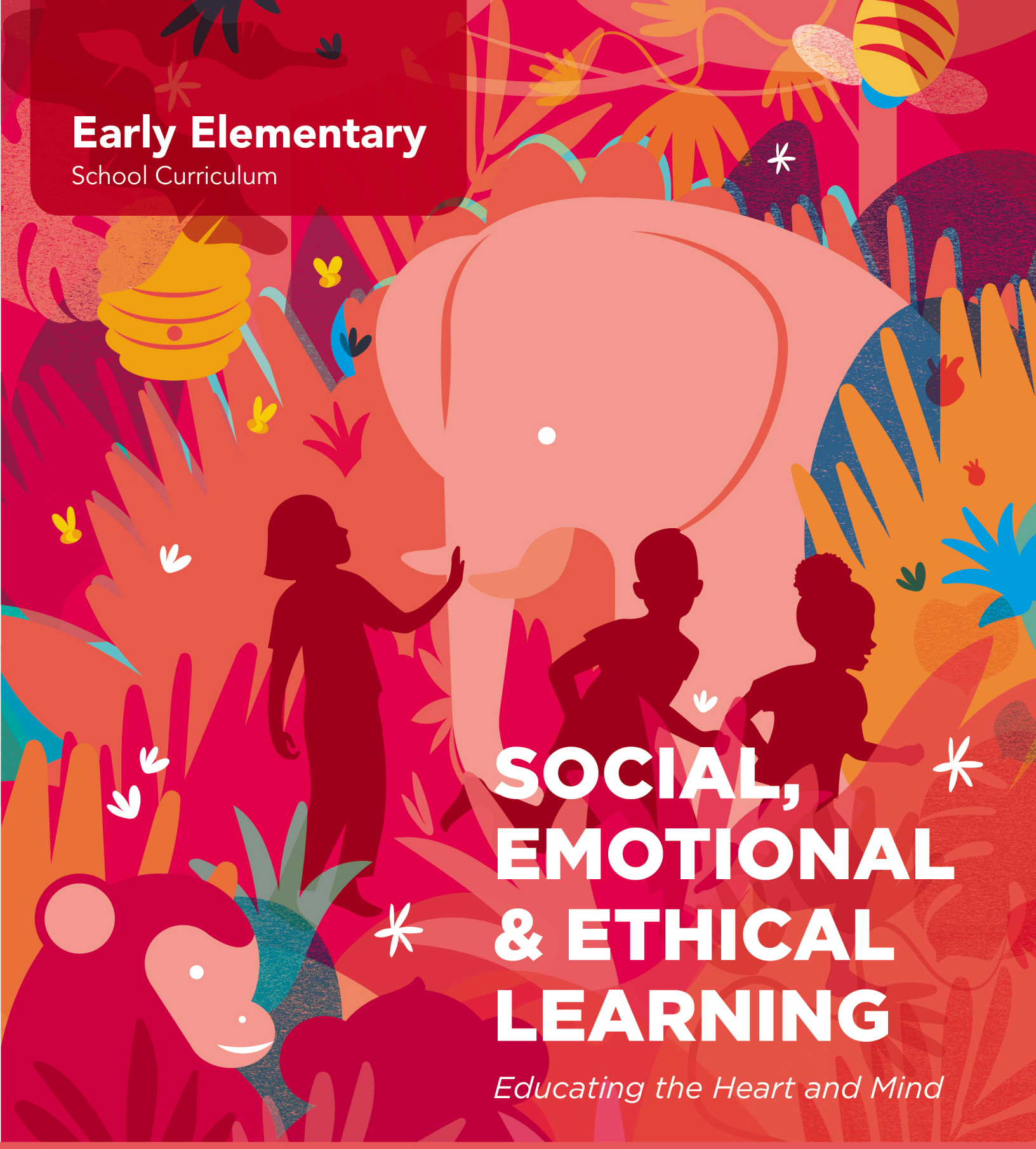


Early Elementary
School Curriculum

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & ETHICAL LEARNING

Educating the Heart and Mind

SEE Learning
Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Early Elementary

School Curriculum

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & ETHICAL LEARNING

Educating the Heart and Mind

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY
UNIVERSITY

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For more information, please visit **compassion.emory.edu**

SEE LEARNING

A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

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

Before implementing the SEE Learning curriculum, it is highly recommended that schools and educators first register with Emory University or one of its affiliates, and participate in an online or in-person educator preparation course. Where available, these steps will help ensure well-supported implementation, resulting in the highest quality experiences for students.

In addition, educators are encouraged to read the 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 thinkers 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. 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 both you and your students.

Over six hundred educators have participated in the SEE Learning program from 2016-2019. They have attended foundational workshops, engaged their classes in the SEE curriculum learning experiences, been visited and observed by members of the core SEE Learning team, and contributed their feedback and suggestions.

This curriculum was prepared under the supervision of Linda Lantieri, Senior Program Advisor for SEE Learning, Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, Associate Director for SEE Learning, and Lindy Settevendemie, Project Coordinator for SEE Learning. In addition, other chief curriculum writers include Ann McKay Bryson, Jennifer Knox, Emily Orr, Kelly Richards, and Christa Tinari. Numerous other educators and curriculum writers contributed in valuable ways to earlier versions of the curriculum, and nearly a hundred educators provided important feedback on individual learning experiences. As with all aspects of the SEE Learning program, the process was also overseen by Dr. Lobsang Tenzin Negi, Director of Emory's Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics.

Scope and Sequence

The SEE Learning curriculum consists of seven chapters (or units) and a final capstone project. Each chapter begins with an introduction that outlines the major content of the chapter, followed by three to seven learning experiences (or lessons). Each learning experience is designed to take from 20 to 40 minutes. The suggested time is considered the minimum time it would take to complete that learning experience and its components. However, learning experiences can always be expanded on a given day, or spread out over one or more days, for deeper and more graduated learning as time permits. Also, most learning experiences can readily 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 five parts. These are:

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

The five parts of the SEE Learning experience correspond to SEE Learning's pedagogical model, which goes from received knowledge to critical insight to embodied understanding. In general, the Presentation/Discussion section supports conveying received knowledge, the Insight Activity is aimed at sparking critical insights, and the Reflective Practice allows for deeper personal reflection that can lead to embodied understanding. 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 other, 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 follows four principles, known by the acronym SAFE.[1] These are:

- **Sequenced:** Connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development.
- **Active:** Active forms of learning to help students master new skills and attitudes.
- **Focused:** A component that emphasizes developing personal and social skills.
- **Explicit:** Targeting specific social and emotional skills.

[1] Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). https://casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches/

Facilitating individual chapters or learning experiences out of sequence can lead to confusion among your students. For example, many ideas 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 to students 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 that they have the foundational knowledge to move with confidence and understanding through each subsequent section, leading to a sense of agency and ownership of the core ideas over time.

Chapter 1: Creating a Compassionate Classroom

This chapter previews how systems thinking, compassion, and critical thinking are built into each chapter. At its core, SEE Learning is about students understanding how best to take care of themselves and each other, specifically with regard to what can be termed their social and emotional health and well-being. Therefore, all of SEE Learning can be seen as rooted in compassion: compassion for oneself (self-compassion) and compassion for others. One cannot, of course, simply tell students to be compassionate to others and to themselves; what is necessary is exploring the value of this mindset, showing a range of methods, and providing a set of tools. As students come to understand the value of these tools and methods, they will begin to employ them for themselves. At that point, they become their own and one another's teachers.

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 even compromising 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 child 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 of an 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. This is the topic of Chapter 3, "Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness."

Attention training has numerous 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 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. 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

Emotions are also taught within the context of chains of cause and effect and systems thinking. This chapter helps introduce students to the idea of thinking about their emotions, and starting to 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. Because strong emotions can prompt behaviors, by learning to navigate their emotions, students are also learning how to "hold back" or exercise restraint from behaviors that harm themselves and others. When they recognize this, they will understand the value of cultivating good "emotional hygiene." This does not mean suppressing emotions; rather, it means developing a healthy way of dealing with them.

Chapter 5: Learning About and From One Another

With this chapter, the curriculum turns from the Personal to the Social domain, and the learning experiences here seek to help students turn their attention towards others. Many of the same skills that were cultivated in Chapters 1-4 for the Personal domain can be applied here also, but this time while focusing outward towards their classmates and those they encounter on a daily basis.

Children of this age are naturally curious about others and attentive to them, but they sometimes lack the skills to know how to attend to others, ask questions, or explore their similarities and differences with others in meaningful ways. This chapter focuses on three key areas, each covered in a single learning experience: understanding others' emotions in context; mindful listening; and exploring ways in which human beings are the same and different. The continuous underlying theme of these learning experiences is empathy: the ability to understand and resonate with another's situation and emotional state. Empathy, and its attendant skill of mindful listening, in turn lays the groundwork for the following chapter on self-compassion and compassion for others.

At this age, children may sometimes assume that others always think and feel the same as they do, or if they do not, they may feel that someone else's differences are such that they are completely different, with little in common. The point of this chapter is to explore the middle ground between these two extremes, appreciating both commonalities and differences for what they are, and seeing that neither negates the other. On such a middle ground, one that embraces both commonalities and differences, a respectful and genuine compassion for others can emerge.

Chapter 6: Compassion for Self and Others

This chapter focuses on how students can learn to be more kind to each other and to themselves. Principally, this involves helping students increase their awareness of their own emotional lives and those of others. When students are able to understand others' emotions and behaviors in context, they will be better able to empathize with others. This in turn can lead to feeling more connected with others, and thus less isolated and lonely.

The overarching theme of this chapter is compassion and self-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."[2] Compassion therefore 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. These qualities are also important for 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 one's personal failings."[3]

It is important to help young students explore self-compassion, because they are just entering a stage in life where they will be increasingly evaluated in numerous ways by their teachers, their parents and guardians, and their peers. It is therefore critical that they learn that any setbacks they encounter in learning or in life do not reflect any lack of personal worth on their part, but can serve as growth experiences for their future development.

Chapter 7: We're All In This Together

Chapter 7 of the curriculum focuses on systems and systems thinking. These are not entirely new topics, since they have 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 within a context, and that a spark can turn into a forest fire, affecting everything around it. Systems thinking is built into the entire curriculum, but in this chapter it is approached directly and explicitly.

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."

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[2] Jinpa, Thupten. *A Fearless Heart: How the courage to be compassionate can transform our lives* (Avery, 2016), xx.

[3] https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/

While this may sound complicated, even small children have an innate capacity for systems thinking. Although they may not use the term "system," they have an intuitive understanding that their family or home environment is complex unit with specific dynamics. Not everyone in a family or classroom likes the same things or acts the same way—and changing one thing in these systems can affect everyone. What is necessary in education is to take this innate capacity for systems thinking and cultivate it further through practice and application.

SEE Learning Capstone Project: Building a Better World

The SEE Learning Capstone Project is a culminating action activity for your students. Students reflect on what it would be like if their entire school were a school of kindness and self-compassion, engaged in the practices of SEE Learning. After imagining what that would look like, they compare their vision to what is actually happening at their school. They then choose a single area to focus on and create a set of individual and collective actions. After engaging in these actions, they reflect on their experiences and share their knowledge with others.

The Capstone Project is divided into eight steps, each which will take a minimum of one session to complete. This curriculum serves as a full school year's worth of content. As you plan for doing the entire curriculum and ending with the Capstone Project, it is recommended that you build in at least eight, and ideally 10-12, sessions for the completion of this collaborative project.

Adaptations

Educators are the best judges of what's needed in their classrooms and schools. As such, you 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 you are considering making more significant changes, we encourage you to first look carefully at the objectives for that learning experience, and that you consider discussing the changes with a colleague to ensure that they do not unintentionally alter the intent, impact, or safety of the learning experience.

Abbreviated Version

If you cannot implement the entire SEE Learning curriculum, we recommend doing the following abbreviated version. This cuts the length of the curriculum in half, but still includes critical elements from all chapters and progresses in a logical order so that later skills are being built upon a proper foundation. The abbreviated version consists of the following learning experiences (LE's) and omits the final capstone project. If the entire abbreviated version cannot be done, simply progress as far along it as time allows.

Chapter 1: LE 1, LE 4, LE 5
Chapter 2: LE 1, LE 2, LE 4, LE 5
Chapter 3: LE 1, LE 2, LE 4
Chapter 4: LE 1, LE 2, LE 4
Chapter 5: LE 1
Chapter 6: LE 1, LE 3, LE 4
Chapter 7: LE 1, LE 2

Effectively Implementing SEE Learning

The effective implementation of any program plays a crucial role in influencing the outcomes and benefits for students.[4] 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 program effectiveness.[5] 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 support of the implementation process is vital. In their meta-analysis, Durlak and colleagues 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.[6]

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

[4] The SEE Learning program is indebted to Prof. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl for contributing this and the following section to this introduction.

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

[6] 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.

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.
- **Adaptation:** any ways in which the program was altered or adapted.
- **Participant Engagement:** the degree to which students engaged in the activities.[7]

What *is* Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

The SEE Learning framework builds on the innovative work done in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and other educational initiatives that seek to introduce holistic education into schools. 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 effectively and ethically.[8]

SEL competencies are viewed as "mastery skills" underlying virtually all aspects of human functioning. Moreover, SEL offers educators, students, families, and communities relevant strategies and practices to better prepare for "the tests of life, not a life of tests."[9] SEL competencies comprise the foundational skills for positive health practices, engaged citizenship, and academic and social success in school and beyond. SEL is sometimes called "the missing piece," because it represents

[7] 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.

[8] 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.

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

a part of education that is inextricably linked to school success that may not have been explicitly stated or given much attention until recently. SEL emphasizes 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 SEL skills can be learned through intentionally providing nurturing and caring learning environments and experiences.[10]

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, many 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. Because of this ongoing debate, SEE Learning chooses to focus 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 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. 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, 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.

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

Thank You

We thank you for your interest in SEE Learning. We hope it provides a useful resource for you and your students, and hope that you will share your experiences and insights with the SEE Learning community in your region and worldwide.

SEE LEARNING

A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1

Creating a Compassionate Classroom

1

Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics | Emory University

Overview

At its core, SEE Learning is about students learning how best to take care of themselves and each other, specifically with regard to what can be termed their emotional and social health. Therefore, all of SEE Learning can be seen as rooted in compassion: compassion for oneself (self-compassion) and compassion for others. It is not enough, however, to tell students to be compassionate to others and to themselves; what is necessary is showing a range of methods and providing a set of tools. As students come to understand the value of these tools and methods, they will begin to employ them for themselves. At that point, they become their own and each others' teachers.

For this reason, Chapter 1, "Creating a Compassionate Classroom," introduces the foundational concepts of kindness and compassion. "Kindness" is the term employed for younger students, whereas "compassion" is employed for older students. 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. 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 others (chapters 5 and 6); and compassion in a systemic context (chapter 7). In some ways, therefore, this first chapter begins to introduce the "what" of SEE Learning and the remaining chapters fill out the "how."

Learning Experience 1, "Exploring Kindness," introduces the concept of kindness, explores what it means, and investigates why we need it. It also explores the relationship between kindness and happiness by using two activities: a step in/step out activity and a drawing of a moment of kindness. It is important for students to explore the connection between kindness and happiness. If students begin to recognize that our universal wish to be treated with kindness by others (rather than with cruelty) is rooted in our wish for well-being and happiness, then they can recognize that this tends to hold true for others also. Therefore if we want to be treated with kindness, it only makes sense for us to treat others with kindness also. This is the principle of reciprocity.

Learning Experience 2, "Class Agreements," provides an opportunity for students to create a list of class agreements that they will strive to abide by in order to create a safe and kind classroom for all. The creation of agreements by students helps them explore kindness in a direct way that shows the clear implications of our need for kindness within the context of a shared space with others.

Learning Experience 3, "Practicing Kindness," returns to the classroom agreements, with an intention to make the classroom agreements more concrete in the minds of your students. First the students engage in an insight activity whereby they translate the class agreements into practical examples that can be acted out. Then they act out those examples in front of each other and reflect

on what they experienced. This process of embodied understanding should continue as the school year goes on and will make it easier to refer to the class agreements concretely throughout the year.

Learning Experience 4, "Kindness as an Inner Quality," aims to deepen students' understanding of kindness through a few stories that are then discussed. We easily associate kindness with external activities, like giving someone food or money, saying sweet words to someone, or helping someone up when they fall. But if the intention behind those actions and words is to take advantage of the other person, then we do not see that as real or genuine kindness; nor do we see it as genuine help. The aim of SEE Learning is not to tell students what to do externally or to get them to behave "appropriately;" rather, it aims at helping students develop genuine internal motivation to seek the best in themselves and the best for others. Therefore, it is important that students gradually learn the importance of inner qualities and not just external behaviors. For this reason, it is important that students gradually learn that kindness goes deeper than just external actions but also refers to a state of mind and heart: one's intention to bring help and happiness to another person. Based on this understanding, students then develop their own definition of kindness, which they can later add to and amend as their understanding develops in sophistication.

The chapter concludes with Learning Experience 5, "Recognizing Kindness and Exploring Interdependence," which involves a further exploration of kindness, this time incorporating the idea of interdependence, which overlaps with the concept of gratitude, which will be explored in greater detail later in the curriculum. The idea here is that although we are surrounded by acts of kindness every day, we often do not recognize these acts of kindness or we take them for granted. By looking deeper at everyday activities and seeing the various ways kindness is involved, students can practice appreciating kindness as a skill that grows over time. Eventually they will be able to see more acts of kindness around them and they will get better at recognizing and appreciating their own acts of kindness. Practicing the skill of recognizing kindness in its various forms can lead to a deeper appreciation for how essential kindness is to our everyday life, our happiness, and even our very survival. In this learning experience, students will also be introduced to the concept of interdependence and how their own accomplishments and objects around them are made possible through the kind acts of others, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of interdependence and gratitude later in the curriculum.

It happens that some students find it difficult to recognize kindness in themselves and others. Acts that appear to us as kind, such as someone holding the door open for another person (or even the act of teaching!), may not appear as kind acts to some of your students. Be patient and allow your students to explore these concepts gradually. Hearing other students express what they see as kind can be helpful, as can having some students share kind acts that they noticed that were done by

fellow students. It may take time, but it is likely that over time you will see perspectives slowly shift towards a greater ability to recognize kindness in its many forms.

The Components of a SEE Learning Experience

You will notice that each learning experience begins with a check-in, and that these check-ins change and develop over time. The check-ins provide a way of transitioning in to the SEE Learning experience and signaling a shift in the day, but they are also a way to strengthen skills through repeated practice. You are welcome and encouraged to use the check-ins at other times, 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 idea. This is for the purpose of received knowledge. The learning experiences also include insight activities, which are designed to be short activities that can move received knowledge into the realm of critical insights, personal "a-ha" moments when a student realizes something for themselves. Whenever possible, received knowledge is incorporated into the insight activities (rather than as a separate presentation) so that students can learn by doing.

In addition, learning experiences include reflective practices. These are for moving from critical insight into embodied understanding; they are for deepening the experience. In some cases there is not a sharp distinction between insight activities and reflective practices, because a reflective practice can lead to insights, and 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.

Finally, each lesson ends with a debrief, which is an opportunity for students to reflect on the learning experience as a whole and share their thoughts, feelings, and questions.

Time and Pacing

Most learning experiences are designed to be a minimum of 20-40 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 30 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.

Setting Up a Peace Corner

You may wish to set up a peace corner, where students can go when they are upset or need some time to themselves. This will also serve as a good place to post artifacts created by your students,

including charts and artwork that they create, and posters or other materials that are supportive of SEE Learning. Some classrooms have pillows, a stuffed animal, special pictures, a poster of the resilient zone (explained in Chapter 2), snow globes and hourglasses, music, story books, and other such resources. Explain to your class that the peace corner is a place where they can show kindness and compassion to themselves and practice some of the things they are learning in SEE Learning. Over time, just going to the peace corner may prove helpful for your students when they need to settle themselves or return to a place of well-being in their bodies, as they come to associate the peace corner with safety and well-being.

Student Personal Practice

Eventually your students will be learning personal practices that they can use. SEE Learning recognizes that each student will connect with a different set of practices. SEE Learning also scales up into practices gradually, recognizing that if not approached skilfully, some practices may actually make students feel worse rather than better. Chapter One sets the stage for personal practice by establishing a safe and caring environment. Chapter Two then introduces practices that calm and regulate the nervous system. Chapter Three then introduces practices involving the cultivation of attention (and what are commonly called "mindfulness" practices). Chapter Four then introduces practices involving emotions. 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.

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*.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

Your child is beginning a program in **Social, Emotional and Ethical (SEE) Learning**. SEE Learning is a K-12 educational program created by Emory University to enrich young people's social, emotional, and ethical (SEE) development. SEE Learning adds to existing social-emotional learning (SEL) programs by including a focus on attention training, compassion and care, an awareness of broader systems, and ethical engagement.

At its core, SEE Learning is about students learning how best to take care of themselves and each other, specifically with regard to what can be termed their emotional and social health. SEE Learning is rooted in compassion: compassion for oneself (self-compassion) and compassion for others. Compassion is not taught as a dictate, however, but through the cultivation of specific skills, such as learning to regulate one's nervous system and deal with stress, learning about one's emotions and how to deal with them constructively, learning social and relationship skills, and learning to think in a broader way about the communities and societies we exist in. The aim of SEE Learning is to provide tools for students' current and future well-being.

Getting Started with Chapter 1

SEE Learning is divided into units or chapters. Chapter 1, "Creating a Compassionate Classroom," introduces the foundational concepts of kindness and compassion. "Kindness" is the term employed for younger students, whereas "compassion" is employed for older students. Compassion refers to the ability to care for oneself and others, and is taught as source of strength and empowerment, not a sign of weakness or an inability to stand up for oneself or others. A growing body of scientific research (referenced in the SEE Learning Companion) points to the positive health and relationship benefits that can come from cultivating compassion.

Home Practice

You are encouraged to take an active role in your child's experience of SEE Learning. The curriculum is available for you to read, as is a volume called the "SEE Learning Companion," which includes the Overview and framework used by the program and references to the scientific research that the program is based upon.

For this first chapter, try asking over a meal or at another time, what acts of kindness each person in your household noticed and/or took part in that day. At other times, point out and recognize moments of kindness and compassion to your child when you come across them, and encourage them to do the same. This builds the skill of recognizing and valuing kindness and compassion.

Further Reading and Resources

You can access SEE Learning resources on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

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*.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics
EMORY UNIVERSITY

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

CHAPTER 1 | Creating a Compassionate Classroom

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Exploring Kindness

PURPOSE

The focus of this first learning experience is to introduce students to SEE Learning through an exploration of kindness and why we need it. The foundation of SEE Learning is compassion and kindness. From the start, it is important for students to learn what kindness is, and why we want it for ourselves and need it. We all want kindness shown to us, because we all want happiness and well-being, and none of us wants sadness, troubles, and difficulties. If we recognize this, we can understand why we should show kindness to others, because they too, like us, want to be happy and don't want to be sad. (Note: The next learning experience will use this understanding of our shared need for kindness to create a mutually agreed-on list of class agreements that will support a safe, productive learning environment.)

*The asterisk by a practice denotes that it can be repeated multiple times (with or without modifications).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Recognize that we all want happiness and kindness.
- Create a personal drawing of kindness that they can use as a resource.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The prompts provided below
- Markers or pens for drawing

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"This year we will be spending some time each week to learn about ourselves and each other.*
- *We will be doing some activities to learn what happiness is and what kindness is.*
- *We will learn about how we can make our classroom a happy place to learn where we can all feel safe."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 12 minutes

Step In, Step Out Activity

Overview

Students will step in and out of a circle depending on whether the prompts the teacher reads apply to them. Then students will take a moment to notice who is on the inside and who is on the outside. This shows who shares that same trait or experience, and who doesn't.

Content/Insights to be Explored

We have many differences, but wanting happiness and kindness is something we all share in common.

Materials Required

Script of prompts, provided below

Instructions

- Students form a circle.
- Using the prompts in the sample script below, ask students to step in if the prompt applies to them.
- Ask students to notice who is on the inside and who is on the outside. Discuss.
- At the end of the prompts tell them:
  - *"Let's look around. It seems we all feel happier when people are kind to us. Just like we can connect over things that we like or things that we have, like the same number of brothers and sisters, we can connect over something that brings our whole class together: our desire to be happy and for people to be kind to us."*

Teaching Tips

- You will want to have a large enough area for students to gather in a large circle to step in and out of. You may need to move desks/tables. An option would be to do this activity outside, or in the gymnasium.
- Instead of having students step in and step out of a circle, you can have students form a circle of chairs and have them stand up or remain seated. Or you could have them raise their hands instead of stepping in. Whichever method you choose, make sure that students can see each other, so they can see how their classmates answer each question.
- In addition to the questions given below in the sample script, add additional questions as you see fit and as time allows. You can also adapt the questions as necessary to your particular students. The point is to begin with things that the students do not all have in common, such as preferences or aspects of their identity, but then move towards what we

all have in common: that we want happiness and prefer kindness.

- Pay attention if some students don't step in when asked the final few questions: they may not have understood the questions. But do not feel the need to make students step in or to accept your conclusions: subsequent learning experiences will continue to explore the ideas of happiness and kindness in greater depth, so their views and feelings may change as their understanding progresses.

Sample Script

- *"Let's all form a circle. This circle is a safe circle. People are free to think and feel independently without comment or judgment from others.*
- *If I say something that's true for you, then you'll step into the middle. We are going to try and do this without talking, but instead just noticing what is going on around you.*
- *Let's start.*
- *Step in the center if you have a brother or sister.*
- *Now, stop and take a look and see who else has a brother or sister, or who else doesn't. Now step back please.*
- *Now, we're going to think about some things that you like.*
- *Step in if you like pizza.*
- *Now, take a look and see who else likes pizza. Step back please.*
- *Step into the center if you like to build with Legos or blocks.*
- *Take a look and see who else likes building with Legos or blocks. Now step back please.*
- *Step in the center if you like playing sports or big active games.*
- *Take a look and see who else likes those things. And step back please.*
- *Who noticed they had a similarity with someone? What was it?* [These questions are crucial as this way kids start to connect more and are ready for the next step.]
- *I notice that only some people step in each time. Let's see what happens if I ask this: Step in if you like to be happy rather than sad.*
- *Now, take a look around. What do you notice about this?*
- *Ah, look! All of us (or most of us) are in the center! It seems that we all like to be happy rather than sad. Now let's step back.*
- *Step in if you feel better when you're happy than when you're sad.*
- *Let's look around. How many of us are here?*
- *Step in if you like it when people are kind to you, rather than mean.*
- *Let's look around. Are we all here?*
- *It seems we like it when people are kind to us. Now let's step back.*

- *Step in if you feel happier when people are kind to you, rather than when they are mean.*
- *Let's look around. It seems we all feel happier when people are kind to us.*
- *Just like we can connect over things that we like or things that we have, like the same number of brothers and sisters, we can connect over something that brings our whole class together: our desire to be happy and for people to be kind to us.*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 12 minutes

Remembering and Drawing Kindness*

Overview

Students will produce a drawing of when someone was kind to them with some sentences underneath explaining the scene and how they felt.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can recall memories or imagined acts of kindness.
- Kindness adds to our happiness.
- We all want to be happy.

Materials Required

- Paper for each student
- Pencils, markers or pens for drawing

Instructions

- Ask students to silently imagine a time when someone was kind to them.
- Ask students to draw an image of that time. Then ask them to write a few sentences to answer these questions about the memory/image:
- What did it look like? What did it feel like? What did you look like? What did you feel like?
- Give students a few minutes to draw, guiding individual students as necessary. When it seems that most students are ready, invite them to share.
- When they are sharing, ask them what it felt like when they were shown kindness.
- If students share moments that were not kind, or that made them feel bad, remind them that kindness is something that makes us feel happier when we receive it from others, and ask them to think of another time when they were shown kindness and felt happy receiving that kindness.
- Allow as many children to share as time allows, drawing their attention to the simple fact that we all want kindness, because it adds to our happiness, and we all want to be happy.

Teaching Tips

- You can do this activity sitting at tables or desks or together as a whole group, sitting in a circle. The script below is written for students sitting at tables or desks.
- Have a few students share their moment of kindness in case others are stuck as this will give some more scaffolding.

- You may want to model with a drawing you have made.
- Depending on the size of your class and reluctance of some students to talk in a large group, you might ask them to pair up to talk first.
- You can also ask other students what they feel when they see another student sharing their kindness moment, as it may also make them feel happy, or it may remind them of a time when they received a similar kindness.
- This drawing activity can be done more than once in different class sessions, but make sure to save at least one copy of the drawings as they will be used again in later learning experiences. The students can save their own drawing, you can hang them up on the wall, or you can collect them and distribute them again later when they are needed. This activity can be repeated at least once a month.

Sample script

- *"Let's go back to our desks.*
- *Remember how we saw that we all like it when people are kind to us?*
- *Let's be silent for a moment and think about a moment when someone was kind to us. Sometimes it is easier to bring memories to our mind if we close our eyes or look at the ground. I'll keep my eyes open.*
- *It could be something very special, or it could be something very simple.*
- *It could be someone helping you, or someone saying something nice to you.*
- *It could be a friend who played with you, or someone giving you a toy or present.*
- *Raise your hand if you've thought of a time when someone was kind to you.* [Have a few students share in case others are stuck - this will give some more scaffolding.]
- *Now we're going to draw what happened when someone was kind to us.*
- *Answer these questions: what did it look like? What did it feel like? What did you look like? What did you feel like?* [Give students a few minutes to draw, guiding individual students as necessary. When it seems that most students are ready, invite them to share.]
- *Okay, we've all done some drawing now of a time when someone was kind to us.*
- *Who would like to share their drawing and tell us about that time?*
- *These drawings will be available to you as a resource to come back to if you need a reminder of a kind moment. You are always welcome to look back at what we've done and bring positive feelings forward."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"What do you think: do we all want to be happy? Do we all like kindness more than meanness?*

- *How do we feel when people are kind to us? How do we feel when people are mean?*
- *This year we're going to be helping each other create a caring classroom. If we all want to be happy, and we all like kindness, then we should learn to be kind to each other. So that's what we're going to do.*
- *In one word or sentence, is there anything you learned today about kindness?"* (Invite individual students to share out.)

CHAPTER 1 | Creating a Compassionate Classroom

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Class Agreements

PURPOSE

The focus of this learning experience is to further explore the idea of kindness and how we all need it and benefit from it by creating a mutually agreed-on list of class agreements that will support a safe, productive learning environment. The creation of agreements by students helps them explore kindness in a direct way that shows the clear implications of our need for kindness within the context of a shared space with others. It also increases their own investment in what is seen as constructive and non-constructive behavior in the classroom, since they can see how the items in the list directly impact themselves and others. It also orients students towards attending to the reality of others' presence and their feelings and needs.

