating and Cultivating Other Ethical Dispositions**. Some of these ethical dispositions include gratitude, forgiveness, contentment, humility, and patience. These ethical dispositions refer to inner qualities—rather than material possessions or accomplishments. A focus

Applying the Science of Compassion to One's Life

(continued)

on valuing people and appreciating how they have enriched one's life stands in opposition to self-promotion.

The Science of Compassion

The primatologist Frans de Waal points out that all mammalian and bird species require maternal care to survive, due to the fact that offspring cannot live on their own after birth, and he provides numerous examples of non-human species expressing empathy and engaging in altruistic acts (De Waal, 2010). Altruistic behavior in various species, including humans, creates reciprocal bonding. This means that we feel connected to others. Research shows us that this sense of connection supports survival and flourishing on both the individual and group levels. In bird and mammalian species, including the human species, compassion is therefore a matter of survival, which may explain why we respond so positively to it, even on a physiological level (De Waal, 2010).

In humans, a preference for kindness manifests at a very young age. Studies by developmental psychologists suggest that infants as young as three months of age prefer individuals who exhibit helping behavior to those who exhibit antisocial behavior.(Hamlin and Wynn, 2011). As one such researcher, Kiley Hamlin, notes, "Though we may think of them as interested only in their own desires, given the chance, toddlers under two [years of age] show generosity. We find them willing to share—to give their treats away. And this makes them happy." (Goleman, 2015).

Research shows that while there is a leveling off of reported satisfaction with life after a certain level of material well-being, there are strong links between gratitude and happiness in children, adolescents, and adults. Not only is gratitude related to greater life satisfaction, but a sense of appreciation for received benefits also increases prosocial behaviors (Froh et al, 2011).

Applying the Science of Compassion to One's Life

(continued)

The Benefits of Compassion

Extensive research has shown that engaging in compassion-based activities has significant physical, emotional, social, and relationship benefits.

- Academic Achievement and Learning (Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2004)
- Increased Happiness and Wellbeing (Pace, et al. 2009)
- Sense of Purpose and Selfworth (Neff et al., 2007)
- Improved Relationships (Duncan, Coatsworth, & Greenberg, 2009)
- Reduced Stress (Fogarty, et al., 1999 and Pace, et al. 2009)
- Improved Medical Outcomes (Lelorain, Brédart, Dolbeault, & Sultan, 2012)
- Increased Social Connectedness (Seppala et al., 2013)

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Graphic Organizer

Benefits of Compassion

Questions	Whole group summary response	Individual response
Of the benefits outlined within the presentation which do you find most appealing for you right now in your life?		
Why did you choose this domain and what does it matter to you (your small group)?		
How would your life be different specific to the domain you selected if you embodied and practiced compassion on a regular basis?		
If people in your life practiced compassion more regularly how would it benefit them, you, and others? Think of specific people and identify which domains they would experience benefit in and how would that occur?		

Exploring Active Compassion

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will explore more deeply the concept of active compassion, which involves taking responsibility for another and acting to protect them. This two-part lesson engages students in developing an understanding from examples from their life of compassion. In the second part of the learning experience, students will create a Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) statement to identify where they can cultivate acts of compassion in their own lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Define compassion through their own personal experience.
- Identify three components of active compassion: affection for someone, understanding their needs and wants, and taking responsibility to help them.
- Determine how compassion sometimes requires saying no or standing up to someone
- Construct a personal plan to develop and embody compassionate responses towards others

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention &
Self-Awareness



Compassion
for Others



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?"**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll keep our eyes on the ground or close them.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies. Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one.**
- **Now let's just bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can just pay attention to our resource with our mind for a few moments quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture. Try to keep your attention resting with your resource.**
[PAUSE]
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**
- **If you find paying attention to the breath**

uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break, making sure not to disturb anyone else. [Pause for 15-30 seconds.]

- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath.** [Pause for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]
- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice — it's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice?"** [Invite students to share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will construct an applied and personalized definition of compassion.

Instructions

Ask students to independently write down three descriptive words related to compassion on a piece of paper.

"Remember last week we explored the science of compassion.

- **What are some benefits of compassion?**
- **What are some ways we cultivate and strengthen compassionate responses?**

Please write down your response to these prompts. For this learning experience, we are going to use real world examples to identify two motivational states of compassion; aspirational and active compassion. In a few minutes I am going to ask you to break into small groups and develop examples from your life or things you have observed that demonstrate compassion.

Before we create our own examples, I would like to share an example with you about a man named Richard Moore.

On Thursday May 4th, ten year old Richard Moore was walking home from school in Northern Ireland. As he passed by a guard station, he was shot at close range with a rubber bullet. This impact of the bullet blinded him for the rest of his life. Richard went on to have a fulfilling and meaningful life. He was a successful businessman and then founded the charity Children in Crossfire that helps children who live in extreme poverty. Throughout his life Richard harbored no ill will towards the soldier who shot him. In January of 2006, over thirty years after he was blinded, Richard wrote a letter to Charles, the soldier who shot him, telling him that he had Richard's forgiveness. They met in person and became good friends, and now often give talks together. Richard's example of forgiveness has inspired many people. In his talks, he often says that forgiveness is a choice, and "a gift you give yourself."

Now I would like to review the SEE Learning definition of compassion.

'Compassion is an emotion involving the wish to relieve or prevent the suffering of another out of a genuine concern for their well-being and a sense of tenderness and care for them.

It refers to a way of relating to oneself, others, and humanity as a whole through kindness, empathy and a concern for both happiness and suffering.'

SEE Learning Companion, p. 106

After sharing the story, provide a moment for student reflection and then ask the following prompt to the class.

"How does this story demonstrate compassion? Specifically, how do you think Richard was able to respond compassionately to Charles, despite receiving harm from him?

Have you heard of other examples of this?"

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will identify examples of aspirational and active compassion through the construction of personal examples from their life or from experiences they have observed.

Instructions

Ask students to form small groups and ask them to construct 2-3 stories from their life or from what they have observed regarding acts of compassion. While creating the example stories ask the students to be attentive to the difference or nuance between aspirational and active compassion.

"Please form small groups and develop 2-3 example stories from your life or from observations of acts of compassion. While you create your example stories, please be attentive to the two degrees of compassion: aspirational and active.

Aspirational compassion is the sincere wish that others be free of suffering. Active compassion goes one step further by taking responsibility for the other, leading one to engage oneself to do whatever one can do to relieve their suffering. Active compassion is a stronger motivational state of compassion. It is a state of mind that assumes responsibility for another.

For example, when some hear of the suffering of others, such as children who have no food or clean water, they are genuinely moved and wish they could lessen that suffering. That is compassion. Others are so moved by this suffering that they devote their lives to ending that suffering: they take responsibility for themselves to do whatever they can to end the suffering. Both are legitimate forms of compassion."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will create a Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan (WOOP) statement then partner with a peer to share and make revisions.

Instructions

The teacher will review the concept of a WOOP statement. A WOOP statement stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan. Using the WOOP statement model students will create a personal WOOP statement that is focused on helping them to foster active compassion on a regular basis.

"Today we will be creating a WOOP statement. Remember that a WOOP statement stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan and helps us make a concrete plan for achieving our wish."

Student Protocol for WOOP Statement

1. Create a personal WOOP statement that identifies how you as an individual can practice compassion in your daily life.
2. Share your WOOP statement with a classmate and provide feedback on each other's work.

When you provide feedback be sure to think meaningfully about each element of a WOOP statement:

- Is the wish strong enough to sustain the commitment to compassion?

- Are the outcomes clearly articulated and do they seem meaningful and relevant?
- What thoughts does your partner have about the obstacles associated with engaging in compassion? How do they anticipate sustaining the courage it requires to act with compassion towards oneself and others?
- Is the plan they presented clear, and does it feel to both of you like something that can be achieved?

"Reflect on the feedback from your partner, and decide how you wish to modify your WOOP statement."

After students have revised and edited their WOOP Statement, lead students through a brief debrief.

"Having created a personal plan to cultivate compassion in your personal life, what challenges do you anticipate in fulfilling your plan?"

"How can we extend the compassion we engage in within this classroom space to the broader school community?"

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) Statement

Instructions

As individuals please develop a WOOP statement that addresses how you plan to engage in forgiveness. Please complete the following prompts to create your WOOP statement.

Wish: Think about something in your life you want to work toward: your career, schoolwork, relationships, or anything personal.

Outcome: Think about what it would look and feel like to have your goal fulfilled. Take some time to deeply imagine, see, and feel what it would be like to attain the best possible outcome.

Obstacle: Just thinking positively about the best outcome isn't enough, though, because there are obstacles that inevitably get in the way of your goals. Imagine an obstacle that you can control from within—such as thoughts, feelings, bad habits, or actions—that might prevent you from working toward your goal. Take some time to deeply imagine what it might feel like to encounter that obstacle.

Plan: Finally, devise a plan to overcome the obstacles you identified. This plan involves "when... then" statements known as "implementation intentions." You might think, "WHEN (obstacle), THEN I will (effective plan)." Repeat this for each obstacle you identified. Using "when...then" statements helps you deliberately connect your plan to the obstacles you've identified ahead of time.

Goal: Exercise after school	Goal: Meditate for 10 minutes before bed
<p>W To be healthy and strong.</p> <p>O Feel good about myself. Have a sense of accomplishment. Proud I'm doing something healthy for my brain and body.</p> <p>O Forget to take my workout clothes to school.</p> <p>P If tomorrow is workout day, then I pack my exercise wear the night before.</p>	<p>W To have a calm mind and to sleep well.</p> <p>O Fall asleep faster. Feel rested. I can focus and pay attention better.</p> <p>O I feel unmotivated, tired and sleepy.</p> <p>P If I'm about to go to bed at night, then I remind myself of all the amazing benefits, set a timer, and meditate for 10 minutes.</p>

Graphic Organizer

Develop Your Own WOOP Statement

What is your **WISH**?

What are your **OUTCOMES**?

What are your **OBSTACLES**?

What is your **PLAN**?

Applying Compassion to One's Life

PURPOSE

Students will apply compassion to their own lives through student-constructed examples. Through these insights, students will gain experience with the three main components of active compassion: having affection for someone, understanding their needs and wants, and taking responsibility to help them. They will also explore how active compassion needs to be coupled with critical thinking, systems thinking, and ethics. Students will also examine the need to sometimes say no in order to set personal and social boundaries.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Apply compassion to one's life by making connections to their own personal experience.
- Reinforce previous knowledge: three components of active compassion: affection for someone, understanding their needs and wants, and taking responsibility to help them.
- Become aware of how compassion sometimes requires saying no or standing up to someone.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Community &
Global Engagement



Compassion
for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Examples of aspirational and active compassion from students
- Fishbowl Activity Protocol handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Attention Practice

- **"Let's prepare for a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?"**
- **First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. Then we'll keep our eyes on the ground or close them.**
- **Before we strengthen our attention, we'll do some resourcing or grounding to calm our bodies. Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or you can imagine one. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let's just bring our resource to mind. And let's see if we can just pay attention to our resource with our mind for a few moments quietly. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can do that too. Whichever you choose, we're going to rest quietly and pay attention for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- **What do you notice inside? If you feel pleasant or neutral, you can rest your mind on that.**
- **If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture but try not to disturb anyone else if you do that. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource. [PAUSE]**
- **Now let's become aware of our breathing. Let's see if we can pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves our body.**

- **If you find paying attention to the breath uncomfortable, then feel free to go back to your resource or grounding, or just take a small break, making sure not to disturb anyone else. [PAUSE for 15-30 seconds.]**
- **If you ever get distracted, you can just return your attention to the breath. You can also count your breath. [PAUSE for a longer time, such as 30-60 seconds or longer.]**
- **You can strengthen your attention by focusing on sensations or by focusing on the breath. It's your choice — it's always up to you.**
- **What did you notice?" [Share aloud.]**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

Students will review their class definition of compassion. Students will be asked to analyze and revise the definition. They will do this based on their understanding of the science of compassion and the application of compassion by historical figures (as experienced in previous learning experiences).

Instructions

Lead a whole group discussion on the definition of compassion previously developed by the class.

"Think back to our recent learning experience when we explored aspirational and active compassion."

Aspirational compassion is the sincere wish that others be free of suffering. Active compassion goes one step further by taking responsibility for the other, leading one to engage oneself to do whatever one can do to relieve their suffering. Active compassion is a stronger motivational state of compassion. It is a state of mind that assumes responsibility for another.

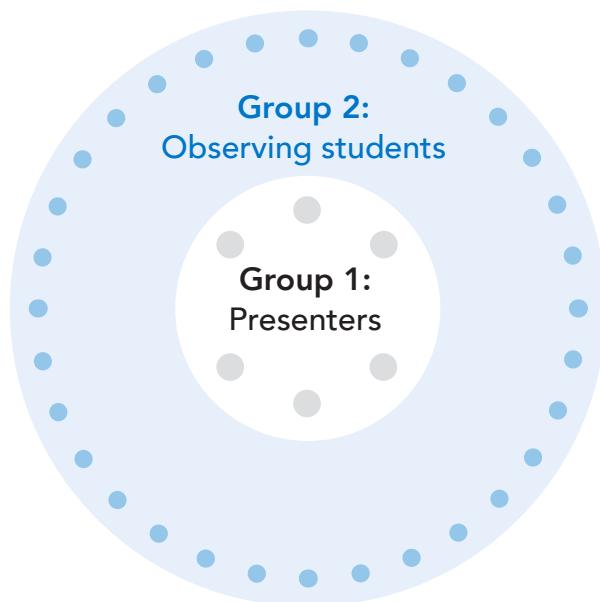
In the examples you constructed in the previous learning experience, what are the differences between aspirational and active compassion?"

Allow time for discussion and revision.

purpose and process. If all of your students are familiar with this strategy, have volunteers review the purpose and process, preferably referencing related signage posted in the classroom.

Description of a Fish Bowl Activity

A fishbowl is an instructional strategy that allows students to present information to other students and for the observing students to be engaged through a note taking protocol. The set up for this fishbowl activity will require you to change the arrangement of desks or tables in the classroom so that you have one group in the middle of the classroom presenting and then the observing students arranged around in a circle the presenting student group. The purpose of this activity and classroom arrangement is to create an efficient and engaging opportunity for students to present and for observing students to be engaged.



INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Activity Overview

In this activity students construct a role play scenario based on an experience from their own life. They will then act them out in a fishbowl experience. A fishbowl experience is an authentic learning activity in which a small group of students engage in a demonstration in the center of the classroom while the remaining students take on active, designated roles as observers. If this is the first time your students have participated in a fishbowl, teach the

Instructions

Students will review the example stories of compassion. They will construct scenarios from their own lives in which they observed or engaged in compassion. Students will form small groups (3-4 students) to share personal and observed example stories of compassion. In small groups, students will construct a scenario they can act out from their example stories. They will need to identify the characters of the story, the plot that will be acted out, and to practice their scenarios. The students not participating in the active demonstration serve as observers. Using reflection questions that are outlined on the observer worksheet, these students will engage through written reflection and prepare to share what they observe.

"Today we will have the opportunity to transform our example stories of compassion from your own life or from your observations into skits.

In small groups, you will review the example stories you constructed in the previous learning experience and develop a skit. This skit includes the characters or actors of the story, the plot, and how the story will progress. The goal of the skit is to model and demonstrate compassion.

You will have a few minutes to practice your skits and then using a fishbowl you will act them out. The students not actively engaged in the skit will use the template provided and respond to the following prompts.

- ***How was compassion being demonstrated?***
- ***Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?***
- ***How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?"***

Provide time for students to brainstorm and draft scenarios.

"Each student group will then present their skits to the class and the class will identify if they are modeling compassion."

Students not engaging in the skit will observe the demonstration groups, and will respond to the following questions using the following prompts:

- ***"How did the characters in the skit use different strategies to move towards a compassionate response?***
- ***What changes in the situation did you notice, when compassion was applied?***
- ***How did a compassionate response transform or promote the well-being of each of those involved?"***

Provide directions and a list of prompts for students on a handout or displayed on anchor chart.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Activity Overview

In this reflection experience students will review their Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan (WOOP) statement to see if they need to make any changes or adjustments to it to better reflect their lives.

Instructions

Students will reflect on and review their WOOP statements created in previous lesson(s). Having engaged in a review of real life situations, students may want to provide additional detail to their WOOP statement or adjust it to be more representative of who they are and how they want to show up for themselves and others.

"Today we will spend time reviewing our Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan (WOOP) statements and modify them, if you think it is helpful to better reflect your growing understanding and desire to show up for yourself and others."

Allow time for reflection and revision.

Allow students to engage in a final reflection on their WOOP statement.

"On a personal basis reflect on the following prompts specific to your WOOP statement.

- How will your modified WOOP statement support you to discern effective actions that lead to compassionate outcomes?***

- What will the benefit of engaging in your WOOP statement be?"***

Lead students in a debrief using one or more of these questions:

- "Are there degrees of compassion and how do we know when we experience these different degrees?"***
- What are some things that can lead a person to shift towards compassion?***
- How can active compassion shape the relationships people have with others?***
- What systemic impact might one person acting with compassion have on themselves and others?"***

Fishbowl Observer Protocol

Scenario 1

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?

Scenario 2

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?

Graphic Organizer

Fishbowl Observer Protocol

(continued)

Scenario 3

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?

Scenario 4

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?

Fishbowl Observer Protocol

(continued)

Scenario 5

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?

Scenario 6

How was compassion being demonstrated?

Do you notice a change in the situation when compassion was applied?

How did a compassionate response transform or promote the wellbeing of those involved?



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 7

We're All In This Together

Overview

In this chapter, we explore systems thinking. All living beings live in interconnected and interdependent ways. We impact and are impacted by every other living thing within these systems. “Our innate systems intelligence, just like our innate capacities to understand self and others, needs to be cultivated,” writes Peter Senge, one of the world’s leading systems thinkers, in *The Triple Focus*¹. Our systems intelligence is our awareness of our shared interdependence and our ability to act based on this awareness. When we deepen our understanding of the interdependent nature of life, we begin to understand kindness, compassion, and good intention in a more realistic manner. Being a systems thinker requires discernment. Discernment is the capacity to anticipate the impact of our actions. Discernment consists of the ability to assess and respond to different and changing factors to maximize benefit and minimize harm. This chapter helps students grapple with issues of complexity so they can better understand themselves and world around them. Through this understanding students gain the capacity to engage more skillfully in our application of compassion.

Chapter 7 of the curriculum fosters the competency of appreciating interdependence by focusing on systems and systems thinking. The topics covered in previous chapters have prepared students to become systems thinkers. In Chapter 1, students drew an interdependence web, showing how many things are connected to a single item or event. Chapters 3 and 4 explored how emotions arise from causes and are contextual and what it takes for an emotional spark to escalate into a raging fire, thus affecting everything around it. In Chapters 5 and 6, students explored identity, forgiveness, and compassion for others. Therefore, systems thinking has been built into the entire curriculum, but in this chapter, it is approached directly and explicitly.

What is Systems Thinking?

SEE Learning defines systems thinking as: “the ability to understand how persons, objects, and events exist interdependently with other persons, objects, and events, in complex networks of causality.” Students have an innate capacity for systems thinking. Although they may not use the term “system,” they regularly engage in systems thinking. Navigating complex relationship dynamics, identity explorations, and abstract thinking about one’s place in the world are all ways that teenagers begin exploring systems in their desire to make meaning from the world and how they fit within it. A significant objective of Chapter 7 is to make what is often invisible to adolescents visible. This chapter examines systems and systems thinking through the realities within which students live. Younger elementary and middle school students are introduced to systems through concepts such as the family and the classroom. This high school curriculum focuses on more complex systems (environment, politics, economy, society, etc.) to connect with the more complex reality of their

¹ Goleman and Senge, *Triple Focus: A New Approach to Education*.

experiences. This chapter sets the stage for systems thinking by recognizing that a system has parts and that those parts are interrelated. Systems are dynamic and the parts are continually changing. Even the rules of the entire system can change over time. Systems can be physical (such as a weather system or a mechanism) and/or social (a group of people or a movement). The human body, therefore, is a good example of a system, as is our ecosystem.

Students can apply systems thinking to anything, including any object, process, idea, event or even themselves. This is because it is an approach to thinking about interrelationships. This approach is distinct because it considers interactive, dynamic entities within context - that is, as interdependent parts of larger, complex wholes. From this perspective, a heap of wet clothing can, in fact, function as a system. When the moisture of one soggy piece of clothing begins to seep into the other pieces, mold can start to grow. This will spread throughout the whole pile. The opposite of systems thinking is static, unconnected, independent, unity, and unrelated thinking that does not consider anything beyond oneself or it is the false belief that things/experiences exist in isolation. A systems thinker is a holistic thinker who anticipates unintended consequences and considers the impact of their behavior on others rather than just themselves. The Waters Foundation notes these habits of mind that characterize "systems thinkers"²:

- Seeking to understand the big picture
- Seeing patterns/trends in systems
- Recognizing how a system's structure causes its behavior
- Identifying cause and effect relationships
- Surfacing and testing assumptions
- Finding where unintended consequences might arise
- Finding leverage points to change a system
- Resisting making quick conclusions

SEE Learning includes a chapter on systems thinking because compassion and compassionate engagement must consist of the ability for discernment. Complex systems thinking is critical for this discernment. The goal of this chapter is to support students in their ability to engage intentionally in systems thinking to support ethical and compassionate engagement. SEE Learning also supports systems thinking by having students work and learn together. By keeping the focus on action and thinking together and facilitating opportunities for students to learn from each other³, this program uses traditional learning and thinking strategies to further support systems thinking skills. These

² Waters Foundation, *Systems Thinking in Schools* (2014).

experiences are intentionally structured to give students opportunities to learn from each other. Students arrive at this chapter already having cultivated many systems-thinking skills and will now benefit from a deeper exploration.

Systems Thinking and Ethical Engagement

In SEE Learning, systems thinking works with compassionate engagement to help students develop ethical and responsible decision-making. In SEE Learning, ethics are taught by encouraging students to cultivate discernment about their decisions and the impact those decisions have on themselves and others. Systems thinking is powerful when combined with compassion because it empowers students. Students are empowered because their decisions become actions that matter beyond their immediate circle of impact.

Systems thinking is transformative. When students become aware of how interconnected they are with others, they begin to perceive the world differently. They begin to recognize the many ways people have supported and cared for them. This supports the cultivation of gratitude, appreciation, and a sense of connection. Deep engagement with systems thinking can bring about profound shifts in perspectives students have about themselves, others, and the world. These shifts change how a student analyzes a problem or situation. A problem taken out of isolation and critically examined through broader complex contextual dynamics is understood and addressed very differently. This reframing, over time, allows for a greater sense of connection with others, gratitude, respect, understanding, patience, and even forgiveness. These processes take time, but compassionate systems thinking can cultivate ethical awareness if approached in this way. This awareness can bring about critical insights that deepen experiences until they become embodied understanding.

Learning Experience 1, “The Interdependence of Life” invites students to examine interdependence and ethics. Students will revisit the definition of interdependence and compassion and investigate the purpose of ethics. Students will create an interdependence web of their food. This activity aims to strengthen students’ understanding of interdependence. The goal of the learning experience is for students to identify how awareness of interdependence leads to a sense of gratitude and appreciation.

Learning Experience 2, “Developing Discernment” will guide students through a life cycle analysis of a cell phone. The students will then apply the analysis to things they use regularly, understanding how different components of an object have different life spans and environmental impacts.

³ Goleman and Senge, *The Triple Focus*.

Students will begin to think about the likely consequences of using and eventually discarding everyday objects, and thus developing an ethical discernment toward the usage of daily objects.

Learning Experience 3, “Exploring Systems Thinking” engages students to examine the concepts of “system” and “systems thinking.” Students are provided with a simple “Systems Thinking Checklist” that can be used to see the systemic nature of any person, object, or event. They will apply the checklist to analyze the human circulatory system. Students will continue to explore the role of systems thinking in cultivating ethical discernment and recognizing common humanity.

Learning Experience 4, “Understanding Complex Issues” challenges students to identify and explore personal, local and global systems. This learning experience then engages students to understand the benefits and problems related to such systems. Students will choose one complex issue to explore more deeply and use systems thinking to address the issue. This learning experience will enable students to apply the skill of discernment as they work to understand systems at different levels.

Learning Experience 5, “Holistic Perspective Taking” allows students to analyze a complex issue that affects them. Students are then asked to see how the same issue could be perceived in different ways. They are prompted to notice that each perspective can help in finding solutions. Students will practice considering all of the facts of the issue by engaging in holistic perspective taking with the goal of approaching each other with curiosity and practicing mindful listening to truly consider each other’s perspectives.

Learning Experience 6, “Habits of a System’s Thinker: Considering Impact” guides students to examine a system or an issue of their choice. Students will engage in systems thinking by practicing ethical discernment when considering the impact of personal and group choice and responsibility within a system. Students will consider both short- and long-term consequences of actions, identifying possible root causes of a problem, noticing unintended consequences and devising possible solutions to the problem. The final reflection will prompt them to investigate the downsides of not engaging in systems thinking and the benefits of being a systems thinker.

Student Personal Practice

Once students learn how to notice feedback loops, systems, and systemic structures — and to map them using interdependence drawings — they can use this skill again and again, finding new applications. These strategies can also be used when teaching history, social studies, science, and other subjects. Encourage your students to look for systems and connections in their studies and in their lives. This can start with encouraging them to do interdependence drawings and drawings

of feedback loops for things they are interested in. This sustained practice will help them gain ever increasing familiarity with this type of thinking.

Systems Thinking Connections to the SEE Learning Framework

Domains	SEE Learning Competency	Connection to Systems Thinking
Personal	Awareness and Attention Training	Cultivation of awareness of how one's actions impacts oneself and others both now and into the future
Personal	Self-Regulation	Support the development of inhibitory and impulse control as awareness is cultivated about current and future impacts
Personal	Self-Compassion	Gains the capacity to cultivate a broader perspective and not get stuck in a negative bias feedback loop by seeing all of the factors that our outside of one's control
Social	Interpersonal Awareness	Develops insight into the ways in which individuals who are designated friend, stranger, and enemy can shift and are not rigid

Domains	SEE Learning Competency	Connection to Systems Thinking
Social	Compassion for Others	Strives to alleviate the suffering of others on both a aspirational and engaged level
Social	Relationship Skills	Cultivates a sense of appreciation for others by seeing how they contribute to one's well-being and happiness
Systems	Appreciating Interdependence	Develops the skill of systems thinking and actively utilizes it in one's life to promote personal wellbeing
Systems	Recognizing Common Humanity	Makes visible the fundamental reality that like us others what happiness and not to suffer
Systems	Community and Global Engagement	Cultivate the skill and determination to engage in one's community at different levels to provide the benefit and wellbeing of others

Teacher Personal Practice

Your ability to encourage the innate systems thinking abilities of your students will be stronger the more you engage with systems thinking yourself. You are encouraged to regularly reflect on the concepts in this chapter. Sometimes when we think about the systems we live in, especially systemic structures, we may feel disempowered, because we don't feel like we can change the whole system. This can happen especially if we start by thinking of the very large-scale systems we live in, where it seems our individual actions can have little impact. You are encouraged to start with looking for very small examples of systems and feedback loops—in a family, a relationship with a friend, or in your classroom. What systems and feedback loops can you identify in these areas? What happens when you try to introduce a change into a feedback loop, or shift a negative feedback loop to a positive one? If you feel frustrated that your first experiments do not yield immediate results, remind yourself to take heart and that you will build this “muscle” over time.

Similarly, you can look for small instances of interdependence. Can you think of a time when something that started very small led to a change for the better in your life? You can experiment and see what happens if you make some small improvement or change in your home life, in your classroom, or in your school. After making the change, watch for and reflect on any positive consequences, days or weeks later. Further resources for engaging in systems thinking can be found in the online SEE Learning educator preparation platform.

Further Reading and Resources

- *The Triple Focus: A New Approach to Education*, by Daniel Goleman and Peter Senge (More Than Sound, 2014).
- *The Habit-Forming Guide to Becoming a Systems Thinker* by Tracy Benson and Sheri Marlin (Systems Thinking Group Inc., 2017).

Chapter 7: Systems Thinking

Learning Experience 1: Interdependence of Life

Learning Experience 2: Developing Discernment

Learning Experience 2: Exploring Systems Thinking

Learning Experience 4: Understanding Complex Issues

Learning Experience 5 Developing Holistic Perspective

Learning Experience 6: Habits of a Systems Thinker: Considering Impact

The Interdependence of Life

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students discuss interdependence and ethics. First, we revisit the definition of interdependence and compassion. Then, students will have a class discussion on the purpose of ethics. Finally, students will create an interdependence web of their favorite dish. This activity will help strengthen students' understanding of interdependence. By the end of this lesson, students should be able to identify how awareness of interdependence leads to a sense of gratitude and appreciation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Analyze interdependence by examining how all individuals depend on and can be affected by a system context
- Explore a definition of ethical practice
- Recognize the number of people contributing to our well-being by providing the necessary ingredients for a favorite dish

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating Interdependence

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Colored pencils
- Computer (research)
- Timer
- School Interdependence Web
- Sweater Interdependence Web
- Favorite Food Examples handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Overview

Lead students in a resource practice. Use a timer for 4 minutes for the practice and 1 minute for the debrief questions.

Guiding Language

"Let's take a moment to get comfortable. For you, this may be in your chair or, if you feel like it, leaning against a wall or sitting on the floor. You can open your eyes or keep them closed. However you feel comfortable. [PAUSE]

- *Now I invite you to think of something that makes you feel better, stronger, or more resilient. It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary.*
- *Take a few moments to focus on your resource. Notice the details of your resource. What do you see, smell, feel, hear, or taste?* [PAUSE]
- *What do you notice inside your body when you think about your resource? Notice the sensations.* [PAUSE]
- *You might feel warmer or cooler, lighter or heavier, perhaps tingling, maybe you notice your breathing — just be curious.* [PAUSE]
- *As you notice your sensations, can you find a place in your body that feels pleasant or*

neutral? If so, let your attention rest there for a few moments. [PAUSE]

- *If you don't notice any sensations, that's okay. Just notice that you're not feeling any sensations at the moment and continue to sit with your resources.* [PAUSE]
- *When you get distracted, notice that and bring your attention back to your resource*
- *Let's take a moment to get comfortable. For you, this may be in your chair or, if you feel like it, leaning against a wall or sitting on the floor. You can open your eyes or keep them closed. However you feel comfortable.* [PAUSE]
- *Now I invite you to think of something that makes you feel better, stronger, or more resilient. It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of kindness you experienced. It can be real or imaginary.*
- *Take a few moments to focus on your resource. Notice the details of your resource. What do you see, smell, feel, hear, or taste?* [PAUSE]
- *What do you notice inside your body when you think about your resource? Notice the sensations.* [PAUSE]
- *You might feel warmer or cooler, lighter or heavier, perhaps tingling, maybe you notice your breathing — just be curious.* [PAUSE]
- *As you notice your sensations, can you find a place in your body that feels pleasant or*

neutral? If so, let your attention rest there for a few moments. [PAUSE]

- If you don't notice any sensations, that's okay. Just notice that you're not feeling any sensations at the moment and continue to sit with your resources. [PAUSE]*
- When you get distracted, notice that and bring your attention back to your resource or a sensation in your body. [PAUSE]*
- If you become aware of unpleasant sensations, you can shift your focus to another part of your resource, choose a new resource, or do a grounding practice if you like. Then, track your body for sensations again, focusing on a place that feels neutral or pleasant. Let your attention rest there for a few moments again. [PAUSE]*
- As we do this practice, we're learning more about our bodies and how to use a resource to get in touch with sensations of well-being that can help our body feel safe and relaxed.*
- Now we'll conclude the practice. Thank you."*

Debrief

Write the debriefing questions on the board. If no students volunteer, please share an example of a resource that you use personally.

"Who would like to respond to one of the following questions about your resource practice today?

- 1. What was that like for you?**
- 2. Who noticed a new sensation to share about?**
- 3. Who has a thought or insight to share?"**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 20 minutes

Overview

In this presentation, students will explore more deeply the concept of interdependence. They will also be introduced to SEE Learning's perspective of ethics. Finally, as a class discussion, students will create a definition of Ethical Practice.