*The asterisk by a practice denotes that it can be repeated multiple times (with or without modifications).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore several practical implications of our need for kindness for how we act with each other.
- Identify agreements that can help create a kind, caring classroom.

LENGTH

45 minutes, split into 2 days if possible (30 minutes on day 1; 15 minutes on day 2)

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A piece of plain chart paper that can be hung on the wall with the header "In our classroom we agree to…"
- A board or a second piece of chart paper for scratch ideas
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Last time we learned about kindness and happiness. We played the step in, step out game and we also drew a moment when someone was kind to us.*
- *Does anybody remember some of the things we talked about?*
- *What do you remember? What can you tell me about kindness and happiness?* (possible answers: We all want happiness and like it when people are kind to us instead of mean)
- *Does it help us be happy when other people are kind to us?*
- *Let's remember our kindness drawing from last time (or a new one) for a moment. Do you notice your body or feelings change? How do you feel different?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 24 minutes

Creating Classroom Agreements

Overview

Students will consider what would contribute to happiness and kindness in the classroom and make a list of class agreements.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all want kindness and happiness.
- There are specific actions we can take to support each others' happiness.

Materials Required

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Instructions

- Ask students what we can agree on to do with each other so we have a fun, safe, caring, and happy class.
- Take lots of suggestions and start a list on a board or the piece of scratch chart paper where all the students can see it. If needed, you can prompt the students with possible ideas, such as:
  - kindness
  - having fun
  - not bullying
  - helping each other
  - sharing/taking turns
  - showing respect for each other
  - listening to each other
  - not being mean
  - not shouting
  - asking for help
  - paying attention
  - saying sorry

Teaching Tips

You can allow any student to answer the follow-up questions, not just the one who made the initial suggestion.

Sample script

- *"Let's try to make a list of how we would like our class to be.*
- *We all want to be happy, so that's something we all have in common.*
- *And we saw that one thing that makes us happier is when people are kind to us.*
- *So kindness might be one thing we would put on the list. What do you think?*
- *What else might we put on the list that we will agree to do as a class so that we can be happy and have a safe, caring classroom?*
- *When a student suggests something, use it as an opportunity to have the all students delve deeper by prompting them with one or two questions like:*
  - *What does that mean?*
  - *What does that look like?*
  - *What would happen if we all did that?*
  - *What would happen if we didn't do that?*

[Continue this process as time allows.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY

15 minutes (another day, if possible)*

Creating Classroom Agreements, part 2

Overview

Students will continue to consider what would contribute to happiness and kindness in the classroom and make a list of class agreements.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all want kindness and happiness.
- There are specific actions we can take to support each others' happiness.

Materials Required

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- The list made in previous activity

Instructions

- Together, group the agreements and write them on the piece of chart paper that has the heading "In our classroom we agree to…"
  - For this, it's important to put them into action statements that are in the affirmative, like "Be kind" or "Be helpful" or "Ask for help when we need it."
- Read the agreements aloud together.
- It is helpful for kids to sign the agreements chart and hang it in the classroom.
- Remind students that you are making the agreements so we feel happier and safe here in our classroom.

Teaching Tips

- If possible, complete this insight activity the day after the first one. Students often need time to let the ideas about their agreements settle and marinate; sometimes they even come up with more the next time you sit down together.

- If you are able to complete this activity a day after the first one, use the provided check-in below to get started.

Sample script

- [Check-in if you are completing on a different day: *"Last time we met we came up with a big list of things we needed to feel safe and happy in our classroom space. Today we are going to look back at the list. If you realize there was something you wanted to add, let me know.]*
- *Maybe we can put some of these together if they are similar, so that we can have a few main agreements that we can remember.*
- *On this sheet it says, "In our classroom we agree to…" So we can put our agreements after that from the list we just created.*
- *I wonder if these ones go together?*
- *And we can put them in this form, "Be kind…"*
- [Continue this process as time allows.]
- *Now we have some agreements we can make with each other.*
- *Let's take a look at them and read them out loud together.*
- *We're going to try to do this for ourselves so we feel happier and safe here in our classroom.*
- *Let's keep thinking about this list until we meet again, when we might have more to add."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"This year we are going to learn about how best to be kind to ourselves and others. We'll be learning ways to do this, and this agreement that we created together is our first step!*
- *In one word or sentence, is there anything you learned today that you might use another time to help yourself or someone else meet their needs?"*

CHAPTER 1 | Creating a Compassionate Classroom

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Practicing Kindness

PURPOSE

The focus of this third learning experience is to build on prior learning and engage in the actual modeling and practice of kindness for experiential and embodied understanding. This involves two steps: an insight activity whereby the students translate the class agreements into practical examples that can be acted out; and then a practice activity where they act out those examples in front of each other and reflect on what they experienced. By acting out the very same items they said they wanted in the classroom, they will come to a better understanding of kindness, of their class agreements, and of how they look in practice. This process of embodied understanding should continue as the school year goes on and will make it easier to refer to the class agreements concretely throughout the year.

*The asterisk by a practice denotes that it can be repeated multiple times (with or without modifications).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Develop specific ways of exhibiting kindness based on the class agreements.
- Apply their understanding of kindness in concrete individual and collective actions.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Relationship Skills

LENGTH

30 minutes (You will likely want to repeat this learning experience more than once so that you can get through all your class agreements.)

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Your class agreements listed on a piece of chart paper or on the board
- Another piece of chart paper or a board to write ideas for practicing the class agreements

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's take a moment to sit quietly and rest our minds and bodies so that we can think a bit.* [Pause.] *Maybe you are tired or full of energy, maybe it's been a challenging morning (day) or an exciting one. Either way, it's okay.*
- *Now let's all see if we can think of any moments of kindness in the day so far. Maybe something happened at home or on your way to school or as recently as just a minute ago. See what comes up for you. Don't worry if you can't think of something, you can always imagine a moment of kindness too.* [Pause.]
- *Let's sit with your moment of kindness for a little bit.*
- *Would anyone like to share what they thought of?*
- *How did that make you feel?*
- *Anyone else?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Turning Class Agreements into Helping Actions

Overview

In this insight activity, students discuss translating the class agreements concrete actions and behaviors that they can practice doing with each other, thereby making the class agreements "visible" in a direct way.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all want kindness and happiness.
- There are specific actions we can take to support each others' happiness.

Materials Required

- Your class agreements listed on a piece of chart paper or on the board
- Extra chart paper or board space

Instructions

- Ask students what each agreement looks like, sounds like, and feels like when it is enacted effectively and kindly.
- As the students give examples, document what they are saying by writing or drawing the examples on a piece of chart paper and link them to the class agreements that they reflect.

Teaching Tips

- Depending on the class agreements, sometimes the actions will be obvious. In this case, ask students to give examples so that their understanding grows of how they might practice it. For example, if one of the class agreements is "Listen to each other," you can ask them to be very specific about the actions that this would involve by asking questions like, "What does it look like when we listen to each other?" or "What do we do with our eyes when we listen? Do we look at the other person?" or "Do we talk while we're listening to the other person or are we quiet?"
- You may not have enough time to complete all the agreements in one session, in which case you can move on to the reflective practice for now and return to this activity again later.

Sample script

- *"I realized that even though we can all say _____* (Choose one from your list, for example: "help each other") *we don't always know exactly what that looks like. Do you know the word specific? It means to make something clearer with a real example. Let's take another look at our class agreements that we made together and see if we can be more specific about some of them.*
- *What would it look like to _____(help each other)? ? Can we turn the idea of _____(helping each other) into real helping actions? What does it look like when we _____(help each other)? How do you think it makes someone feel when we do this?*
- *If we saw someone not _____(helping), what could we say or do?"*

Try this format with several of the class agreements. When you come to a good stopping point, you can suggest returning to the rest of the agreements during other class meeting times. Eventually you will have specific ideas connected to each general agreement.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Practicing and Acting Out Kindness

Overview

In this reflective practice, the students will act out the helping actions they just created.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all want kindness and happiness.
- There are specific actions we can take to support each others' happiness.

Materials Required

- The group agreements
- The list of concrete actions and behaviors created in the previous insight activity

Instructions

- Model the activity first yourself. Start by selecting the helping actions that you feel are most concrete and easy to model. Then ask for two or three volunteers to model the helping actions.
- Next, ask for a volunteer who can pretend to be in need of helping and one or two students volunteer to see that need and engage in the helping actions. Have the volunteers can stand up and act out a scenario in front of the class.
- Other students should be asked to watch quietly and closely so that they can share later what they saw.
- After the scenario has been acted out, which may only take a minute, allow those who volunteered to share what they saw and felt.
- Then ask the students who observed what they saw and felt.
- Then do another example of that helping action or move on to the next helping action and do a scenario modeling that one.
- Repeat for all of the group agreements.

Teaching Tips

- In some cases, there won't be a particular person in need, but you can create other scenarios that might arise in the classroom related to that class agreement and the helping actions that came from it.
- You may find that 10 minutes is not enough time to practice all the helping actions that were generated during the previous insight activity. You can repeat this reflective practice several times, each time emphasizing different class agreements or activities.

Sample Script

- *"You all came up with a lot of ideas on how we can help each other here in the class. Now we can see more clearly what these class agreements will look like.*
- *It might be even clearer if we practiced a few of the helping actions we just talked about.*
- *Maybe we can pretend that one of us needs help and we can see what helping actions we can practice? Which helping action should we start with? Would two or three of you come up here to do the helping action?*
- *I'll start by being the person who needs some help. Then those of you who came up here can practice this helping action when you see that I need help.* [Act out a scenario.]
- *That was great! Now I'll tell you what I felt.* [Share a statement about what it felt like to be helped in that way, such as "It made me feel happy," or "It made me feel better," or "It made me feel safer."]
- *Now I'd like to ask those who helped me. What did it feel like for you to help me in that way?*
- *Now I'd like to ask those of you watching. What did you see and feel?*
- *Now maybe one of you could be the person who needs some help and we could try some other helping actions."*

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

- *"Let's take a moment to sit and think about what we just saw and felt.*
- *Did you notice how you felt when you saw people needing help or getting help? It often feels good not just to get help but to give it, and even to see someone being helped. It can make us feel happier and safer when we are helped by others and when they show us kindness.*
- *Is there anything you learned or practiced about kindness that you might like to use again sometime?*
- *Is there anything you think we should add to the class agreements after what we did today?"*

EXTRA PRACTICE

It's important for kids to be able to practice kindness in authentic situations. Over the next week, set a goal each day for kids to practice one of the agreements (this can be set at the beginning of the day) and then check in at the end of the day to see how it went. This can also be brought back throughout the year when kids seem to be becoming lax about class agreements.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

Kindness as an Inner Quality

PURPOSE

The focus of this fourth learning experience is to go further into the idea of kindness by exploring whether it is just outer actions or also something inside one's heart and mind. We easily associate kindness with external activities, like giving someone food or money, saying sweet words to someone, or helping someone up when they fall. But if the intention behind those actions and words is to take advantage of the other person, then we do not see that as real or genuine kindness; nor do we see it as genuine help. For students to understand how to cultivate kindness as a disposition, which lies at the heart of SEE Learning, they will be aided by understanding that kindness goes deeper than just external actions but also refers to a state of mind and heart: one's intention to bring help and happiness to another person.

*The asterisk by a practice denotes that it can be repeated multiple times (with or without modifications).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore kindness in the context of outer actions and inner intentions and motivations.
- Recognize the distinction between real (inner, genuine) kindness and apparent kindness.
- Develop their own definition of kindness.
- Provide examples of actions that might seem unkind, but are really kind, and vice versa.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Compassion for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper with "kindness" written in the middle of each
- The story provided below

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Last time we talked about how we could create a kind, caring classroom and we created some classroom agreements. Does anybody remember some of the things we talked about and put on our list?* [Allow time for sharing.]
- *Today we are going to think about how can we practice kindness."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

The Two Brothers and the Baby Swan

Overview

In this activity, you will read a story to the students that shows how we all naturally prefer kindness, because kindness makes us feel safe and secure. A story is provided for you here that has an element that shows that kindness relates to our intentions also, and is an inner quality. If someone pretends to be kind, but really intends to take advantage of someone, then we do not see that as genuine kindness. If students come to understand that kindness is an inner quality, not just actions, then they will realize that to cultivate kindness, we need to cultivate that inner quality, not just act outwardly in a particular way.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all prefer kindness and want to move towards kindness and away from meanness.
- Kindness makes us feel safer and more secure.
- Kindness is an inner quality.
- Pretend kindness (outward actions without a good intention) is not genuine kindness.

Materials Required

Story provided below

Instructions

- Read the story to your students.
- Facilitate a discussion. Sample questions are provided within the script for your use.

Teaching Tips

- The sample discussion questions listed in the script can help you have a discussion and encourage the students to explore the story and its various dimensions. Feel free to add your own questions and respond to the flow of the discussion.
- Allow them to share openly and remember that there are no right or wrong answers, but also keep in mind the critical insights (listed above) that you are orienting them towards. These insights have to come naturally, and it's all right if not all the students reach all the insights at once, since they will be returned to continuously in future learning experiences.

Sample script

- *"We are going to read a story together that has to do with kindness. Sometimes people do things that look kind, but in their heart, they are not actually kind and compassionate. While I read this story, think about who is truly kind in this story and who is pretending."*

- [Read the story below.]
- "*Now we're going to talk about that story a little bit.*
- *What happened in the story? What are some of the things you noticed?*
- *How do you think the different people in the story were feeling?*
- *If the baby swan could talk to us, what are some things she would say? What else?*
- *Why do you think the swan went to the younger brother?*
- *Remember when the older brother was saying sweet things to the swan? What happened after that?*
- *Was the older brother being kind when he was saying those things? Why or why not?*
- *How is kindness like helping?*
- *If someone pretends to be kind, but inside they don't really want to help the other person, is that really kindness? Explain your thinking.*
- *Is kindness just the outer action, like sweet words, or is it also something inside us? An inner quality? Explain your thinking.*
- *Could something that looks unkind at first, really be kind? Like if a parent says "No" to their child, is that always unkind or could it be kind? What if the child was going to do something dangerous and the parent said "No." What do you think?*"

STORY | The Two Brothers and the Baby Swan

"*Two brothers were playing in a park one day and when they saw a beautiful little baby swan. The older brother thought, "Oh, what a pretty bird!" and he wanted to capture the bird for himself, so he threw a stick at it. The baby swan got scared and tried to run away, but since it couldn't fly very well yet, it had to move on its legs. The younger brother said, "Stop! Don't hurt the bird! It's only a baby!" and he went to go and help the swan and protect it. When he reached the swan, he petted it and offered it some food. But the older brother got angry and kept trying to chase the swan and catch it.*

Then their mother came by and said, "What's going on?"

"That bird is mine," said the older brother, who wanted to capture the bird. "Make him give it to me!"

"No, don't give her to him," said the younger brother. "He tried to hurt her."

"I don't know what happened because I wasn't here to see it," said the mother. "Maybe we should let the bird decide."

She placed the baby swan between the two boys and said to her, "Who would you like to be with?"

The older brother who had tried to hurt and capture the swan tried to call to her sweetly. "Please come to me little bird! I will take good care of you!"

But the baby swan didn't go to him. She went over to the younger brother, who had tried to protect her.

"Look, the bird prefers you," said their mother. "You should be the one to keep her."

So she gave the baby swan to the younger brother, who fed it and took care of it and kept it safe."

[The End.]

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Making and Reflecting on a Definition of Kindness

Overview

In this reflective practice, students will make a word map of the word "kindness." This will be used to develop a simple definition of kindness (one or two sentences) for use in the classroom. The students will take moments for silent reflection during the making of this definition and after making it, to allow this wider understanding of kindness to deepen in them.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all prefer kindness and want to move towards kindness and away from meanness.
- Kindness makes us feel safer and more secure.
- Kindness is an inner quality.
- Pretend kindness (outward actions without a good intention) is not genuine kindness.

Materials Required

- Chart paper or a board to write on

Instructions

- Write the word "Kindness" in the middle of a piece of chart paper or on the board.
- Then take suggestions and write the other words around the word kindness that help define what kindness is. You can use lines to connect them to the word kindness. This will create a kind of word map on the paper.
- If the students mentioned words in the discussion related to the insights listed above, but do not mention them now, you can prompt them by saying, "Remember someone said something about how kindness is an inner quality, not just words and actions. Should we add something about that?"
- Allow the students to come up with their own words and ways of expressing what kindness means.
- Come up with a once sentence definition of kindness. Since it may be difficult for the students to come up with a one sentence definition on their own, you can propose different wordings that incorporate some of the words they have provided. If necessary, you can group those words together to make it easier first.
- When you have come up with your short definition, however tentative, write it on a new piece of chart paper and allow the students a minute of silence to reflect on it.

Teaching Tips

- Don't worry if you can't come up with a perfect short definition right away. If you cannot come up with one in class, you can come up with one later on your own that uses the input they provided and that is now recorded on the chart paper.
- Note: Many of the reflective practices in SEE Learning involve moments of silent reflection for students to think, ponder, and internalize their insights. How long these moments should be will depend on the classroom environment and your students. They can be as short as 15 seconds or can be as long as a few minutes. You will be the best judge of the appropriate amount of time. You may find that with practice, the students will get more comfortable and familiar with these moments, and that you can prolong them for longer periods of time.

Sample script

- *"I wonder if we could come up with one sentence to explain what kindness is. So that if someone asked us "What does kindness mean?" we could tell them.*
- *Let's take a quiet moment to think about the story and our discussion about it.*
- *I'm going to write the word kindness in the middle of the board, and you can suggest words that are like kindness that we can use to explain what kindness is.*
- *What words should be put here along with kindness? What words are like kindness or help to explain kindness?*
- *Now we have several words up here. We've made a word map around the idea of kindness.*
- *Let's take a moment to be silent and think about these words. Is there anything missing? Is there anything we would like to add? Don't tell me right away. Let's wait and think for a minute.* (Allow a moment of silence for reflection. This could be as short as 15 seconds or could be longer.)
- *Now that we've waited a little bit, why don't you raise your hand quietly if you have something to add. If not, you can continue quietly reflecting while others are making suggestions.*
- (Add suggestions as students make them.)
- *Now let's take out our kindness drawings.*
- *Let's take a moment to silently look at them and think. Is there anything we notice from the drawings that we are missing in our word map? Don't tell me right away. Let's wait and look at our drawings and think quietly for a little bit.* (Allow a moment of silence for reflection. This could be as short as 15 seconds or could be longer.)
- *Now that we've waited a little bit, why don't you raise your hand quietly if you have something to add. If not, you can continue quietly reflecting while others are making suggestions.*

- (Add suggestions as students make them.)
- *Now let's see if we can make that one sentence explanation of kindness we talked about. How would we explain in one sentence what kindness is, using these words and ideas here? Let me try to make a sentence and you can help me.*
- *So now here is our explanation of what kindness is. It may not be perfect, but we can always make it better as we go along and learn more about kindness.*
- *Let's take a moment to quietly read this and think about what kindness means and how important it is for us. Let's do this silently so that we can really get a feel for kindness and what it means inside ourselves."* (Allow time for silent reflection.)

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"What is something you learned about kindness today?*
- *Students have the choice to debrief on their own, with a partner of their choice, or in a sharing circle with the right to pass."*

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 5

Recognizing Kindness & Exploring Interdependence

PURPOSE

The focus of this learning experience is to practice recognizing kindness and exploring interdependence. Although students will already have some notions of what kindness looks like, by looking deeper at everyday activities and seeing the various ways kindness is involved, their appreciation for kindness can grow further. Similarly, though students may have some idea of the concept of interdependence, the simple activity of mapping an accomplishment and all the things that that accomplishment depended on can help them see interdependence more clearly. Interdependence refers to the fact that every object and event comes into being from a variety of causes, in the sense that it depends on other things. 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; and it can serve as a foundation for gratitude and a feeling of connectedness to others. It also supports systems thinking, since interdependence is a feature of all systems.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Recognize acts of kindness in their day.
- Recognize interdependence as a feature of our shared reality.
- Recognize how the objects and events that we need come from the acts of countless others.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

LENGTH

35 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

- *"Can anyone remember what we said kindness means? We created a way of explaining it to others. Who remembers what we said?*
- *Let's look at our explanation of what kindness is now. I wrote it up on this piece of paper.*
- *Have any of you felt kindness today? Yes? What was it like? If you can't think of a moment of kindness from today, you can imagine one if you like.*
- *Let's take a moment to sit for a few seconds and remember what kindness feels like. If you are comfortable with it, close your eyes and really try to picture that moment when someone was kind to you or when you felt kindly towards someone else. Or if you are using your imagination, just imagine that moment.* [Pause.]
- *Thank you. Can some of you give share some of the acts of kindness that you thought of?"*

Teaching Tips

- Use your discretion in guiding this, as you know your own class. Encourage them to think of any moment - no matter how small. It could be the crossing guard who smiled at them, or they handed someone a marker when they needed it, or they smiled at someone they don't usually pay attention to. Let your students know that it's ok if they can't think of a time, because they can imagine one. As you practice with this, it will get easier. Encourage curiosity: the feeling that we're all just exploring and wondering about this together.
- It's possible you may wish to do the check-in during a morning meeting time, and then save the other parts of the learning experience for later in the day. That way, children will already be oriented towards thinking about kindness when you come to the activities.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 5 minutes

Recognizing Kindness*

Overview

In this activity you will invite students to share moments of kindness that they observed or participated in during the day, guiding them to reflect on how it made them and others feel, and challenging them to recognize as many forms of kindness as they can.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We see countless acts of kindness around us every day, but we may recognize very few of them if we do not look deeply.

Materials Required

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers

Instructions

You can begin by asking them how many acts of kindness you think the class will come up with from just things that happened to them today and write the numbers they propose on the board. Then, at the end of the activity, ask them if they think their original guesses were correct, too low, or too high.

Teaching Tips

As in every insight activity, students may have other critical insights as you go along–if so, record them or note them on the board so that you can return to them later. Elementary aged kids are developing their abilities to take perspectives and think bigger than just themselves. This is a quick exercise that can be done many times throughout the year that reinforces kindness is all around.

Sample script

- *"So, I have a question for you. If you think about our day together in school, how many "kindnesses" do you think you could count? 10? 20?* [Let them make guesses and write the numbers on the board or chart paper.]
- *Ok I'm going to write those numbers down on the board here so we can check them again later.*
- *Now, let's see how many acts of kindness we can come up with. Who can think of something that happened today that was an example of kindness? Did anyone show you kindness today? Or did you do anything that was kind for someone else?*
- [Allow for student sharing. If you like you can write a single word or phrase that captures what was shared on the board so that a list begins to grow. After the student has shared, you can ask follow up questions, such as: Why was that kind? How did it make you feel? How do you think it made the other person feel?]
- [You can ask these follow-up questions to other students as well, not just the student who shared, so that they can think about the various ways the action was kind and how it might have made others feel.]
- *Now let's try to look more deeply. I wonder if we can find even more acts of kindness?*
- *Do you think there might have been kindnesses that we didn't even know about or notice?*
- *We found a lot of acts of kindness when we looked deeply, didn't we? How does it feel to know that we are surrounded by so many acts of kindness?*
- *Now, let's see. How many did we find? Did we find more than we thought we would?* (You can compare with the numbers the students suggested earlier and that you wrote on the board.)
- *It seems we can find a lot of acts of kindness if we look for them. But if we don't look, we might not see them."*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 20 minutes

Recognizing Interdependence

Overview

In this activity students will draw a web of interdependence starting with a single accomplishment, event, or object.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Objects and events exist in a web of interdependence; they depend on countless other objects and events.
- We are connected to and depend on countless other people in a variety of ways, even if they are strangers to us.

Materials Required

- A large sheet of paper for each group to draw on
- Markers

Instructions

- Point out to the class that you have been thinking a lot about acts of kindness together.
- Tell them that today you will explore an idea called interdependence.
- Ask the group for suggestions of an important accomplishment or event in their lives. Examples include going on a trip; learning to ride a bike; learning to play a game; learning to read and write; and so on. Take suggestions for about 1 or 2 minutes for this.
- Write down their suggestions and then select one that many of the students may share or is most relatable among the group.
    - If your group cannot think of an example that many or most have in common, ask them to identify an object made by humans that they all need.
- Draw this accomplishment, event or object in the middle of the board or a sheet of paper. This will be the "subject" for the activity.
- Model the following and then ask them to do it:
    - Create a first circle by adding (drawing or writing) anything the subject depends on or needs to exist. Ask "What else do we need to have X (subject)"?
    - Draw a line connecting this thing to the subject.
        - For example, if you chose "learning to ride a bike" as their subject, you might add a teacher, a friend, the bicycle, a flat surface to ride on, the person who invented bicycles, and so on. Or if you choose a pencil as their subject, they could add wood, lead, a factory, paint, and so on.
    - Ask them to see if they can think of at least 10 people or things the subject depends on.
    - Ask them to now add and draw what the items in that first circles themselves depend on. Again, have them draw lines connecting the new items as they are added.
- Have them continue the process freely, selecting any item on the page and identifying things or people it depends on.
    - 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?"

- When enough time has passed, stop the class and ask them to estimate how many people in total are needed for their subject.
    - For example, how many people in total are needed for that pencil to be made? Or how many people in total are needed for you to learn to ride a bike? Give them a little time to calculate it and discuss this.
- Debrief.

Teaching Tips

- This activity works great with students standing around the whiteboard or with a piece of chart paper on the floor in the center of a circle of students, each with a marker to participate.
- Examples for accomplishments/events might include going on a trip; learning to ride a bike; learning to play a game; learning to read and write; and so on.
- As in every insight activity, students may have other critical insights as you go along—if so, record them or note them on the board so that you can return to them later.

Sample script

- *"We have talked a lot about kindness in our lives, and one thing that we might have seen is that kindness rarely involves just you - usually kindness that occurs in our lives involves and depends on at least one other person.*
- *We call this interdependence: we constantly depend on others.*
- *Today, we are going to investigate this idea of interdependence more deeply. Who can think of an important accomplishment or event they have achieved or experienced?* [Write down a few suggestions and select one that is relevant and relatable to use with the whole group. If your group cannot think of an example that many or most have in common, ask them to identify an object made by humans that they all need.]
- *Now, let's think about people and things that _____ (riding a bike) depends on. Each time you think of something, draw or write it, circle it, and draw a line connecting it to the subject. First, let me show you how. So, we are focusing on (riding a bike). That depends on having a bike, a road, and someone to teach you.*
- *Let's try and come up with at least 10 things that (riding a bike) depends on and write or draw them together.* [Invite students to do the writing/drawing. Allow enough time for this to happen.]
- *What do you notice?*
- *Now, we are going to take this even further. We are going to look at each circled item we have already written down and think, what does that item depend on?*
- *Let me show you. I'll go back to "the bike." The bike exists because a person in a factory somewhere made it, so I will write "factory worker" out next to "bike."*

- *Go ahead and add branches to each circle, writing/drawing what each thing depends on. Create connected branches as best you can.*
- *We can help each other. Let's see how many connections we can make."*

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

- *"What do you notice about the web we made?*
- *What does it feel like to think of yourself as a part of this web?*
- *What does interdependence mean to you? What do you think about this idea?*
- *How can we connect being thankful/grateful to interdependence?"*

SEE LEARNING

A Curriculum for Educating the Heart and Mind

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 2

Building Resilience

Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics | Emory University

Overview

Chapter One explored the concepts of kindness and happiness what they mean for us when we are together in the form of class agreements. Chapter Two 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 Resilient Zone

A way of describing when the nervous system is regulated (in homeostasis) and 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 or using 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 stay in one's resilient zone.

Grounding

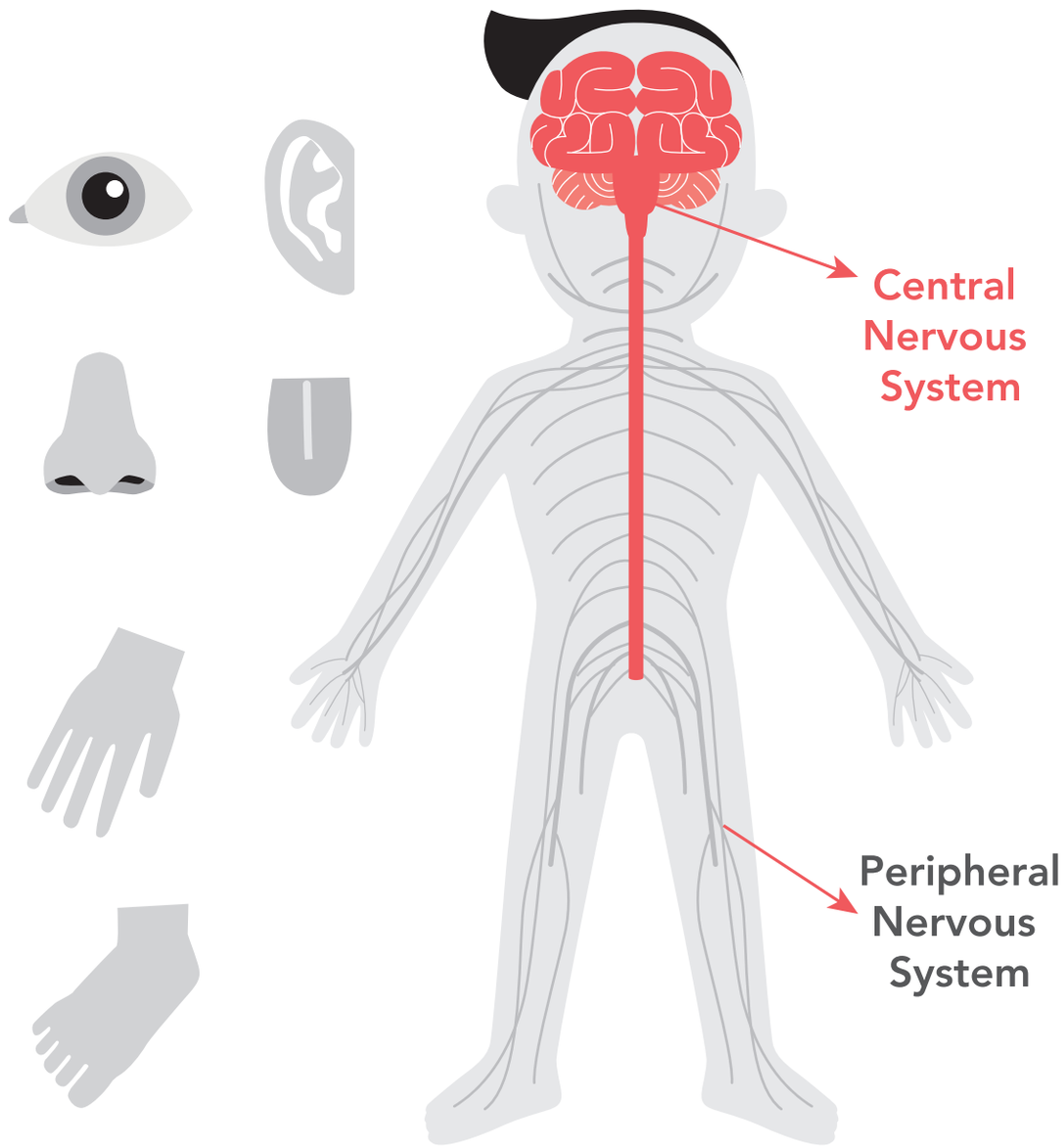
Attending to the contact of one's body with objects or the ground in order to return to or stay in the resilient zone.