Instructions and Guiding Language

In Part I, students will learn about the definition and connection between compassion and interdependence. In Part II, students will have a class discussion on ethics. Write the following vocabulary words, along with their definitions, on the board: Compassion, Interdependence, and Ethics.

Part I: Interdependence (Presentation)

"Let's take a moment and review Compassion and Interdependence. Compassion is an emotion involving the wish to relieve or prevent the suffering of another out of a genuine concern for their well-being and a sense of tenderness and care for them.

It is important to remember that compassion rarely involves only you. Usually, kind acts that occur in our lives involve other people. We are kind to others, others are kind to us, or we are kind to each other. Our well-being depends on others and others' well-being on us. We call this "interdependence."

Interdependence is the principle that objects and events arise from various causes and conditions. Therefore, things can be interconnected even across long distances or periods of time. We understand that our lives do not exist in a vacuum and that there is an inherent relationship between ourselves and broader systems of people.

Interdependence can be applied not only to kind acts but to everyday things we use or experiences we've had. So remember, reflecting on the kind things others do for us or we do for them can be a personal resource for us and help us feel better, safer, or happier.

Understanding interdependence can help us recognize how we depend on others and others rely on us. This can help us feel gratitude, compassion, and connectedness even to people we may never meet. It also supports systems thinking since interdependence is a feature of all systems. We will discuss systems thinking in the next learning experience."

Allow 1-2 minutes for students' questions and insights about interdependence.

"Let's look at this picture."

Give students at least 1 minute to look at the School Interdependence Web on page 409.

"What do you notice in this picture?"

What does this picture mean to you?

What connections do you see between this picture and our discussion today?"

Allow students to share, as you record their answers on the board.

The goal of this picture is to help students visualize an interdependence web in a city. Sample student responses might include:

- We exist within and are affected by Interdependent Systems.
- We are all interconnected in this world.
- The people we are connected to are also connected to many others.
- We are individuals within a system context, and we are all connected.

Part II: Ethics (Class Discussion)

"Let's talk a bit about ethics. Ethics is a set of principles or values that guide our thoughts and actions toward our own

well-being and the well-being of others. For example, seeing the value of friendship and caring for your friends are ethical practices. Caring for your friends benefits the friends as well as yourself. How about eating healthy? Every day, we engage in ethical practices. This section aims to make ethics a little more visible to us. Let's discuss the following questions as a class.

How would you describe ethics to someone not in our class? What does ethics mean to you?

What are some essential characteristics of an ethical practice?

What responsibilities do we have to consider the well-being of others when making decisions?"

Co-create a working definition of ethical practice or some important characteristics of it as a class. A sample definition might be:

"When we engage in ethical practices, we free ourselves from actions and behaviors that can harm ourselves and others."

Conclude the discussion by saying:

"Interdependence contributes to a sense of gratitude and connection with other people worldwide. Applying ethics to our decision-making will help us consider the impact those decisions have on ourselves, others, and the larger system we live in."

Teaching Tips

In SEE Learning, ethics is defined as a moral principle or values that can help guide one's thoughts and actions for one's and others' benefit. This learning experience aims to support students as they start thinking about ethics and ethical practice. It may be beneficial to have a class discussion or put students in small groups when discussing Part II. The time allocated for this section is 15 minutes. Please modify the time so it meets the needs of your students. Finally, writing the vocabulary on the board or having a word wall in your classroom dedicated to SEE Learning can be helpful.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

In this insight activity, students will explore the idea of interdependence by working in a small group to create an interdependence drawing of their favorite meal. Interdependence helps us feel gratitude for the complexity of everyday objects we need for our survival. It is also an essential aspect of systems thinking.

Instructions and Guiding Language

To help your students understand this concept, do the following example as a whole group.

"Today you will make an interdependence web. Before we start, let's look at an example of this activity using a sweater."

- **What do you notice about this interdependence web?**
[Show students the Independence Web 2 of a sweater on page 410]
- **Next, look at where, when, why, and how this sweater came to exist.**
- **Finally, consider all the people needed to make this sweater."**

Allow 3-4 minutes for any questions over interdependence.

Let students self-select into groups of 3-4. Provide each group with a large piece of chart paper and colored pencils. Ask students to come to a consensus of a dish they all like to eat within 2 minutes.

"In your group, you will make an interdependence web drawing for the dish you chose."

Review the series of steps with the whole group before signaling the groups to begin their own web constructions. Remind students to be kind to each other and respectful of whatever others offer.

"Let's take up to two minutes to come up with a dish everyone in the group enjoys eating. When your group comes to agreement, draw a simple picture of it in the center of your paper."

If possible, write the following steps on your board. Check in with each group to provide help or guidance.

"Now, let's follow these steps to make your interdependence web.

- **#1: Brainstorm everything necessary for your favorite dish to exist.**
- **#2: Draw lines that connect your picture to the words or images of things/people needed for your dish to exist.**
- **#3: Look at your first circle of ideas. What do all of these depend on? Add more items around each of those, connecting with lines.**
- **#4: Imagine all the people involved in growing and harvesting the ingredients for your dish. Imagine all the people involved in making it and the tools and resources they use. Add any people, tools or resources that are necessary for this next layer of contributors.**
- **#5: Keep going:**
 - **Where do the ingredients come from? Is it from a farm or factory?**
 - **How far have the ingredients traveled?**
- **#6: Finally, think about all the people you've charted out. Estimate the total number of people needed for you to have this tasty food and write it on the bottom right-hand side of your paper."**

Conclude by asking your class the following questions:

- **“What surprised you?”**
- **“What are you wondering about now?”**

Encourage students to share this experience.

Teaching Tips

It is recommended that students start by picking four main ingredients in their favorite dish. For example, lasagna’s four main ingredients would be cheese, pasta, meat, and sauce.

- Then, where do these ingredients come from?
- Is it a factory?
- Is it a store?
- Is it a farm?
- Where are the ingredients from (location)?
- How far have the ingredients traveled?

Next, remind students what you need to buy the ingredients and the supplies they need. For example, you need money to purchase the ingredient of your favorite food. This requires having a job etc.

Suggest students take 2 to 3 minutes for each step. Step #5 is designed to push students to think about the global distribution of food. The goal is to help them realize that some ingredients come from around the world. Finally, encourage students to share what they are thinking and feeling after this exploration.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

In the same groups, ask students to select 2 of the following questions to discuss. Build in time at the end for several students to share.

“As a group, select two of the following questions to discuss with your group. Please, everyone remember to help ensure each person in your group is heard. This is a time to share ideas that may be similar or different, and to listen generously to one another.

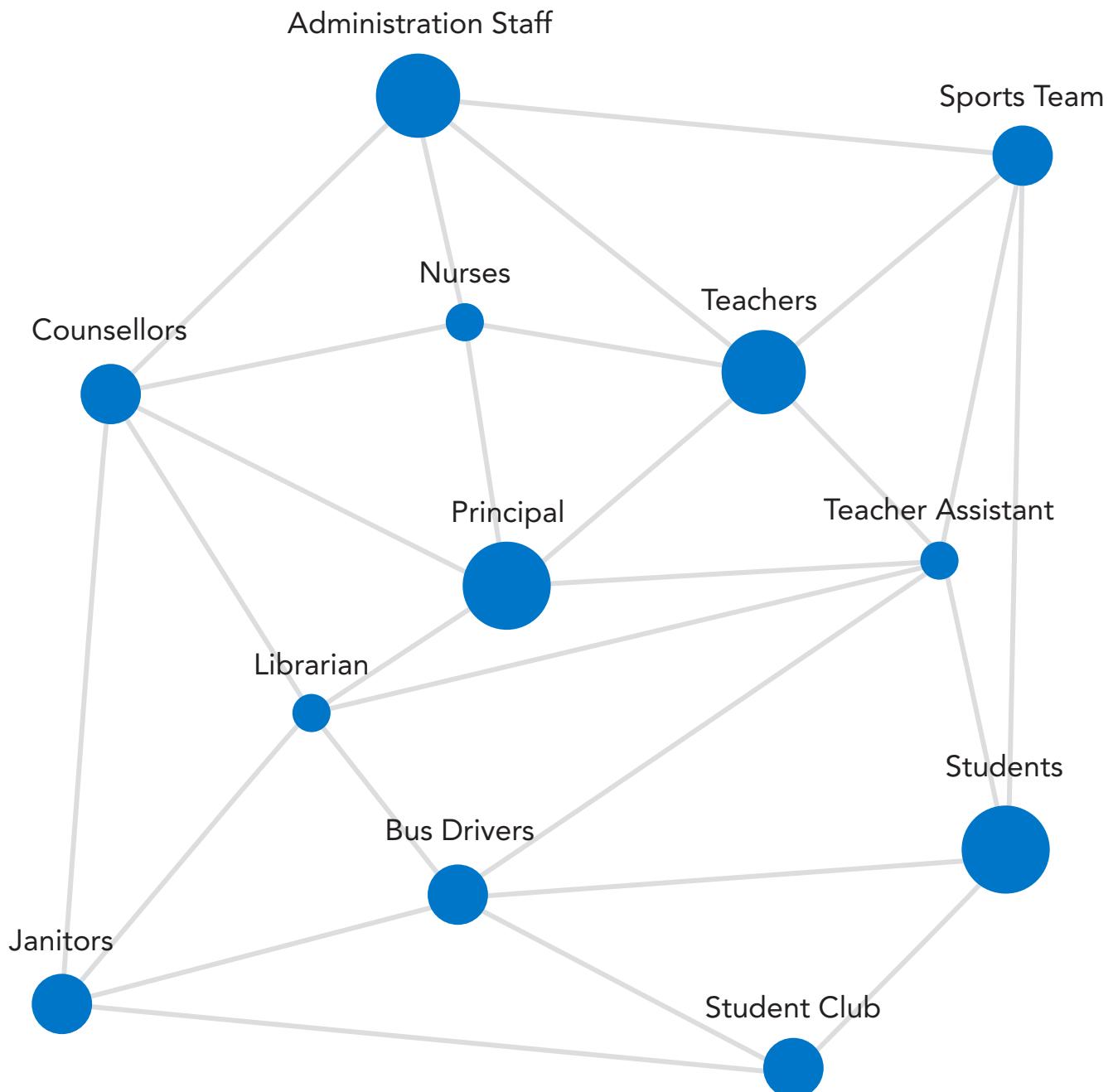
1. **How are these people in your independence web connected to you? How do they impact your well-being?**
2. **Interdependence is part of our daily life, but often we do not see it. How can we highlight our interdependence more?**
3. **What personal responsibilities do we have within the larger system?**
4. **How do your everyday choices in food consumption affect the larger system?**
5. **What are some ways our school is connected to our larger community?”**

Teaching Tips

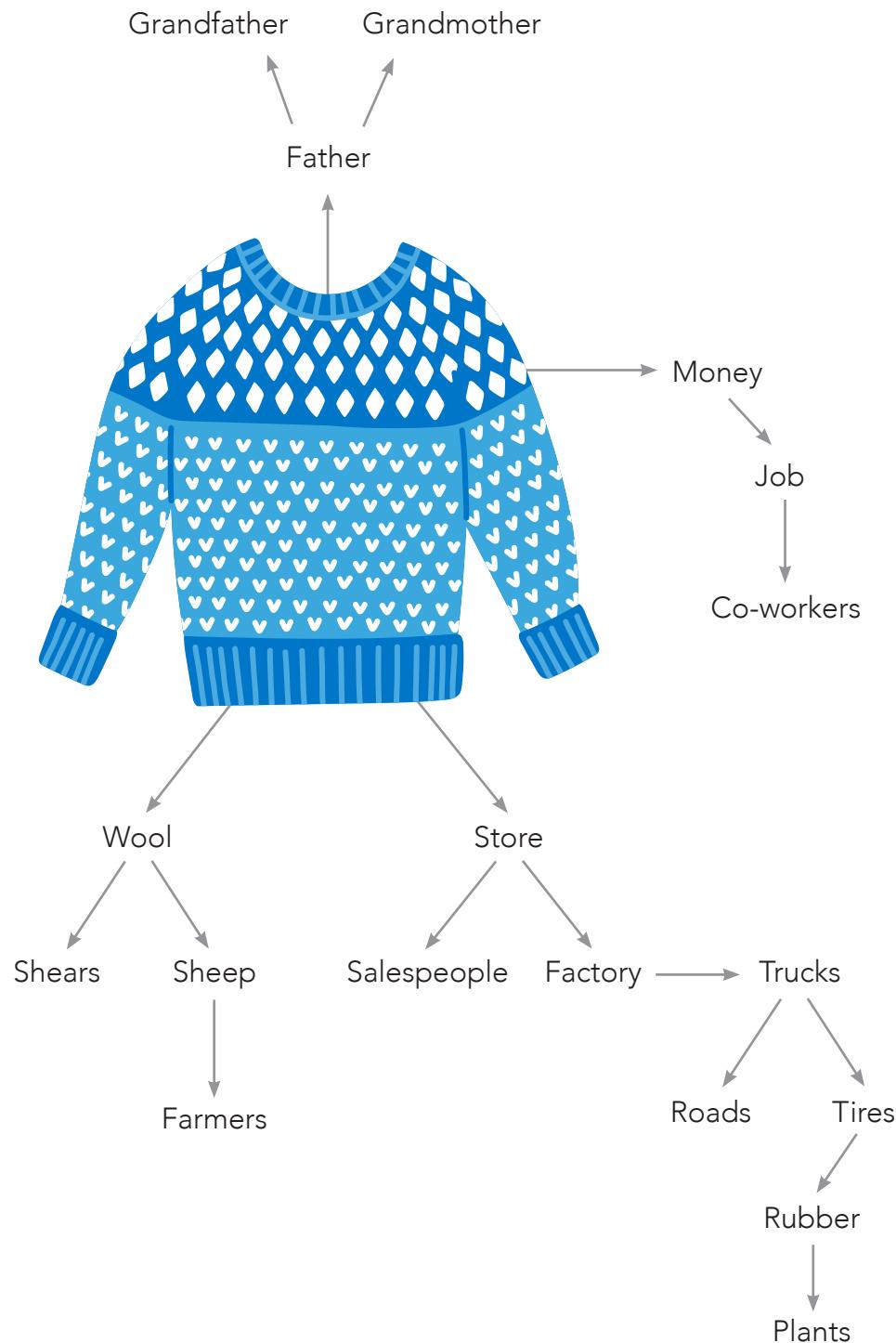
Interdependence can help us recognize how we depend on others, and others rely on us. This can help us feel gratitude, compassion, and connectedness to other people we may never meet. This reflective practice can also be completed in pairs (i.e., Think-Pair-Share). Dedicate 5 minutes to discuss questions within

groups and 5 minutes to share. If time is an issue, select one question for the entire class to discuss together instead.