Help Now! Strategies

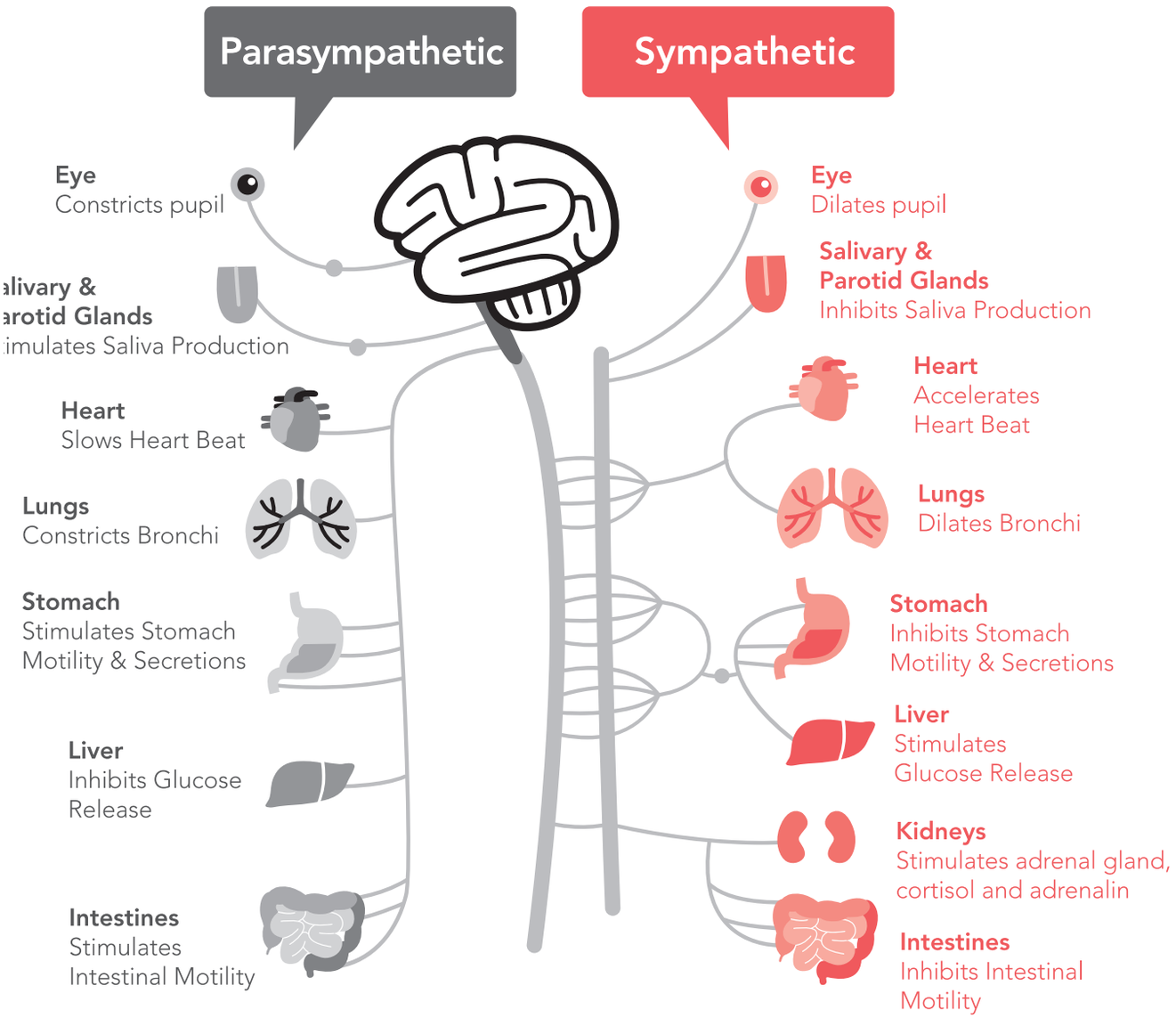
Simple and immediate techniques for helping students return to their resilient zone when they get "bumped out" of that zone.

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 and our spinal cord (called the central nervous system) and the network of nerves that connect our brain and spinal cord to the rest of our body, including our internal organs and our senses (called the peripheral nervous system).

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 help keep us alive, it reacts very quickly to perceived threats or to perceived safety. Our autonomic nervous system has two pathways that activate based on whether we perceive danger (the "fight or flight" response) or safety (the "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, we notice changes in our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, pupil dilation and our internal organs. Then when we sense that the danger has passed and we are safe again, we notice changes in these same 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 can in turn lead 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 the information and skills necessary to enhance this type of self-care.

Sensations

The first Learning Experience, "Exploring Sensations," helps students build a vocabulary of sensations as a guide to notice the state of our nervous system. Sensations (warmth, coldness, heat, tingling, tightness, etc.) are physical, and are to be distinguished from emotions (sad, angry, happy, jealous), which will be explored later in SEE Learning. Although feelings will be explored later, it is important to note that feelings, thoughts and beliefs have a corresponding sensation or set of sensations within the body. Learning about sensations helps introduce another portal of understanding to ourselves and our students.

Help Now! Strategies

Learning Experience 1 then moves into Help Now! strategies. These are easy actions that can be practiced to quickly return our bodies and minds to the present moment, and thus function as useful ways to bring our bodies back to a place of balance if we get bumped into our high or low zones (states of hyper-arousal or hypo-arousal).

Resourcing

Learning Experience 2 "Resourcing" uses the individual kindness drawing created in Chapter 1 as a personal resource. Personal resources are internal, external or imagined things, unique to each person, that bring about a sense of well-being, safety or happiness when brought to present moment awareness. When we think of a personal resource (a wonderful memory, a favorite place, a loved one, a joyful activity, a comforting thought), this often brings about pleasant sensations in the body. If we then attend to those sensations consciously and give them a bit of space and time, they can deepen. This increases our nervous system's sense of safety and brings about an ever greater sense of well-being and relaxation in the body.

Tracking

Noticing sensations and keeping one's attention on them is called "tracking." We "track" or "read" sensations, since sensations are the "language" of the nervous system. This leads to body literacy: our understanding of our own body and how it responds to stress and safety. Although we all share the same basic structure of having a nervous system, our bodies react to stress and safety in slightly different ways. We may become tense in different parts of our body. We may also respond to well-being in different ways. We may experience a pleasant warmth in our chest or an opening and loosening in our facial muscles. Learning to track the sensations of our own body helps us understand when we are feeling relaxed, safe and happy, or if we are having a stress response. This ability opens up "choice" so when we are distressed, we can choose to bring our awareness to a

sensation of well-being or neutrality within the body. This awareness can increase the sense and feeling of well-being.

Note that sensations are not inherently pleasant, unpleasant or neutral for everyone or at all times: warmth, for example, can be experienced as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral at different times. This is why it's important to ask whether the sensation is pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

Since tracking can lead to awareness of unpleasant sensations, which can then be triggering, tracking is always done in conjunction with resourcing, grounding or a Help Now! strategy. The following strategy of "shift and stay" is also important to teach when introducing tracking.

Shift and Stay

Part of tracking is noticing if the sensation is pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. If we find pleasant or neutral sensations, resting our attention on that part of the body can sometimes allow the sensation to deepen and allow the body to relax and return to the resilient zone. However, if instead we become aware of an unpleasant sensation, we can "shift and stay." This means to scan our body to find a place that feels better (either neutral or pleasant) and then rest our attention on that new location.

The Treasure Chest and Resource Stone

Learning Experience 3 "Creating a Treasure Chest" builds on previous experiences by helping the students build up a personal "treasure chest" or "tool box" of personal resources that can be called upon whenever necessary. It then reinforces the skills of resourcing and tracking.

Grounding

Learning Experience 4 "Grounding" introduces the practice of grounding. Grounding is noticing the physical contact our body has with things, including things we touch or how we are standing or sitting. Grounding can be a very helpful tool for calming the body and mind. Typically, we have already unconsciously developed a number of grounding techniques that help us feel relaxed, secure, safe and better. These may include things like sitting in a certain way, folding our arms in a certain way, holding objects we like, lying a certain way on a couch or in bed, and so on. However, we may not be aware of intentionally using these to calm our bodies and return to our resilient zone. Practicing grounding introduces new techniques and makes conscious ones that we have already developed, thereby making them more accessible when we need them.

The Three Zones

Learning Experience 5 "The Resilient Zone" introduces the "three zones" as a way of understanding how our body (and specifically our autonomic nervous system) operates. The three zones are the high zone, the low zone, and the resilient zone (or zone of well-being). Understanding this model can be very helpful for both teachers and students.

In this model, a person 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 since the high zone and low zone are both states of dysregulation, they are not opposites of each other: they may share physiological characteristics and when we are dysregulated we may bounce between high and low zones.

In Learning Experience 6, students will learn about these three zones through scenarios and then will give advice to each other on how to return to their resilient zone, based on the skills they have already learned (resourcing, grounding, tracking, and the Help Now! strategies).

Being able to monitor the state of our body is essential to our well-being and happiness because our autonomic nervous system can short-circuit other parts of our brain (harming decision making and bypassing executive function). When we learn to remain in our resilient zone there are many health benefits for our body, including being able to maintain peace of mind and greater control over our behavior and our emotional reactions.

Learning Experience 7 "How Kindness and Safety Affect the Body" connects this chapter back to Chapter 1 and the themes of happiness, kindness, and the class agreements. Now that students know about the important role that their bodies play in their well-being and happiness, they can better understand why it is important to show kindness and consideration to one another. They begin to learn that being mean or inconsiderate of one another leads to stress and our bodies respond to that stress in unpleasant ways, hindering our ability to be happy. Students can explore the idea that since we are constantly relating to one another and share the same space, we can play a positive role in helping each other remain in our resilient zones, or return to them if we become out of balance.

In some cases, the activities in this chapter may not instantly yield the results and insights you wish. Don't be discouraged, as it is often hard even for adults to notice and describe sensations at first. It may take repeating some of the activities a few times before your students are able to describe sensations, notice if they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, and use the skills of resourcing and grounding. Even if they do gain insights quickly, repetition is key in order for the skills to become embodied. Eventually, some of the students may begin practicing the skills spontaneously, particularly when facing challenging or stressful circumstances.

Many of these skills were developed through trauma and resiliency 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 child 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 resilient-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 in a good position to explore the next elements of SEE Learning: cultivating attention and developing emotional awareness when they have more of an ability to regulate their nervous systems.

Check-Ins and Repeated Practice

From Chapter Two onwards, the importance of practice becomes even more important in SEE Learning. You will note that the check-in's for this chapter build, each incorporating skills and material covered in preceding Learning Experiences. Feel free to select which check-in's 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-in's 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.

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, teaching your students these practices will be strengthened by your own familiarity with them. It is recommended that, if possible, you first try these practices on your own and with colleagues, friends and family as you are able. The more experiential knowledge 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 work 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 the book *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 book T*he Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (2015).

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting **SEE Learning, Chapter 2, "Building Resilience"**. You may remember that SEE Learning is a K-12 educational program created by Emory University to enrich young people's social, emotional, and ethical development.

In Chapter 2, your child will learn a variety of methods for regulating their nervous system to enhance resilience to stress and adversity. This involves developing greater skill in noticing sensations in the body that signal well-being or distress (called "tracking") and learning simple strategies that can calm the body down. These techniques come from a significant body of research on the role that the autonomic nervous system plays in stress physiology. Your child, however, will be encouraged to use and practice only those skills that work effectively for him or her.

Home Practice

Many of the skills your child will learn in this chapter are skills you can explore yourself, and are just as applicable to adults as they are to children. You are encouraged to talk to your child about how you notice stress in your body and what signs your body gives you when you are experiencing stress as opposed to well-being. It may also be useful to discuss what kinds of healthy strategies you use to keep yourself resilient and which strategies are most appropriate for which situations or settings. Feel free to ask your child to share the techniques they are learning or to demonstrate them for you.

Early Chapters Included

Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and compassion and how they relate to happiness and well-being.

Further Reading and Resources

Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children by Linda Lantieri. Introduction by Daniel Goleman.

SEE Learning resources are available on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER 2 | Building Resilience

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Exploring Sensations

PURPOSE

This first learning experience explores sensations and helps students build a vocabulary to describe them, since sensations tell us most directly about the state of our nervous system. Students will also learn Help Now! strategies, most of which involve sensing things around the room. Help Now! strategies (developed by Elaine Miller-Karas and the Trauma Resource Institute) are immediate tools to help students return to a regulated body state if they are stuck in a dysregulated state, such as being overly agitated. They also are a great way to introduce the concept of sensations and practice attending to them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Develop and list vocabulary of words that describe various sensations.
- Practice attending to external sensations while learning Help Now! strategies for regulating the body.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A piece of chart paper or a board for creating a list of words that describe sensations
- Print outs of the Help Now Strategies (optional)
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"Welcome. As you think about this whole day until now - from when you first woke up to being in class right now, raise your hand if you can think of something kind that you experienced or did for someone. Would anyone like to share?*
- *Have any of you been practicing kindness by using the class agreements? Which ones? What did that feel like?*
- *Have you seen anyone else practice one of the agreements? Describe it. What did it feel like to see that?*
- *What do you think might happen if we keep practicing kindness with each other?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

What Are Sensations?

Overview

In this presentation you will help your students understand what a sensation is and then have them come up with a list of words that describe sensations, thereby building a shared vocabulary of sensation words.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Just as we can sense things on the outside with our five senses, we can pay attention to sensations inside our bodies also.
- Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.
- There are simple strategies we can use to help our bodies become calmer and feel safer.

Materials Required

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Instructions

- Review the five senses and talk about what we use them for. Discuss the nervous system and how senses are related to it. Discuss the concept of sensations.
- Make a list of sensation words with the students.
  - If they say things like "I feel good!" which is a feeling but not a specific sensation, then encourage them to put that into sensation words by asking, "And what does good feel like in the body?" or "Where in the body do you sense that?" It is all right if some of the words they come up with are not precisely sensation words, as the activities that follow will help them further develop their understanding of what a sensation is.

Teaching Tips

- **A sensation** is a physical feeling that arises in the body, such as warm, cold, tingling, loosening, tightening, heaviness, lightness, openness, and so on. Physical sensation words are to be differentiated from general feeling words like good, bad, stressed, relieved, and so on, and they are also different from emotion words like happy, sad, afraid, excited, and so on. Helping your students come up with a list of sensation words will help them recognize sensations in the body, which in turn will help them monitor the state of their bodies.

- If you feel comfortable doing so, it is also recommended that you introduce your students to the role of the **nervous system**: 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, for example) and that keeps us alive by regulating our breathing, our heart rate, blood flow, digestion and other important functions. This whole chapter involves coming to understand the nervous system (specifically the autonomic nervous system). You can teach the content and skills without naming the nervous system specifically and instead using the general term "the body," but if you are able to bring in additional information about the autonomic nervous system gradually, this will likely enrich your students' overall understanding.

Sample Script

- *"We've been exploring kindness and happiness. Today we're going to learn about how about how our senses can help us know what our bodies are feeling.*
- *Let's see if we can name the five senses? Those are for feeling things on the outside: we can see, hear, smell, touch and taste things.*
- *What are things we can sense on the outside through our five senses? Let's think about one of our senses—hearing—let's take a moment of silence and notice what sounds we can hear during a minute of silence. What did you hear? Can anyone share what you are sensing right now using one of the other senses? What about seeing? Touch? Smell?*
- *There is a part of our bodies that help us sense these things on the outside of our bodies and also inside our bodies. We call it the nervous system.*
- *It is called the nervous system because our body is full of nerves that send information from different parts of our bodies to and from our brain. We're going to be learning some interesting things about our nervous system that can help us be happier and healthier together.*
- *So, our senses help us feel things on the outside of our bodies like a sound or smell. Let's notice if we can feel anything inside our bodies. Let's put one hand on our heart and the other hand on our belly and let's close our eyes for a moment and notice if we can feel anything inside our body.*
- *Sometimes we can feel something in our bodies like whether we are feeling hot or cold. We call things like that sensations. That's because we sense them.*
- *Sensing something is feeling something with our body. Sensations are just things we can feel or sense with our body. Our body tells us what we are sensing.*
- *Let's think of things we can sense on the outside. We will make a list of sensations together.*
  - *When you touch your desk, is it hard? Is it soft? Is the temperature warm or cool?*
  - *If you touch your clothing, is it soft? Scratchy? Smooth? Something else?*

- *Take out your pencil/crayon/pen, as you touch it, is it round? Flat? Warm? Cool? Sharp? Something else?*
- *Is there something else on your desk/near you that you want to describe with sensation words?*

- *Now let's think about what we sense on the inside. An example would be if we are standing in the sun, our senses may let us know it is too hot, and we take action to move into the shade to cool down. In the beginning, we sense the warmth or the heat on the inside and when we move to the shade, we sense a cooling down on the inside. Let's think together about other sensations we experience on the inside.*

- *Let's see how many we can come up with. If you say something but we're maybe not sure if it's a sensation, I'm going to write it separately over here."*

- (Some children may need further prompting to understand sensations. Hence asking questions like the following may help:) *"What do you feel on the inside when you're sleepy? What part of your body tells you that you are sleepy? How about when you're hungry? What do you feel like when you are having fun? What do you feel on the inside when you're happy? If you play a sport, what do you feel like on the inside? What do you feel on the inside when you're excited? Where in your body do you feel that?* (It may be helpful if you give a personal example, such as when I'm thinking about having fun, I sense warmth in my shoulders and cheeks.)"

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Sensing on the Outside and Inside*

Overview

- This activity is to help students continue to recognize that we can sense things on the outside (using our five senses) and on the inside (turning our awareness inside, noticing and naming what sensations we find inside the body).

- The Community Resiliency Model, designed by the Trauma Resource Institute, provides several activities called "Help Now!" strategies. These all involve doing an easy cognitive task or directing our attention to sensations. It has been found that when the nervous system is agitated, directing attention to sensations by doing activities like these can have an immediate calming effect on the body. This insight activity works through the individual Help Now! strategies and also lays the foundation for cultivating attention as a skill (which is further developed later in SEE Learning), since all the Help Now! strategies involve paying attention.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Just as we can sense things on the outside with our five senses, we can pay attention to sensations inside our bodies also.

- Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

- There are simple strategies we can use to help our bodies become calmer and feel safer.

Materials Required

- Optional: copies of the stations handout if you are doing stations
- Help Now strategies posters (both items are included at the end of this learning experience)

Instructions

- Select a Help Now strategy to lead your class through. Follow the script below in order to get comfortable asking questions about sensations. Show the poster of the Help Now strategy to your class.
- Use this format to explore the various Help Now! strategies as you have time, and repeat this activity as necessary.
- Note: You can also have students explore the Help Now! strategies as stations around the room. Use the handouts provided in the following section or make your own and post them around the room. Have your students pair up and then walk around the room until they find a Help Now! station that they want to try. Then they can do the Help Now! skill together as a pair and share what they experience. After everyone has had a chance to try two or more stations, bring them back together as a class and ask them to share which stations they did and what they experienced.

Teaching Tips

- As students explore the effects of these strategies on their bodies, it is important that they also learn to notice whether the sensations they experience are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. As this vocabulary (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral) and the ability to connect these terms to sensations in the body will be important for all learning experiences in this chapter, it is worth checking in occasionally with your students to deepen their understanding of noticing sensations in this three-fold way. Note that sensations are not inherently pleasant, unpleasant or neutral for everyone or at all times: warmth, for example, can be experienced as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral at different times.
- Note that not every Help Now! strategy will work for every student. Some may prefer to push against a wall, some may prefer to lean against a wall. Some may like touching pieces of furniture around them, some may not. An important part of the process here is for each student to learn what works for himself or herself, while you as the teacher also learn what works for each individual student. This is the building of body literacy—a knowledge of one's own body and how it experiences well-being and distress. Even something that works one time may not be effective another time, so learning a variety of strategies is best.

- Once your students have had some familiarity practicing Help Now! strategies, you can also have them illustrate their own Help Now! stations and place them around the room.

Here is a list of the Help Now! strategies and below is a sample script of how you can lead the activity to explore a few of them at a time.

- Notice sounds in the room, and then outside of the room.
- Name the colors in the room.
- Touch a piece of furniture near you. Notice its temperature and texture (is it hot, cold or warm; is it smooth, rough, or something else?).
- Push against a wall with your hands or your back and notice how your muscles feel.
- Count backwards from 10.

Sample script

- *"Remember we said we want to feel happy and we want to experience kindness.*
- *Our bodies can feel happy or unhappy too. If we pay attention to that, we can do things that feel kind to our bodies.*
- *We're going to try a few sensing activities and see if we notice anything happening to our bodies.*
- *We'll start with sensing things on the outside.*
- *Let's all listen and see if we can hear three things inside this room. Listen and then raise your hand when you have three things that you heard inside this room.* (Wait until all or most of the students have raised their hand.)
- *Let's share now. What three things did you notice?* (Call on individual students to share).
- *Now let's see if we can hear three things outside of this room. Raise your hand when you've got three things that you heard outside this room."* (Note: This exercise can also be accomplished with music. You can play music and ask the students what happens on the inside as they listen to music.)
- (When most or all students have raised their hands, allow them to share.)
- *"What happened to our bodies when we all listened for sounds inside and outside the room? What did you notice?"* (Allow for sharing. You may notice that when you are all listening for sounds, you become quieter and more still.)
- *"Now we're going to notice what happens inside our bodies when we do this.*
- *Our sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. There are no right or wrong sensations. Sensations exist to give us information like I am too hot in the sun, I need to walk to that shade to cool down. Neutral means in-between. It means that the sensation isn't pleasant, but it isn't unpleasant either.*
- *Let's listen for things inside or outside this classroom that we didn't notice before.* [Pause.]
- *When we're doing this, what do you notice on the inside of your body as you're listening? Do you notice any sensations inside your body*

right now? Raise your hand if you notice a sensation inside your body.

- *What do you notice? Where is it? Is it pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?* [Allow other students to share.]
- *Now let's see if we can find things of a certain color in the room. Let's start with red.*
- *Look around the room and see if you can find three red things in this room.*
- *Notice what you're feeling on the inside as you find the color red. Does anyone notice any sensations in their bodies? Raise your hand if you noticed one.*

Strategy	What Sensations Do You Notice in Your Body?	Are the Sensations Pleasant, Unpleasant, or Neutral?
Name six colors you notice in the room.		
Count backwards from 10.		
Notice different 3 sounds in the room and 3 outside of the room.		
Slowly drink a glass of water. Feel it in your mouth and throat.		
Spend a minute walking around the room. Notice the feeling of your feet on the ground.		
Press your palms together firmly or rub your palms together until they get warm.		
Touch a piece of furniture or a surface near you. Notice its temperature and texture.		
Slowly push against a wall with your hands or your back and notice any feelings in your muscles.		
Look around the room and notice what catches your attention.		

- *What is it? Is it pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?"*

Use this format to explore the various Help Now! strategies as you have time, and repeat this activity as necessary.

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

- *"What are some things you learned today about sensations?*
- *What are some words that describe sensations?*
- *How can knowing a little more about the idea of sensations help us be happier and kinder? When do you think it might be useful to use one of these Help Now! activities?*
- *Let's remember what we've learned and see if we can use it together next time."*

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



Name six colors you see.

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

Help Now! Strategy

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?

Help Now! Strategy

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?

Help Now! Strategy

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?

CHAPTER 2 | Building Resilience

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Resourcing

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to help students explore the use of a personal resource (in this case, the kindness drawings created in chapter 1) to bring about greater well-being in the body. Personal resources are internal, external or imagined things that serve to bring about sensations of greater well-being in the body. They are unique to each person. Thinking about a personal resource tends to bring sensations of well-being to the body.

When we notice these sensations (tracking) and then focus upon pleasant or neutral sensations, the body tends to relax and return to its resilient zone (which students will learn about later). Both resourcing and tracking are skills that develop over time 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Discover how to use a personal resource to relax and calm the body.
- Develop greater skill in identifying and tracking sensations in the body.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

The drawings of kindness that students created in chapter 1. If you do not have those drawings, you can have them create new ones, but this will take additional time.

LENGTH

25 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

- "Let's practice some of the Help Now! activities that we learned. (You may wish to have pictures of the Help Now! activities up to allow students to pick one of them.)
- Let's listen and see if we can hear three things inside this room.
- Now let's listen and see if we can hear three things outside this room.
- What do we notice on the inside as we do that? Do you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation? Remember, neutral means in-between.
- Look around the room, and see what catches your attention that is pleasant or neutral, it could be an object, a color, a favorite friend, or something else.
- Now let's check-in with our bodies. What do you notice on the inside? Can you find a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body?
- Is there anyone that can't find a pleasant or neutral sensation? If so, raise your hand. (If some students raise their hands, help them shift to a place in their body that feels better.)
- Once you've found a pleasant or neutral sensation, let's just pay attention to that place quietly for a moment. See if the sensation changes or if it stays the same."

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Using the Kindness Drawing as a Personal Resource

Overview

- In this activity, students share their drawing and then notice sensations in their body, paying particular attention to pleasant and neutral sensations.

Content/Insights to be Explored:

- Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral; the same sensation (such as warmth) could be any of these three
- When we focus on pleasant or neutral sensations, our bodies tend to relax.
- We can use resources and attention to sensations to relax our bodies.

Materials Required

The drawings of kindness that students created in chapter 1

Instructions

Follow the script below to facilitate Resourcing for the first time.

Teaching Tips:

- Bringing to mind something that evokes greater well-being, safety, or security is called "resourcing." The object that one brings to mind is called a personal resource. Noticing the sensations that arise is called "tracking" the sensations or "reading" them (you can use whichever term you prefer). When a pleasant or neutral sensation is found through tracking, we can keep our attention on that

sensation for several moments and observe the sensation, seeing if it stays the same or changes. This tends to deepen the sensation and lead to greater relaxation in the body.

- Although we all have nervous systems, there can be great variety in terms of what functions as a personal resource for us and what sensations arise in us related to well-being or stress. If tracking leads us to noticing unpleasant sensations, we can try to find a place in the body that feels better, and focus on that instead. This is called "shift and stay." When we do find a pleasant or neutral sensation in the body through tracking, we can keep our attention on it for a few moments. As noted, this silent attention tends to deepen the experience and signals to the body that we are safe, and the body typically responds with relaxation.
- It's possible that during resourcing, the students will share sensations that are coming from things other than the kindness drawing. For example, the student may feel nervous speaking up and may describe sensations related to that. If that happens, you can redirect the student back to the kindness drawing and see if that evokes any pleasant or neutral sensations. If the student does report a pleasant sensation, then ask them to pause for a moment and just notice that sensation. It is this pausing and staying aware of the pleasant or neutral sensation that allows the body to relax and deepen into an experience of safety. If the student reports unpleasant sensations, ask if there is somewhere else in the body that feels better, then allow them to pause and notice that place that feels better.
- Note: A single sensation (like warmth, for example) can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Coolness similarly can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. So it is helpful to ask the students specifically whether the sensation is pleasant, unpleasant or neutral so that they begin to learn the skill of tracking in this way. Also note that the nervous system responds to stimuli very quickly. So if you wait too long when the student sharing their kindness drawing, their attention will have moved on to something else, and they will no longer be experiencing sensations related to recalling a moment of kindness. The timing of this will become more apparent to you with practice.

Sample script

- *"Remember how we said we all like kindness?*
- *We're going to explore how looking at or thinking about something we like can lead to sensations in the body.*
- *Does anyone remember what we call the part of our body that senses things and sends information to our brain? That's right—the nervous system. We're going to learn more about that now.*
- *Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant, or they can be neither. If they are not pleasant and not unpleasant, we say they are "neutral" or "in between."*

- *What sensations do you think could be pleasant or unpleasant or in-between?*
- *How about warmth? What's it like when it's pleasant? Unpleasant? In-between?*
- *Or coolness?*
- *Or having lots of energy and movement inside our bodies? What's it like when we have that and it's pleasant? Have you ever felt that but it was unpleasant? Could it be in-between and neutral?*
- *Now let's take out our kindness drawing that we made.*
- *Take a moment to look at your kindness drawing. Remember what it was about.*
- *If you like, see what catches your eye on your drawing, and touch the part that catches your eye.*
- *Are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral? Is there a difference between looking and touching your kindness drawing?*
- *Who would like to share their kindness drawing with the rest of us?*
- *It's important that when one of us shares, everyone else is going to listen and watch quietly."*

Allow one child at a time to share. After the child has shared, ask them immediately (waiting too long will allow the sensations to pass):

- *"What do you notice on the inside right now as you remember that moment of kindness?*
- *Are there any sensations you notice in your body?*
- *Is that sensation you just told me about pleasant, unpleasant or in between?*
- *What other sensations do you notice in your body as you remember the moment of kindness?*
- *Would anyone like to share?"*

As an option, you can allow them to share other things that make them feel happy, safe, or good, besides their kindness drawing.

- *"If you'd rather choose something else to think of instead of your kindness drawing, you can think of a person, place, an animal, a thing or memory that makes you feel good and share that."*

Allow a few students to share and go through the same process with each one. It's possible that as one student shares and experiences pleasant sensations, there may be noticeable changes in their body associated with relaxation. Other students may notice this. If they do, allow them to share what physical changes they noticed.

Once you have modeled this process two or more times, you can have the children form pairs and share with each other.

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

- *"What did we discover about personal resources and sensations?*
- *What kinds of sensations came when we looked at our personal resources?*
- *Where in our bodies did we feel those sensations?*
- *Do you think we could come up with more personal resources in the future?*
- *If you ever feel unpleasant, do you think you could use one of your personal resources to help your body feel better?"*

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Creating a Treasure Chest

PURPOSE

This learning experience builds on the last activity by helping students create a "treasure chest" of personal resources. Personal resources are internal, external or imagined things that serve to bring about sensations of greater well-being in the body. They are unique to each person. Thinking about a personal resource tends to bring sensations of well-being to the body. It is good to have more than one resource, because a particular resource might not work all the time. For example, some resources might serve to energize us when we are feeling down, while others might calm us when we're feeling hyperactive. It is important to practice resourcing along with tracking, since it is the tracking skill that builds body literacy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Create a treasure chest of personal resources that they can use to calm themselves when stressed.
- Discover how to use their personal resources to relax and calm the body.
- Develop greater skill in identifying and tracking sensations in the body.

LENGTH

30 minutes (40 with optional activity)

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The kindness drawings from Chapter 1
- Colored or white blank 4"x6" cards (or paper cut to a similar size) and colored pens or markers for each student
- Small box, pouch, or a large colored envelope to serve as the "treasure chest" for each student to store their drawings of personal resources in
- A box of small colored rocks, stones, crystals or other similar objects (optional)
- Art supplies for decorating the treasure chest (optional)

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

Distribute the kindness drawings from the previous learning experience to each student.

- *"Let's take a moment to get comfortable as we take out the kindness drawings we did a few days ago.*
- *Look around the room, and see what catches your attention that is pleasant or neutral, it could be an object, a color, a favorite friend, or something else.*
- *Bring your attention to a place on the inside that feels pleasant or neutral.*
- *Now let's think of our moment of kindness or the drawing of a resource.* [Pause.] *Take a look at your drawing and see if you can remember what the act of kindness or resource was that you drew, where you were, or who you were with.*
- *When you think about this moment of kindness or resource, what do you notice happening the inside your body?* (If students share pleasant or neutral sensations, allow them to sit with their attention on those sensations. If they share unpleasant sensations, encourage them to shift and stay, or to choose one of the Help Now! activities.)
- *As we do this, we're learning about our bodies and how to calm them and make them feel okay."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 16 minutes

Creating a Treasure Chest of Personal Resources*

Overview

In this activity students will come to understand what a personal resource is: something specific to them that makes them feel good or better when they think of it. They create a set of personal resources for themselves, drawing each one on a piece of paper and then labeling it. The pieces of paper can be small so that they can be folded and placed in a box (or colored envelope) which will serve as a treasure chest of the student's personal resources. If you or your students prefer, you can call the treasure chest something else, like a "treasure pouch," "pouch of resources," "tool box" or "tool kit." (Similarly, you can provide pouches instead of boxes.) As the year goes on, they can add to their treasure chest of personal resources and they can pull resources from it when they need to.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can develop and use a variety of resources to help the body feel calmer and safer.
- Our nervous systems respond when we think of things we like and enjoy or things that make us feel safer.
- Some resources may work better at certain times than others.
- Resourcing can become easier with practice.

Materials Required

- colored or white blank 4"x6" cards (or paper cut to a similar size) and colored pens or markers for each student; small box, pouch,

or a large colored envelope to serve as the "treasure chest" for each student to store their drawings of personal resources in; a box of small colored rocks, stones, crystals or other similar objects (optional); art supplies for decorating the treasure chest (optional)

Instructions

- Tell students you are going to make a treasure chest and explain to students what resources are.
- Ask questions to get students to share some of their resources.
- Provide ample time for students to draw their resources and then share them. Sharing can be done in pairs or as a whole group or both.

Teaching Tips

- What's important in this learning experience is students identifying what serves as a personal resource for them, that is, recognizing the value of something in their life as a resource that makes them feel good or better. Although we all have things in our lives (people, places, activities, memories, hopes, etc) that make us feel better, we sometimes take them for granted or don't recognize them as having this special value.
- You may wish to repeat this activity to create more resources. Also, you can set aside time for your students to decorate and personalize their treasure chest, thereby making it individualized. In this way, their treasure chest itself may come to serve as a resource for them. You can also use the following supplemental insight activity ("treasure stone") to add to the treasure chest.
- *Note:* Personal resources can be quite simple; they do not have to be something incredibly wonderful. Personal resources are also unique to the individual; what works for one person will often not work for someone else. To keep the range as broad as possible at first, use a variety of words to describe what a personal resource can be rather than a single word like "happiness," "safety," "joy," etc. That will make it easier for your students to find something that works for them.

Sample Script

- *"Today we're going to create a treasure chest.*
- *What's a treasure chest for? What kind of things do you find in a treasure chest?*
- *In this chest we're going to put reminders of things that make us feel good, things that make us feel safe, or things we like.*
- *We call these things personal resources. A resource means something that is useful. It's personal because our resource is something special to us. It doesn't have to be special to other people.*
- *Personal resources are things that make us feel good or happy or safe.*
- *They can be things we like to do. They can be things we find relaxing or fun. They can be people we like. They can even be things about ourselves - things we're proud of or happy about.*

- *Is there someone you like who makes you feel safer and happier when you think of them?*
- *Is there a place you like that makes you feel better when you go there or think about it?*
- *Is there something you really like to do that is fun?*
- *These are all personal resources. It can be anything that makes you feel good or makes you feel better when you're not feeling good.*
- *It can even be something that you imagine that makes you feel good or happy when you think of it.*
- *Let's take a moment to think of a personal resource for ourselves, it might be two or three.*
- *Now let's take a moment to draw our resource or resources.*
- *Let's write down the name of our resource on the drawing so we can remember what we drew later.*
- [Allow students ample time to draw.]
- *Now we've created a few personal resources. Each one is like a treasure. It's valuable. Like treasure, we can save it for later and we can use it when we want to.*
- *We can keep our resources in our treasure chests. Let's write our names on our treasure chests.*
- *Let's share what we made with each other. Who would like to share one of your resources and why it is a resource for you?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

Practicing Resourcing and Tracking*

Overview

In this reflective practice, students will choose one of their personal resources and sit with it for a moment, seeing if they can notice sensations in the body and identify them as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral (in-between).

Teaching Tips

- Note that if students share unpleasant sensations, remind them that they can shift to a place in their body that feels better or even just neutral. This skill is called "shift and stay." Also, remember that you are helping them to learn what a sensation is, so if they say things like "It feels good" or "It feels bad," ask them things like, "What does good feel like? Can you describe the sensation?" You can use the sensation word list that you created with them in the previous learning experience.
- Resourcing is a skill that will take time to develop. It is suggested that you repeat this activity a few times until students gain some direct experience with pleasant sensations in the body while thinking of their personal resource. After such critical insight is born, further practice will then lead to an embodied understanding of the way their own nervous system experiences and expresses stress and well-being.

Sample script

- *"Now we're going to notice sensations in our bodies.* (Review what a sensation is with examples if necessary).

- *Let's take a moment and choose one of your favorite resources.*
- *Make yourself comfortable and place the drawing of your resource in front of you.*
- *If you feel that you are distracted, move to a place where you are less distracted.*
- *Let's take a moment and be still and just look at our resource and think about it.*
- *What does it feel like on the inside when we look at and think about our resource?*
- *Do you notice any pleasant sensations? If you don't, that's okay.*
- *If you notice unpleasant sensations, then just shift and find another part of your body that feels better. Stay with the place that feels better.*
- *Once we've found a pleasant sensation, or just an in-between sensation, then we can stay there and just feel that sensation.* [Pause.]
- *It's like we're reading our body and its sensations. We call this tracking. Tracking means to follow something closely. When we notice the sensations in the body and pay attention to them, we are tracking.*
- *Would anyone like to share a sensation that they notice in their body?*
- *What does it feel like when you just pay attention to that sensation?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"These treasure chests are for you to use to help you whenever you need to feel more safe, calm and peaceful.*
- *Whenever you feel you need some help feeling calmer, you can take a few moments and touch your stone quietly, and remember something you're thankful for. Or look at your pictures of your resources.*
- *What kinds of sensations came when we looked at our personal resources?*
- *Do you think we could come up with more personal resources in the future?*
- *When might you want to use your treasure chest?"*

OPTIONAL INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Resource Stone

Overview

This is an optional supplemental insight activity that can go along with the treasure chest activity. You may not have time to do both activities in one lesson, so you can always do this later. In this activity, you invite the students to form a circle and choose a small stone, crystal or other object from a bag or box. They then think of something they are thankful for, and the stone or object comes to represent that thing. They then add the object to their treasure chest.

Materials Required

- a small stone, crystal or other small item for each students; students' treasure chests

Instructions

- Invite the students to join you in a circle.
- Give each student a small crystal, stone, or other small item or invite them to choose one they like from a box or bag. They should choose.
- Lead them through the resourcing practice, scripted below.

Sample script

- *"This is a special treasure for your treasure box.*
- *It is a stone (or crystal) that can help remind you how to feel calm, safe, and peaceful. We'll call it a resource stone, since we will use it to remind us of a resource.*
- *But, before it can do that, we have to practice something new.*
- *Take a moment and think of something that you are thankful for.*
- *It can be one of your personal resources or something new.*
- *We can feel thankful for little things, like a someone giving you a smile, or big things like special people in our lives.*
- *Let's all take a moment and think about something we feel thankful for: a place, a person, an object or something else.*
- *It could be an adult in your life, a pet, a favorite park. Whatever it is, take a moment to picture it in your mind.*
- *As you think about this special thing, give your stone a gentle squeeze. You can rub it with your fingers too.*
- *Notice what sensations you feel on the inside as you hold your stone and think of what you're thankful for.*
- *Now, we'll go around the circle and share what we're thankful for.*
- *I'll start: "I'm thankful for… (the trees that I see outside, my walk home, my good friends, my cat)."*

Go around the circle until everyone has shared. It's ok to pass.

- *"Notice how you feel on the inside now that we've all expressed thanks for something special to us.*
- *Does anyone notice any sensations on the inside? What do you notice?*
- *Now you can return to your desks (tables) and place your special stone inside your treasure chest.*
- *We can write a note and put it in our treasure chest also, so that we remember what it is we were thankful for."*

CHAPTER 2 | Building Resilience

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

Grounding

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to explore the skill of grounding as a way of returning to and staying within the resilient zone/OK zone. Grounding refers to attending to the physical contact of one's body with an object. Grounding is always practiced with tracking (attending to sensations in the body), as these two together build body literacy. As there are many ways to do grounding, and each student will likely find methods that work best for him or her, it is recommended that you repeat some of the activities in this learning experience a few times.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Increase awareness of how our bodies feel when we move them in certain ways.
- Gain proficiency in the practice of grounding through various postures.
- Gain proficiency in the practice of grounding through holding an object.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Students' treasure chests
- A grab bag of objects for students to hold such as stuffed animals/soft toys, articles of clothing, pendants, watches, toys. (If you prefer, or if it is difficult to arrange these items, you can ask students beforehand to bring something that they feel they might enjoy using for this activity)

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"Let's take out our treasure chests and see if there's something in there we'd like to use.*
- *Pick one of your personal resources and hold it in your hands or place it in front of you.*
- *Let your eyes rest on it, or close your eyes and feel it carefully with your hands.*
- *Let's take a few moments to really give our attention to our objects.* [Pause.] *As you do that, try to notice the sensations inside your body. You might feel warmer or cooler, lighter or heavier, perhaps tingling, maybe you notice your breathing, just be curious. If you don't notice any sensations, that's okay and just notice that you're not feeling any sensations at the moment. You can still just sit and enjoy your object."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY #1 | 12 minutes

Grounding with One's Stance*

Overview

In this activity students will practice the skill of grounding by trying out different stances and seeing which ones bring about the greatest sense of well-being in their bodies.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Our nervous system responds to the physical contact of our bodies with objects and surfaces.
- Attention to pleasant or neutral sensations in the body when grounding can lead to relaxation.
- We each have specific grounding techniques that will work best for us.
- Practicing grounding can make it easier and more effective over time.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- You may need to prepare the space first to allow for students to push down on a desk as well as push and lean against a wall.
- Use the script below to guide your students through grounding with one's stance and tracking for the first time.
- Explain that you will be learning a skill called "grounding" which is to help the body feel better, safer, more secure, and more stable. (In that sense it is quite like resourcing, but instead of thinking of a resource, it involves moving your body until it is most comfortable.)
- Lead your students through different postures (standing, sitting, pushing down on their desk, leaning against the wall, pushing against the wall), pausing briefly during each posture to allow them to track their sensations, and then allowing them to share what sensations (if any) they notice.
- Conclude by allowing them to practice the stance or posture that they like best, and note that they can use stances and postures like this when they need to calm down or help their bodies feel better.

Teaching Tips

- Because our nervous systems constantly monitor the posture of our bodies and the contact of our bodies with objects (including what is supporting us, such as the floor, beds, or chairs), simply changing our stance can help the nervous system regulate itself better. Tracking sensations allows a deepening of the experience and the building of body literacy.
- If you like you can add other postures as well, even including lying down or sitting with one's back against the wall. Arm positions can also be used, such as folding one's arms. Remember to encourage them to use tracking to notice the sensations in their bodies, as this will help them see which postures are most helpful.

Sample script

- *"We can use the sense of touch to practice a skill called "grounding."*
- *We are going to try a little experiment and see if we feel differently depending on what our body is doing. Remember, our nervous systems are all different, so something that feels pleasant for you might feel unpleasant for others. Since we're all sitting now, let's notice the sensations in our bodies that come from sitting. Feel free to change your way of sitting to one that is most comfortable for you. Now let's track our sensations by paying attention to them.* [Pause.]
- *Now let's all stand. Stand in the way that is most comfortable for you.*
- *Let's track what sensations we notice in our body now that we're standing. Let's see what we're feeling on the inside.* [Pause.]
- *Who would like to share?* [Allow for student comments on what they are sensing.]
- *Raise your hand if you feel better standing. Raise your hand if you felt better sitting.*
- *That's interesting, isn't it? Tracking helps us know which feels better for us. It is different for each of us.*
- *What we're doing is called "grounding."*
- *We use grounding to help our bodies feel more safe, strong, secure or happy.*
- *That's because our nervous system always pays attention to the position of our bodies and what we're touching. It senses what position we are in and it responds to that. It can feel better or not so good depending on how we're standing or what we're touching.*
- *Now that we are paying attention to sensations, we can see if the way we hold our body changes those sensations.*
- *Sometimes by changing the way we are standing or sitting can help us feel better.*
- *Let's try something different. Let's push down on the table with our hands. It doesn't have to be too hard. And let's track what sensations we feel on the inside.* [Pause.] (If students are sitting in a circle away from tables, they can place their hands on the bench or floor and push hard to lift themselves up off their seat,

feeling the contact and also the pressure in their arms.)

- W*hat sensations do you notice on the inside?* [Allow students to share.]
- *Let's try a different thing. Let's push against the 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 like this and where in our body we feel those sensations.* [Pause.]
- *What sensations are you noticing?* [Allow students to share.] *Are they pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?*
- *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.* [Pause.]
- *What sensations are you noticing now?* [Allow students to share.] *Are they pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?*
- *Raise your hand if you felt better pushing against the wall. Raise your hand if you feel better leaning against the wall. Raise your hand if you felt better pushing down on the table or seat.*
- *Now let's each do what we prefer. If you want to sit, do that. Or you can stand, you can push down on the table, you can lean against the wall, or you can push against the wall. Let's all do the one we like best.*
- *Now let's pay attention to the sensations inside our body by tracking. You might like to close your eyes to help you feel the sensations.*
- *What do you notice? Do we all like the same things?*
- *Did you find one that made you feel better?*
- *When we do this, we learn what feels best for us. We can use this practice of grounding to help our body be calmer if it isn't feeling calm."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY #2 | 10 minutes

Grounding with an Object*

Overview

In this activity you will allow your students to choose an object they like from a selection that you provide (or ask them to bring objects of their own) and they will practice holding a few of the objects and noticing what sensations arise in their bodies when they do this.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Our nervous system responds to the physical contact of our bodies with objects and surfaces.
- Attention to pleasant or neutral sensations in the body when grounding can lead to relaxation.
- We each have specific grounding techniques that will work best for us.
- Practicing grounding can make it easier and more effective over time.

Materials Required

A grab bag of objects for students to hold such as stuffed animals/soft toys, articles of clothing, pendants, watches, toys. (If you prefer, or if it is difficult to arrange these items, you can ask students beforehand to bring something that they feel they might enjoy using for this activity).

Instructions

Use the provided script to guide students through grounding with an object and tracking for the first time.

Teaching Tips

- Grounding is the physical contact of our body with an object. This can include the ground, a chair or the wall, as in the previous activity. But it can also involve holding an object. When we enjoy the sensations that arise from holding an object, attention to those sensations can also help us relax.
- You may wish to have a variety of soft objects or objects with nice textures as well as some hard objects like wooden objects or stones. Students can also use their resource stone from the previous Learning Experience. If you will not have enough objects for them, you can ask them to bring in something from home prior to doing this activity.

Sample script

- *"We can do grounding by holding or touching things also.*
- *Here are some things we can use to practice grounding. You can each choose something you think you might enjoy holding.*
- *Let's sit and hold our object. You can feel it with your hands or place it on your lap.*
- *Notice how it feels.*
- *Can anyone describe their object using sensation words? What does it feel like?*
- *Now let's do tracking. We're going to pay attention to the sensations in our body as we hold our object.*
- *Let's be silent for a moment and notice any sensations in our body as we hold our object.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice? Where did you notice it in the body?*
- *Let's be silent again and do some more tracking.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice this time?*
- *Would anyone like to change their object?* [Repeat once allowing students to pick a different object if they didn't particularly like their first one.]
- *This is also grounding."*

After you do this a few times, you may find that some students like particular objects especially and can use them for grounding. If this is the case, you may wish to leave some of these objects in the classroom to allow students to use them for grounding when they feel the need to as suits your classroom.

OPTIONAL INSIGHT ACTIVITY #2

10 minutes

Grounding with a Part of the Body*

Overview

This activity is an extension of further ways students can use grounding, in this case by becoming aware of their feet and hands while lightly pressing down on a table, leaning against the wall, sitting or standing. As in other grounding activities, what is important is to combine grounding with tracking (awareness of sensations in the body).

Sample Script

- *"We can do grounding by becoming aware of a part of our body in relationship to a surface.*
- *Let's try placing our hand(s) against a table, a wall or the floor.*
- *Let's try paying attention to our feet and how they are positioned on the ground.*
- *Now let's do tracking. We are going to pay attention to the sensations in our body.*
- *Let's be silent for a moment and notice any sensations in our body.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice? Where do you notice it in the body?*
- *Let's be silent again and do some more tracking.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice this time?*
- *Did you like paying attention to your hands, your feet or both?*
- *This is also grounding."*

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

- *"We have spent some time together trying out different ways of grounding ourselves and noticing sensations within our bodies. Which has been the best one for you (i.e. which has given you pleasant or neutral sensations)? Which one did not work for you?*
- *Does anyone remember a sensation that they felt or heard someone else share?*
- *When do you think you could use grounding?"*

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 5

Nelson and the Resilient Zone

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to introduce students to the concept of the resilient zone, which you can also call the "OK zone" or "zone of well-being," by using a puppet and charts to facilitate understanding. The resilient zone refers to when our mind and body are in a state of well-being. When we are in our resilient zone we can handle the stresses that happen during the day and react with the best part of ourselves. Stress can bump us out of our resilient zone into our high or low zone.

When we are stuck in the high zone we may feel anxious, agitated, nervous, angry, stressed out, and so on. Our body is dysregulated, making it hard for us to concentrate, learn new information, or make good decisions. When we are stuck in the low zone, we may feel tired, lacking in energy, unexcited about things we normally like, unmotivated and deflated and it's just as difficult for us to learn new things, solve problems, or make our best choices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Understand our three zones.
- Develop the skill of recognizing which zone they are in at any given moment through tracking.
- Develop the skill of returning to the resilient zone using resourcing and grounding.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A board or chart paper for drawing the three zones
- A hand puppet (or you can substitute a stuffed animal or soft toy)

LENGTH

30 minutes

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"Take a moment to give your attention to the sensations inside your body. You might want to check how much energy you have, whether you are feeling heavier or lighter, warmer or cooler, relaxed and soft or tight and jumpy. I invite you to notice what's going on.*
- *Last time we talked about grounding - using our body and senses to help us calm down and feel better. Can you remember something you tried that felt pleasant or neutral to you? (Take enough responses to feel that most strategies have been represented.) Is anyone having trouble remembering these? (If so, you might want to make a list to post in the classroom.)*
- *Is there one form of grounding you would like to try right now? (Allow some time for individual choice and exploration, or you may want to choose one experience for the whole group to try.)*
- *How do you feel now? Can you tell whether that exercise was helpful to you? Do you notice any differences in your body?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

The Resilient Zone

Overview

Here you will present and discuss the concept of the resilient zone, the high zone, and the low zone, using a puppet and charts to facilitate understanding and set up for the next activity, which goes through the day of a child ("Nelson") and how that child experiences the day in his body and nervous system. If you are unable to use a puppet, you can substitute a picture of a child who is roughly the same age as your students.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Stressors can knock us out of our resilient zone. All people experience being stuck in the high zone or stuck in the low zone.
- When we are stuck in one of those two zones, we tend not to make the best decisions and we don't feel good.
- There are specific practices we can do to return to the resilient zone
- Once in the resilient zone, we experience more well-being, our bodies are healthier, we are kinder to ourselves and others, and we make better decisions.

Materials Required

- A board or chart paper for drawing the three zones;
- A hand puppet (or you can substitute a stuffed animal or soft toy).

Instructions

- Show the students the puppet and introduce him/her as a child roughly the same age as your students who goes to a school quite like theirs. Allow them to name him/her ("Nelson" will be used here). Explain that you are going to talk about Nelson's day and ask them to think about what Nelson might be feeling as he goes about his day. In order to do this, explain that you will be using a chart that

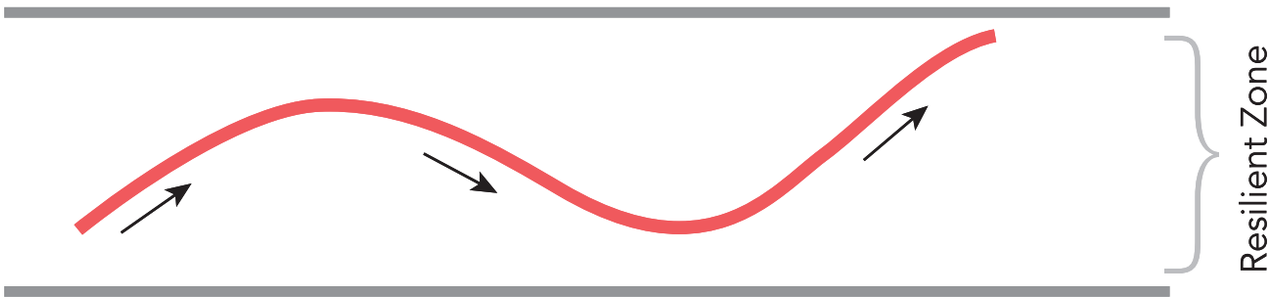
shows different zones or different ways Nelson could be feeling in his body.

- Show a chart of the resilient zone or draw one on the board or a piece of chart paper. Your drawing should have two horizontal lines and a wavy line between them inside it going up and down.
- Explain that this drawing shows how our bodies, and specifically our nervous systems, go throughout the day: sometimes getting more excited or even upset, sometimes feeling more tired or low in energy.
- Explain that the middle zone is the "resilient zone" (or "OK zone" or "zone of well-being" or another name your class can come up with.) This is where we'll put Nelson when he's feeling OK. He could be experiencing a range of emotions and feelings in this zone, but his body is still healthy and he can make good decisions. He can be OK sad or OK mad and still be in his resilient zone/OK zone.
- You can explain that "resilient" means the ability to deal with and handle difficulties; the ability to bounce back; inner strength, fortitude or toughness.
- Draw the lightning bolt symbol (or some other symbol) to represent the stressor or trigger. Explain that sometimes things happen that upset Nelson or make him feel less safe. If we come across something like this in the story, we can use a lightning bolt to indicate that something might be stressing Nelson. This might even knock Nelson out of his resilient zone. If that happens, he could get stuck in the high or low zone.
- Now add two pictures that represent a child being stuck in the high zone or low zone, such as the ones provided in the graphic. (You may print out the accompanying graphic and use that instead.)
- Ask your students what they think the boy in the high zone is feeling – really angry, upset nervous, anxious? If Nelson gets stuck in the high zone, what might he sense on the inside?
- You may need to provide examples first. Write down the words they give you, using a different color (such as red) for sensation words. Then repeat this with the low zone. What do they think the girl in the low zone is feeling-sad, tired, alone? If Nelson were to get stuck in the low zone, what might he sense on the inside? Write down the words they give you, using a different color for sensation words.
- Then tell the story of Nelson included in the sample script below, pausing to check (a) what the students think Nelson might be sensing in his body; (b) where he might be on the resilient zone chart; (c) what he could do to get back to the resilient zone or stay there.
- Make sure to conclude the discussion by reminding the students that we have already learned a lot of skills that we can use to return to our resilient zone. Invite them to resource and/or ground as you end the discussion.

Teaching Tips

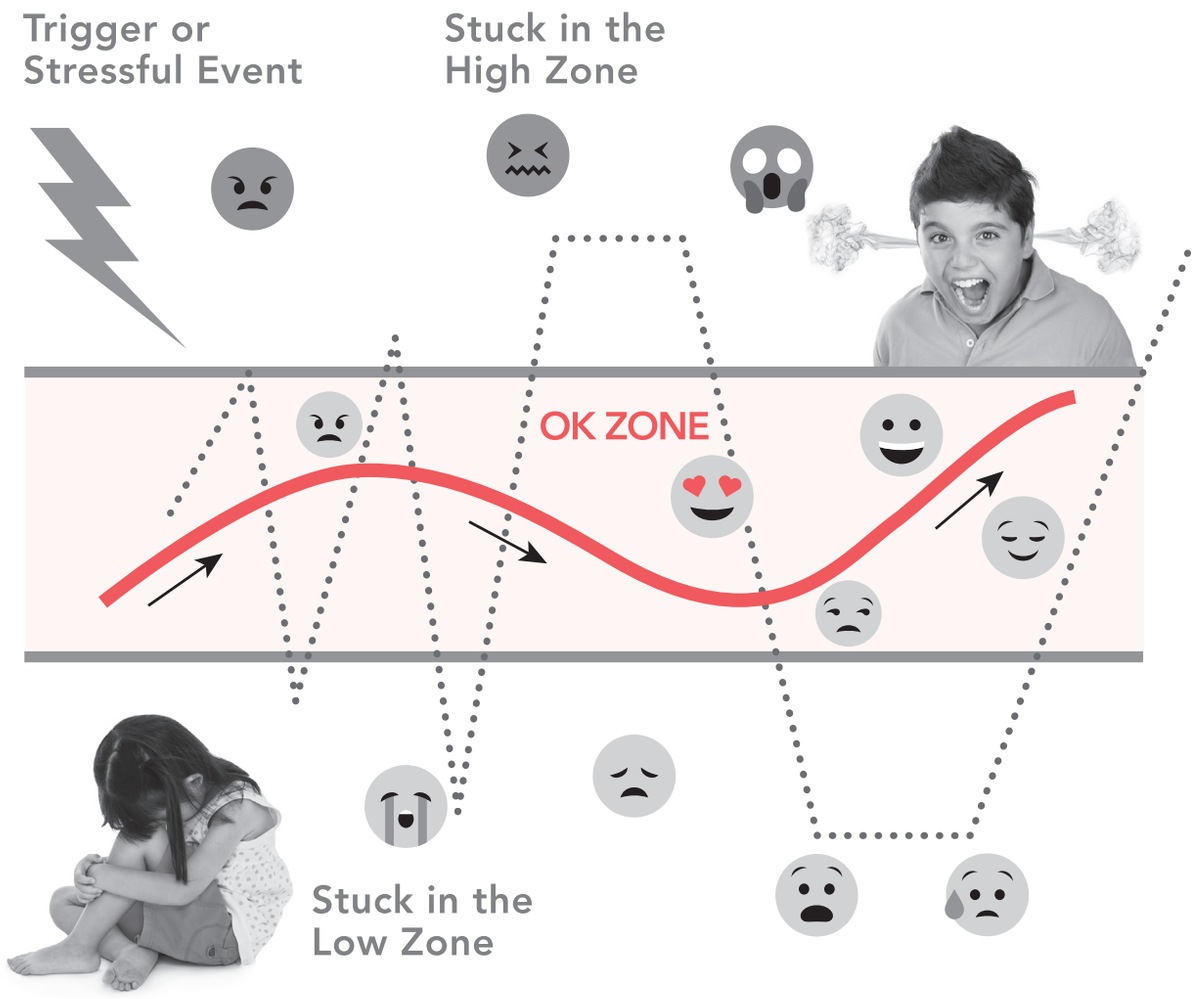
- Don't be concerned if your students do not reach these critical insights right away, as they are reinforced in the following two learning experiences also.
- A note on safety: When teaching about the three zones, it is safest to use a proxy at first (such as the puppet, pictures, or emojis) to represent being stuck in the high or low zones and to ask students about what they think that proxy is feeling or sensing. This is a way of teaching the three zones indirectly at first. It is not recommended to ask students direct questions such as, "What do you feel like when you're stuck in your high zone?" or "What is it like for us to be stuck in the high zone?" or "Do you remember a time when you were stuck in your high zone?" Doing so could inadvertently cause a student to experience a traumatic flashback or to describe the worst thing that ever happened to them. Similarly, it is best to avoid creating scenarios to teach this material that involve students directly simulating being stuck in their high zone or low zone, rather than through a proxy or a role play.

THE RESILIENT ZONE



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



Sample script

- *"We've been learning about our bodies and in particular our nervous system.*
- *What have we learned that our nervous system does?*
- *We've been paying attention to our sensations. And we've learned how to calm ourselves using resourcing, grounding and Help Now! strategies.*
- *I'm going to introduce you to a friend of mine.* [Show puppet.] *Our friend needs a name. What name should we give?* [This story that comes next will use the name Nelson.]
- *Nelson is the same age as most of you. He also goes to a school like you, and he's going to help us understand the nervous system by showing us what he goes through in a day. Nelson has had a really active day!*
- *To do that we're going to make a picture to help us understand our nervous system. Our*

picture will show us what Nelson's nervous system is doing as he goes about his day.