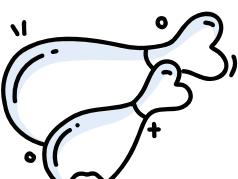
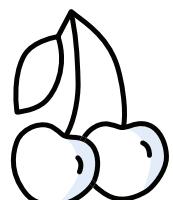
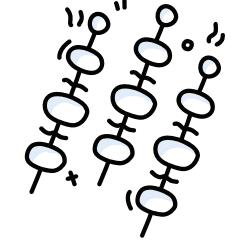
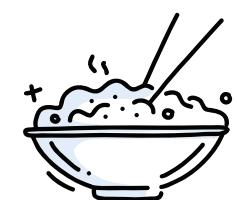
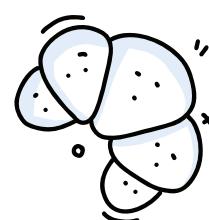
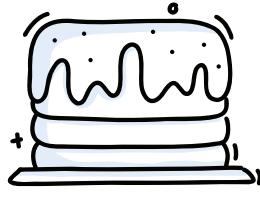
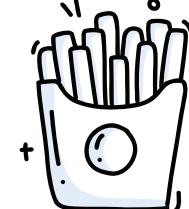
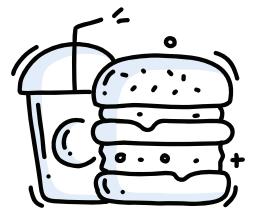
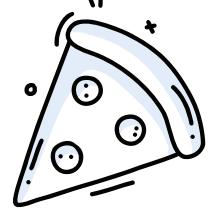
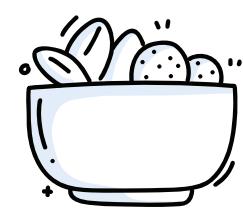
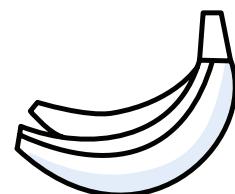
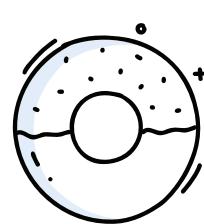
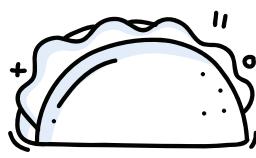
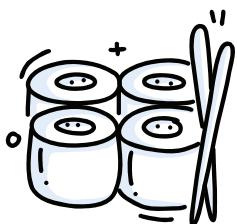
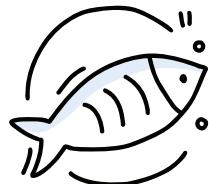
School Interdependence Web



Sweater Interdependence Web



Favorite Food Examples



Developing Discernment

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, we introduce students to the life cycle analysis of a cell phone, and they will apply the analysis to things they use regularly. Through an awareness of how the different components of an object have different life spans and varying impacts, students will begin to think about the likely consequences of using and eventually discarding everyday objects and thus cultivate an ethical discernment toward the usage of daily objects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Analyze the life cycle of a cell phone and an object they use on a daily basis.
- Understand the role of discernment in our life and our wellbeing

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Attention and
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Colored pencils, markers
- Writing utensils and paper
- Timer
- Computer
- Life Cycle of a Cell Phone handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Overview

Lead students in a resource practice.

Use a timer for 4 minutes for the practice and 1 minute for the debrief questions.

Guiding Language

"Let's take a moment to get comfortable. This may be sitting with your back straight, or, leaning against your chair, or sitting on the floor. You can keep your eyes open or have them closed. Whatever is comfortable for you. [PAUSE]

- Now I invite you to think of a resource, something that makes you feel better, stronger, or more resilient. It could be a person, place, thing, something about yourself, or a memory of a kind act that you have experienced. Your resources can be real or imaginary.**
- Take a few moments to focus on your resource. Notice the details of your resource. What do you see, smell, feel, hear, or taste? [PAUSE]**
- What do you notice inside your body when you think about your resource? What sensations came up? [PAUSE]**
- You might feel warmer or cooler, lighter or heavier, perhaps tingly, maybe you notice your breathing — just be curious. [PAUSE]**

- As you notice your sensations, find a place in your body that feels pleasant or neutral and let your attention rest there for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- If you didn't notice any pleasant or neutral sensations, that's okay. Just be aware that you're not feeling any sensations at the moment and continue to sit with your resource. [PAUSE]**
- When you get distracted, notice that and bring your attention back to your resource or a sensation in your body. [PAUSE]**
- If you become aware of unpleasant sensations, you can shift your attention to another part of your body that feels better, or choose a new resource. You can do grounding practice if you like and track your sensations, focusing on a pleasant or neutral sensation. Let your attention rest there for a few moments. [PAUSE]**
- As we do this practice, we're learning more about our bodies and how to use a resource to get in touch with sensations of well-being, which can help our body feel safe and relaxed.**
- Now we'll conclude the practice. Thank you."**

Write the debriefing questions on the board. If no students volunteer, you can share your experience while reading the resource practice with the class.

"Please respond to the following questions about your resourcing practice today?

- 1. How does being calm and regulated help to guide decision making?***
- 2. What kind of decisions do we make when we are not calm and we feel dysregulated?***
- 3. How does being calm and regulated help us to discern between behaviors that can harm ourselves and others and benefit ourselves and others?***

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 15 minutes

Overview

In this presentation, students will engage in a life cycle analysis of an object that many people use daily: a cell phone. Students will be introduced to life cycle analysis or 'cradle-to-grave' assessment through this example. They will then apply this analysis to an everyday object and consider the likely impacts of their usage on the planet. They will learn to develop ethical discernment based on their analysis.

Instructions and Guiding Language

In Part I, students will learn about life cycle analysis or the 'cradle to grave' assessment, apply it to a cell phone to understand the various stages of its life, and consider the impacts of using the product. They will analyze the information related to the life cycle of a cell phone and then reflect and respond to prompts

related to discernment. In Part II, students will apply the analysis to an object of their choosing and explore the likely consequences of producing and consuming the object to the planet, to their and others' well being.

Part I: Review Life Cycle Analysis or Cradle-to-Grave Approach

"Have you ever wondered where the things we use come from, or what happens to them when we finish using them? Do you know how the products we use impact the environment or the planet?

To consider these, let's take a moment to look at 'life cycle analysis', also known as the 'cradle-to-grave' approach. It involves evaluating various aspects—often the environmental impacts—of a product as it goes through all stages of its life cycle.

According to the European Environment Agency, "assessment that considers impacts at each stage of a product's life-cycle, from the time natural resources are extracted from the ground and processed through each subsequent stage of manufacturing, transportation, product use, and ultimately, disposal". Such an assessment can allow us to discern the wider dimensions of products or issues and their impacts on us.

In small groups, I would like you to review the handout related to the life cycle of a cell phone, reflect upon the five phases outlined and respond in your small group to the

prompts at the end of the handout. After you finish your discussion please respond to the prompts below."

Provide time for students to review the handout and respond to the prompts.

Prompts for Small Group Review

- **"What part of the life cycle of the cell phone surprises you the most?"**
- **"How can this type of cradle-to-grave assessment influence how you view and use a product?"**

Part II: Discernment Defined (Class Discussion)

"In this part, we will apply the life cycle analysis to an object of your choosing and think about ethical discernment. Just like cell phones, other things have their own life cycles. As we become more aware of the life cycle of items we use everyday and their impacts on our wellbeing, we become more discerning about how we use them, how we dispose of them, and the impacts of our actions on ourselves, others, and the environment."

Allow students to respond:

"What does it mean to be discerning? How do we apply discernment to the things we use?"

Discernment, as applied to ethical discernment, is the ability to assess and understand actions that are beneficial

versus those that are harmful. It helps us consider the likely consequences of our actions and distinguish actions that are most harmful to ourselves and others from those that are beneficial. It, thus, helps us learn to identify behaviors that need to be cultivated and those that need to be regulated.

Discernment originates from critical thinking and reasoning. We use our intelligence to understand and analyze how our behaviors affect others and vice versa. This can lead to an acknowledgement of numerous ways in which others contribute to our well-being and a deeper sense of appreciation of others. It can be further enhanced by repeated reflection on particular ways in which our well-being is supported by others. Discernment plays an essential role in developing ethical awareness.

"How come the most intellectual creature to ever walk Earth is destroying its only home?" (Jane Goodall). Could this be because we are not engaging our discernment and thinking about what is good for the planet and what is bad?"

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

In this insight activity, students will work in small groups to choose an everyday item and create a life cycle analysis. The students can use the internet to search about the various stages of the product's life and the impacts of producing these objects on a massive scale. They will reflect on how they are contributing to the life cycle of the product and its impacts.

Instructions and Guiding Language

"In this part of the activity, you will choose an object that you regularly use and subject it to the life cycle analysis. You will work in groups of four to create the different phases of your chosen object's life while reflecting on the likely consequences and the impacts of the object on the environment, on your wellbeing, and that of the larger community. This activity requires the use of the internet to do research. So, open your computer and start your research.

While doing the life cycle analysis, reflect on how you are part of the object's life cycle and what can you do to minimize the negative impacts of the object, if any, and maximize the positive impacts. After completing the assessment, you will reflect as a group on the following questions and share your reflection with the class.

- 1. What new things did you learn about the object?***

- 2. How does this type of assessment of cradle-to-grave assessment influence how you view the object?***

- 3. How would this type of assessment affect the way you purchase, use, or dispose of products in the future?***

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

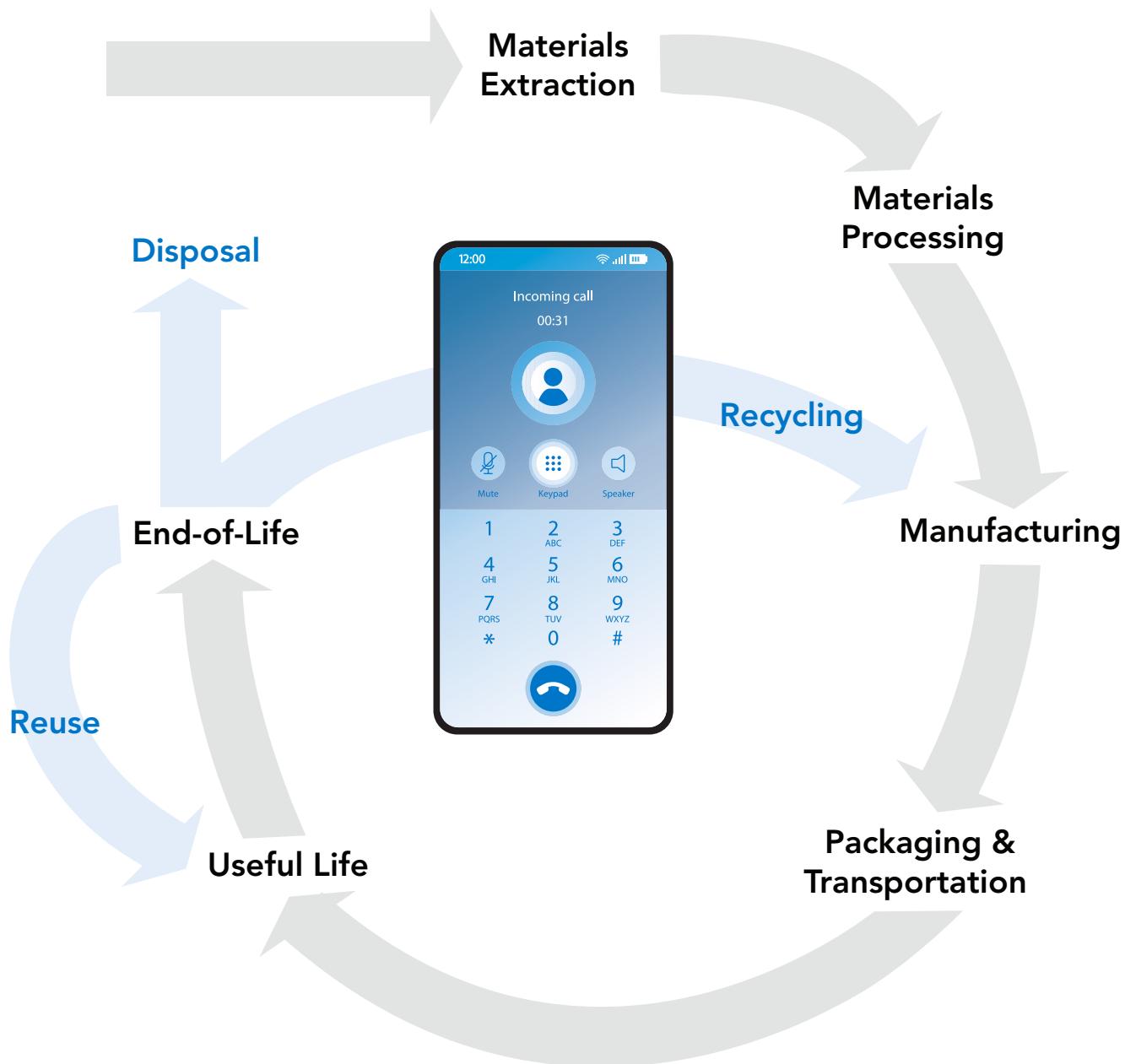
In the same groups, ask students to select 2 of the following questions to discuss. Build in time at the end for several students to share.

"As a group, reflect on the following two prompts to connect your experiences with life cycle analysis, discernment, and contributions.

- 1. Remember that discernment is the ability to understand what actions are really beneficial and what consequences are most likely to follow from certain actions. With this in mind, how will you view and engage in activities moving forward?***
- 2. How can we use discernment to help make our choices?"***

The Life Cycle of a Cell Phone

The following life cycle has been adapted from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) resources on the life cycle of a cell phone.



The Life Cycle of a Cell Phone

Cell phones consist of nine basic parts, each of which has its own life cycle:

The Nine Basic Parts of a Cell Phone

1. Circuit board/printed wiring board
2. Liquid crystal display (LCD)
3. Battery
4. Antenna
5. Keypad
6. Microphone
7. Speaker
8. Plastic casing
9. Accessories (such as adapters, headsets, carrying cases, and decorative face plates)

The Six Phases of the Life of a Cell Phone

Phase 1: Materials Extraction

A cell phone is made up of primarily three types of materials: 40 percent metals, 40 percent plastics, and 20 percent ceramics and trace materials. Three main components of a cell phone are circuit board (brain of the phone), liquid crystal display (screen), and the battery (energy source).

The circuit board controls all the functions of the cell phone and is made from raw materials including copper, gold, lead, nickel, zinc, beryllium, tantalum, coltan, and other metals. The production of the board requires sand and limestone for fiberglass and crude oil for plastic many of which are “persistent toxins” that can stay in the environment for long periods of time, even after disposal.

The liquid crystal display (LCD) works as a display screen by becoming opaque (hard to see through) when electric current passes through it. The contrast between the opaque and transparent areas forms visible images and characters. Various liquid crystalline substances, such as mercury, a potentially poisonous substance, are used to make LCDs, which also require the use of glass or plastic.

The rechargeable battery is the power source of the phone. Several types of batteries are used in cell phones: nickel-metal hydride (Ni-MH), lithium-ion (Li-Ion), nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd), or lead

The Life Cycle of a Cell Phone

(continued)

acid. Some of these batteries contain nickel, cobalt, zinc, cadmium, and copper. Li-Ion batteries use lithium metallic oxide and carbon based materials, all mined from the earth.

Phase 2: Materials Processing

Raw materials must be processed before they can be used to make products. In cell phones:

- Crude oil is mixed with natural gas and chemicals to make plastic;
- Copper is mined, pulverized, heated, and treated with chemicals and electricity to extract the pure metal used in the cell phone. The purified copper pieces are shipped to a manufacturer where they are converted into wires and sheets.

Phase 3: Manufacturing

The basic shape of the circuit board is made up of plastics and fiberglass, which is then coated with gold plating. The board carries several electronic components, connected with circuits and wires (primarily made of copper) that are soldered to the board and secured with protective glues and coatings. LCDs are made by sandwiching liquid crystal between layers of glass or plastic.

Batteries consist of two electrodes, made from two different metals, and a liquid substance, called electrolytes.

Phase 4: Packing and Transportation

Cell phone parts and the finished products are packaged and transported. Transportation by truck, train, or plane all require burning of fossil fuels, which can contribute to global climate change.

While packaging protects products from damage, decorative packaging can be wasteful. Packaging consumes valuable resources, such as paper (from trees), plastic (from crude oil in the earth), aluminum (from ore), or other materials, all of which require energy and can result in waste. Recycled materials can be used for some packaging.

Phase 5: Useful Life

It is estimated that on average people replace their smartphone once past the age of 2.75 years.

The life of a cell phone can be extended by taking care of it—protecting it from damage, avoiding dropping it, and keeping it out of extreme heat and cold and away from water and other liquids.

Extending the life of a cell phone even by a year could reduce many tons of e-waste.

The Life Cycle of a Cell Phone

(continued)

Phase 6: End of Life

Donating or recycling cell phones when you no longer need or want them extends their useful lives, and prevents them from ending up in the trash where they can potentially cause environmental problems.

Reuse

Many organizations — including recyclers, and electronics manufacturers — accept working cell phones and offer them to schools, community organizations, and individuals in need. Reuse gives people, who could not otherwise afford them, free or reduced cost access to new phones and their accessories. Plus, it extends the useful lifetime of a phone.

Recycle

Electronics recyclers are springing up everywhere! Today, many stores, manufacturers, and recycling centers accept cell phones for recycling. Some rechargeable batteries can also be recycled. When rechargeable batteries are recycled, the recovered materials can be used to make new batteries and stainless steel products. You can google to search for local contacts that recycle and refurbish cell phones. For every million cell phones recycled, 35,274lb of copper, 772lb of silver, 75lb of gold, and 33lb of palladium could be recovered.