- *This middle part is called our resilient zone [or OK zone or zone of well-being.] That's because in the middle here, Nelson's body is feeling resilient.*
- *Resilient means we are strong on the inside, we are in control and we can handle any difficulties. Even if difficult things happen, since we are resilient, we can bounce back and be in control again.*
- *When we're in our resilient zone, we might have some difficulties, but we can deal with them because we have inner strength. We are not super stressed-out or super troubled because we have learned how to get our bodies and minds into a better place that helps us feel better.*
- *How do you think Nelson feels in his body when he's here in this zone?*
- *Through the day we might go up and down* [draw a wavy line in the resilient zone]. *The line going up means we might get excited and have lots of energy, or the line going down means we might get sleepy or be a bit low in energy. But we can still do that in our resilient zone.*
- *But then something scary happens or something we don't like* [draw or point to the lightning bolt]. *And it knocks us out of our resilient zone. And we might get stuck in our high zone.*
- *How do you think Nelson feels when he gets stuck in his high zone?* [Allow responses.]
- (If you feel it is helpful, you can have the class ask Nelson directly how he feels when he's stuck in the high and low zones. This will allow you to share feelings and sensations that the students might not mention:) *Let's ask him. Nelson, how do you feel when you get stuck in your high zone?*
- *Nelson says: "I don't like it. I feel anxious and scared sometimes. Sometimes when I'm stuck in my high zone I feel so angry and upset! I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm not in control. I feel a lot of stress up there in the high zone. But sometimes when I'm stressed, I'm in the low zone. When I'm stuck in the low zone, I feel like that girl in the picture."*
- *How do you think that girl who is stuck in the low zone is feeling?* [Allow responses.]
- *Do you feel that way Nelson?*
- *Nelson says: "When I'm stuck in my low zone, I feel low in energy and sad. I just don't feel like doing things. Sometimes I don't even feel like playing games that I usually like. I'm just not interested. Sometimes I just want to be alone. Sometimes even if people are around, I feel like I'm alone. It doesn't feel that great to be stuck in the low zone, I can tell you that. But I do feel good again when I get back into my resilient zone."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Nelson's Day

Overview

In this insight activity, students go through Nelson's day, which is a typical day in the life of a child roughly the same age your students. As you tell the story of Nelson's day using the puppet, you will let the students guide the process by asking them where Nelson is on the resilient zone chart.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Stressors can knock us out of our resilient zone. All people experience being stuck in the high zone or stuck in the low zone.
- When we are stuck in one of those two zones, we tend not to make the best decisions and we don't feel good.
- There are specific practices we can do to return to the resilient zone
- Once in the resilient zone, we experience more well-being, our bodies are healthier, we are kinder to ourselves and others, and we make better decisions.

Materials Required

- The sample story (below)
- Marker
- Whiteboard or chart paper

Instructions

- An asterisk is placed at each point in the story where you can pause and ask your students to guide you as to what Nelson might be feeling and where he is on the resilient zone chart. Ask, "What sensations do you think Nelson is feeling right now in his body?" After they've shared that, ask, "Where is Nelson in his three zones?" Ask them to be specific—if he's in the resilient zone, is he in the middle or the upper part of it or the lower part of it? Or has he been bumped out of his resilient zone? If so, he is stuck on high, and if so how high? As they give you the answers, you will be drawing a wavy line from left to right that chronicles Nelson's day and where he is on the chart based on what they say.
- At some points the students may feel something stressful has happened that knocks Nelson out of his resilient zone. At those times you can ask, "Should we put a lightning bolt here? Should it be a big lightning bolt or a small one?" If your students think these bump Nelson out of his resilient zone, you will draw the line accordingly to show that.
- Also when you see an asterisk in the story and pause, you can ask your students to recommend things Nelson could do to calm himself or make himself feel better. As Nelson does those things, they may decide that he returns to his resilient zone. Note that you do not need to adhere rigidly to every time an asterisk appears in the story. These are just suggested moments when you can pause and check-in. Most likely, your interaction with the students will be more fluid than this and you may wish to pause more or less frequently depending on how they are participating in the activity.

- At the end, you will ask them to look at the whole picture and share what they notice. Lastly, explore the idea that if Nelson thinks about his day, and knows when stressful things tend to happen, might he be able to prepare in advance for those things so that they have less of a chance of bumping him out of his resilient zone?
- End with an opportunity for them to practice resourcing and grounding themselves.

Teaching Tips

- A sample story is provided for you, but before doing this activity you should feel free to change it to fit the typical experiences your own students might have so that they can best relate to what Nelson is going through. (Note that once you go through this exercise once with your students, they should be able to do a similar exercise with any story that you read to them or tell them: that is, they will be able to tell you what the character(s) is feeling in his or her body and where they might be in their resilient zone (or out of it).)
- As an alternative, you can demark the resilient zone on the floor with rope or tape and have students move from zone to zone as they hear Nelson's story and you land on an asterisk.

Nelson's Story

*"Nelson wakes up. It's so early! He doesn't have to go to school until 8am, but for some reason he's very excited and he woke up earlier than usual. Why?**

Nelson's mother comes into his bedroom. "Nelson! You're up early. Why don't you brush your teeth and get dressed." She pulls out some socks for him, but they are socks that he doesn't like. These socks make his feet itchy..

*"No! I don't like these socks!" Nelson says.**

"Okay, you don't have to wear those socks," Nelson's mother says. "Which pair do you like?"

Nelson searches and searches until he finds his favorite pair of socks. They are rainbow colored and are so very soft. "I like these ones!" he says.

"Okay," Nelson's mother says. "You can wear those socks." He puts them on and his feet feel great!

*Nelson brushes his teeth and goes downstairs. His mother is preparing breakfast for him. It's eggs and roast potatoes, his favorite. "Yay!" he says as he settles down to eat.**

"Nelson, we're going to be late," says his mother. "Hurry up and finish your food. Do you have your book bag?"

"No, it's upstairs," Nelson says as he's eating.

"Go and get it," says his mother. "And don't forget to put your homework assignment in it."

"But I'm still eating!" says Nelson. He was enjoying his food so much.

*"You have to go and get it now or we'll be late," says his mother. "Go now."**

*Nelson has to take a bus to school. He almost misses the bus! But he gets out just in time to catch it. When he finally gets on the bus and sits down next to his friend Arya, he says, "Phew! I just made it!"**

Nelson arrives at school and goes to his classroom. The teacher comes in and has all the students sit in a circle.

"Now it's time for us to show our assignments," the teacher says. "Remember I gave you some homework to do?"

Nelson suddenly remembers that the teacher gave them a little bit of homework to do, but he didn't do it.

"Oh no," he thinks. "How did I forget about that again?"

"Let's go in a circle," the teacher says. One by one, each student shows their homework. Nelson knows it's going to be his turn soon.

*"Now it's your turn, Nelson," says the teacher and points at him.**

"I didn't do it," said Nelson. "I'm sorry."

*"Don't worry," says the teacher and smiles at him kindly. "You can bring it tomorrow."**

*Nelson sees that a few other students also didn't do their homework, and the teacher tells them that they too can bring theirs tomorrow.**

*At lunchtime, Nelson is so happy because it's his favorite food: pizza!**

Nelson goes outside for recess after lunch, when they always have a little time to play before coming back to class. He sees some other children playing kickball. "I love kickball!" Nelson thinks.

*But when he goes over to play with them, there are a lot of big kids and they don't let him play"You can't play with us!" they shout. Nelson is surprised and sad. He goes off by himself and stands at the edge of the playground. Suddenly he doesn't feel like playing with anyone any more. His whole body feels very heavy.**

Then Nelson's friend Theresa comes over to him.

"Hey, Nelson," she says, "we're playing kick ball too. Won't you come and play with us? We'd love to have you on our team!"

*"Really?" says Nelson. "Okay!"**

He runs over and plays kickball with Theresa and the other students until recess is over.

*At the end of the school day Nelson goes home. He has dinner with his family and then crawls into bed. He's so tired and his legs hurt a bit from playing so much kickball, but the soft pillows feel so good under his head.**

The End"

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

- *"Who would like to explain a part of what the drawing of the resilient zone means?*
- *How do you think we'd know if someone else was in their high zone?*
- *What about their low zone?*
- *What do you think are other words we could use to explain to someone what resilient means?*
- *Do you think most people have been stuck in the high zone some time? What about the low zone?*
- *What did you learn today that you want to remember because you feel it might be helpful sometime?"*

CHAPTER 2 | Building Resilience

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 6

Exploring the Resilient Zone through Scenarios

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to build off of Learning Experience 5, "Nelson and the Resilient Zone," by allowing students to move on a map of the three zones on the ground according to how they feel the characters in specific scenarios might be feeling. This helps them to further embody their understanding of resilient and the nervous system, while still maintaining an indirect approach, in that you are not asking them what it is like when they themselves are stuck in their high or low zones, but rather you are exploring this through characters in a scenario.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Understand our three zones.
- Develop the skill of recognizing which zone they are in at any given moment through tracking.
- Develop the skill of returning to the resilient zone using resourcing and grounding.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The chart(s) of the resilient zone and nervous system to put up for students to see
- Sample scenarios (provided)
- Colored tape to place on the floor to create the three zones

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

- *"Take a moment to give your attention to the sensations inside your body. You might want to check how much energy you have, whether you are feeling heavier or lighter, warmer or cooler, relaxed and soft or tight and jumpy. I invite you to notice what's going on.*
- *Last time we talked about grounding - using our body and senses to help us calm down and feel better. Can you remember something you tried that felt pleasant or neutral to you?* (Take enough responses to feel that most strategies have been represented.) *Is anyone having trouble remembering these?* (If so, you might want to make a list to post in the classroom.)
- *Is there one form of grounding you would like to try right now?* (Allow some time for individual choice and exploration, or you may want to choose one experience for the whole group to try.)
- *How do you feel now? Can you tell whether that exercise was helpful to you? Do you notice any differences in your body?*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY

20 minutes

Exploring the Three Zones through Scenarios*

Overview

In this activity, you will provide different scenarios and the students will stand along a line or diagram on the ground that shows the three zones, indicating where they think the character would be in their bodies based on that scenario. They will share what it's like to be in those zones. Then they will suggest to each other what the character could do to return to their resilient zone. Those stuck in a high or low zone will then do the practices suggested, and can move if they find themselves returning to the resilient zone. This is an activity you may wish to repeat multiple times.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Stressors can knock us out of our resilient zone. All people experience being stuck in the high zone or stuck in the low zone.
- When we are stuck in one of those two zones, we tend not to make the best decisions and we don't feel good.
- There are specific practices we can do to return to the resilient zone.
- Once in the resilient zone, we experience more well-being, our bodies are healthier, we are kinder to ourselves and others, and we make better decisions.

Materials Required

- The chart(s) of the resilient zone and nervous system to put up for students to see
- Sample scenarios (provided)
- Colored tape to place on the floor to create the three zones

Instructions

- Draw a visual representation on the ground of the three zones, which will be your "zone map." An easy way to do this is to use colored

tape and simply draw two parallel lines, thereby creating the three zones. The resilient zone will be the space between the two lines, the high zone will be above the top line, and the low zone will be below the bottom line. If you like you can also put signs on the ground that say "High," Resilient" (or "Well-Being") and "Low."

- If you feel it would be helpful, because your students don't quite have a firm grasp on the word "resilient," you can also write the word "resilient" on the board or on chart paper and ask students to name other words that are like resilient, creating a word map.
- Next ask for 2-4 volunteers who will stand on the zone map based on a scenario you read. Explain that everyone else will be an observer. You will then read out a scenario from the samples below (or make up your own) and ask these volunteers to stand where they think the character(s) in the story would be. Tell them that the three zones are a continuum: for example, they can be in the resilient zone but towards the high end of it (for example, if they are energetic or excited, but not stressed out), just into the high zone (slightly stressed), or very far high in the high zone (highly stressed out).
- After they've found their positions, ask the volunteers to share why they are standing where they are standing (they do not all have to agree or stand in the same place), and ask them to share what they might be sensing in their bodies.
- Then ask the rest of the class (the observers) for suggestions as to what the character(s) could do to feel better. They should suggest some of the skills (Help Now! skills, resourcing or grounding, or other activities. Ask the volunteers (and observers if you like) if they would like to practice what has been suggested. Those who wish to can then do the skill. Then ask them how the character would now be feeling, and if they'd like to move to a place that better describes where the character would be now.
- Repeat with a new scenario and new volunteers.

Teaching Tips

- Note that this activity is a soft way of exploring the zones and the practices due to the fact that you are using scenarios rather than asking students directly where they are in their bodies. Because our nervous systems are constantly reacting to circumstances, however, it is very likely that you will in fact have students who may be stuck in a high zone or low zone. Our nervous systems also react to thoughts and imagination as if they were real. Therefore, the practice combines imagination with reality, and it is good for you as the teacher to be aware of this and see that activation of the nervous system is going to happen, and that the practices the students use can help them regulate their bodies in the moment.
- Gradually, practicing these skills can expand your students' resilient zones, making it harder

for them to be bumped out into the high or low zones by stressors and making it easier for them to return to their resilient zone if they are bumped out.

- Once students understand the process, using scenarios that have actually happened in your class or between students can very effective: this helps develop the important skills of empathy, perspective-taking, and conflict transformation that are more fully explored later in SEE Learning.

Sample Scenarios

These scenarios are offered only as examples. Please feel free to change the names of the characters to be appropriate for your class or to choose situations more appropriate for your class. You may wish to choose names that are not names that your students have. While you can allow students to be wherever they feel they should be and explain why, some suggestions of typical responses are provided in brackets.

- David is a student your age, and he has to perform in front of the whole school. How do you think he is feeling? Does anyone think David might be feeling something different? What if he has a lot of practice doing it and likes to do it? What are some sensations he may be feeling?
- Keiko is in bed at home. She can't sleep because tomorrow is her birthday and she knows she's going to be getting some wonderful presents. [She might be excited but not stressed, and therefore probably not stuck in the high zone.]
- Sandra goes to play with her friends, but none of them will play with her. Instead, they all walk off and leave her alone by herself. [Probably stuck in the low zone, or in the lower part of the resilient zone. Alternatively, she could get angry and be stuck in the high zone or in the higher part of her resilient zone.]
- Cameron shows up for school and is asked by his teacher for his homework. But he didn't do any of it.
- Steven is at home one evening. He hears his older brother fighting with his mother and both of them are shouting.
- Amy is at home with her parents on the weekend. They say, "We're going out and you have a new babysitter coming to watch over you." She liked her old babysitter a lot but doesn't know this one.
- Aliyah is out at a crowded shopping center with her parents. But then she looks around and realizes she can't see her parents anywhere. [You can also ask where her parents may be once they realize Aliyah is not with them.]
- Kiara comes to school to find that her class has thrown her a surprise birthday party!
- Tyler and Santiago are at a haunted house. "Let's go in! It will be fun!" says Tyler. "I don't want to go," says Santiago. "No, let's go!" says Tyler and he pulls Santiago inside. [Have some students show where they think Tyler would be and some Santiago.]

You may wish to repeat this activity a few times. Use these examples to come up with your own scenarios, developing ones that will be closer to situations your students might encounter. Work with students to come up with scenarios, perhaps similar to those that have occurred in your class.

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

- *"Let's take a moment to bring to mind one of our resources. You can take one out of your treasure chest if you like and touch it or hold it.*
- *Let's pay attention to our resource for a moment and notice any sensations that arise in the body.*
- *If you notice a pleasant or neutral sensation, let's stay with that for a few moments. If you notice an unpleasant sensation, let's find a place that feels better in the body and then rest there.*
- *What do you notice?*
- *What did you learn today that you want to remember because you feel it might be helpful sometime?"*

CHAPTER 2 | Building Resilience

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 7

How Kindness and Safety Affect the Body

PURPOSE

The purpose of this final learning experience in chapter 2 is to return to the foundational concepts of kindness, happiness and safety explored in chapter 1 and tie in what has been learned in chapter 2. Now that the students have a greater understanding of their bodies, how to calm them, and the resilient zone, they can connect this with what they learned about happiness, kindness, and the value of class agreements. Stress and a sense of threat can knock us out of our resilient zone, making us feel uncomfortable and actually releasing chemicals in our bodies and dysregulating our nervous system in ways that are unhealthy and can even cause long-term damage. Since students now have first-person experience exploring how we can get bumped out of our resilient zones, and how uncomfortable that can feel, and also know that we can help each other return to our resilient zones/OK zones through kindness, they can understand the importance of kindness and their class agreements on a deeper level. They are helping each other to be happy and healthy, and are even helping each others' bodies to be happy and healthy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Synthesize the class agreements with their understanding of how the body experiences kindness, safety and happiness.
- Recognize the relationship between nervous system dysregulation and physical health.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The chart of class agreements and the chart of helping actions that were created in chapter 1
- The resilient zone chart
- Graphic of the autonomic nervous system (if possible - there is one in the chapter introduction for your use)

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"Let's take out our treasure chests and see if there's something in there we'd like to use. Or if you'd rather do grounding, you can find a comfortable way to sit, stand or lean.*
- *If you're resourcing, then pick one of your personal resources and hold it in your hands or place it in front of you. Let your eyes rest on it, or close your eyes and feel it carefully with your hands.*
- *If you're grounding, just bring your attention to your body.*
- *Let's now take a few moments to do tracking and pay attention to the sensations inside our bodies.* [Pause.]
- *If you find a pleasant or neutral sensation just pay attention to that and watch it. See if it changes or stays the same.*
- *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.]
- *What did you notice?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 8+ minutes

Overview

The point of this discussion is to help your students understand that what they have been experiencing in the body has implications for health and happiness overall.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Experiencing a lack of kindness can make us feel stressed and unsafe and knock us out of our resilient zone. Experiencing kindness can help us feel safe.
- Having less stress is healthy for our bodies.
- By being kind and respecting others, we can help others feel safer, happier and more healthy.

Materials Required

- Resilient zone chart
- Graphic of the autonomic nervous system (if possible - there is one in the chapter introduction for your use)

Instructions

- Begin by reviewing sensations and the information we receive from them.
- Show students the resilient zone chart again. Review what happens to our bodies when we are in or out of the resilient zone. Discuss how the body might feel when in the high zone and the low zone. Discuss ways of helping one's body return to the resilient zone.
- Use the treasure chests for resourcing after talking about the zones.
- If possible, show a picture of the human body showing the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and/or the organs inside the body.
- Explain the ANS and how it reacts to danger and stress.

- Discuss how we can affect others and their zones and how we can help others get back into the resilient zone.

Teaching Tips

- Our nervous systems are designed to keep us alive, and as such respond to perceived threats or the need to mobilize with activation of the sympathetic nervous system. This stress response releases chemicals in our bodies and increases inflammation as the body prepares for potential danger. This is not a problem in the short term, but chronic inflammation and stress gradually weakens our bodies and makes us susceptible to a whole range of physical and mental illnesses.
- This means that when we feel safer, calmer, and/or happier, our bodies are physically healthier and can do things like learn, grow, develop, rest, digest, regenerate and heal. When we are feeling unsafe and unhappy, our bodies shut down the systems that allow us to do those things, instead preparing us for danger. When we understand this, we can realize that how we treat each other matters deeply. Being mean to someone is likely to cause them to feel stress and a lack of safety, making their bodies less healthy and contributing to illness. Being kind to someone helps them feel safe, making their bodies more healthy. Since we want health and happiness for ourselves, we want others to treat us with kindness and we want to feel safe around them. It makes sense therefore to show to others what we want for ourselves: kindness and compassion.

Sample script

- *"We've been exploring the sensations in our body. When we pay attention to them, we learn if we're feeling good, happy and safe, or if we're feeling a bit nervous, unsafe or unhappy.*
- *We've also learned what we can do to make ourselves feel happier, calmer and safer in our bodies. What are some of the things we've learned to do for that?* [Allow for just enough sharing that students are connecting with the last lessons.]
- *Show the resilient zone chart. When we are in the resilient zone/OK zone, can someone show me what that may feel like in your body? Why?*
- *What do you think happens inside our bodies when we are in our resilient zone/OK zone? Do you think it's healthy for our bodies to be in our resilient zone/ok zone? Why or why not?*
- *What do you think happens inside our bodies when we get stuck in the high zone a lot? Do you think it's healthy for our bodies to be stuck in the high zone? Why or why not?*
- *What about the low zone? Why?*
- *Let's take a moment to look at something in our treasure chest, think of a resource, or ground. Be aware of what happens inside.*
- [If possible, show a picture of the human body showing the autonomic nervous system and/or the organs inside the body.] *Scientists have discovered that when we are feeling unsafe or*

when we are stuck in our high or low zones for a long time, it is not healthy for our bodies.

- *We get stressed, and our nervous systems release a lot of chemicals in our bodies that could make us sick if we're not careful.*
- *What are some things we need our nervous system to do? It's the part of the body inside that controls our inner organs, like our stomach, our heart, our lungs. It helps us digest things when we eat. It helps us sleep and rest. It even helps us grow our body to be bigger and stronger. It has to keep our heart beating and our lungs breathing and our blood flowing.*
- *It's the nervous system that does all these things. When we're in the resilient zone/OK zone, then it can do all these things just fine. It also protects us properly against germs, diseases and illness.*
- *But when we're stuck in the high zone or low zone, our nervous system has a hard time doing these things. Instead, it gets ready for danger and it stops doing things we need to be doing to be healthy.*
- *That's okay if there's a real danger, and we need to run fast or do something quickly. But if there's no real danger, then it doesn't need to be ready like that.*
- *When we're stuck in the high or low zone, what do you think happens to our heart? To our breathing? To our ability to digest food? To our ability to rest?*
- *If we can't digest our food properly, or if we can't rest properly, or if we can't grow properly, then that's a problem, isn't it?*
- *If we are not in danger and our nervous system does not need to take action to keep us safer, in which zone would we want to be?*
- *Would we want to make someone else feel unsafe and bump somebody into their high zone or low zone? What might we do that could bump someone into the high zone or low zone?* [Allow sharing.]
- *What might we do that could help someone stay in the resilient zone/OK zone or get back into the resilient zone/OK zone if they were bumped out?"* [Allow sharing.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 13+ minutes

Acting Out the Class Agreements with Tracking

Overview

In this practice, students will work together to create little skits. If you have the ability to do so, you can video record these skits and tell your class that you'll be making a short movie.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Experiencing a lack of kindness can make us feel stressed and unsafe and knock us out of our resilient zone. Experiencing kindness can help us feel safe.
- Having less stress is healthy for our bodies.

- By being kind and respecting others, we can help others feel safer, happier and more healthy.

Materials Required

- The chart of class agreements
- The chart of helping actions that were created in Chapter 1

Instructions

- Using the class agreements and the helping actions they created in Chapter One, explain that they will create stories based on these agreements being followed or broken and then will act these stories out (and make a movie, if you have the ability to do so). When creating stories, be sure to use made-up names for characters that are not the actual names of students in your class. As before, it may work to have one student pretend to be in need and have one or two other students see that need and engage in helping actions.
- After a story has been created, ask for volunteers to act it out. Explain that when you say "Go!" they will start the story and everyone else will be quiet and watch. When you say "Slow!" they will slow down their actions and take a moment to notice sensations in their body (tracking). You might also first ask the observing students what they think the characters in the story might be sensing in their bodies, and which zone they might be in. When you say "Go!" again, the acting students will continue the story. When you say "The End!" they can stop acting out the story.
- After the scenario has been acted out, which may only take a minute, allow both those who volunteered, and then those who observed, to share what they saw and felt. Then ask the observers what helping actions they might have done had they been in the story.
- When this debrief is completed, have your students create another story if there is time.

Teaching Tips

You can repeat this reflective practice several times, each time emphasizing different class agreements or activities. You can also draw from actual scenarios that have happened in class, seeing how they relate to the class agreements and walking students through the scenario while having them pay attention to their sensations and prompting them to suggest what skills or actions could be helpful.

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

- *"What did you learn today about our class agreements?*
- *How do our class agreements affect our bodies?*
- *Is happiness something we feel inside the body? How do we know that? What about kindness?*
- *Is there anything you think we should add to the class agreements after what we did today?*
- *Is there anything you learned or practiced about kindness that you might like to use again sometime?"*

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 3

Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

Overview

In the first chapter of SEE Learning, "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 respect. It only makes sense that we learn about our minds and bodies so that we can practice kindness towards ourselves as well. One important aspect of this was explored in Chapter 2, "Building Resilience," which focused on how to understand and regulate the autonomic nervous system. Self-care and kindness towards others go hand in hand, since if we experience dysregulation within ourselves, we may be more likely to cause difficulties for others and less likely to act kindly and attentively towards them. From our own personal experience, we can see how dysregulation can contribute to behaviors and choices that we later regret.

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. This is the topic of Chapter 3, "Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness."

Attention training has numerous other benefits for students as well. 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. Yet while often told to "Pay attention!", students are rarely taught the methods by which they can train and cultivate 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 therefore 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 paying attention to one's breath. Throughout, students are invited to notice what happens to their minds when they are able to pay attention with calmness, stability and clarity.

In Learning Experience 1, "Exploring the Mind," students use an activity called the "Mind Jar" to explore what is meant by "mind." In SEE Learning, "mind" is a broad category that includes

subjective, first-person experience: thoughts, emotions, attitudes, memories, feelings, and so on. These processes naturally also involve the body, so mind and body are understood as interconnected. At a more advanced level, the mind also involves processes that are not always immediately obvious to us: associations, unconscious or automatic processes, and so on.

The purpose of exploring what we mean by mind is two-fold in SEE Learning: first, so that students can gradually develop a "map of the mind," meaning an understanding of mental processes, including emotions, and second, so that students can understand what it means to pay attention to our minds and cultivate attention as a skill, particularly for gaining greater insight into mental processes.

Learning Experience 2, "Exploring Attention," helps students investigate what attention means, and how it involves both the senses and the mind. 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.

Learning Experiences 3 and 4, "Cultivating Attention in Activities Part 1" and "Part 2," help students explore the various things to which we can pay attention, including actions, and also why we would strive to cultivate attention. One reason is that attention to our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors helps us catch emotional impulses before they become problematic: that is, we become better able at catching the spark before it becomes 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 something in one's mind and not forgetting it, getting distracted, or losing sight of it. If one wants to concentrate on studying for a test, but one becomes distracted by a song and starts to daydream, then one has lost mindfulness of what one set out to do. If one commits to doing something, but then forgets all about it, then one has lost mindfulness of that commitment. Mindfulness is therefore not only important with regard to attention, but with regard to one's ethical values and commitments. In that sense it goes alongside compassion and supports it. The term "mindfulness" is defined specifically in SEE Learning and this may differ from how it is used in other programs, so a section below explains these differences. "Mindfulness" as used here 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 while one is cooking, then one will take a stance to avoid getting burned and will be heedful of it. Similarly, if one gains a critical insight that one has a tendency to hurt others with sarcasm or ridicule, then 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 being aware of what is going on in one's mind, one cannot notice that one is about to react in a harmful way, and therefore one cannot retain mindfulness or practice heedfulness.

Learning Experience 5, "Cultivating Attention on an Object," helps students explore how to focus their attention on a single object, such as the breath, and sustain awareness of it over time in order to build the muscle of attention. Because the breath is not a particularly stimulating object of attention, it can be very suitable for some students in the cultivation of 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 distraction to something else. Clarity means that the mind is not dull, lax, or lethargic, but rather engages its object of attention with alertness and vividness. Hence, 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 and 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 resiliency 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 6, "Self-Awareness," further explores the relationship between the cultivation of attention and an increase in self-awareness. Up to this point, previous learning experiences have covered attention to the senses, to sensations, to activities, and to a particular object, such as the breath. This final learning experience explores using attention to look at the mind itself. Just as students can learn to pay attention to external things, they can also learn to pay attention to their own thoughts, emotions, and feelings. This is called meta-awareness or meta-cognition.

This learning experience introduces the practice of paying attention to the mind itself 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 experience 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."

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 best fits them.

Like any skill, attention can be cultivated but will take time. Although there are 6 learning experiences in this chapter, your students are unlikely to gain proficiency in the skills and practices in only 6 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*.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting **SEE Learning, Chapter 3, "Strengthening Awareness and Attention."**

In Chapter 3, your child will explore the topic of attention and learn techniques for strengthening attention. Attention is absolutely crucial for learning, and children are often told to pay attention, but are rarely taught how to do so. In addition to providing specific practices to enhance attention, this chapter also explores how one can learn to pay better attention not only to external things, but also to one's own mind, thoughts, sensations, and emotions.

Home Practice

As your child goes through this chapter, it will be helpful for you to talk about what it feels like to pay attention and how you decide what to pay attention to in your body, mind, and environment. You may also share strategies you use when you find it difficult to pay attention to something. Feel free to ask your child what they are learning, discussing, and practicing related to attention. Point out moments when your child is able to pay attention well and explore with them what it is that enables them to do so (such as level of interest, familiarity, or other factors).

Early Chapters Included

- Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and compassion and how they relate to happiness and well-being.
- Chapter 2 explored practices for regulating the body and nervous system to enhance resilience to stress and well-being.

Further Reading and Resources

Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children by Linda Lantieri. Introduction by Daniel Goleman.

SEE Learning resources are available on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Exploring the Mind

PURPOSE

This learning experience uses a story and a "mind jar" to explore what goes on in our minds. In SEE Learning, "mind" is a broad category that involves our first-person experience of the world, including feelings, emotions, thoughts, memories, hopes and fears, our imagination, and so on. The mind is also what we use to pay attention to - or to be mindful of - things. Students also create two illustrated mind jars of their own in groups to show what might be in their minds when they are feeling stirred up and anxious, as opposed to when they are feeling calmer and more relaxed.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore what we mean by "mind" and the ways we can categorize mental experience.
- Learn that our mind can be relatively clear or cloudy, making it easier or harder to discern what is happening in our minds.
- Learn that we can calm and stabilize the mind by allowing it to relax and settle.
- Explore the similarities we share with regard to our minds and mental experiences.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Water in a large, clear glass (pint) jar with lid
- Small containers with sand, pebbles, small glass stones or glitter if available (or other materials with some that sink and some that float)
- Spoon to stir with
- A small stool or table to put the jar on at eye level so the class can watch it

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's start with some resourcing. If you like you can take out a resource from your treasure chest or you can just imagine your resource.*
- *If someone did something kind for your recently, or if you were kind to someone else, you can feel free 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.]
- *Now let's do tracking and pay attention to the sensations inside our bodies.*
- *If you find a pleasant or neutral sensation just 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.]
- *What did you notice?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 14 minutes

The Mind Jar

Overview

In this insight activity, your class will explore what we mean by "mind" through a story and the use of a "mind jar." A mind jar is a large transparent jar of water to which you can add sand, pebbles, and other things that can float in the water and make it cloudy, but eventually settle down if left undisturbed, leaving the water clear. The mind jar serves as a visual metaphor for how our minds become clearer when we let them settle.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- There are many things that go on in our minds, including thoughts, emotions, memories, feelings, hopes, fears, and more
- When agitated, our minds can become cloudy, making it hard for us to see what is going on inside us or around us. Even pleasant sensations/thoughts/emotions can cause our minds to become cloudy instead of calm.
- We can cultivate greater clarity of mind by not agitating it and instead developing focus and attention.
- When our mind is calm, things in our mind become more clear.
- We feel calmer.
- We learn more easily.
- We make better decisions.
- Our body feels more settled.
- We can stir our mind up (agitation, confusion, rumination) or let it settle.