Disposal

The rate at which cell phones are discarded is more than 150 million phones each year, resulting in more than 78,000 tons of e-waste! Cell phones that are thrown in the trash end up in landfills or incinerators (burned). Because cell phones contain metals, plastics, chemicals, and other potentially hazardous substances, one should always recycle, donate, or trade in one's old cell phone. It's free and easy. Phones that are thrown away waste energy and result in the loss of valuable resources.

Exploring Systems Thinking

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students learn about “system” and “systems thinking.” First, students are provided with a simple “Systems Thinking Checklist” that can be used to see the systemic nature of any person, object, or event. They then analyze their circulatory system as a system. Finally, students will continue to explore the role of discernment through systems thinking that can cultivate ethical discernment and recognizing common humanity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Apply the principles of systems thinking.
- Examine how changing one part of a system leads to changes (some intended, some unintended) in other parts of the system.
- Recognize how the cultivation of recognition of common humanity and systems thinking enable our discernment and ethical engagement.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Recognizing
Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Writing utensils and paper
- Colored pencils
- Computer (research)
- Circulatory System image
- Common Humanity image

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Overview

Lead students in a grounding practice.

Instructions and Guiding Language

- **“Let’s do grounding practice together. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, feel free to do a resourcing practice instead.”**
- **“Let’s take a comfortable posture. Check in to see if you are aware of any sensations in your body. If you notice tension or discomfort, you can shift your posture or take a few deep breaths to ease that tension.”**
- **“Let’s see if we can notice any pleasant sensations in our body, especially in parts of the body that are in touch with a surface, and place our attention there. Stay with any pleasant or neutral sensation for 10-15 seconds. [PAUSE]”**
- **“If the stability of the chair gives you comfort, let that be your grounding point. [PAUSE]”**
- **“Let’s focus on the pleasant sensation for a while. [PAUSE]”**
- **“If the sensation is or becomes unpleasant, try to shift your attention to another sensation that is more pleasant.”**

Write the debriefing questions on the board. If no students volunteer, you can share your experience while reading the resource practice with the class.

“Would anyone like to answer one of the following questions about your grounding practice today:

- **“How did that feel?”**
- **“Who would like to share?”**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 15 minutes

Overview

In this presentation, students will explore systems and systems thinking. They will also investigate more deeply the relationship between recognizing common humanity and cultivation of ethics.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Students will have a class discussion on ethics and common humanity. Write the following vocabulary words along with the definition on the board: system, systems thinking, and common humanity.

Common Humanity and Ethics (Class Discussion)

“Common humanity refers to the idea that all people, regardless of their differences, are similar and therefore equal at a fundamental human level, be it our wish to flourish and grow, our tendencies to avoid unnecessary suffering, our capacity to feel, or our dependency on others. Cultivating an understanding of common humanity can help us develop a more inclusive viewpoint, strengthen our sense of identification with

others that extends beyond our immediate community, and thus increase our capacity for compassion.

Systems thinking becomes especially powerful and relevant when combined with compassion and concern for all involved. As part of our common humanity, we prefer kindness and compassion from others. Systems thinking can help us see the consequences of our decisions and actions, such that we can act in ways that are more beneficial to our well-being and the well-being of others both locally and globally.

As a class, let's discuss the following questions:

- 1. What are some ways in which we can see all people as fundamentally equal?**
- 2. How can systems thinking help us to see our shared common humanity?**
- 3. What implications might systems thinking have for how we treat each other both now and into the future?**
- 4. How can systems thinking lead to compassionate behaviors?"**

Allow 3-4 minutes per question over systems thinking and common humanity.

Teaching Tips

Systems are everywhere. If you don't feel comfortable discussing the circulatory system, feel free to use other examples for your systems checklist. Using examples that meet the interest of your student population is recommended.

In Part II, feel free to select 2 to 3 questions to discuss instead of all five questions. Finally, there are a lot of good videos explaining systems thinking. We recommend both Peter Senge "Introduction to Systems Thinking" and "Systems Thinking: A Cautionary Tale" (cats in Borneo). Both videos provide an excellent definition of systems thinking but provide different examples.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Overview

In this insight activity, students will examine how changing one part of a system leads to changes (some intended, some unintended) in other parts of the system.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Allow students to select their own groups. Each small group should have 3 to 4 students. Provide each group with a large piece of chart paper.

"Today's insight activity is on systems thinking. Remember that systems thinking involves discernment, which is the ability to understand how you might respond to a

situation on a personal, social, and systems level. In order to engage in the practice of discernment we need to look for connections between things and how they make up a more significant, interconnected whole. It is important to note that changing one part of the system can cause "unintended consequences" in another part of the system."

Allow students 2 to 3 minutes to select whether they want to do Part A or Part B.

"In your group, you can decide to complete Part A or Part B. When your group agrees, get started.

In Part A, decide what consequences-positive, negative or unintended-might arise in the circulatory system if a person:

- ***Consume lots of coffee or tea?***
- ***Consume lots of soda?***
- ***Has a balanced diet?***
- ***Has a lot of stress in their life?***
- ***Exercises regularly?***

In Part B, think about how someone's circulatory system (and its health or lack of health) affects other systems, such as:

- ***Their family system?***
- ***The health system? (Individual health vs. public health)***

- ***The economic system? (local vs. global)***
- ***The ecosystem?"***

Remind students that for both parts they should be able to explain their answers. Monitor each group to provide help or guidance.

Allow students to share (3 minutes per group).

Conclude by asking your class the following question:

"What did you notice from doing this activity?"

Allow students to discuss this experience.

Teaching Tips

You can have bigger groups, depending on your class size. Feel free to assign groups and make each group complete both parts (A and B). The last question, "What did you notice from doing this activity" should allow students to share their thoughts and feelings. If you don't feel comfortable discussing the circulatory system, you can talk about another system in the human body (i.e., Digestive System). Thinking about systems helps us realize how important each part is and how important each person is.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

In the same groups, allow students to select 2 of the following questions to discuss. Then, if you have time, get a couple of students to share.

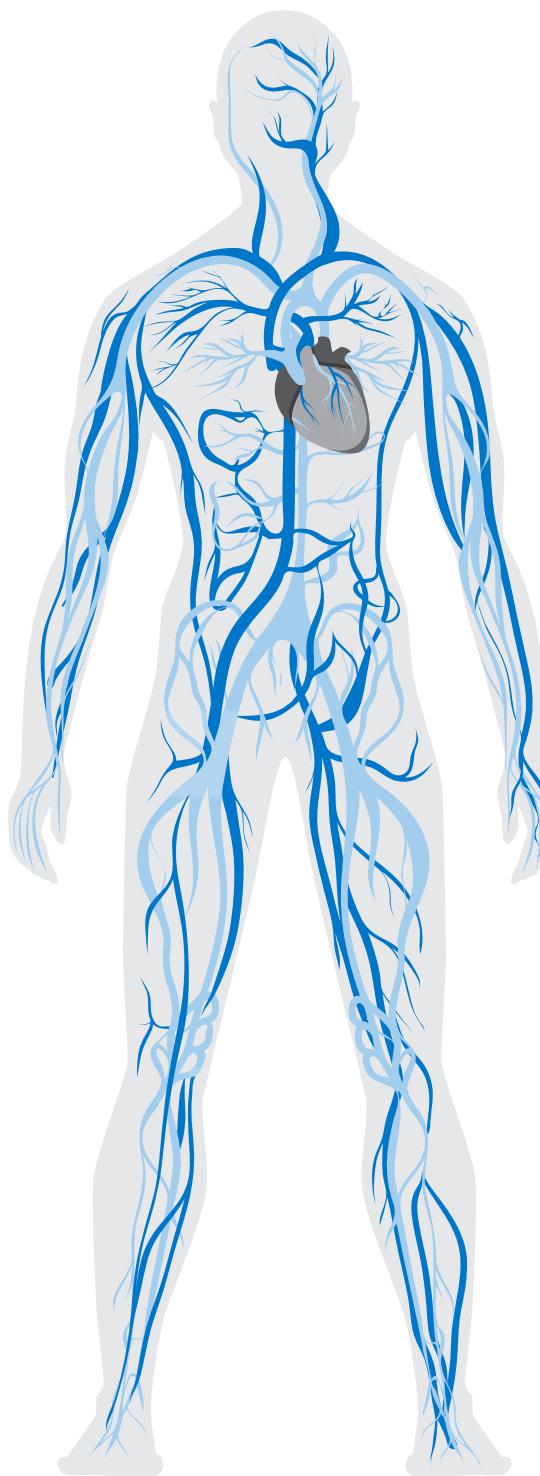
"Thinking about systems helps us realize how important each part is and how important each person is. Let's end this lesson by selecting two of the following questions to discuss with your group.

- 1. What are important things to consider/ discern in order to make a responsible decision?***
- 2. How might discernment shape the decisions you make and the impact they have on yourself and others?***
- 3. How would your current decisions and behaviors change if you became a systems thinker?"***

Teaching Tips

You can also do this reflective practice in pairs (i.e., Think-Pair-Share). If time is an issue, select one question for the entire class to discuss together.

Human Body Circulatory System



Common Humanity



Understanding Complex Issues

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will identify and explore personal, local and global systems, and understand the benefits and problems related to such systems. Students will choose one complex issue to explore more deeply and use systems thinking to address the issue. This learning experience will enable students to apply the skill of discernment as they work to understand systems at different levels.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Continue exploring systems by brainstorming and categorizing personal, local and global systems
- Describe the benefits that come from certain systems as well as the complex issues and problems that can exist within those systems
- Discern how issues affect larger systems, social structures and personal wellbeing

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Community and
Global Engagement

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Writing utensils and paper
- Exploring Complex Issues or Achievements handout

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Overview

Lead your students through a resourcing practice. You can use the following script to lead the resourcing practice. Use a timer if needed. Pauses can be up to 10 seconds each.

Guiding Language

- **"We will start with some resourcing practice.**
- **Let's take a comfortable posture and bring to your mind something that is a resource for you. Resource is anything that provides you a sense of safety, a sense of joy, or something that calms you. It can be a kindness that you have received, or a kind act that you have shown to someone else. Or it can be something else.**
- **If you'd rather do grounding, find a comfortable way to sit or something comfortable to hold or touch and bring your attention to the point of contact.**
- **Let's now take a few moments to think about our chosen resource. Think about the details of the resource as vividly as you can.** [PAUSE]
- **Now let's take a moment to think about what our resources depend on. Did it come out of nothing or is it connected to other things as part of a larger system?**
- **What's happening inside? Notice your sensations. If you feel pleasant or neutral,**

you can rest your mind on that. See if it changes or stays the same. [PAUSE]

- ***If you feel unpleasant, you can shift to a different resource, or you can ground. You can also change your posture. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource.*** [PAUSE]
- ***Whenever you notice that you got distracted, you can bring your mind back to your resource.*** [PAUSE]
- ***What did you notice on the inside?"***

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 15 minutes

Overview

Students will deepen their understanding of systems by exploring them at different levels: personal, local and global. They will examine complex issues, identify contributing factors causing them, and analyze how such issues can affect us at personal, social and systems level.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Display this table of systems at three levels and engage students in an active discussion using the prompts and questions below. There can be many ways to categorize systems. Here we use the personal, local and global as three categories of systems. Local could be a small social group such as a class, a school or a community in one's locality, and global a much larger system up to worldwide.

Students will work in small groups and have 3-5 minutes to list as many examples of personal, local and global systems as they can. One example for each category has been provided in the chart.

Personal	Local	Global
A student	A school	An educational system

Introduce the table and together as a class. Generate 1-2 examples of each type of system. Then each small group generates additions to each category.

After 3-5 minutes have passed, ask groups to share what they found and record ideas on a class chart/the board. Finally ask students the following debrief questions:

- **“What benefits come from these systems?”**
- **“Let’s choose one or two systems and list the potential benefits that come from it.”**
(Write these on the board or ask students to write benefits in their small groups.)
- **“Who benefits from these systems in particular?”**
- **“What problems or issues might be involved in these systems?”** (Write these on the board or ask students to write benefits in their small groups.)
- **“Who gets affected by these problems or issues?”**

Teaching Tips

If you have students struggling to understand this concept, perhaps just analyze each system for its benefits and potential problems.

Remind students of the definition of a system and how we can use the systems checklist to explore something as a system. The following are some other examples that you can use for these three categories. Under the personal category, you can have the nine systems of the human body, or the whole organism. Under the local or social category, you can have a family or neighborhood; under the global category, a government.

A key insight is that the systems checklist isn’t simply a way of determining if something is a system, since anything (even an atom, or a person) can be explored as a system. It’s therefore a way of exploring anything as a system, since systems thinking is a skill that can be applied widely to many aspects of life.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Overview

In this insight activity, students will study complex issues as systems and analyze contributing factors, how the issues affect us and ways to address the issues.

Instructions and Guiding Language

This insight activity has two parts. In the first part, students will work in groups to come up

with several examples of complex issues and fill the table given below. Each group will then choose one issue to explore further using a graphic organizer.

Personal	Social	Systems

"A complex issue is an issue that can be approached from multiple perspectives and may have multiple possible solutions. We can use systems thinking to explore complex issues, analyzing which systems are involved and how, if we change one part in one system, we affect other parts in the system or in other systems. When we apply systems thinking to complex issues or problems, we can identify possible solutions for them.

Let's return to our groups and each group will come up with a list of three complex issues. Specifically, you will think of three things you think would be beneficial on a personal, social or systems level. Then apply discernment to consider how actions can be engaged in on each level (personal, social, and systems) to address those issues.

For the first prompt, examples could be benefits:

- Systems level: you might list "ending food poverty" or "eliminating discrimination"**

- Social level: you might list "feeling a strong sense of community pride"**
- Personal level: you might list "more self-confidence" or "better health"**

For the second prompt, examples could be on using discernment to address the issue identified:

- Systems level: you might list "joining a coalition to address food insecurity" or "voting for anti-discrimination policy"**
- Social level: you might list "developing a community event"**
- Personal level: you might list "developing a new skill" or "eating healthier"**

After 3-5 minutes have passed, ask groups to share what they found and record ideas on a class chart/the board.

Group Work

"Step 1: Look at the ideas that your group/class has generated. As a group, choose one issue to explore more deeply. If possible, choose an issue that you have direct experience with and have access to information about.

Step 2: After your group has chosen an issue to explore more deeply, complete this graphic organizer.

Step 3: Debrief: Use a circle round/talking piece to discuss the following prompt: What stood out to you the most? Did anything surprise or startle you when doing this exercise?"

Facilitate a 2-3 minute debriefing/sharing experience.

Teaching Tips

A good example of a complex issue that students can easily relate to might be the issue of how to prevent or minimize food waste. It happens at all stages of the food system — production, processing, distribution, retail and consumption — and in all the countries around the world. This issue is multifaceted, which would allow students to analyze it in various ways. They could complete the graphic organizer by viewing food waste at home, school, their local community, or nationally. Remind students of your class strategies for assuring that all voices are heard in the group.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

As a class, discuss the following questions. If time allows, ask students to share. Remind students to be kind to each other and respectful of whatever others offer.

1. **"Describe two to three insights specific to the role of discernment in actually contributing to change on a personal, social, and system level from this learning experience."**
2. **What other issues are you interested in exploring further by applying systems thinking?**
3. **How might deepening your skillset as a systems thinker help you to become more effective in addressing issues on a personal, social, and systems basis?"**

Graphic Organizer

Exploring Complex Issues or Achievements

Issue or Achievement _____

Describe the issue/achievement in as much detail as you can in the box below.	<input type="checkbox"/> Why did the issue happen? or <input type="checkbox"/> Why do you want to achieve that?	<input type="checkbox"/> What might help us solve this problem? <input type="checkbox"/> What do we need to know to help achieve this goal?

How does this issue affect:

Me/Us Personally	My Social Circle	Larger Systems

Developing Holistic Perspective

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will work in small groups to analyze a complex issue that affects them, and see how the same issue could be perceived in different ways, noticing that each perspective can help in finding solutions. They will practice considering all of the facts of the issue by engaging in holistic perspective taking with the goal of approaching each other with curiosity and practicing mindful listening to truly consider each other's perspectives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Develop big picture thinking skills by considering issues on personal, local, regional, and global levels
- Recognize how people perceive and experience the same issues, events or things in different ways

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating
Interdependence



Recognizing
Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Markers

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Resourcing Practice

Guiding Language

- **"Find a comfortable posture and if you would like bring your attention to your breath."**
- **Choose a strategy that works for you. You may notice the breath moving in and out at the base of the nostril, you may notice the belly and chest rising and falling with the inhale and exhale or you might just feel the breath moving more slowly and deeply into the body. [PAUSE]**
- **For the next few moments, do your best to focus on a resource of your choice.[PAUSE]**
- **If you become distracted by something else and your awareness wanders, gently bring your attention back to your resource, back to your breath. [PAUSE]**
- **We are also strengthening our ability to choose where we place our attention and what we are paying attention to.**
- **Take one more deep breath in and as you breathe out open your eyes if they are closed.**

Who would like to respond to one of the following questions about your resource practice today?

- **What was that like for you?**
- **Who noticed a new sensation to share?**

- **Who has a thought or insight to share?"**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Overview

Students will learn about perspective taking, how to cultivate holistic perspective and the benefits of having holistic perspectives.

Instructions and Guiding Language

Use the following questions and prompts to engage the class in discussion:

- **"As a systems thinker, what does perspective mean?"**
- **Is everyone's perspective the same as ours?**
- **What shapes our perspective?**
- **Is one person's perspective more valid or important than another's?"**

Using the ideas in the discussion and the definition, offer/create a definition.

"For example: Perspective is the way that one looks at something. Our perspectives differ based on our personal beliefs and experiences. We can bring very different perspectives, thoughts and ideas to the same experience or idea.

Let's do a check in to illustrate this point. Come up to the board and write a few words about how you feel about rainy days.

Review the answers and notice if there are different responses to a rainy day. Now let's look from another's perspective:

- How might a farmer feel about a rainy day?
- People who are living in a drought?
- People living in a tropical rainforest?
- A highway construction worker?
- A family who are about to go on vacation?

When we can look at something from many points of view, we are exercising "holistic perspective taking," an aspect of systems thinking. We are looking at the big picture from different angles which is one key habit of a systems thinker. Taking a holistic perspective is one way we can think in "big picture terms."

A holistic perspective can:

- allow us to understand complex issues more deeply, and thus find better solutions.
- help us understand others better and have empathy and compassion for them
- help us cultivate humility so we can learn from others
- help see through thinking traps that come from a limited perspective
- help us regulate our emotions if we were seeing things too narrowly or taking our limited perspective as absolute"

Conclude by saying the following to your class:

"Applying a holistic perspective to a problem can help you explore all sides of an issue and address it better. This can be beneficial for increasing knowledge, empathy, and well-being."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Activity Overview

In this insight activity, students will analyze an issue from multiple angles and form a bigger picture. They will practice considering all of the facts of the issue by engaging in holistic perspective taking with the goal of approaching each other with curiosity and practicing mindful listening to truly consider each other's perspectives.

Instructions and Guiding Language

If possible, put students in the same group.

"Please form small groups. We will continue engaging in systems thinking by looking at the issue we chose in previous learning experiences from different angles to develop a more holistic perspective.

When we use holistic perspective-taking, we engage in big-picture thinking. We consider diverse facts about the issue. When we engage in holistic perspective-taking, we are not trying to convince each other or come to a consensus. We aim to approach each issue with curiosity, practice mindful listening

to hear other people's perspectives, and open our minds to all the facets of the issue. You will engage in systems thinking in your groups by challenging yourself to use holistic perspective-taking and big-picture thinking.

Process

Step 1

Return to the graphic organizer we used in previous learning experiences. Look at the issue you identified and take a moment to add details or make changes to your document.

Step 2

Individually reflect on and write about the following prompt.

Prompts: What are four things you consider the most important aspects of your issue or problem? (Examples may include: who is affected by the issue, how widespread is the issue, what makes it significant, what its consequences are, who are the parties involved, etc.

Step 3

Write the issue you are discussing on the group chart paper provided. Take turns listing the most important aspects of the issue you just wrote about and explain why you chose those aspects. Notice how others' understanding of the issue differs from one's own.

Step 4

Identify the similarities and differences between perspectives about these most important aspects."

Teaching Tips

Remember that you and your students come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This can shape current understandings of an issue. By applying a holistic perspective, students can learn to analyze different contexts and the implications they might bring, from both local and global perspectives.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

Ask students to write on the following questions:

- **"How did your perspective differ from the rest of the group?"**
- **"Did the analysis you engaged in lead to new insights?"**
- **"Did any sensations, thoughts or feelings come up for you as you noticed differing perspectives and ideas?"**
- **"What qualities does a holistic perspective taker need to be discerning while also understanding the ideas of others?"**

Teaching Tips

Have your students choose between writing this prompt in a journal or discussing it in pairs.

Habits of a System's Thinker: Considering Impact

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students will continue to examine a system/issue of their choice. Students will continue to engage in systems thinking by practicing ethical discernment when considering the impact of personal and group choice and responsibility within a system. Students will consider both short- and long-term consequences of actions, identifying possible root causes of a problem, noticing unintended consequences and devising possible solutions to the problem. The final reflection will prompt them to investigate the downsides of not engaging in systems thinking and the benefits of being a systems thinker.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Engage in systems thinking when considering both short- and long-term consequences of actions, identifying a possible root cause of a problem, and notice unintended consequences.
- Practice ethical discernment when considering the impact and responsibility of an individual or group choice.
- Cultivate a sense of connection to others and a sense of purpose to support their wellbeing just as they support yours.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



**Appreciating
Interdependence**



**Recognizing
Common Humanity**

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper and markers
- Completed Exploring Complex Issues or Achievements handout in Chapter 7, Learning Experience 4
- Cell Phone Issues Example
- Negative Self-talk Example
- Impacts and Solutions handout

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

Grounding Practice

Guiding Language

- **"Let's do grounding practice together. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, feel free to do a resourcing practice instead."**
- **Let's take a comfortable posture. Check in to see if you are aware of any sensations in your body. If you notice tension or discomfort, shift your posture or take a few deep breaths to ease that tension.**
- **Let's see if we can notice any pleasant sensations in our body, especially in parts of the body that are in touch with a surface, and place our attention there. Stay with any pleasant or neutral sensation for 10-15 seconds. [PAUSE]**
- **If the stability of the chair gives you comfort, let that be your grounding point. [PAUSE]**
- **Let's focus on the pleasant sensation for a while. [PAUSE]**
- **If the sensation is or becomes unpleasant, try to shift your attention to another sensation that is more pleasant.**
- **How did that feel?"**

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Overview

Thinking about impacts and consequences is an important habit of a systems thinker. Reflecting on consequences of one's choices, decisions, and actions, be it short-term effects or long-term, could help students connect their actions with consequences and thus develop an ethical discernment.

Instructions and Guiding Language

After defining impact, use the prompts to engage the class in discussion:

"What is impact?

- **When we impact something we cause a direct effect on it. Our everyday choices can have short- and long-term impacts on the systems we are a part of.**
- **Considering the impact of one's decisions and actions is an important habit of a systems thinker. When we consider impact and allow it to guide our actions we are practicing ethics.**

When we engage in ethical discernment or value-based decision making, we can ponder the following questions:

- **What choices do I have related to this decision?**
- **What are some likely outcomes of those choices?**
- **Which course of action will most likely yield long-term benefits for oneself and others?**

- **What is my motivation? Am I concerned with the well-being of others?"**

Engage the class in a discussion by using the following prompts and questions:

- **"How do our personal choices impact the greater systems we are a part of? Let's consider this question by looking at emotional intelligence. Can we make choices to increase our emotional intelligence? What are they? Our overall health and well-being? Our interactions with others and our relationships? Our success at work?**
- **We each have a choice as to how we care for our nervous system. Intentionally increasing our emotional intelligence impacts our own health and well-being and our ability to have positive and meaningful interactions with others. All people experience challenges and emotions. Many people notice and are able to describe times when they feel happy, sad or angry. Some people have grown their ability to recognize a wide range of emotions and are skilled at knowing what may contribute to feeling that way.**
- **And some people have practiced being able to consistently recognize their feelings in the moment, name them and pause (stop before acting), in a way that helps them take care of themselves and interact with others in healthy and productive ways. Everyone has the potential to do this. How does the way we care for our nervous system and choosing to support growing**

our emotional intelligence influence systems? Personal? Local?

- **The choices we make every day impact personal, local and global systems. If a person chooses to increase their emotional intelligence might they be practicing ethical discernment? Why or why not?**

Teaching Tip

Emotional intelligence is being able to notice and choose to impact your emotional state. One's emotional state includes emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, hope, loneliness, joy, and compassion.

Regulation of one's emotional state is essential for a healthy life and healthy interactions with others. The following strategies can help return you to your well-being zone: grounding, resourcing, and self-compassion.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Activity Overview

In this insight activity, students will further explore the issue they have identified in the last two lessons and analyze the impacts of our choices on the issue and evaluate possible solutions to the problem.

Instructions and Guiding Language

If possible, allow students to be in the same groups as in the previous lesson. Introduce the Impacts and Solutions document. Model the process by reviewing the document with one

example, Impacts and Solutions together as a class and then ask students to return to their groups to complete the document.

The document has two parts: Part A asks students to consider the impacts of our choices on the issue and Part B asks students to devise possible solutions to the problem. Part A will have 10 minutes and B will have 10 minutes.

"Return to your small groups and let's further examine the issue or problem we identified in our last two lessons.

Today we are going to discuss the impact that we and other people have on the issue we are exploring.

When looking at the choices that have affected this system, let's consider them through a lens of ethical discernment and active compassion.

As a group, you will reflect on the problem and then devise a possible solution to the problem using your lens of ethical discernment."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions and Guiding Language

Students select one question to discuss within a small group and share out with the whole class.

This reflection engages students in a small and then whole group discussion. The aim of this reflection is for students to see the downsides and benefits of being a systems thinker through the lens of relationships and feelings of connection with others.

Through their discussion, students should identify that a lack of systems thinking can lead people to experience loneliness which can lead to an erosion of trust towards others and suspicion of intentions. This hinders our ability to trust others and work collaboratively with them.

Whereas being a systems thinker reminds us of the connections we have with others and cultivates both a sense of appreciation and gratitude towards others.

Having developed our understanding of ethical discernment and having gained experience with it, we can begin to apply it throughout our life. We can also embrace the insights garnered from being a systems thinking as we foster gratitude, appreciation, and a sense of connection to others.

In small groups please respond to the following prompts:

- 1. How does being a systems thinker help us to address the incorrect outlook that believes we are self-made and that we don't need to rely on others?**
- 2. What are some of the pitfalls or downsides of thinking or feeling we are not connected to others?**
- 3. How does systems thinking lead to compassionate responses towards others?**
- 4. How will you work to apply the skills of systems thinking in your life?"**

Example

Cell Phone Issues

Directions:

Complete the graphic organizer below to devise a solution to the issue your group is exploring.

Issue Description: _____ Cell Phone Issues _____

Part 1: Considering Impact

Discuss the following questions as a group. Write down ideas and insights.

1. Name and describe the issue in detail.

The issue we are looking at is the use of social media on cell phones and other personal devices. We consider this to be an issue because cell phones and social media are very distracting, you can miss out on important information or social interactions when you are distracted by your phone. Phones also give us a false sense of connection. Some people look to their cell-phones as a way to connect with others and this can cause isolation and lack of in-person exchanges. When we are connected on cell phones there can be many misconceptions because we can't hear each other's tone or read each other's body language through text messaging. It is also easier to say harmful things when you are communicating over a device. We also have new fears like FOMO, fear of missing out. Cell phones and social media can be addicting.

2. Who or what may have contributed to the issue? What are some possible causes for this issue?

Some studies show that teenagers spend so much time on social media for the following reasons:

- a. the fear of missing out if not on social media
- b. social media strengthens connections and makes them feel less lonely, and
- c. social media is a fun way of passing time.

3. Identify some choices that have impacted this issue. Who made these choices?

Viewing social media as a safer way to interact, seeing it as providing us more control, mirroring what adults are doing.

Example

Cell Phone Issues

(continued)

Part 2: Devise a Plan to Improve the System/Issue or Solve the Issue

Devise a possible solution(s) to the identified issues. Consider the short and long term consequences of the solution.

Possible Solution(s) and Action Steps	Short-term & Long-term Consequences	Possible Unintended Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set time limits for myself• Be intentional about what I am using my cell phone• Erase apps that I find do not contribute to my well-being <p>Action Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have cell phone-free mornings• Plug my cell phone away from my bedroom and do not sleep near it• Use my cell phone for communication and research and limit my social media time• Take Snapchat off my cell phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling better about my relationship with technology• Setting boundaries• Being present and available in my immediate environment• Better management of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less stress

Example

Negative Self-talk

Directions:

Complete the graphic organizer below to devise a solution to the issue your group is exploring.

Issue Description: _____ Negative Self Talk _____

Part 1: Considering Impact

Discuss the following questions as a group. Write down ideas and insights.

1. Name and describe the issue in detail.

- The issue is negative self-talk
- Individual choices around responding to a perceived “failure” like failing a test.
- Individual choices of lack of preparing for a test.
- Norms and perspectives related to how grades impact self-worth

2. Who or what may have contributed to the issue? What are some possible causes for this issue?

- Our tendency to be self-critical
- Negative bias: We tend to get hooked on negative aspects more easily
- The motivation could have been to use negative self-talk as a way to improve or do better next time

3. Identify some choices that have impacted this issue. Who made these choices?

- Choosing the negative inner critic instead of the positive one
- One’s choice to view oneself negatively and comparing one’s performance with others’

Example

Negative Self-talk

(continued)

Part 2: Devise a Plan to Improve the System/Issue or Solve the Issue

Devise a possible solution(s) to the identified issues. Consider the short and long term consequences of the solution.

Possible Solution(s)	Short-term & Long-term Consequences	Possible Unintended Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of resilience practices• Talk to a trusted person• Be intentional about positive self-talk <p>Action Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do a few minutes of resourcing and grounding once a day• Seek out a trusted friend or adult and ask for support and solutions• Say positive things to myself when I am in my personal “Zone of Resiliency”• When I am up against a struggle, I can talk to myself as if I am speaking with and supporting a friend.	<p>Short-term Consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling regulated• Successfully work through challenging thoughts and emotions• Increasing my level of presence and awareness• Developing and maintaining meaningful relationships• Practicing kindness and compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better

Graphic Organizer

Impacts and Solutions

Directions:

Complete the graphic organizer below to devise a solution to the issue your group is exploring.

Issue or Problem: _____

Part 1: Considering Impact (10 minutes)

Discuss the following questions as a group. Write down ideas and insights.

1. Name and describe the issue in detail.
2. Who or what may have contributed to the issue? What are some possible causes for this issue?
3. Identify some choices that have impacted this issue. Who made these choices?

Graphic Organizer

Impacts and Solutions

(continued)

Part 2: Devise a Plan to Improve the System/Issue or Solve the Issue (10 minutes)

Devise a possible solution(s) to the identified issues. Consider the short and long term consequences of the solution.

Possible Solution(s) and Action Steps	Short-term & Long-term Consequences	Possible Unintended Consequences

Enduring Capabilities

1. Attention and Self-Awareness



- a. **Attending to Our Body and Sensations:** Notice and describe sensations in the body, and understand how they relate to stress and well-being.
- b. **Attending to Emotions:** Attend to and identify one's emotions in type and intensity as they arise.
- c. **Map of the Mind:** Categorize emotions in relation to one's own experience and to existing emotion models.

2. Self-Compassion



- a. **Understanding Emotions in Context:** Understand how emotions arise within the context of underlying needs, perceptions, attitudes, and situations.
- b. **Self-Acceptance:** Accept oneself and one's emotions by understanding their context, allowing for a relaxation of self-judgment.

3. Self-Regulation



- a. **Balancing the Body:** Regulate the body and nervous system to optimize well-being, especially when affected by stress.
- b. **Cognitive and Impulse Control:** Direct and sustain attention on chosen objects, tasks, or experiences, avoiding distraction.
- c. **Navigating Emotions:** Respond constructively to impulses and emotions and cultivate the behaviors and attitudes that facilitate one's long-term well-being.