Materials Required

- Water in a large, clear glass (pint) jar with lid
- Small containers with sand, pebbles, small glass stones or glitter if available (or other materials with some that sink and some that float)
- A spoon to stir with
- A small stool or table to put the jar on at eye level so the class can watch it

Instructions

- Review the Zones that were introduced in Chapter 2: the resilient zone, the high zone and the low zone.
- Place a large plastic or glass jar with water on a table or in a place where it is clearly visible. Invite your students to join you sitting in a circle or in a way that everyone can see the jar.
- Show the students how clear the water is and how easy it is to see through.
- What do you notice about the water now?
- I'm going to tell you a story about a boy called Desmond. For this story, we will be using this jar to show what is happening in Desmond's mind. Can you see clearly through it? We're going to use sand, pebbles and glitter. Sand will be for neutral things, pebbles for challenging things, and glitter for nice things.
- Tell a "Clear-Muddy Mind" story (a sample story is provided below). Add the materials into the jar yourself, or invite your students to add them, at appropriate times (here marked by letters in the story).
  S = Sand
  P = Pebbles
  G = Glitter

  Or substitute other appropriate substances for neutral, challenging and nice things. As the story goes on and your students start to understand the process, you can ask them what substance to add after each sentence.

Teaching Tips

- This activity uses the mind jar in conjunction with a story (you can make one up or use the story provided below).
- It is highly recommended that you test out your mind jar before doing this activity with your class.
- You can vary the substances you put inside.
- When left on its own, ideally the substances in the mind jar will sink within a minute or two, resulting in the cloudy liquid becoming clear.
- You can use a snow globe, but you lose the opportunity for class participation and the chance to show different mental activities (thoughts, feelings).
- After you finish, keep the mind jar set up, as you will use it again in upcoming learning experiences.

SAMPLE CLEAR-MUDDY MIND STORY

- *"It's snack time, which Desmond loves, because he is always hungry and he looks forward to morning snack (G)*
- *He looks in his lunch box and realizes that he has pretzels and carrots, not his favorite, but not too bad (S).*
- *He really enjoys the crunch that the pretzels and carrots make and gets lost in thought while eating them. (G)*
- *Before he is halfway through he hears his teacher say, "It's time to clean up to go outside." Desmond is not finished with his snack and he wanted to eat all of it. (P)*
- *"Oh well," he thinks, at least I get to go outside and play with friends. (S)*
- *He's looking forward to playing four square (or other popular game) with his friends like they always do at morning recess. (G)*
- *But when he gets outside, he realizes that other kids are already playing there and it's crowded. (P)*
- *"We can just play soccer or catch," suggests his friend, but Desmond really wanted to play four square.*
- *"Recess is ruined," he cries, "I'd rather just sit by myself". (P)*
- *Desmond watches as his friends play soccer. (P)*
- *Finally, his best friend Lincoln comes over and says, "I know you wanted to play four square, maybe we could play it at afternoon recess instead. Come play with us, we really miss you out there."* (G)

DEBRIEF

- *"What happened in the story?*
- *How did Desmond feel at the beginning, middle and end?*
- *What was challenging for him?*
- *What was neutral for him?*
- *What was pleasant for him?*
- *Note that things Desmond felt might not have felt that way for you. Your mind is different than Desmond's and that's ok. We all react to things differently because we have different minds, and that is ok.*
- *What else did you notice or what else do you want to talk about in the story?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 4 minutes

Settling the Mind*

Overview

In this practice, students will practice keeping their attention on the mind jar for a short while as it settles. However, they also have the option of shifting their attention to their bodies – particularly to neutral or pleasant sensations – and keeping their attention on those sensations. Either way, the students will be cultivating attention.

Teaching Tips

It's recommended that you start with very brief attention training exercises like this—even as short as a minute or two—and gradually build to longer sessions over weeks and months. Where the script says "Pause," you can pause for as short as 8-12 seconds, or as long as you feel is comfortable for your students. It is also recommended that you allow students to shift to resourcing, grounding, or a Help Now! strategy as needed. This is because if students feel dysregulation in their bodies, asking them to still their bodies and focus their concentration on a particular thing can sometimes increase discomfort.

Sample script

- *"I'm going to talk you through this reflective practice and then we can share out at the end. Remember that you can always adjust your position to a better one, and you can always think about a resource or do grounding if you ever feel uncomfortable.*
- *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 just 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.*
- *Let's watch the jar quietly now.* [Pause.]
- *What do you notice in your body as we just watch it and keep our attention on it?*
- *If you find a neutral or pleasant sensation in your body, then you can shift your attention to that if you like.*
- *If you feel unpleasant, you can do resourcing or grounding as we watch the mind jar. You can think of a resource from your resource kit. Maybe you'll find a resource that helps your mind settle a bit, just like the mind jar is settling.* [Pause.]
- *Notice how the mind jar just slowly settles and becomes clearer when no one is stirring it or disturbing it.* [Pause.]
- *Remember that you can always adjust your position to a better one, and you can always think about a resource or do grounding if you ever feel uncomfortable. Otherwise, let's just keep watching the mind jar. Let's see what we notice in the mind jar and in our body."* [Pause.]

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"What did you notice – in your mind or in your body - as you watched the jar settle?*
- *Who had a strategy or a way that helped you stay focused on the Mind Jar? Could you share it with the group?*
- *Do you think it helps us if our minds are calmer and more settled? What does it help us do?"*

CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Exploring Attention

PURPOSE

This learning experience introduces 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," whereby they pass around a novel object while sharing what they notice about it, and then things they wonder about it. This activity highlights how close attention reveals details and can make even a simple object interesting and also that we can each experience the same object in different ways. The learning experience concludes with a reflective practice for strengthening attention using a resource.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the various things we mean by "attention" and its importance in learning.
- Learn key vocabulary related to attention.
- Explore the strengthening of attention as a skill.
- Learn that while we often perceive things differently, even when looking at the same thing.

LENGTH

35 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The mind jar (for the check-in)
- A flashlight or other light source
- One or two small objects of curiosity, preferably ones that students are unlikely to have encountered before (such as a seashell, textile, wooden mask, honeycomb, bone, piece of rare fruit, etc.)
- A bag (optional)

A NOTE ON VOCABULARY

During these activities and over the course of subsequent learning experiences, it can be helpful to gradually introduce some of the following key terms about attention, which also prepare the students for a fuller "map of the mind" to come.

- **attention:** directing the senses or mind to one thing
- **to notice:** to be aware of something; to see something (not just with the eyes, but with any of the senses or the mind), especially something new
- **to observe:** to watch closely with the senses or mind so that we can notice things about it
- **to experience:** to sense or feel something directly
- **to concentrate:** to devote all of one's attention to one thing
- **focus:** attention on a single thing or activity; a center of attention; like concentration
- **to judge (or make a judgment):** to form an opinion or decide if something is one way or another (such as good or bad)

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's begin by thinking about one of our resources.*
- *You can choose a resource from your resource kit, or think of a new one, or even imagine one.*
- *As you think of your resource, notice what happens in your body.* [Pause.]
- *Now let's try settling with the mind jar again. I'm going to shake the mind jar gently and we can allow our minds to settle as we watch it settle. We'll just sit quietly and keep our attention on the mind jar, watching it.*
- *Remember that you can do grounding or return to your resource if it makes you feel more comfortable. Just be careful not to disturb anyone else as they settle.*
- *What did you notice as we settled with the mind jar?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 7 minutes

Attention with a Flashlight

Overview

In this insight activity, students will explore the concept of attention by using a flashlight as a visual metaphor for attention.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can direct the flashlight of our attention to different things.
- What we "shine the light on" can seem more interesting, more important or more detailed.

- Our attention is like a muscle. It gets stronger as we use it.
- We can direct our attention and this helps us notice and learn new things.
- If we don't pay attention, we may miss important things.
- We can pay attention with our senses and our mind. We can strengthen our attention like a muscle.
- When just observing and not judging, each of us may have different experiences, all of which are valid.

Materials Required

A flashlight or other light source

Instructions

- Dim the lights.
- Ask students to describe an object or part of the room seen in darkness, then again when a flashlight shines on it.
- Discuss how differently the room looks when we shine a light on it, how much more we can see and how the flashlight is like our attention.

Teaching Tips

- It's not necessary to make the room completely dark.
- As an alternative to the darkened room and the flashlight, use a bag with an unfamiliar object inside it and have students reach in and describe what they sense with their hands.

Sample script

- *"Today we're going to do some activities that will help us pay attention better.*
- *You already know a lot about paying attention. You've been doing it all your life. What does it mean to pay attention?*
- *How do we do that?*
- *What happens when we pay attention? Does anything happen in our bodies?*
- *Can anyone give an example of a time when you paid attention and noticed something important?*
- *What about a time when you didn't pay attention and missed something important?*
- *So attention helps us notice things, and some of those things might be very important. Attention can be so helpful. Let's try something. I'm going to dim the lights a bit."*

With the lights dimmed (but not too dark) first ask the students to describe something in a dark area. Then shine a flashlight (or some other light source) on that area and ask them to describe what they notice that they couldn't see before.

- *"What does the flashlight help us do?*
- *How about when I shine the light on something in particular, are the other objects in the dark still there, even though we can't see them?*
- *Right, they're there, but we can't see them as clearly.*

- *How can we use our minds like a flashlight? Can we pay attention to certain things closely or point our attention at them?*
- *Can we keep our attention on something, like holding a flashlight steady?*
- *Do we sometimes get distracted and lose attention? Let's see.*
- [Draw a circle on the whiteboard and tell students to pay close attention to it. Then, stand off to the side and make distracting motions and sounds.]
- *What was that like for you? What did you do with your attention?*
- *Do you think it's useful to be able to pay attention when you want to? Why?"*

If helpful, do a visual mapping of the word "attention" by writing it in the center of a piece of chart paper and inviting students to suggest other words related to attention. Feel free to do this with the other key terms if they came up in the conversation.

- *"Did you know we can strengthen our attention like a muscle if we practice? In that way, it's even better than a flashlight.*
- *Since attention is so useful, we're going to practice paying attention so we can get better at it. But we'll do it in some fun activities."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 7 minutes

I Notice, I Wonder

Overview

In this insight activity, students further explore the concept of attention and practice non-judgemental noticing and wondering. This activity can be repeated many times.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- 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 just observe before making a judgment, there are no "right" answers, just different experiences.

Materials Required

- One or two small objects of curiosity, preferably ones that students are unlikely to have encountered before (such as a seashell, textile, wooden mask, honeycomb, bone, piece of rare fruit, etc)
- A bag (optional)

Instructions

- Have ready an interesting object (possibilities - a pine cone or seed pod, a tool, a little known fruit or vegetable, a sea shell, perhaps something that connects to a class story or area of study).
- Explain that each student will have a chance to study the object carefully and say something they notice or wonder. The challenge is that

they cannot repeat something someone else has already said. If this feels too hard, students can do this in smaller groups first and work up to whole class.

- Pass the object (hand-sized or smaller) from student to student.
- Encourage each child to begin with "I notice..."
- Alternatively, pass the object around in a bag and have each student reach in to feel it.

Teaching Tips

Continue to support students by reminding them that because we are just observing and sharing our experiences, there is no right or wrong answer. If a student wants to repeat something that has already been said, like "It's brown," invite them to elaborate, such as "It's brown like chocolate" or "It's very light brown" or "It's as big as…" You may need to remind students also to keep paying attention to each other and the object, seeing if they can notice more and more of its features.

Sample Script

- *"Let's all get into a circle for an activity on attention. It's called "I Notice, I Wonder."*
- *I have an object here that I will pass around. If you know what it is, don't tell anyone what it is, and instead try to pretend you are seeing it for the first time.*
- *As the object goes around the circle, we'll each look at it carefully. We can smell, touch, and listen to it too.*
- *So we're going to pay close attention to it for a moment and observe it.*
- *Then offer one thing you notice or wonder to the group. We'll pay attention to each other and to the object.*
- *It's ok to say, "It reminds me of… It's about as big as a…. The color is like…. I wonder where it came from...I wonder what it's used for…"*
- *We aren't going to name the object. We're not going to say what it is until after we are finished with the activity.*
- *We don't have to make a judgment about the object either. That means we don't need to say if we like it or don't like it.*
- *If you are stuck, you can say "pass", and we can come back to you if you choose. And, there's no right or wrong answer. Just notice something about this object and share that.*
- *Before you pass the object, model for students by starting yourself: Let's try it. I'll start.* (Look at the object closely for a moment.) I notice the object is … (insert descriptor).
- [Send the object around the circle. When the object has been around once, do a second round in which students can state a "notice" or a "wonder." Model a "wonder" this time.]
- *Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, just your own experience. Listen carefully to what other people wonder."*
- [Send the object around the circle.]

DISCUSSION

- "*Did anyone hear someone else say something that you were thinking too?*
- *Did someone say something you hadn't noticed or wondered about yourself?*
- *Who can add one more thing they notice? Or wonder? Could we keep on noticing and wondering about more and more things?*
- *I noticed there were no wrong answers. Why do you think that is? (We're describing our own experiences, not opinions or judgments.) Do you think there's a right or wrong way to experience this object?*
- *Did anyone get distracted? Did you ever lose attention for a moment? Were you able to bring your attention back to the group and the object?*
- *Write or share as a whole group what this felt like:*
  - Where did you feel sensations in your bodies?
  - What were these sensations?
  - Why might this activity be helpful when thinking about attention or why did we do it?"

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5 minutes

Settling the Mind with a Resource*

Overview

In this reflective practice, students will choose one of their resources from their resource kits and will use it as an object of focus for a brief attention practice. This is identical to resourcing, except that here you are using the resource or the sensations that arise as an object to sustain attention on.

Instructions

Use the script below to facilitate this reflective practice.

Teaching Tips

- As before, make sure you give students the option of shifting their attention to another resource, to grounding, or to a pleasant or neutral sensation in their bodies should they ever feel uncomfortable from trying to focus their attention. Allow them to move slightly and adjust their posture also, as long as they are careful not to distract or disturb other students.
- As before, where the script says "Pause," you can pause for as short as 8-12 seconds, or as long as you feel is comfortable for your students.

Sample script

- "*Let's practice strengthening our attention just a little bit. We're going to do it with a resource, just like we've been doing, except this time we're going to hold our attention a bit longer.*

- *To help us concentrate, we're going to keep our eyes on the ground or close them and we're going to sit up straight but in a comfortable way.*
- *I'll talk you through the practice and we can share out after.*
- *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.* [Pause.]
- *If you feel a neutral or pleasant sensation in the body, you can pay attention to that. 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.]
- *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.]
- *Whenever you notice that you got distracted and you forgot about your resource, you can bring your mind back to your resource.* [Pause for a longer time, such as 15-30 seconds or longer.]
- *Let's finish now. You can open your eyes.*
- *What did you notice this time, when we paid attention to our resource a bit longer?*
- *Were you able to pay attention?*
- *What did you do when you lost your attention or got distracted?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Have you learned anything about attention that you found interesting?*
- *How else might it help us if we practiced attention and got better at it?"*

CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 1

PURPOSE

This learning experience introduces three concepts : (1) "awareness" of what is going on in our mind, our bodies, and around us; (2) "heedfulness" of things that could be dangerous or harmful; and (3) "mindfulness" of what we are trying to do or accomplish without distraction and without forgetting what we are doing. 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: that is, catching the spark before it becomes a forest fire.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Further explore the term "attention" and the benefits of strengthening attention.
- Learn we can pay attention to things on the inside (our body and mind).
- Be introduced to the terms "mindfulness" "awareness," and "heedfulness."
- Learn to catch impulses before they cause us problems, like catching a spark before it becomes a forest fire.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper and markers
- A piece of chart paper or a whiteboard with the word "attention" written in the center and the words "mindfulness," "awareness" and "heedfulness" written around it
- A water source, and towel for spills
- 4 oz cups (small cups work best because there is limited space for holding)

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"We've been learning how to pay attention and how to strengthen our attention like a muscle. Can anyone think of a time recently when you had to pay close attention? What was that like?*
- *Maybe you can think of a time when you had to pay attention, but it was hard because there were a lot of distractions, but you still paid attention. Who has a moment that they can share?*
- *Remember when we used the flashlight? How was that like what we had to do when we wanted to pay attention but there were things that got in the way?*
- *What are some of the things attention helps us to do?*
- *Let's take a moment to calm our bodies and minds so that we can be ready to pay attention Take a comfortable posture, one that is relaxed but that will help you keep your attention here.*
- *Now let's do grounding or resourcing. If you're doing grounding, notice the how your body is touching the floor or chair or some other place. Then notice pleasant or neutral sensations and keep your attention there for a few moments.*
- *If you're doing resourcing, bring your resource to mind and see if you can keep your attention on your resource for a few moments.*
- *If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can shift to a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body and focus on that instead.* [Pause 15-30 seconds or longer as your students are able.]
- *What did you notice this time?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 8 minutes

What is Attention and What is it For?

Overview

- This discussion is for exploring what attention is, what we can pay attention to, and what the benefits of attention are.
- You will create a further word map for the word "attention," this time to explore: (1) the various things we can pay attention to, (2) what we pay attention with (our senses, our body and our mind), and (3) what the benefits of attention are.
- The students have already been paying attention to things on the inside through the practice of "tracking" their sensations. Here you can expand it to include paying attention to things on the inside that include the mind and aren't limited to sensations. Some examples are: a piece of music stuck in one's head; daydreaming; getting lost in a particular thought or memory; picturing something imaginary in one's mind, such as when resourcing; worrying about something then realizing it's going to be okay; and so on.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Just as we can pay attention to outside things with our senses, we can pay attention to what's going on inside us (sensations, thoughts, feelings, etc).
- Attention supports learning and can be strengthened.
- We can learn to catch impulses before they cause us problems.

Materials Required

- Markers
- A piece of chart paper or a whiteboard with the word "attention" written in the center. (Later you will add the words "mindfulness," "awareness" and "heedfulness" written around it.)

Instructions

- Co-create a word map by writing the word "attention" in the middle and then writing out other words that students suggest around it, connected with lines or arrows.
- Complete this activity as a whole group. (Sample script below.)
  - Ask students what things on the outside we can pay attention to. Write those suggestions in a list entitled Outside.
  - Ask students what we use to pay attention to those things on the outside. Write these senses near the Outside list.
  - Ask students what things on the inside we can pay attention to. Write those suggestions in a list entitled Inside.
  - Ask students what we use to pay attention to those things on the inside. Write these suggestions (mind, body, attention) near the Inside list.
  - Ask students why it is important to pay attention to these things, on the inside and the outside. Write the benefits they suggest.
  - Ask students to consider what it might be like if we couldn't pay attention at all. Discuss.
  - Remind and reinforce that everyone can pay attention and we can all strengthen our attention like a muscle with practice.

Teaching Tips

Save the thought maps or take photos of them for later reference.

Sample script

- *"What do we mean when we say "pay attention"?* (Write down students' responses around the word attention.)
- *Can we pay attention to things on the outside and on the inside?*
- *What are things on the outside that we can pay attention to? Things outside of us.* (for example, the room, the sound of a fire truck, other people) (Write these on a list under the word "Outside")
- *What do we use to pay attention to those things?* (our senses, our eyes, ears, etc) (Write these near the same list)

- *What are things on the inside we can pay attention to?* (sensations, being hungry, thoughts, emotions, feelings, worries, memories, our activities) (Write these on a list under the word "Inside")
- *What do we use to pay attention to these things on the inside?* (Our body, our mind, our attention)
- *Why is it important to pay attention to these things?* (If you like, list benefits on another piece of chart paper.)
- *What would it be like if we couldn't pay attention at all? What might happen?*
- *Fortunately, everyone can pay attention and we can all strengthen our attention like a muscle with practice."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

The Story of Ben

Overview

In this activity you'll review a story that gives an example of paying attention to one's activities, and then discuss it with your students to gradually introduce the concepts of "mindfulness," "awareness," and "heedfulness." You'll also help them make a list of examples of things we might need to be heedful of.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can learn to catch impulses before they cause us problems.
- Awareness and attention can be strengthened with practice.
- There are things that it's helpful to be heedful of.

Materials Required

- One of the stories (provided below)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Instructions

- Students who had SEE Learning in previous years may already know the Story of Ben. Remind students of the story or re-read the story to your class.
- Review the ideas of "heedfulness" and "awareness."
- Have kids brainstorm times during which they were or were not heedful. This brainstorm can be whole group or individual.
- Brainstorm a general list of what things it's good to be heedful of or careful about.
- Select two or three ideas from that list and discuss why it's helpful to be heedful of those things.

Teaching Tips

- The story can be fun to act out by yourself or with your students. For example, you can stretch out one hand and then catching hold of it with your other hand at the appropriate time. Feel free to alter details or replace the story with one that you feel may be more suitable for your students, as long as it exemplifies paying attention to the mind

and catching a habitual tendency before it becomes problematic.

- Help students start brainstorming with a funny one, such as: Ms. Austin was walking in her backyard, thinking about a lot of things other than where she was going, and she forgot to look out for dog poop (or a dirty puddle) and stepped in it!

The Story of Ben

"Once there was a fellow called Ben. When he was younger, Ben had a bad habit of just taking things that didn't belong to him. Some people even called him a thief. But when he grew a bit older he stopped doing that. He decided that he shouldn't steal from people, because if he did, they would be hurt and it would be hard to be friends with them. One day while out walking, Ben was invited in by some friends for a meal. While sitting at the table, he noticed the food in front of him, and while his friends were away, he quickly reached out to take some of the food with one hand to put into his pockets. Suddenly he caught himself, and his other hand quickly grabbed hold of the arm that was about to steal the food. "Stop! Thief! I've caught you!" he shouted loudly. His hosts rushed in, surprised. "What's going on? Where's the thief?" they asked. "It's Ben!" he shouted, holding his own arm tightly. "Ben is the thief!""

Alternative story: **The Boy and the Acorns**

"A boy in school was playing and throwing acorns. He was throwing them away from other children, over the playground fence, when a car came by. He hit the car with the acorn. The driver got out and was upset. "Why did you throw something at my car?" she asked. The boy was in tears. He said, "My hand just threw it before my mind knew it was a bad idea." The driver nodded and she said, "Don't worry. I used to do things like that too. With practice, you can learn to catch yourself before you do something that could be dangerous. It's called heedfulness.""

Sample script for use with The Story of Ben

- *"What happened in this story?*
- *Who was Ben talking to when he said, "Stop! Thief! I've caught you!"?*
- *Why were the other people surprised when they walked in and heard Ben say that?*
- *What did Ben do without thinking about it?*
- *At what moment did Ben become aware that he was doing something that might get him into trouble? We could say that at that moment he had awareness – he realized what he was going to do.*
- *We can have awareness of things on the outside by seeing them or hearing them. Can we also have awareness of things on the inside? Can we have awareness of what we're doing?*
- *Ben knew that stealing was dangerous. When you know something could be dangerous, you have "heedfulness." It means to be very careful.*
- *What are things we need to be careful around or heedful of if we are in the kitchen?*

- *What was Ben heedful of? Did it work?*
- *If Ben hadn't practiced being heedful, what do you think would have happened? What would have happened if he just stole the food without catching himself in time?*
- *Let's take some time for individual writing* [or in small groups].
- *Brainstorm a list of things it's good to be heedful of or careful about.*
- *Let's talk about one or two ideas here and why it might be helpful to be heedful of them. Which would you like to talk about first?"* [Allow students to select. Continue as time allows.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Pass the Cup

Overview

In this activity, students will pass around a cup filled almost to the brim with water in order to learn about attention. Begin by filling a cup almost to the brim or as full as you imagine your students can handle. The students should pass it hand to hand around the circle. You can pause them in the task to notice what sensations they feel in their bodies as the cup comes closer or it's their turn (tracking), then notice the sensations in their bodies as they watch others when their turn is over. As some students might get nervous while doing this, make sure to remind them that it's only water, and though you're going to try hard not to spill it, no harm will be done if it spills a little. This activity allows students to feel where heedfulness happens in their bodies and helps them monitor their attention.

Sample script

- *"Now we're going to use our attention the best we can with a little game.*
- *Let's all get into a circle."*

Pour the water very slowly into a 4oz paper cup.

- *"Did anyone notice that they started paying closer attention as I poured the water? Did you notice what you were thinking?*
- *We're going to pass this cup around the circle and try not to spill any of the water.*
- *There are a couple of important things to remember:*
  1. *Try to keep your mind on the cup. When we do something and pay close attention to it, keeping our mind right on it, we call that mindfulness. It's not a race. Go as slowly as you need to.*
  2. *As you watch the cup going around the circle, see if you can notice how your body and mind reacts as it gets closer to you. Noticing what's going on inside us is awareness: we are paying attention to things on the inside.*
  3. *By being careful not to spill, we're practicing heedfulness. But if it does spill, it's only water, so don't be disturbed if a little gets spilled.*
- *Okay, let's begin!"*

Start passing the cup slowly around the room. After 3 or 4 students have passed the cup, remind students to check-in with their bodies:

- *"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. This is practicing awareness."*

When the passing is complete, give everyone a moment at to reflect on their experience. Ask them to consider how they felt while watching as well as passing. Here are some sample questions you can use to facilitate a discussion about the activity:

- *"Before we share, take a moment to yourself, and think about how it felt for you during the passing the cup game. What did you notice on the inside?*
- *Who would like to share what they noticed on the inside. (Good! So you had awareness.)*
- *Who could feel sensations in their body when other people were passing the cup? What did you feel and where? (Good! So you had awareness of that too.)*
- *Did you notice any moments when you lost your attention, when your attention went to something else? What distracted you?*
- *How were you able to practice mindfulness by keeping your attention on the cup? What helped you pay attention?*
- *Who was practicing heedfulness by trying not to spill the cup? Raise your hand.*
- *Were you able to bring your mind back to the cup if you lost your attention?*
- *What are some other times when you pay close attention like this?*
- *This game is really good practice for other things that need our attention. Can you think of some?"*

Your students may want to try again. As an option, you can try with two cups going in opposite directions at the same time.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 4 minutes

Settling the Mind with a Resource*

This reflective practice is the same as that in the previous learning experience. You are encouraged to do this practice on a regular basis with your students to strengthen the muscle of attention.

Sample script

- *"Let's practice training our attention just a little bit. We're going to do it with a resource, just like we've been doing, except this time we're going to hold our attention a bit longer.*
- *To help us concentrate, we're going to keep our eyes on the ground or close them.*
- *I'll talk you through the practice and we can share out after.*
- *Choose one of your resources from your resource kit, or you can choose a new one, or*

you can imagine one. Raise your hand when you have thought of the resource you want to focus on.

- *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.* [Pause.]
- *If you feel a neutral or pleasant sensation in the body, you can pay attention to that. 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.]
- *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.]
- *Whenever you notice that you got distracted and you forgot about your resource, you can bring your mind back to your resource.* [Pause for a longer time, such as 15-30 seconds or longer.]
- *Let's finish now. You can open your eyes."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"What did you notice this time, when we paid attention to our resource a bit longer?*
- *Were you able to pay attention?*
- *What did you do when you lost your attention or got distracted?*
- *Is it getting easier or harder to pay attention as we practice? Do you notice any changes?*
- *Do you notice any difference in the class as a whole when we practice?"*

Allow students to share out or pass.

OPTIONAL INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Mirroring

Overview

- This activity involves two people mirroring each other's arm movements, first with one playing the role of leader and the other following and mimicking and then switching roles. It is helpful if you've practiced this yourself in advance. You can also practice with a student first so that the two of you can demonstrate for the entire class.
- The exercise often leads to momentary experiences of close attunement, which demonstrates an aspect of focused attention: namely that our mind and body become "merged" in the activity and we lose track of other things around us. Some students may experience a state of "flow" and often it is possible to lose track of who is leading, and who following.

Leading the Activity

If you like, demonstrate with a student and yourself first. Then divide the class into pairs, with an A and B. Pairs stand, facing each other holding their hands up as if they were only an inch from a mirror.

- *"Let's begin by feeling the energy between your hands. We're going to do this activity in silence so that we can pay attention and use our mindfulness fully. We will talk together about the experience afterwards.*
- *Partner A can now begin to move one hand very slowly. Partner B is going to use mindfulness to follow and mirror the movement as exactly as you can. Partner B, you're going to match everything about A's hand as if you were an exact mirror.*
- *Now Partner A can move the other hand very slowly, and Partner B, you follow the movement, paying close attention with mindfulness.*
- *Now try moving both hands away and back, up and down. Move freely but slowly.*
- *Now let's use our awareness to notice what's happening in our mind and body right now."*

Give them a few minutes to do the mirroring, then let them switch roles with the student who was mirroring becoming the leader. If there is time, you can ask them to try changing their body shape slightly, for example balancing on one foot, shifting their weight, or turning a little to the side so that they are not facing each other straight on. If any partnership has become particularly comfortable working together, it can be fun to ask them to choose secretly who is the leader and who the mirror. Then let the class try to guess.

After playing the game, prompt your students with questions like the ones for the Pass the Cup activity, such as:

- *"Remember we said our attention is like a flashlight. What were we shining the flashlight on just now?*
- *What was happening in your body and mind? What were you aware of?*
- *What are some other times when you pay close attention like this?*
- *This game is really good practice for other things that need our attention. Can you think of some?"*

CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

Cultivating Attention in Activities: Part 2

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to show what the cultivation of attention looks like when applied to simple activities like listening, eating or walking, which are mildly but not overly stimulating, before transitioning to even more neutral things like the breath and writing. It also introduces the idea of "the spark and the forest fire" as an analogy for how our feelings and impulses can get out of control and cause problems for us if we do not pay attention to them with heedfulness and address them in time. There are many activities included here, so feel free to split the learning experience into multiple sessions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Notice that the training of attention can be involved in any activity we do.
- Practice mindful eating.
- Practice mindful walking, including how to lead the activity.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Provided scenario
- A picture of a spark and a forest fire (provided at the end of this chapter)
- A chime or bell
- Optional: small food or snack items such as grapes, raisins, grape tomatoes, crackers with enough for two items per student; napkins; a clear open space where your students can walk in a circle together

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"We've been learning how to pay attention. What are some things you have learned about attention?*
- *Have you been noticing people paying attention or not paying attention? Would anyone like to share an example?*
- *Have you thought of any other things that attention helps us to do? Since yesterday, can you share one time you used your attention?*
- *Let's take a moment to calm our bodies and minds so that we can pay attention for the activities we're about to do. Take a comfortable posture, one that is relaxed but that will help you keep your attention here. Let's lower or close our eyes.*
- *Let's do grounding or resourcing. First, take a moment to think of one of your resources that you would like to use to help you today. Raise your left hand when you have thought of your resource. Let's begin. If you're doing grounding, notice the contact of your body with the floor or chair or some other contact.*
- *If you're doing resourcing, bring your resource to mind.*
- *If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can shift to a pleasant or neutral sensation in your body and focus on that instead.* [Pause 15-30 seconds or longer as your students are able.]
- *What did you notice on the inside?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 8 minutes

The Spark and the Forest Fire

Overview

In this insight activity, students review the metaphor of the spark and the forest fire as representations of feelings and impulses through reading a scenario. Then they discuss some times when they practiced heedfulness themselves.