4. Interpersonal Awareness



- a. **Attending to Our Social Reality:** Recognize our inherently social nature and attend to the presence of others and the roles they play in our lives.
- b. **Attending to Our Shared Reality with Others:** Appreciate what we share with others on a fundamental level, such as wanting to experience happiness and avoid hardships, having emotions and body states, and other common experiences.
- c. **Appreciating Diversity and Difference:** Appreciate that part of our shared reality is the diversity, uniqueness, and difference of individuals and groups, learning to respect those differences and the way they add to our collective life.

Enduring Capabilities

(continued)

5. Compassion for Others

- a. **Understanding Others' Feelings and Emotions in Context:** Understand others' feelings and reactions in relation to the situations in which they occur, and understand that, like oneself, others have feelings caused by needs.
- b. **Appreciating and Cultivating Kindness and Compassion:** Value the benefits of kindness and compassion and purposefully nourish them as a disposition.
- c. **Appreciating and Cultivating Other Ethical Dispositions:** Value and foster development of ethical dispositions and prosocial emotions such as forgiveness, patience, contentment, generosity, and humility.



6. Relationship Skills

- a. **Empathetic Listening:** Listen attentively with the purpose of more fully understanding others and their needs.
- b. **Communication Skills:** Communicate compassionately in a way that empowers self and others.
- c. **Helping Others:** Offer help to others according to their needs and proportionate to one's ability.
- d. **Conflict Transformation:** Respond constructively to conflict and facilitate collaboration, reconciliation, and peaceful relations.



7. Appreciating Interdependence

- a. **Understanding Interdependent Systems:** Comprehend the interrelated nature of our world and the methods of systems thinking.
- b. **Individuals within a Systems Context:** Recognize how all individuals exist within a systems context, and how they affect and are affected by that context.



8. Recognizing Common Humanity

- a. **Appreciating the Fundamental Equality of All:** Extend the realization of fundamental equality and common humanity to those outside one's immediate community and ultimately to the world.
- b. **Appreciating How Systems Affect Well-Being:** Recognize how systems can promote or compromise well-being on cultural and structural levels, such as by promoting positive values or perpetuating problematic beliefs and inequities.



Enduring Capabilities

(continued)

9. Community and Global Engagement



- a. **Exploring One's Potential for Effecting Positive Change in Community and World:** Recognize one's own capacity to individually or collaboratively effect positive change based on one's abilities and opportunities.
- b. **Engaging in Communal and Global Solutions:** Explore and reflect on creative and collaborative solutions to issues affecting one's community or the world.

The SEE Learning Framework: Enduring Capabilities

		DIMENSIONS		
		AWARENESS	COMPASSION	ENGAGEMENT
DOMAINS	PERSONAL			
	SOCIAL			
	SYSTEMS			



A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

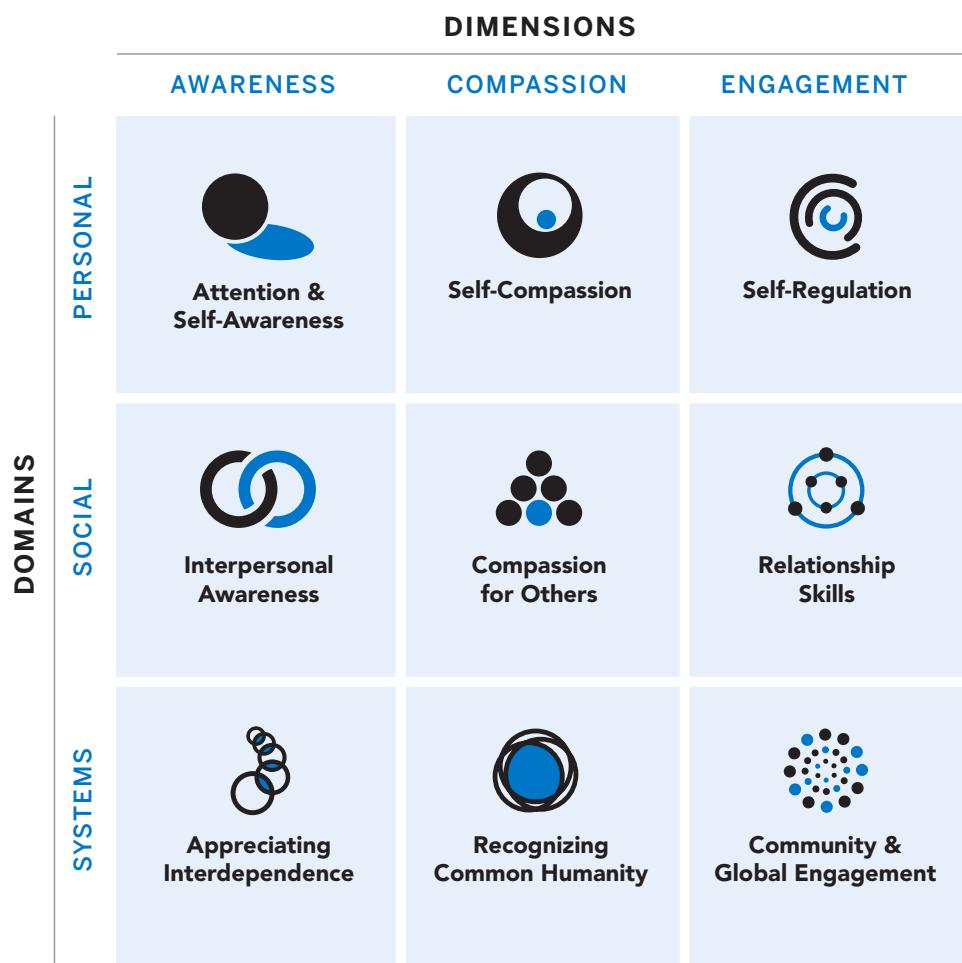
HIGH SCHOOL

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Compassion in Action

SEE Learning and the Purpose of the Compassion in Action Project

SEE Learning® (Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning) is an international program designed to foster social, emotional, and ethical learning in education at all levels (elementary school, middle school, high school, and higher education). SEE learning is grounded in the idea that education can and should be expanded to foster the values and competencies that lead to greater happiness for both individuals and society at large. The purpose of SEE Learning is to create a more aware and compassionate world by building competencies in students that promote attention and awareness, resilience, compassion for self and others, critical thinking and ethical discernment. By developing these inner competencies, students worldwide can assume individual and collective responsibility through their actions to create a more aware and compassionate world.



Project Overview

This project is directed at high school students (age 14-19). It can be implemented over the course of the year. One clear pathway is to have it serve as a culminating or capstone project on the basis of completing the SEE Learning curriculum. The chapter provides a guide for creating, planning, implementing, and presenting a SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project CAP. In addition to outlining the process for engaging in the CAP, ideas are provided to help adapt and implement the capstone project into different international contexts and educational settings.

The CAP can, and should, be adapted to meet the needs of students and the school community it is implemented in. The resources provided in the chapter will enable individuals and schools to effectively integrate the CAP into their curriculum and educational programming.

Student Outcomes

The CAP seeks to develop students who embody SEE Learning competencies. This includes:

- Identifying personal pathways to engage in compassionate activities
- Reflecting on how compassion can become embodied through actions
- Cultivating a sense of purpose and experience flourishing through service focused on compassion
- Recognizing how they can make a difference through identifying goals, planning action, and engaging in activities that benefit oneself and others
- Developing lifelong skills related to leadership, taking the initiative, and assuming responsibility for the welfare of others
- Engaging as a systems thinker in anticipating, discerning, and coordinating the changing factors associated with the project
- Overcoming challenges and cultivate resilience through each of the project stages
- Appreciating how they are a part of a local and global community and how their welfare is interdependent with the welfare of others

Responsibilities of the Student

The project aims to provide a forum for students to demonstrate how they can positively impact the world around them with awareness and compassion. To accomplish these, students need to engage with the project weekly for over a year, devoting time to each aspect of the project. Throughout the project, students will document their process from envisioning to presenting.

This documentation will result in the creation of a CAP portfolio. Upon the completion of the project, the student will submit their portfolio to the coordinator or supervising teacher who will review it based on the criteria outlined within the portfolio rubric or according to the standard they determine for successful completion.

CAP Student Expectations

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the CAP requirements, timelines, evaluation criteria, and presentation criteria
2. Establish personal and project goals
3. Engage in meetings with the coordinator or supervising teacher to discuss and determine project plans
4. Collect evidence of activity and document each aspect of the project and submit with the portfolio
5. Submit the CAP portfolio for final review to a coordinator or supervising teacher
6. Present their project to a public audience (students, teachers, parents/family members, community members, etc)

SEE Learning Compassion in Action Experiences

The SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project (CAP) experiences can take many different forms. They can occur as extensions to a project-based learning experience or as a separate culminating experience required for graduation. The CAP experiences can be structured and coordinated through the school. They can also be completely student led to fulfill volunteer or service hours needed to support college applications.

One of the most essential tasks for a school in the development of the CAP is to identify how to allot time in scheduling and determine who is responsible for coordination. Coordination can occur on behalf of a supervising teacher. It can also take shape with a designated coordinator. Coordination can also be provided by administrators or volunteers. Regardless of who is responsible, a coordinator should be identified within a school site to support the student planning, implementation, and presentation phases of the project. The coordinator will also need to engage in communication and evaluation, and support the student presentations.

The SEE Learning Capstone Experience can occur as a single event or consist of a series of events spread over an extended period of time. It is not considered best practice to designate a predetermined number of hours required for the project, rather the amount allocated to the project should be guided by the nature of the project selected. As stated in the expectations section for students, the project should “demonstrate a sustained and committed engagement” rather than a predetermined number of hours. The CAP requires planning and coordination. Although it can be a singular event, that event should be developed, coordinated, implemented, and reflected upon. It is considered best practice for students to engage in a series of planned experiences. In this way, they will have multiple opportunities for reflection and to demonstrate the development of SEE Learning competencies. The CAP should incorporate at least two competencies (found within the SEE Learning framework). A student can select more than two but should be aware of the need to have evidence from their project of each of their focused SEE Learning competencies.

SEE Learning Compassion in Action Projects experiences can manifest in numerous different ways. The primary focus of the project is for students to unify their passion areas with the SEE Learning competencies and make those competencies visible and meaningful. The project can be based on a personal interest, skillset, talent, or focus area in which they would like to grow or develop. Within these areas, students will need to develop the competencies that constitute the SEE Learning framework and demonstrate evidence of how they embodied the enduring capabilities of SEE Learning throughout their CAP.

Phases of the CAP

The SEE Learning Capstone Project is organized into five stages for students, coordinators, and parents/guardians: exploration, planning, implementation, reflection, and demonstration. These stages help students progress from the initial ideas to the presentation. In addition, the project steps provide a process and order by which students can integrate the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project into their academic and personal life.

This process also has many benefits outside of completing the project. It builds critical enduring skills associated with critical thinking, facing adversity, demonstrating resilience, and cultivating executive functioning skills (organization, task initiation, goal prioritization, working memory, sustained attention, planning, etc.). Most importantly, it provides an essential culminating experience by which to synthesize, in an embodied way, what they have learned throughout their SEE Learning education.

The stages of the CAP enable a student to explore their passions and interests. They can then relate and connect those interests to the SEE Learning competencies and enduring capabilities. Throughout the project, students will have opportunities to reflect on how their actions embody the SEE Learning competencies and how they are demonstrating the SEE Learning enduring capabilities.

As students work through the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project stages, they will develop skills that will assist them in many aspects of their life. This process begins with exploration. Students are first asked to apply self-awareness as they explore a topic or issue they are interested in. This exploration will include research that occurs in multiple ways. Research should help the student develop a meaningful understanding of the topic or issue, providing considerations related to context, history, impact, causation, and other factors.

Phase 1

In this first phase, students are asked to raise questions and cultivate meaningful inquiry about the topics or issues. The SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project aims to create a more aware and compassionate world. As students explore a specific topic or issue, they will be asked to examine how they can bring more awareness and compassion into the topic they want to explore. Finally, students will be prompted to take action by actively engaging in the topic or issue. To do this, they will need to engage in the planning phase of the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project.

Phase 2

Having conducted their initial exploration, students will define how they will engage in the project. Their engagement can occur in many ways. However, students should plan to have an authentic experience that aligns with the topic or issue they are engaging in. An authentic experience can take many forms. It can consist of participating in an activity, demonstrating something, experiencing or learning something. On the basis of deep reflection, students will be able to identify how they are demonstrating and embodying the enduring capabilities of SEE Learning.

Phase 3

The third phase of the project is implementation. As students implement their project, they will be asked to reflect on, and document, the experience as it is occurring. This is to help cultivate meaningful insights. The implementation of the plan may differ from what the students envisioned. They will likely face challenges and difficulties as they engage and implement their projects. Reflection during this phase is critical as it allows students to face adversity and cultivate resilience.

Phase 4

The next phase is reflection. After completing their authentic experience, students will be asked to engage in a project reflection to understand how the project was explored, planned, and implemented from a holistic perspective. Finally, students will be asked to examine how they have changed through this experience and how that change has contributed to greater awareness and compassion.

Phase 5

The final phase of the CAP consists of students presenting their experience to an audience. An authentic audience involves members who have a vested interest in the topic. It could include presenting at a public forum, a city council meeting, or other public forums. Presentations to authentic audiences typically occur outside of the classroom. This may not be possible for every school or learning context, however it is highly encouraged to seek out an authentic audience for the culminating presentation of the project. It is delivered to stakeholders of the topics or issues the students examined and took action towards. Sharing this experience with others provides a forum for students to demonstrate the insights they gained and also inspire others to take action toward building a more aware and compassionate world.

Exploration

Students inventory their passions, areas of interests, skills, and abilities that can be used or framed through the lens of awareness and compassion. Students can consider how they can utilize their project to promote personal growth and development. Personal growth and development can occur when students align their passions and areas of interest with service. For example, a student who is a passionate musician could volunteer time to teach young students or perform at an event that raises awareness of an issue. Students can also frame the project in terms of supporting the growth and development of others. Students can also support an existing cause or develop a new initiative. Students can identify a need they want to address. The goal of the CAP is to help create a more aware and compassionate world. This goal can be achieved on both an internal and external basis. As students narrow in on a topic or issue, it will be important for them to cultivate a strong wish or desire to benefit themselves and others. This wish and commitment will sustain their effort and help them to weather the challenges and adversity they may face as they implement their project.

Planning

Students need to define how they will engage in the project. They need to construct an action plan and determine the required resources, the timeline, the new skills they may need to develop to

complete the project, and ways to engage in ongoing reflection throughout the project. They need to identify outcomes that they would like to achieve. As they craft clear outcomes, they will be able to clearly identify the steps and processes needed to achieve those outcomes. The planning phase should anticipate the obstacles they will face and also how they might work to overcome those obstacles. Common obstacles students may face are:

- Estimating how long something will take
- Communicating with others and coordinating with project members or representatives of organizations
- Dealing with external factors that cause the plan to change
- Documenting experiences while also guiding or participating in them
- Having different opinions or perspectives on how to go about something related to the project

Implementation

The implementation phase allows students to move from a concept to action. As they navigate this phase, they will need to reflect on a regular basis in order to adjust and respond to the multitude of factors that are within and outside of their control. Students will be asked to maintain regular reflections on their experiences. Reflections will be documented within the CAP Reflection Log document. In their process of implementation, they will need to problem solve and respond to unforeseen challenges. Students can work individually or with others to implement their CAP. As they implement their project, it will be essential for students to apply the SEE Learning competencies. They can do this through formal and informal self-reflection on how they are embodying the SEE Learning enduring capabilities.

Reflection

The reflection phase allows students to examine the experience from a holistic perspective. Through a reflection process, students will describe what occurred, how they cultivated an awareness in themselves and others, how they fostered compassion, how they demonstrated resilience, and how they will carry this experience forward. Students will be asked to connect their personal growth, their achievements, and the insights they generated from experience. They will also be asked to identify future pathways the project could lead to regarding fostering awareness and compassion.