Content/Insights to be Explored:

- Feelings and impulses can be like sparks that quickly grow to a forest fire if we don't catch them in time.
- It is important to notice our sparks and address them before they become fires, and that can be helped through 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, it lasts until it burns itself out.

Materials Required

- Scenario, provided below
- Pictures of spark and forest fire (provided at end of learning experience)

Instructions

- Ask students to help remind each other of the spark/forest fire metaphor. Show students a picture or video of a forest fire. (Script below if needed.)
- Share the story provided below.

- Give students a few moments to reflect and think about the story. Then ask the group:
  - What happened in the story?
  - What was the spark for the main character?
  - What could happen next if he doesn't catch the spark?
  - What might he do to catch his spark?
  - How can we benefit from catching our sparks?
  - How can we help others by catching our sparks?

Teaching Tips

- You can write the main character's thoughts on the board with arrows connecting them to show how one leads to another.
- You can also share with your students the graphic novel Sparks! provided in the supplementary materials to SEE Learning or a similar story that illustrates the concept of the spark of a feeling becoming a forest fire or someone catching it before that happens.

Sample script

- "*Who knows what is happening here?* (Show picture of forest fire.)
- *Does anyone know how a forest fire gets started? How big is the fire when it first starts?*
- *How would you put out the spark or small flame when it's just getting started? Who could do that?*
- *What about when it's really big like this? How would you put it out? Is it harder to put out when it's a big forest fire like that?*
- *We've been talking about things on the inside, like our thoughts and feelings. How might our feelings be like a spark that turns into a forest fire?*
- *What happens when someone has a feeling and then it starts to get bigger and bigger, and suddenly they're feeling really angry or really unhappy?*
- *What could they have done if they caught that feeling when it was just a spark?*
- *How could we be careful or heedful of those sparks before they become forest fires?*
- *Let's read a short scenario together and talk a little more about this metaphor.*
- [After reading the scenario, ask:]
  - What happened in the story?
  - What was the spark for the main character?
  - What could happen next if he doesn't catch the spark?
  - What might he do to catch his spark?
- *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?*"

Sample scenario

"Louis got his math test back. He saw that he missed 3 problems and failed the test. He thought "I did terribly on this test, I'm terrible at math." Then he thought,"I am never going to be good at math, which means I'm not a good student and then I'm not going to get into college and get a good job and have a successful and happy life..." "

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Mindful Listening*

Overview

In this practice students try mindful listening. This also serves as a grounding practice after discussing heedfulness and students' own examples, which could be activating for some.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can pay attention to any activity.
- We notice more when we pay close attention.
- Attention can make things more vivid and interesting.
- Despite looking the same at first, each thing is unique and different in some way.
- Paying close attention can calm our body and mind.

Sample Script

- *"Find a comfortable place in the room. It may be more comfortable for you to close your eyes, but if not, you are also welcome to focus your eyes on the floor. Now, let's take two breaths to settle in.*
- *We are first going to focus on things that are far away from us. Open up your ears as big as you can. Can you find the farthest away sound? It is not important to identify the sound, just notice it.*
- *Now we are going to find the sounds happening inside the building.*
- *Let's bring it in even closer - notice the sounds happening inside the room.*
- *Finally, bring your hearing in as close as possible, what sounds do you hear inside your own body?*
- *Open your eyes, and come back: How do you feel? What zone do you feel in right now?*
- *What sensations do you notice in your body? Has your breathing changed?*
- *What other activities could we do together mindfully?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

There is no debrief listed here because each Reflective Practice contains discussion questions specific to each practice.

OPTIONAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Mindful Eating*

12 minutes

Overview

In this activity, your students will engage in a mindful eating exercise, which involves examining and then very slowly eating a piece of food with full attention.

Materials Required

- Small food or snack items such as grapes, raisins, grape tomatoes, crackers with enough for two items per student
- Napkins

Instructions

- Put food items on a plate that can be passed. Let students know that they will be eating the item eventually.
- Tell students to take one item and a napkin and pass it on. Be sure not to eat it yet.
- Remind students of I Notice, I Wonder. Tell them this activity is similar. Let them know they are going to pay close attention with all their senses to the food item. This will be a slow process. [Use the script below if needed.]
- After you conclude (such as when the timer or chime goes off), have the students remain in a circle standing and debrief with the questions below.

Teaching Tips

- Be mindful of student allergies or other special circumstances with your group.
- If the discussion of mindful eating is rich, leave the mindful walking or listening for another day.

Sample script

- *"We're going to do a mindful eating activity now. That means we're going to eat by paying attention very closely. Let's see what that means.*
- *I have some snacks here and some napkins. I'm going to take one snack and one napkin pass it on. Each of you can take one and then pass it on to the next person until we all have one. Don't eat yours just yet - just put it on the napkin.*
- *Earlier we did an activity called "I Notice, I Wonder." We all looked at an [the object you used for that activity] together. We paid close attention to it and noticed all sorts of things.*
- *We're going to do something similar with this snack. Let's pay close attention to it with all our senses and see what we notice. We can look at it, smell it, feel it in our hands or against our lips, even listen to it. And soon we're going to taste it, but not just yet. Then we'll share at the end of the activity.*
- *What are some things you notice about your snack just by looking at it? (for example, its color, how it reflects the light, its surface) Now, Look again...what is another detail that you did not notice before? Now, pick it up – anything more you notice? Now smell it. Anyone notice a smell? Do you notice anything happening in your mouth while you're looking at it? When you think about eating it, do you notice any thoughts? Your mind might be telling you "oh boy, I can't wait!" or "Yuck, I don't want to eat that!" or you might feel a little curious, or just neutral.*
- *Now we're going to eat it, but we're going to do it mindfully. That means we'll pay close attention. We're not going to eat it all at once.*

- *Take your snack and put it in your mouth but don't bite on it yet. Just feel what it's like inside your mouth.*
- *Now let's take a first bite - just one bite. Pay close attention and see what you notice.*
- *Now let's take a few more bites, but very slowly. You don't need to speak just yet: what are you noticing? Is the taste staying the same or changing? Can you notice any thoughts?*
- *Let's take a moment to slowly eat our snack mindfully, keeping our attention focused on our eating. At the same time we're using awareness to see what we notice. Let's do this in silence and raise your hand when you are finished eating.* [Wait until most of your students have finished eating, then ring the chime.]
- *Now let's share what we noticed. What did you notice?*
- *Next ask:*
  - *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?*
  - *Did any of 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?*
  - *Do you think you could do mindful eating with other foods or at other times? If you like you can even do mindful eating at home or at lunchtime in school.*
  - *What other activities could we do together mindfully?"* [Invite sharing.]

If you have time, repeat the activity with the same snack or with a different snack. Then conclude by pointing out that we can eat anything with mindfulness and attention.

OPTIONAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

12 minutes

Mindful Walking*

Overview

- This activity involves having students walk slowly in a line, one in front of the other, while paying attention to the simple act of walking and the sensations of one's feet on the ground.
- Mindful walking is different from mindful eating in that the activity itself can be 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, whereas it is the things that we find less stimulating that we have difficulty paying close attention to.

Materials Required

- A clear open space where your class can walk in a circle together

Instructions

- Clear an open space where your class can walk in a circle. Make sure there are no obstacles that students can trip on or bump into.
- Get your students into a circle. Set the distance between students (two to three feet between each student).
- Have students turn to face the same direction. Decide on a number of rounds (two to three) you will mindfully walk, or set a timer (3-5 min).
- Lead the slow walk yourself the first time, then have a student lead.
- Set the pace (one step per in-breath and out-breath may work well).
- Ask students to lower their gaze so they only see the feet of the student in front of them.
- After you conclude (such as when the timer or chime goes off), have the students remain in a circle standing and debrief with the questions below.

Teaching Tips

- You may need to use an outdoor space, hall or gym.
- As an alternative to leading the activity yourself, you may start with a few students and then allow students to join the line or circle as they feel ready. In this case, you would join last, first making sure that each student understands what to do and feels comfortable engaging in the mindful walking.
- You are recommended to do this activity more than once. As your students gain familiarity, you can start and conclude the activity in mindful silence also. For example, you can each rise from your seats slowly and with full attention one by one as you join the line, and when the mindful walking concludes, you can slowly take your seats, again in silence, one by one, until the last person is seated. You can also start having students volunteer to be the "leader"—the person who starts and ends the activity and sets the pace.

Sample script

- *"Now we're going to be mindful with something that's a little harder to pay attention to.*
- *We walk all the time, so it's hard to pay attention to it. It's easier to pay attention when something is new or exciting or fun, isn't it?*
- *Let's all get in a circle and hold our arms out to make sure we have enough space in between us. Now take 2 large steps back.*
- *We're going to walk in a circle. I will lead you in a slow walk. I might pace my walking by taking one step with my in-breath and one step with my out-breath. You can do this if you like. It's not required.*
- *You'll wait until the person in front of you moves away from you to begin. Once we are all mindfully walking, we will go for a couple rounds.*
- *Keep your eyes down on the feet of the*

person in front of you. See if you can keep the same distance as you walk—not too close to them and not too far away.

- *Now I'm going to start and we're going to do the whole thing in silence, without talking.*
  - *When your walking is completed, ask:*
  - *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?*
  - *What else do you notice from doing mindful walking?*
  - *What other activities could we do together mindfully?"*





CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 5

Cultivating Attention on an Object

PURPOSE

This learning experience introduces the idea of focused attention training, using the breath or some other neutral object (such as a neutral sensation) as the object of focus. This may be more challenging than previous activities, which involved paying attention to things that are more stimulating. True attention training, however, 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. The example of training a puppy or elephant is first introduced to explain the basic components of focused attention training, followed by a reflective exercise involving focus on a single neutral object, such as the breath, and then a drawing exercise to reinforce learning.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Reinforce their understanding of mindfulness and awareness through metaphors as well as direct experience.
- Experience the process for cultivating focused attention on a single object.
- Draw their own images to illustrate attention training.

LENGTH

35 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Drawing paper and pens, pencils or markers for drawing
- Print-outs of the images at the end of this learning experience

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"What are some experiences we have had together that helped us to strengthen our attention muscle?*
- *Did anyone notice a time when a spark could have become a forest fire, but you noticed and stopped it in time? It could be something small.*
- *Let's practice our attention a bit with a resource. To help us concentrate, we're going to keep our eyes on the ground or close them.*
- *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 but try not to disturb anyone else if you do that. Otherwise, just keep your attention resting with your resource.* [Pause.]
- *Whenever you notice that you got distracted and you forgot about your resource, you can bring your mind back to your resource.* [Pause for a longer time, such as 15-30 seconds or longer.]
- *What did you notice on the inside?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 8 minutes

Cultivating Focused Attention

Overview

- The purpose of this presentation and discussion is to introduce the idea that we can learn to focus our attention on a single object and sustain that attention over time. The method we use is simply to hold a neutral object of focus (such as the breath) in mind and bring our mind back to it whenever we notice that our mind has wandered or has become sleepy (lethargic or dull).
- This presentation uses a metaphor of training a puppy to reinforce the concepts of mindfulness and awareness:
  - Mindfulness = being able to keep one's mind on a chosen object without forgetting it
  - Awareness = noticing what is taking place in the mind (such as when it gets distracted or sleepy)
  - The puppy = the mind
  - The path = the object of focus (what we're paying attention to)
  - The leash = mindfulness (what we use to keep our object of focus in mind)

- The kind owner = awareness (what we use to notice if the mind has wandered or is sleepy)

- This not only can help to bring about greater calm and well-being in our bodies and minds, but it also builds our attention like a muscle. With increased attention, we can learn better, we can focus and pay attention better, we can redirect our attention easily when necessary, and we also have a tool for examining our own minds and mental processes, including thoughts and emotions.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can keep our attention on a single object for longer periods of time.
- Our mind may wander or it may get a bit sleepy.
- If we lose track of our object, we can simply return our attention to the object and hold it again gently in our mind.
- When we keep bringing our mind back and holding our object, our attention gets stronger over time.
- We can feel calmer when we practice sustaining our attention.
- We can learn more easily when we strengthen our attention.
- We can see our attention strengthen gradually through practice.
- We can learn to pay attention even to a neutral or seemingly uninteresting object.
- Our body posture can help us to pay attention.
- Attention involves using mindfulness and awareness to keep us on task.

Materials Required

- The picture of the puppy, provided at the end of this learning experience (Alternatively, a picture of training an elephant is also provided.)

Instructions

- Show your students the picture of the puppy, provided at the end of this learning experience. (Alternatively, a picture of training an elephant is also provided.)
- Explain that the pictures of the puppy and the elephant are visual metaphors for attention training. In the picture of the puppy, the path is the object of focus and the puppy is being trained to stay on the path, just as we might train our attention to remain focused on an object or activity. The puppy is the mind, which is what we are training. The leash is mindfulness, since it keeps the puppy on the path. The kind owner is awareness, since it pays attention to what the puppy is doing. (In the picture of the elephant, the elephant is the mind; the stake in the ground is the object of focus; the rope is mindfulness; and the attentive trainer is awareness.)
- In this way you can use the picture(s) to explain the concepts and practices you have been using to help students cultivate stronger attention. Discussing the importance of

kindness also helps, because attention training takes time and patience. This will also support the topic of self-compassion, which comes in the next chapter.

Teaching Tips

You have already introduced attention with the metaphor of the flashlight.

Sample script

- *What do you think is happening here?*
- *How do you train a puppy? Do you see anything in this picture that's being used to train the puppy?*
- *What is the puppy being trained to do? (Stay on the path. Walk along the path. Not run away.)*
- *What is the leash for?* (Keeping the puppy on the path. N*ot letting it run away. Keeping it safe.)*
- *Do you think the kind owner has to watch the puppy? Why?* (It might stray off the path. It could get into danger.)
- *What should the trainer do if the puppy wanders off the path?*
- *If the puppy is too excited, will it be hard to train? What if the puppy is very sleepy?*
- *Is training a puppy similar to when we train our attention? How might it be similar?* (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 on the path, and our mind wanders off, what could we do? Could we bring our mind back like the kind owner brings the puppy back?*
- *Is it important for the owner to be kind and patient when training the puppy? Why?* (It takes time. The puppy could get discouraged.)
- *If the kind 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.)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 8 minutes

Focused Attention on the Breath*

Overview

This reflective practice introduces the more formal practice of attention training on a single object, such as the breath. The key is to sustain attention and bring the mind back when it wanders (or keep attention crisp if one becomes sleepy). The simple method is bringing the mind back whenever it wanders.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Begin with a grounding or resourcing practice first to bring about greater calm in the body.
- Ask students to pick a part of the body where they can notice their breathing (nose, chest, belly).
- Ask students to pick some other neutral object if they prefer (a spot on the ground, a part of the body that feels neutral, a neutral sensation). The object should be neutral and not very stimulating.
- Remind them that when their attention wanders, they can bring it back to their object (the breath or other object of focus)
- Remind students that if they become uncomfortable focusing on one thing, they can always return to doing grounding or resourcing or can stop the practice entirely. (Use the script below to facilitate the practice.

Teaching Tips

- It is very important to remind students that they can always return to doing grounding or resourcing or can stop the practice entirely, especially those who experience dysregulation when trying to sit still or focus, for whom it may take more time before they can do practices like this with ease.
- This third chapter of SEE Learning provides a range of attention training practices, but this particular reflective practice of focusing attention on the breath can become a foundational practice for your class. You are encouraged to repeat this practice throughout the school year.
- Feel free to record yourself or a student guiding the practice so that you can play the recording back. Be aware that it may take many sessions until your students gain some familiarity with it.

Sample script

- *"Now let's try to train our attention in the way we'd train a puppy.*
- *Let's take a comfortable seat and we will 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 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.]
- *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. If you don't want to use your breath, you can choose 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 just allow your attention to remain with the breath.*
- *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.*
- *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 our mind wanders, we just bring our mind back to the breath, just like bringing the puppy back. And we see if we can hold the breath in our mind a little longer.* [Longer pause.]
- *Now we can open our eyes. What was that like? Who would like to share?*
- *Were you able to keep your attention on the breath with mindfulness?*
- *Were you able to use awareness to notice when you were focused or when you were not focused?*
- *What sensations do you notice in your body now?*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Drawing Attention Training

Overview

In this activity you will ask students to make a drawing that shows one thing they have learned about attention. You may decide to allow them to choose freely or you may wish to specify more clearly what you'd like them to draw about. The drawings will help them to bring home their understanding and share with you and their classmates what they have come to understand about attention and how to strengthen it.

Materials Required

- Blank paper for drawing
- Markers, crayons or pens

Instructions

- Together, make a list of the things they have learned about attention.
- Have them each choose something from the list to draw. If some students struggle to find

something to draw, you can ask them to draw an activity you did as a class (such as mindful walking or mindful eating). Or you can ask them to draw any activity they like to do, since any activity can be done with mindfulness and awareness.

- Allow several minutes for drawing and then allow students to share and explain their drawings. As they share, be sure to ask how attention plays a role in the drawing, asking about how mindfulness, heedfulness or awareness might be present in their drawings.

Teaching Tips

- You can also ask them to write a word on their drawing that explains what it is trying to depict (e.g. "mindfulness," "a cloudy mind," etc.) or the activity they are depicting ("mindful walking," "playing games," etc.).
- After your students have shared, you may wish to hang up their drawings around the classroom as reminders and reinforcement of what the class has learned about attention.

Sample script

- *"We've learned a lot of things about attention and how to strengthen it.*
- *What if we wanted to share what we've learned with other students in the school or with our family?*
- *Let's come up with a list of a few things we've learned and then we'll draw pictures that we could use to share what we've learned with others.*
- *Who can name one thing we've learned about attention? (For example: It can be trained. It is like a flashlight. It is like training a puppy. It helps us learn and notice things. We can do it with any activity. It helps us have a clear and not cloudy mind like in the mind jar. It involves mindfulness, awareness and heedfulness, etc.)* (You may wish to come up with a list that you write on the board or a piece of chart paper.)
- *Who can name one way we strengthen our attention? (For example: By practicing. By exercising it. By bringing our mind back when it wanders. By not falling asleep. By having good posture.)* (You may wish to make a separate list of these.)
- *Who can describe our mind when we're not able to pay attention? How might it be?*
- *Do you think we could make some drawings to share what we've learned?*
- *Let's each making a drawing that shows one thing we've learned about attention."*

You can also give them more direct guidance about what to draw while still allowing for their individual creativity, such as:

- *Let's each take a piece of paper and draw three images.*
- *First we'll draw what it looks like when our mind is sleepy, cloudy or dull, or we are in our "low zone." You can draw yourself or an animal or something else that shows that the mind doesn't have much clarity.*

- *The second image will be when our mind is wandering because we're stuck in our high zone. Maybe we're too excited or uncomfortable. Here our mind is full of distractions. What does that look like?*
- *And the third image will be when our mind is balanced and we are in our resilient (or OK) zone. Here our mind is in a calm, alert state. It's not too distracted and it's not too dull and sleepy. This kind of mind can pay attention and learn anything.*

After students have had time to draw, invite students to share their work.
Ask:

- *"How does attention play a role in your drawing?*
- *How is mindfulness, heedfulness or awareness in your drawings?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Have you learned anything about attention that you think you could use?*
- *Have you noticed any change in your ability to pay attention?*

Do you think your attention would grow stronger if we practiced more? Would that be helpful?"

Expanding on the practice of focused attention on the breath

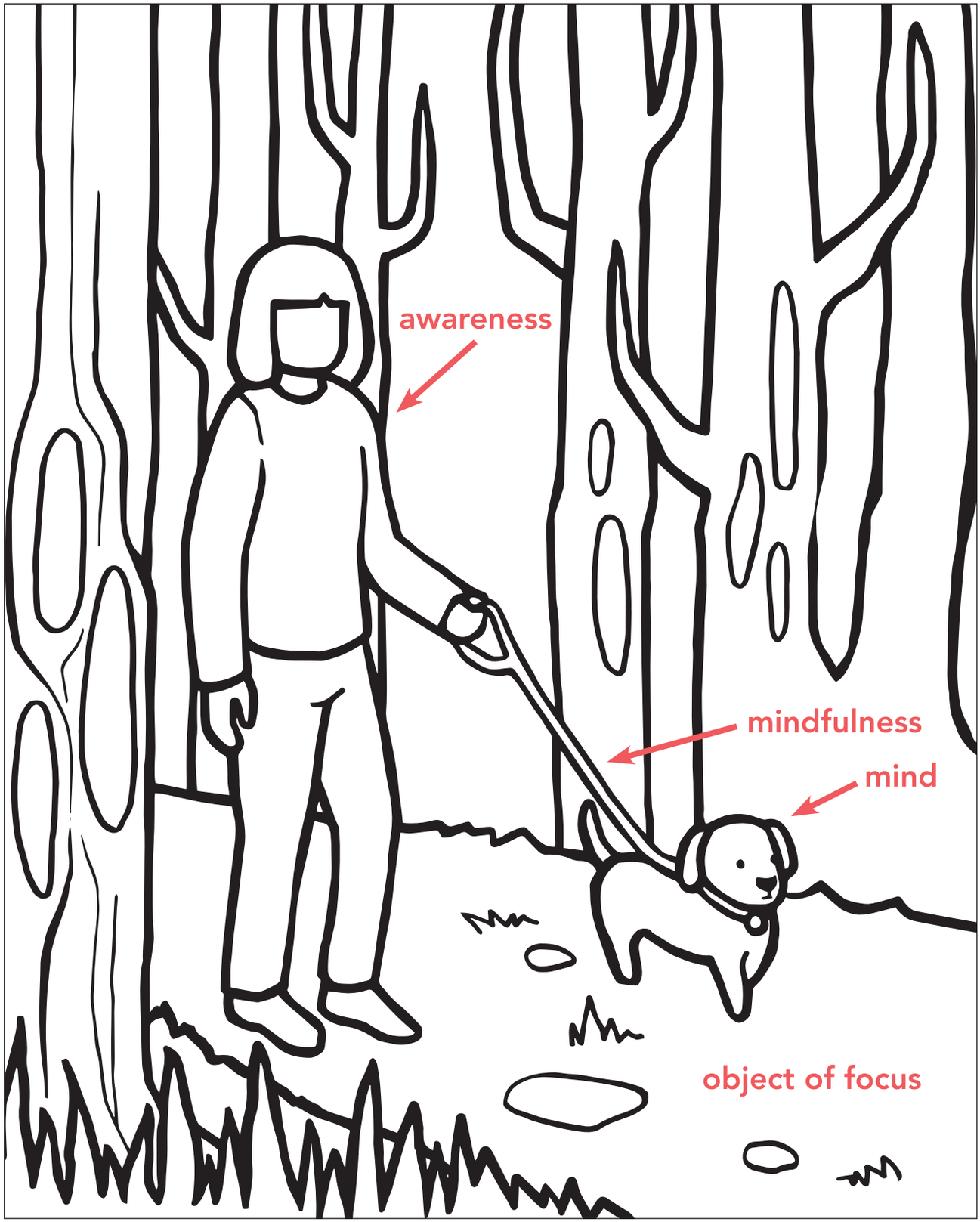
As you practice focused attention on the breath this more with your students, you can also introduce the idea of mentally counting the breath. This involves counting "1" in one's mind on the in-breath, and then "2" on the out-breath until one gets to 10. After that, one can start over at 1 again. This can be a vivid way of illustrating how quickly we can get distracted, whereupon we tend to lose count of where we were. Counting the breath is a very concrete way to help students reach the critical insight that attention can be strengthened through practice, because students can tangibly see for themselves that their ability to count without losing track of where they are increases over time.

As you continue the practice, you can also begin to show your students that body posture can help facilitate a calm, alert mind. In subsequent practices, you can encourage them to sit in a way that they find comfortable but alert.

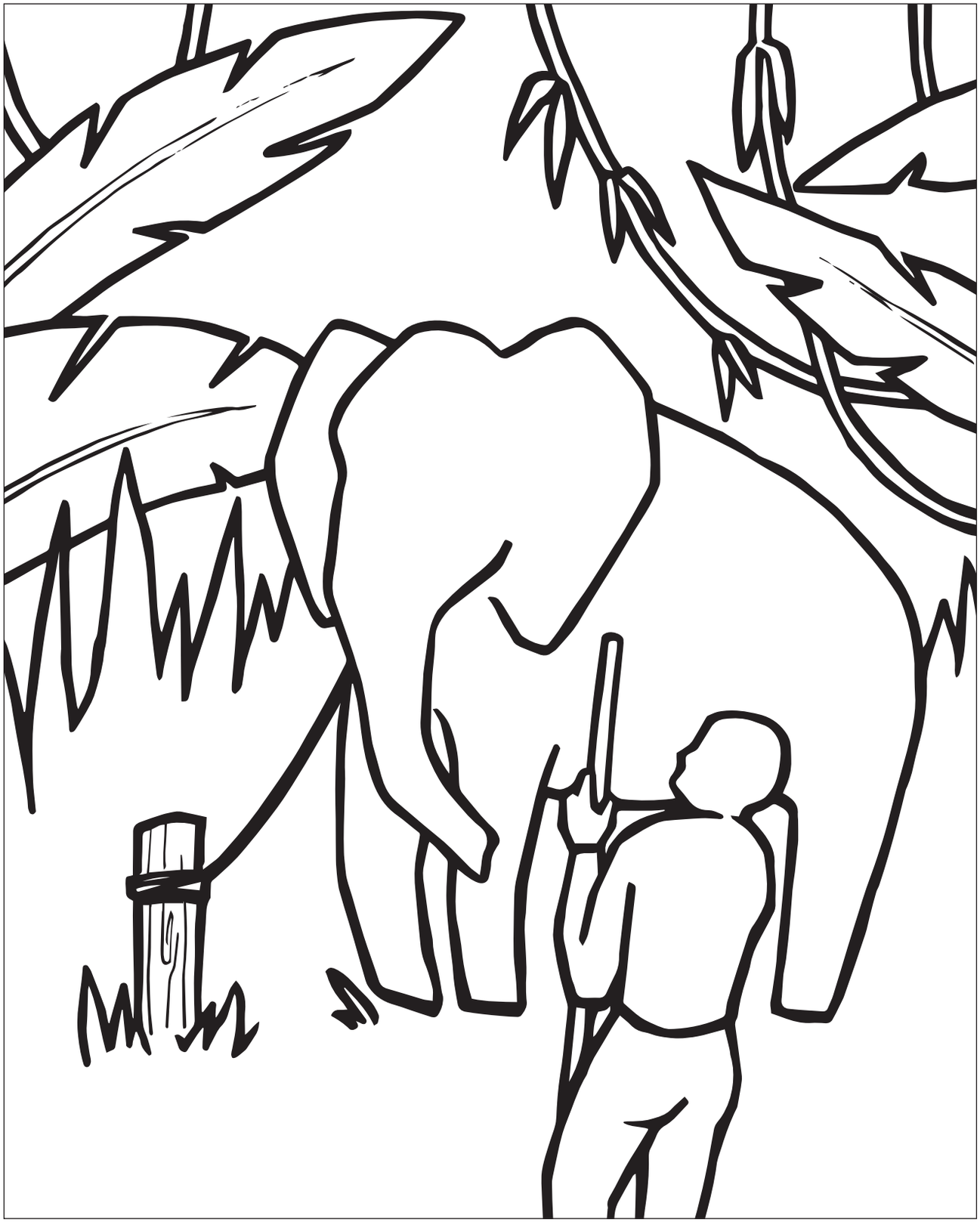
- *"Did you know that the way we sit can affect our mind? If we sit like this* [slumping]*, we can actually make our minds more dull and sleepy. If we stood up with our eyes wide open, how do you think our minds would be? Dull and sleepy or more easily distracted?*
- *So instead, next time when we do our attention training on the breath, we're going to find a comfortable posture helps us be stable and clear, helps us be in that calm, alert state. I'm going to sit right now in that way.* [Sit so that your spine is relatively upright and straight, and your feet are planted on the ground firmly.]