Presentation

Students are asked to demonstrate to an authentic audience what they accomplished and how they cultivated awareness and compassion in themselves and others. Through demonstration and communication, others can learn about and experience the student's SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. The presentation intends to deepen the students' insights to become embodied. The presentation also allows others to respond and engage with the project. This engagement has the potential to encourage others to contribute and extend the student's project in the pursuit of a more aware and compassionate world.

The CAP allows students to achieve the following:

- Foster a more aware and compassionate world.
- Develop personal insights and competencies that promote personal flourishing and wellbeing.
- Identify how they embodied SEE Learning enduring capabilities, specifically Attention & Self-awareness, Self-Compassion, Self-Regulation, Interpersonal Awareness, Compassion for Others, Relationship Skills, Appreciating Interdependence, Recognizing Common Humanity, Community & Global Engagement.
- Develop and demonstrate executive functioning skills (task initiation, goal/prioritization, persistence, organization, working memory, etc.)
- Fulfill school-specific requirements related to advisory, graduation, project-based learning, college applications, community service requirements, etc.

SEE Learning Compassion in Action: Examples

Engaging in a service project is one pathway for students to create a more aware and compassionate world. The focus of service empowers students to see how they can make meaningful contributions to the community and the world. Service within SEE Learning enables students to respond to an authentic need and is imbued with a collaborative exchange grounded in two-way engagement.

Through engaging in service, students cultivate SEE Learning enduring capabilities as they develop awareness, resilience, compassion for self and others, and other SEE Learning competencies. The act of service requires students to problem solve, become more self-aware, and experience a sense of common humanity and compassion with others that demonstrate a need. Although the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Projects can assume many different forms, students are encouraged to engage in some aspect of service throughout their projects. Students will learn to identify personal, community, social, and environmental needs through the exploration, planning, implementation,

reflection, and presentation stages. Through reciprocal and interactive collaboration, students can cultivate a sense of purpose and accountability for alleviating the needs they are striving to address.

It is essential to acknowledge that service comes in many different forms and can occur at many levels. Although service can occur at the school level, it is recommended that service experiences go beyond the school to extended communities (local, regional, national, or international). Community engagement implies interaction and collaboration with others. By working locally, students can cultivate connections with others that support the formation of relationships, see fundamental and sustained change, address real-world problems, and provide capacity for long-term sustainable solutions. By engaging locally, students can then make and extend connections at a larger scale (regional, national, international). Partnerships can be formed with individuals and organizations to build the capacity to address issues. Connections can also be made with other students worldwide engaging the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. Digital tools can remove barriers to connecting, networking, and engaging with students elsewhere. These same digital tools can support students by engaging in networking, communicating their initiative, developing partnerships, and sharing about impact. Throughout the experience, students are expected to regularly and meaningfully engage in substantive personal reflection on how they are cultivating and embodying the enduring capabilities of SEE Learning. Students can document their reflection insights within the CAP Reflection Log document.

One of the most important aspects of service is sustained engagement. This requires students to cultivate a deep commitment to the need they are addressing and to foster resilience as they face inevitable challenges or barriers. Through this extended effort, students will begin to see how they can affect change and meet the needs of others. The goal of these efforts is to see within the reflections of students the embodiment of awareness, resilience, and compassion. Although it is encouraged for students to engage in service outside the school environment, there may be opportunities for students to offer service within the school. Regardless of the context, the goal is for students to identify an authentic need and to develop a plan to address that need. Although individual experiences or singular incidents of service can be rewarding and beneficial, it is highly encouraged for students to engage in multiple service experiences over an extended and sustained duration of time. Through this regular engagement, relationships are cultivated, and mutual benefit fostered. For example, rather than a single trash pick-up at a local park, students can decide to form an organization or association that engages in regular trash pick-ups to ensure sustainability and long-term benefit.

There may be times when students decide to access an issue that requires immediate action such as a disaster or community emergency. When developing a project around an urgent need, students would still go through the phases required for the CAP. However, they may need to modify elements associated with process and timeline. In this situation, a student or group of students would quickly assess the needs of the issue and develop a response. Given the accelerated exploration phase, students should engage in research and investigation after the authentic experience to understand what the underlying causes of the issue were or what factors contributed to the issue and emergency response. On the basis of this deeper knowledge, students can develop a plan or create a pathway for ongoing support of the issues. An example of this could be responding to a Tsunami by providing aid initially. This effort could also be coupled with work to support an education campaign that helps foster resilience and preparation for future Tsunamis. What is critical is for students to utilize discernment and to embody systems thinking to identify truly compassionate activities that are capable of alleviating the suffering of others, both now and in the future.

Students can elect to engage in fundraising to address an issue by supporting an organization. As students follow the phases outlined within the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project, they will create a meaningful understanding of the organization they wish to support. First, students must investigate the need and the organization addressing it. Students can then utilize the phases of the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project to plan, develop skills, and implement their fundraising efforts. Students should communicate with the organization they wish to support and create accountability for the funds they raise. Students should be encouraged to contribute in other ways to address the issues through direct action, advocacy, or outreach efforts.

One common pathway for students to offer service is through volunteering. Volunteering is common and often utilized to assist. However, students who engage in volunteerism are not necessarily engaging in a SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. For volunteer efforts to be considered an authentic experience within the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project, these efforts need to exist as a component of the extended project phases (exploration, planning, implementation, reflection, and presentation). In this way, volunteerism can become a component of a broader process of engagement aimed at cultivating awareness and compassion.

Guiding Students through the CAP

Given the complexity of the CAP it is recommended that a teacher supervises each participating student or the school identifies a staff member to serve as the CAP Coordinator.

The role of the supervising teacher or coordinator is to guide the students through each phase of the project scope and ensure that each criterion outlined in the evaluation rubric is completed. Guiding students begins with an information session (please see online resources for information session materials; agenda, slide deck, etc). This information is provided twice. One session is for interested students and one session is for family members and students. Given the commitment of the CAP, it will be important for students to receive support beyond what the supervising teacher or coordinator provides. Guiding students through the process of the project requires a minimum of three meeting sessions. The first meeting session focuses on developing an idea for the project. In this session the supervising teacher or coordinator will help the student engage in a personal inventory of interests, skills, and passions. This session will also focus on helping the students to understand the purpose of the project (the cultivation of awareness and compassion) and connect it with the identified areas of interest. The second session focuses on reviewing and providing feedback on the students' plans. On the basis of an approved plan, the student can move forward with implementing their project. The third session focuses on outlining the reflection and presentation process for the project. On the basis of this meeting, the student will submit their final reflection for review and their presentation plan.

Supervising Teacher or Coordinator Supports

1. Provide information through Whole Group Information Session and Individual Support Sessions
 - a. Whole Group Information Session
 - b. Interest Inventory and Planning Session
 - c. Reviewing the Student Plan
 - d. Reflecting on Implementation and Planning for Project Presentation
2. Provide feedback
 - a. Evaluate student portfolio and provide feedback
 - b. Attend student presentation and provide feedback

The project is a collaborative exchange among a group of students or between students and an organization. Therefore, all SEE Learning Capstone Projects should ensure the project phases are followed to meet all requirements. These requirements are provided below and directly shared

by the supervising teacher, or the school SLCSP coordinator in the initial information session for students and family members.

For any CAP, it is important to ensure that:

- there is a need for awareness and compassion in a personal or community-based issue
- there is a well-researched and thought-through plan
- all participating partners and collaborators have agreed to the project plan
- the risks and barriers to success have been explored and addressed within the plan
- there is a review of the project's benefits

The Role of Ongoing Reflection Throughout the Project

Students will submit a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates engagement and reflection throughout their project. Reflection is an important pathway for the SEE Learning enduring capabilities to become embodied. Ongoing and regular reflection is a key component of this projectCAP. The SEE Learning pedagogical model consists of three processes: received knowledge, critical insights, and embodied understanding. The goal of SEE Learning is for students to cultivate deeply embodied competencies in awareness, resilience, compassion for self and others, and ethical engagement. In order to achieve this, it has to become personal. Ongoing reflection enables students to use their critical thinking to investigate the topics deeply.

Students can use many different lines of approach to personalize their insights. As students personalize these insights, they get deepened. We refer to such experiences as "a-ha moments". The knowledge is not merely acquired but it has led to a new perspective on the world and has transformative power. This level of embodiment can endure for long, perhaps, for the rest of the students' life, and help shape how they interact with themselves and others.

It is important for students and supervising teachers or coordinators to build a culture of reflection. A primary focus of reflection should be ethical discernment and systems thinking. Students will be asked to reflect on the relationship and impact of their project on themselves, others, and their communities. They will also be asked to consider both short-term and long-term impacts their project may have. It will be essential for students to be informed about how to be reflective. Students will need to cultivate discernment through developing the skill set of reflection as they navigate the many choice points they experience throughout their project. It is also through

reflection, students will examine the impacts they may have as they progress through the planning, implementation, evaluation, and presentation of the project. The goal of strengthening the skill of reflection is for students to have improved problem solving skills, cultivate capacity for interpersonal attunement, and develop discernment skills that enable them to apply compassion in effective ways. The ability to engage in reflection before, during, and after an experience is also a benefit of engaging in the CAP. Reflection should not be limited to the project, rather it should be reinforced and supported in the learning experiences of SEE Learning. Meaningful reflection is not about quantity but rather quality. As students are developing the skill of reflection, providing them feedback on both the content and process of reflection is critical.

Feedback can and should be structured through peers and the supervising teacher or coordinator. Feedback can be offered in formal and informal ways. Examples include during the scheduled meeting sessions with the supervising teacher or coordinator, through a small group peer experience, or an informal discussion. Prioritizing reflection means that sufficient time and effort are given for this process. It is important for students and supervising teachers or coordinators to create space and time for reflection. The amount of reflection is determined by the students and should be ongoing. Students should identify moments worthy of reflection and document those reflections.

The purpose of reflection is to:

- Develop ethical discernment
- Cultivate a desire to benefit others
- Investigate how their inner state can impact the way they work through challenges, problem solving and using executive functioning skills
- Build stronger connections with others
- Examine areas for improvement and growth to support self-compassion to identify what tools they can use when working through challenges
- Become a systems thinker and understand the impacts of one's actions
- Grow into a lifelong learner and reflective practitioner
- Investigate personal and community values
- Apply prior learning to new experiences
- Receive feedback and identify how that can shape future actions

Different strategies can help students develop the competency of reflection. For example, one way to frame the reflection outlined below is for students to consider “what did I do?” and “how did I feel?” By reflecting on what happened and how it was experienced internally, students can gain insights and cultivate the embodiment of those insights.

- Express what happened: in their own words students can retell the story of what occurred by identifying important details or impact, what went well or was challenging, and what success or difficulties did they or others face.
- Describe feelings and responses: what were the sensations that arose during the experience and how were emotions and feelings shaped by the experiences.
- Examining motives: using monitoring awareness, students can reexamine decisions and actions made to cultivate awareness about themselves and others.
- Engage in inquiry: explore follow-up questions about people involved, issues that came up, processes that engaged in, and the short-term and long-term impacts.

Attributes of Reflection within the CAP

The students’ final capstone project portfolio should include sufficient evidence of reflection. This could include:

- Reflection on important moments from the project
 - A skill was gained
 - An obstacle was addressed
 - An impact on oneself or others was experienced
 - An achievement was made
 - An insight or emotion was experienced
- Experience-based reflection
 - Identify important moments
 - Explore impacts on oneself and others
 - Identify learning outcomes or insights that were gained
- Peer-based reflection to identify shared insights
- Overall project reflection

- Planning phase
- Implementation phase
- Presentation phase

Students will need to have modeled what reflection is and what ongoing and meaningful reflection consists of. The supervising teacher or coordinator will need to engage in the following activities to help students understand what reflection is and is not.

- Define reflection and provide examples of quality and shallow reflection.
- Model reflection by demonstrating both formal and informal ways to engage in reflection.
- Lead reflection exercises with students and have them lead reflection exercises with their peers.
- Share reflection on a regular basis to create a culture of reflection.
- Inspire reflection by providing opportunities for reflections by sharing statements, questions, or experiences that inspire reflection through thoughtful responses.

What reflection is	What reflection is not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeply personal • Is felt through sensations • Leads to change and awareness • Shapes perspective • Relevant • Applied • Flexible: can be done in many different ways • Creative • Supports self-awareness • Inspired • Surprising • Sometimes difficult • Supports planning and organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither positive or negative • Compelled • Evaluated • Overly hard to engage in • Copied from someone else • Identical each time • Led by teachers all the time • A brief summary • Critiqued by others • Meaningless or useless • Comes in one form (verbal, written, etc)

Timeline and Process Outline

The timeline for planning, implementing, and presenting the CAP varies from school to school depending on need and context. However, the goal of the project is to serve as a culmination of SEE Learning to help students take what has been learned in the classroom and apply it to the real world. The purpose is to foster compassion and awareness in both students and those they are serving. It is important that the project be manageable and completed within a school year. Different models are provided that outline the process of the project.

Phase 1: Introducing the CAP

This phase should occur the year prior to the capstone project. For example if a school culminates

in year/grade 12, then the project should be introduced in the middle of year/grade 11. This introduction should be provided to both students and parents/guardians so that they can begin thinking about different experiences or activities that could emerge as a capstone project. This introduction can occur by providing an information session either in person or online. It should also include sending information home and being available to field questions about the project. The reason for introducing this early is to ensure that students are prepared, do not miss potential opportunities, and understand the significance of the project. In some instances, opportunities may only exist at different times of the year and it is important that students can plan accordingly to fulfill their vision and intention of the project. For example, emergencies or events can sometimes arise that require timely and focused responses. Examples include:

- Natural Disasters
- Economic Challenges
- Events
- Conferences

Phase 2: Planning the CAP

The planning phase should begin at the start of the students' final year. With the support of a supervising teacher or coordinator the students will initiate the planning phase. Planning will require students to identify a topic for their project and outline the project's goals, timeline, implementation strategy, anticipated outcomes, and method/process for presentation. The first meeting they have with their supervising teacher or coordinator will focus on planning.

Phase 3: Implementing the CAP

The implementation phase will require students to engage and implement their project. This phase will prioritize ongoing reflection as students actively lead and guide the experiences they develop. Reflection is critical as students will likely face challenges or obstacles. They will need to adjust their plans as they work to implement their projects. This stage will require a meeting with their supervising teacher or coordinator to both check in on implementation progress and plan for their presentation. If schools do not have this option, then students can guide themselves through the process independently. Ongoing reflection that is documented within the reflection log will be important in this phase.

Phase 4: Presenting the CAP

The presentation phase will consist of the student or group of students organizing and sharing their project experiences through a presentation to an authentic audience. This presentation will be completely organized and led by the student. The supervising teacher or coordinator will play only a small support role, if needed. After the presentation, the final meeting with the supervising teacher or coordinator will occur. This meeting will focus on student reflection related to the experience of implementation, the presentation, and overall impact of the project on themselves and others.

Evaluation Criterion

Students will be evaluated on the successful completion of their SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. The project will be assessed based on the portfolio that students create. This portfolio consists of evidence from the project's planning, implementation, and presentation phases. In addition, artifacts and reflections will be constructed and collected through the project to create a body of evidence demonstrating students' engagement, reflection, and impact.

Elements of CAP Portfolio

Numerous resources have been provided to help guide project supervisors and students through the SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project. These resources are available at the SEE Learning website and can be modified to meet the needs of your students, program, or school. The resources include:

1. Initial CAP Topic Planning Template
2. CAP Project Planning Checklist
3. CAP Activity Description Template
4. CAP Reflection Log
5. SEE Learning Enduring Capabilities Alignment Template
6. CAP Project Implementation Rubric
7. CAP Final Reflection Template

SEE Learning provides educators with a comprehensive framework for the cultivation of social, emotional, and ethical competencies. It also provides an age-specific curriculum for K-12 schools, as well as a support structure for educator preparation, facilitator certification, and on-going professional development. SEE Learning builds upon the best practices in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and expands on them by drawing in new developments in educational practice and scientific research, including attention training, the cultivation of compassion for self and others, resilience skills based on trauma-informed care, systems thinking, and ethical discernment.

THE SEE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

		DIMENSIONS		
		AWARENESS	COMPASSION	ENGAGEMENT
DOMAINS	PERSONAL			
	SOCIAL			
	SYSTEMS			



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