- *I like to imagine sometimes that I am a mountain, sitting very stable and unable to be distracted.*
- *Sometimes to help me sit up straight, I imagine that I'm a puppet with a string pulling me gently from the top of my head straight up.*
- *And I like to keep my eyes on the ground, so I'm not distracted. Sometimes, I like to close my eyes entirely. You can do that too if it helps you to not get distracted.*
- *Shall we try sitting like that?"*

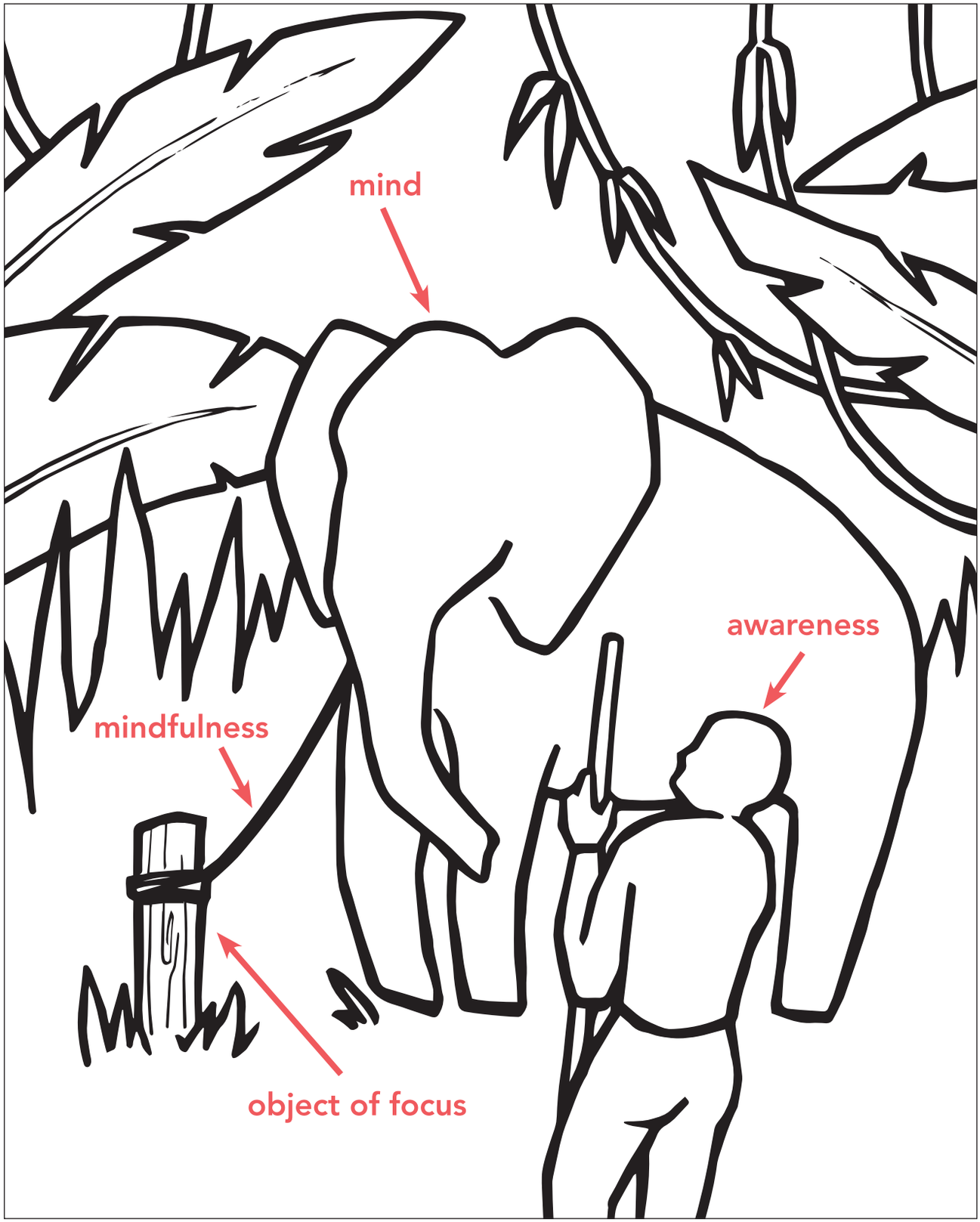



awareness
mindfulness
mind
object of focus

Attention Training



Attention Training



CHAPTER 3 | Strengthening Attention & Self-Awareness

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 6

Self-Awareness

PURPOSE

Students have already learned to direct their attention inwards to the body and sensations. In this learning experience they will explore directing attention inwardly to the mind (called "metacognition"), meaning thoughts, emotions, and feelings. They will explore how such attention can eventually help them to create a "gap" between stimulus and response, a great aid for stopping the spark before it becomes a forest fire.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Learn the practice of observing their own thoughts and feelings.
- Notice a gap between stimulus and response, facilitating impulse control.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The mind jar
- A print-out of the sky image at the end of this learning experience

LENGTH

25 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

- *"Let's prepare for a short attention practice on the breath. 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 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.]
- *What did you notice?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 7 minutes

Can We Watch the Mind?

Overview

The purpose of this discussion is to introduce the idea of paying attention to our minds without immediately getting caught up in thoughts, feelings, memories and so on. The image of the blue sky with a few clouds and birds is a metaphor for the mind.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- 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 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.

Materials Required

- The mind jar
- Copies of the image of the sky with clouds and birds (at end of this learning experience)

Instructions

- Review what we can pay attention to inside and outside.
- Show students the mind jar again. Recollect together what you did together in building the mind jar.
- Ask students about how many thoughts they may have in one day. Try to count them using an example. They might notice images, thoughts, feelings, sensations.
- Allow time for sharing.
- Let them know you are going talk them through a reflective practice to try to watch their own thoughts.

Teaching Tips

- Remind students that we are "just noticing" like we did with the object in "I notice, I wonder."
- There are no right answers. A distraction is just something to notice.

Sample script

- *"We've been learning how to strengthen our attention.*
- *We've learned we can pay attention to things on the outside and things on the inside.*
- *What are things we could pay attention to on the inside? What goes on inside us?*
- *Where are our thoughts? When I have an idea or think of something, is that on the outside or inside?*
- *What about when I feel something? Like when I feel happy or tired? Or when I'm upset? Or when I'm happy? Where are those?*
- *Do you think we can pay attention to our thoughts and what's going on inside us?*
- *Remember when we made the mind jar and we read the story about Theresa? Lots of things were going on and we put them in the mind jar.*
- *What did we put in? Can you remember what those things stood for?*
- *Do we have thoughts there? What about feelings? What else do we have there?*
- *All these things like our thoughts and feelings come up in our minds. How many thoughts do you have each day? Do you think you could count them?*
- *Do you think it's possible to watch your thoughts?*
- *Usually when we have a thought we get all caught up in it. It carries us away. For example, I might think of ice cream. Let's talk a moment to do this right now. Let's close our eyes and think about ice cream. I will ring the chime when a minute is up.*

- [Allow a minute to pass and ring the chime and ask:] *What happened? Then suddenly I am thinking of what kind of ice cream I want, and where I'm going to get it, and how good it's going to taste! Then I might be thinking about the ice cream I had at the beach and then I might be thinking I wish I could go to the beach and pretty soon I would be carried away.*
- *But what if I just watched that thought? What do you think would happen?*
- *Do our thoughts stay forever?*
- *And if I watched it, do you think a new thought would come eventually?*
- *Take a look at this picture.* [Show picture of the sky with clouds.] *What do you notice about this picture?*
- *What if like the clear mind jar, this picture of the sky were a picture of our mind and the thoughts and feelings that come up in it?*
- *What do you think are the thoughts and feelings? Maybe they are the clouds here. What are other things that appear in the sky? Maybe a rainbow, birds, or an airplane? Maybe even a storm or lightning bolt would appear sometimes!*
- *When all 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 like this sky. Do you think we can watch thoughts come and go without holding on to them or pushing them away? We're going to try. We'll do an experiment together."*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Observing the Mind

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 just sitting quietly with eyes closed or downcast while simply noticing what arises in their mind, without getting involved with the contents of their thoughts and feelings. The practice here is just to watch and observe them with open curiosity and without getting too involved. Unlike daydreaming, the purpose is to not get caught up in thoughts and carried away by them, but instead watch them with an open curiosity and without judgment. Practicing this can increase one's ability to catch impulses before they turn into strong emotions and behavioral reactions.

Teaching Tips

- You will notice that this practice combines resourcing and grounding, attention on the breath, and then observing the mind. Each of these practices have been built up to sequentially, so if your students are not able to do this full practice, go back and practice the shorter practices with them more.
- Once they can do this combined practice, you can consider making this your main practice, and repeat this practice 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. Eventually you may be able to do 5-minute long practices. As your students eventually become able to do this, 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.

Sample script

- *"Let's take a comfortable, alert posture.*
- *If we're too excited or too tired, or if we're not in our resilient zone, it will be hard to train our attention. Just like in our drawings where we drew our minds when they were too dull or too excited.*
- *So let's sit upright with our backs straight. And so we don't get distracted, let's lower our eyes to the ground or close them.*
- *So 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.]
- *Let's focus on our breath now. We'll use that as our object of focus. 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.]
- *Now let's practice just watching our mind.*
- *We're going to release our breath. Instead of focusing on our breath, we're just going to watch to see whatever comes up in our mind.*
- *But instead of 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 and see if we can do that.* [Pause for 15-30 seconds, or more if your students are comfortable doing so.]
- *If we get distracted or caught up in our thoughts, let's just remember that we're watching our thoughts. 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.]
- *Now let's open our eyes and share.*
- *What did you notice?*
- *Could anyone watch 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?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"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?*
- *Do you think you could spend a moment watching your own mind sometime in the next few days and share what you notice?"*



EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 4

Navigating Emotions

Overview

In *Building Resilience from the Inside Out*, Linda Lantieri writes of children in the Kindergarten to 2nd grade age range: "Although children this age may not yet easily verbalize their understanding of consciousness, it is now clearer that young children do have the ability to separate out thoughts in the mind from people and things outside of themselves. Since children's skills in this area are emerging, they may or may not be able to understand the theory of why they are doing this work, but will respond to the concrete practices, images, and play that these activities present, especially when practices are made regular as rituals and routines."

Even at this young age, children's emotional life is rich. They experience a full range of emotions and are able to see emotions in others. Yet they may not understand how to verbalize, name or identify their emotions or how to talk about them. They may not understand why certain emotions come up for them or why they come up for other people. And importantly, they may not know that there are things they can do to help understand and navigate their own emotions. Without this knowledge and these skills, one's own and others' emotions can even be scary or overwhelming.

What is an Emotion?

Emotions are evaluations we make of a situation, but they also are felt in the body. Both emotions and physical sensations can be considered "feelings." One can say, "I feel heat in my right foot," which is a sensation, and one can say, "I feel angry about this," which is an emotion. Sensations, however, tend to be localized in a particular part of the body, whereas emotions tend to be felt generally. Also, emotions arise from an appraisal of a situation: for example, seeing what is happening as positive or negative. This means one can feel an emotion about a situation, but one does not tend to feel a sensation about a situation. Usually emotions, however, are also accompanied by physical sensations in the body.

Emotional Hygiene

Understanding emotions can be very empowering for young students. They experience emotions all the time, yet often may not understand what is happening inside themselves. Learning about emotions makes these experiences less unfamiliar and eventually easier to manage.

It is also important that students begin to recognize that strongly negative emotional states have the potential to lead to behaviors that harm their own well-being and that of others. When they recognize this, 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. This requires a basic literacy about emotions, such as being able to identify and name them, as well as their characteristics, and being able to 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 to be more patient with themselves and others. The first three learning experiences therefore explore the idea of needs and what feelings (sensations and emotions) arise when a need is met or goes unmet.

The practice of good emotional hygiene also requires emotional discernment: the ability to recognize when an emotion can become unhelpful or unhealthy, such as extreme anger or jealousy. 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 those emotions they have identified as potentially risky.

Sometimes children are taught that it is "bad" to feel or to express a particular emotion, such as anger, frustration, or sadness. If students conclude that a certain emotion is bad, they may feel guilty when they experience or express that emotion, and they may even feel that they themselves are "bad" because of doing so. It is important therefore to help students recognize that emotions are natural. Developing a healthy heedfulness towards risky emotions does not mean that the emotions themselves are bad or that we are bad if we have them. Rather, it is like recognizing that a cooking fire can become dangerous if it gets out of hand, and that therefore it is good to develop caution and awareness regarding certain emotions.

This chapter therefore seeks to help students start to 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. Because strong emotions prompt behaviors, by learning to navigate their emotions, students are also learning how to "hold back" or exercise restraint from behaviors that harm themselves and others. As students grow older, their "map of the mind" can become increasingly sophisticated as they learn more emotion terms and learn to distinguish between emotions and mental states in increasingly subtle ways. The intention here is to introduce them to the idea of thinking about emotions and start them on that journey.

Student Personal Practice

Developing emotional literacy and emotional hygiene requires practice and skills, not just head knowledge. The reflective practices in this chapter are important for integrating students' growing conceptual understanding of emotions with their own personal experience and ability to recognize emotions in themselves. In this chapter, students will continue to practice the basic skills they have learned in the preceding chapters: how to balance and calm their nervous systems, how to focus their attention, and how to be aware of the thoughts and feelings that arise in each moment. When these practices become natural and embodied for students, they are practicing emotional hygiene on a daily basis.

Teacher Personal Practice

We tend to take emotions for granted, even though they play such a powerful role in our lives. While teaching this chapter, ask your friends, family members, and colleagues what they do to regulate or manage their emotions. Think about things you already do to navigate your own emotions. Doing this will make yourself more conscious of emotions in yourself and others, and this in turn will help you facilitate learning with your students.

Further Reading and Resources

Building Resilience from the Inside Out by Linda Lantieri. Introduction by Daniel Goleman.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting **SEE Learning, Chapter 4, "Navigating Emotions."**

In Chapter 4, your child will explore the topic of emotions, how they arise, and how better to "navigate" them. Your child will learn how to "map" emotions using a variety of tools (such as emotion families, how emotions are experienced in the body, and the relationship between emotions and needs). They will then explore, using this knowledge to better identify emotions in themselves and how they unfold. Understanding emotions can be very empowering for children and can lead to a greater ability to regulate emotions and behavior.

Home Practice

As your child goes through this chapter, it will be helpful for you to ask your child about what emotions they notice in themselves and what emotions they notice in others. This will build emotional literacy. It can be very helpful for you to also talk about your own emotions, when they arise, and how you deal constructively with them.

Early Chapters Included

- Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and compassion and how they relate to happiness and well-being.
- Chapter 2 explored practices for regulating the body and nervous system to enhance well-being and resilience to stress.
- Chapter 3 introduced skills for strengthening attention, both to external things and to one's own mind, body, thoughts, and emotions.

Further Reading and Resources

Building Emotional Intelligence: Practices to Cultivate Inner Resilience in Children by Linda Lantieri. Introduction by Daniel Goleman.

SEE Learning resources are available on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Exploring Needs

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to begin exploring needs that we have to live, learn, and be happy. Recognizing that all people have needs and that we share needs can be an important precursor to developing greater empathy and compassion both for oneself and others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the basic human needs for happiness, life, and learning.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers
- An index card or small piece of paper
- Writing utensils for each student

LENGTH

20 minutes

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"We're going to practice using a resource to calm our minds and relax our bodies.*
- *Take out your resource kit. Choose one resource and place it on your desk. Remember, we've created these resources to help us feel safer and calmer whenever we need to.*
- *Now let's pay attention to your bodies for a moment. Sit up straight and get comfortable in your chair.*
- *Now focus on the resource in front of you. Pay close attention to the details of it.* [Pause.]
- *What do you notice on the inside as you look at your resource? Does it make you feel pleasant, calmer, or neutral? If it does, focus your attention on that pleasant or neutral feeling inside.*
- *But if you feel unpleasant, you can change your focus to something else. You might want to close your eyes and imagine a favorite person or thing.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice on the inside?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Shared Needs

Overview

In this insight activity, students will create a list of "needs": what people need for happiness, life, and learning. They will identify those needs that are basic to most people.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We all have needs.
- Although some of our needs may be specific to ourselves, many are shared among ourselves and others.

Materials Required

- A whiteboard or large piece of chart paper for the list of needs

Instructions

- Write the word "NEEDS" on the whiteboard or a large piece of chart paper.
- Ask students to name some things that we need to be happy, to live, and to learn.
- Write their suggestions as a list on the board. Explain that the class is making a list of our "needs," meaning things we need to be happy, live, and learn.
- Once you have a list of ten or more needs, ask students which of the needs they think everyone has: Do all people have this need? Put a star next to those. Identify these as "Shared Needs."

Teaching Tips

- Students may suggest things that do not seem to be needs, but rather wants or other things. Return to the question, "Is that something we need to be happy, to live, or to learn?" If the student says yes, then to acknowledge and encourage student participation, write their suggestion on the board also, but put it to one side. You can say something like,

"I'm going to put it here on the side and we can see if it fits later." As you go along, and especially when you make the list of shared needs, it will become clearer to students what is meant by a "need."

- A sample list of shared needs is provided at the end of this learning experience for your reference.
- If students have trouble coming up with ideas, offer suggestions, such as, "What about friends? Do we need friends to be happy? Or what about time to play?"
- It could be helpful to ask students to think about the things they do every day, since many of the things we do daily (eating, sleeping, going to school, playing with friends, and so on) have to do with our needs.
- Students this age are likely to list concrete things (like shoes, teachers, cars, pencils) rather than more abstract categories that those items might fall under (clothing, fun, freedom, etc.) You can either write that concrete item on the list as a need, or you can probe further by asking, "Why do we need a pencil? So that we can write and do our homework? So, we need to be able to study and learn things? Or we need to be able to do work?" In this way you can lead them to more general needs.

Sample Script

- *"Today we're going to talk about needs. These are things that we need as human beings to be happy, to live, and to learn.*
- *What are some things that we need? Let's talk first about what we need to be happy.*
- *What do we need to live?*
- *What do we need in order to learn?*
- [If students have trouble coming up with ideas, offer suggestions, such as, "What about friends? Do we need friends to be happy? Or what about time to play?" Also, it could be helpful to ask students to think about the things they do every day and what they need for that.]
- *Let's look at our list so far. What do you notice?*
- *Which of these needs do you think your friends, teachers, and family members all have as well? I'll put a star next to the ones you think others might also have.*
- *These needs with the stars next to them are called "shared needs."*"

DEBRIEF | 4 minutes

- "*Can anyone think of a time when a family member, friend, or teacher noticed what you needed and helped you get it?*
- *How does it feel when other people (family, friends, teachers) notice your needs and help you get what you need?*
- *Have you ever noticed needs that other people have in common with you?*
- *What would happen if we all noticed each others' needs more?*"

Sample List of Shared Needs

To Be Happy

Friends
Family
Love
Belonging
Play time/fun/toys
To be treated with kindness
To feel cared for

To Live

Food/water
Clothing
Shelter
Air
Sleep
Safety

To Learn

School
Teachers
Our minds
Attention
Books

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Exploring Needs and Feelings

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to begin exploring the relationship between needs and feelings. By listening to a story and identifying the needs of the character and what they are feeling, students will practice recognizing another's needs and noticing the connection between needs and feelings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the basic human needs for happiness, life, and learning.
- Explore the relationship between needs and feelings.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers
- Nelson's Day at Grandma's House story
- List of shared needs
- A green marker and a blue marker

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"We're going to practice using a resource to calm our minds and relax our bodies.*
- *Take out your resource kit. Choose one resource and place it on your desk. Remember, we've created these resources to help us feel safer and calmer whenever we need to.*
- *Now let's pay attention to your bodies for a moment. Sit up straight and get comfortable in your chair.*
- *Now focus on the resource in front of you. Pay close attention to the details of it.* [Pause.]
- *What do you notice on the inside as you look at your resource? Does it make you feel pleasant, calmer, or neutral? If it does, focus your attention on that pleasant or neutral feeling inside.*
- *But if you feel unpleasant, you can change your focus to something else. You might want to close your eyes and imagine a favorite person or thing.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice on the inside?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 17 minutes

Recognizing Needs

Overview

In this insight activity, your class will read the story "Nelson's Day at Grandma's House," and discuss how Nelson is feeling. The group will consider Nelson's needs and the feelings associated with met and unmet needs.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We have many needs as we go throughout our day.
- Our needs can be met or can go unmet.
- We generally feel one way if our need is met, but a different way if our need is not met.
- Considering a person's needs can help us understand what they are going through and why they are feeling certain emotions.

Materials Required

- The list of shared needs created in the previous lesson
- Chart paper
- 1 green marker and 1 blue marker,
- The story: Nelson's Day at Grandma's House

Instructions

- Tell students that you will read the story "Nelson's Day at Grandma's House." Last time we heard about Nelson, it was about his difficult day. This story follows our friend Nelson at his Grandma's house.
- As you read the story, pause where there are fill-in-the-blanks for Nelson's feelings, and ask students to share how the blanks should be filled in. You will write the feeling words they suggest on a piece of chart paper using the blue marker. Then ask students about Nelson's sensations, and write those words on the chart paper using the green marker.

- At the fill-in-the-blank points in the story, ask students one or more of the following questions:
- How do you think Nelson is feeling right now?
- What sensations might he be having in his body?
- What does he need right now? [Refer to the shared needs list if necessary. Add the student's suggested need to your list by writing it on the board.]
- How do you think he will feel if he gets what he needs?
- How do you think he will feel if he doesn't get what he needs?
- After you finish reading the story, go over your shared needs list. Did Nelson also have any of those needs?

Sample Script

- *"Who remembers the story of Nelson we read before? What was the activity we did with that story last time? Yes, we looked for sparks and discussed how he moved through the zones.*
- *We're going to read another story about Nelson. This time, we are going to focus on Nelson's feelings and how they relate to what Nelson might need.*
- *What does it mean for a need to be met or unmet? Well if Nelson needed friendship, his need would be met if he had friends around him. But if he needed friendship and he doesn't have any friends, then his need would be unmet.*
- *I'm going to read the story and pause at moments when we come to a feeling or need.* [Begin reading the story, provided below. When you come to a blank, ask some or all of the following questions:]
- *How do you think Nelson is feeling right now? What sensations might he be feeling in his body?* (Like his heart beating fast, feeling sweaty, feeling hot, feeling cold, feeling tired.) [Write these sensation words in green on the board.]
- *What emotions might he be feeling about this situation? Is he feeling mad, sad, happy, surprised, or afraid? Or something else?* [Write these emotion words in blue on the board.]
- *What would make him feel better?* (Point to the shared needs list if necessary.)
- *Why might he need that?*
- *How might he feel if that need was met—if he got what he needed?*
- *How might he feel if that need was not met—if he didn't get what he needed?*
- *Is there something he could do now to help him get what he needs?*
- *Good. Let's continue the story.* [Continue with this format, pausing at each blank.]
- [When done, point out the two types of feelings: sensations and emotions.]
- *Did you notice that I wrote two lists of things Nelson was feeling? What's the difference between these lists?*

- *Yes, this is a list of sensations. Those are things we feel in the body. This other one is a list of emotions. These are things we feel about a situation. They're usually not just in one part of the body. We're going to learn more about emotions later."*

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

- *"How did Nelson generally feel when he had an unmet need?*
- *How did he feel when his need was met?*
- *Who helped Nelson meet his needs?*
- *How would we find out what someone needs, like in our classroom?"*

Story: "Nelson's Day at Grandma's House"

"Nelson woke up suddenly. He heard car horns in the street making loud noises. Beep! Beep! Beep! It was very unusual to hear car horns loudly honking on the country street where Nelson lived. He rubbed his eyes and then noticed that the furniture in the bedroom didn't look like his own. For a moment, Nelson felt _____.

Then Nelson felt something soft in his hand. He realized it was the very soft scarf that his grandma made for him. Whenever he traveled he took it with him. Then he remembered, "Of course! I'm at Grandma's house!" Nelson remembered that his father brought him from his home in the country to his grandma's house in the city, the night before. Now, Nelson felt _____.

Nelson got out of bed and felt his stomach grumble. He was feeling _____. What he needed now was _____.

Then he heard his grandma's warm voice call to him, "Nelson, are you awake? I've made your favorite breakfast! Come to the kitchen to eat!" Nelson felt_____ that his grandma made him his very favorite breakfast. It was a special meal that Grandma made only for him!

Nelson enjoyed a delicious breakfast of fried eggs, spicy beans, and slices of banana with honey spread on them. Nelson loved it! Now, he was feeling _____.

Nelson and his grandma were washing the dishes when the phone rang. Grandma answered it. Nelson couldn't hear everything over the running water in the sink, but could hear his grandma say, "Oh, that's really too bad. I hope feels better soon." "Nelson" said grandma, "that was Mrs. Montoyo. She called to say that Juan is sick and won't be able to come over today to play." Nelson's heart sank. Nelson only gets to see Juan when he is at Grandma's house, because Juan lives in the city, while Nelson's lives in the country. Nelson felt _____. He liked seeing Juan and playing soccer with him outside. He liked his grandma's house but there weren't his usual games and toys there. Now, Nelson started wondering what he would do to pass the time.

Nelson's grandmother noticed the nervous look on Nelson's face. "Nelson," said Grandma,

"Why don't we take a walk to the park? Maybe you will meet some new friends there." Nelson felt _____.

When Nelson and his grandma got to the park, Nelson saw several groups of children playing. There were children on the swings, a few playing with a basketball, and some others playing a tag game. Nelson walked over to the children playing with the basketball. "Hi," he said, "Can I join your game?" A tall girl with curly brown hair said, "No, we have even teams right now." Nelson felt _____.

Just then, Nelson felt a tap on his arm. He spun around to hear a boy with glasses say, "Tag, you're it!" Nelson barely had time to think. He had to find another child to tag. He noticed a group of children running in all directions, and he thought if he ran really hard, he could tag one of them. Now, Nelson felt _____. It would be a fun time after all."

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Personal Needs

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to give students an opportunity to explore their own needs. After a brief insight activity intended to reinforce the connection between needs and emotions, students will engage in a reflective practice in which they explore one of their own personal needs. They will reflect on what helps them meet this need and what it feels like for them when that need is met.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore personal needs.
- Explore the emotions and sensations that arise when one's needs are met.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A large piece of chart paper
- The Shared Needs list created earlier
- 1 piece of paper
- Crayons, markers, or pencils for each student

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"We're going to practice using a resource to calm our minds and relax our bodies.*
- *Take out your resource kit. Choose one resource and place it on your desk. Remember, we've created these resources to help us feel safer and calmer whenever we need to.*
- *Now let's pay attention to your bodies for a moment. Sit up straight and get comfortable in your chair.*
- *Now focus on the resource in front of you. Pay close attention to the details of it.* [Pause.]
- *What do you notice on the inside as you look at your resource? Does it make you feel pleasant, calmer, or neutral? If it does, focus your attention on that pleasant or neutral feeling inside.*
- *But if you feel unpleasant, you can change your focus to something else. You might want to close your eyes and imagine a favorite person or thing.* [Pause.]
- *What did you notice on the inside?"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 13 minutes

Feelings and Needs of a New Student

Overview

In this insight activity students will explore the relationship between feelings and needs by imagining how a new student might feel if he or she just joined the class, and what needs he or she might have.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can have different types of feelings: some are sensations (how we feel in specific parts of the body) and some are emotions (how we feel about a situation).
- People experience different sensations and emotions when their needs are met or go unmet.

Materials Required

- A copy of the Shared Needs list created earlier
- 1 piece of paper for each student
- Crayons, markers, or pencils for each student

Instructions

- Begin by asking students to remember the moments of kindness they have discussed before. Check to see if kindness is on the list of shared needs.
- Ask them how it makes them feel when they get kindness when they need it.
- Ask them how it might make someone feel if they needed something like kindness and did not get it.
- Explain what "met" and "unmet" needs are.
- Refresh students on what a sensation is and list a few.
- Refresh students on what an emotion is and list a few.

- Bring up a scenario with Nelson as a new student. Ask what needs he might have if he is shy. Ask how he would feel if those needs were met or were unmet.
- Take a moment to pause and have students silently visualize a time when they joined a new group and their need for friendship, kindness, and belonging was met. Ask them to consider what sensations or emotions they felt.
- Provide time for sharing.

Teaching Tips

Remember that students should only be prompted to visualize situations that they find pleasant or neutral, not situations that would make them feel unpleasant or uncomfortable.

Sample script

- *"We've talked about remembering moments of kindness and how it makes us feel.*
- *Do you think we all have a need for kindness and caring? Did we include that in our list of shared needs?*
- *How do we tend to feel when we get what we need? Like if I need kindness because maybe I'm feeling sad and I get kindness—how might that make me feel?*
- *When we get what we need, we say that the need is "met."*
- *And what if I needed kindness or needed friendship because I am feeling a bit lonely, but I don't get it. Does that happen sometimes—that we don't get what we need? How might I feel then?*
- *When we don't get what we need, we say the need is "unmet." That means we didn't get what we needed.*
- *Now let's think about our friend Nelson. What if Nelson had just joined our class and was a new student here with us. Nelson is a bit shy and he doesn't know anyone at the school. What needs might he have?* [Ask for suggestions.]
- *How might he feel if that need was met? That means, if he got what he needed?*
- *How might he feel if that need was not met? That means, if he didn't get what he needed?*
- *Now some of the things Nelson is feeling could be sensations. Does anyone remember what a sensation is that we can feel in our bodies?* [Show your list of sensation words or prompt them.]
- *Sensations are things we feel in parts of our bodies: like feeling cold, feeling warm, feeling our heart pounding, feeling our breathing coming fast, feeling tingling, feeling tight, or loose. What else might we feel in our bodies?*
- *Nelson could also be feeling emotions. What about emotions? Does anyone know any emotion words?* [Show your list of suggested emotion words or prompt them.]
- *Emotions are words for how we feel about a situation: like feeling happy, feeling sad,*

feeling mad, or feeling scared. Can anyone think of other emotion words?

- *Let's think of more things Nelson might need as a new student and how he might feel if he got what he needed.* [Ask for suggestions as above.]
- *Now we're going to try to think about ourselves. Let's think of a time when we had a need and it was met. It might be a need on our list or one not on our list.*
- *Would anyone like to share?*
- *What was your need and how was it met?*
- *How did you feel when your need was met? Did you feel any sensations or emotions?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 12 minutes

My Needs

Overview

In this reflective practice, students will do a brief reflective practice on what need they feel is most important to them right now and what is helping them meet it. They will combine this with the tracking of sensations in the body.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- What needs are most important can vary from person to person, or from time to time.
- Thinking about our needs being met or unmet affects our emotional state and our nervous system.

Materials Required

- The Shared Needs list created earlier.
- A piece of paper and a crayons, markers, or pencils for each student.

Instructions

- Ask students to put their name on the sheet of paper.
- Read through the Shared Needs list and ask students to pick one need that they want to draw a picture about. Ask them to write that need at the top of their paper.
- Explain this is a private practice and they won't have to share what they draw with anyone, unless they want to.
- Ask them to draw a picture that shows themselves and other people helping them meet their need.
- Once their pictures are drawn, ask them to imagine what it feels like to have their need met completely. Then ask them to notice what this feels like on the inside (tracking). Give them the opportunity to ground or resource if they notice unpleasant sensations.
- Invite anyone who wants to share to do so.
- Invite them to put their drawing in their resource kit.

Teaching Tips

- Observe students as they complete their drawings to ensure that they are depicting a time when their need was met. If they have

trouble thinking of a time, remind them of the way that the other students and you welcomed them into the class this year.

- Note that the needs that your students share with you can be important sources of information about them. Be careful to respect their privacy, while also recognizing that they may choose to share things that can help you to know more about them and their needs.

Sample script

- *"Everyone should have a piece of paper and markers. Write your name on the paper, please.*
- *Now choose a need that you feel is really important for you right now. We can look at the needs list we made if we need ideas.*
- *Write down that one need on your paper.*
- *Now let's take a moment to think. What are things or people in your life that help you meet this need?*
- *Draw a picture of your need being met. You can include other people in your drawing. If your need hasn't been met yet, you could still imagine other people helping you.* (Allow time for drawing.)
- *Now let's take a moment to think: What would it feel like to have this meet completely met? Take a moment to imagine this.* [Pause 30 seconds.]
- *Now take a moment to check what you notice on the inside.* [Pause 30 seconds.]
- *Thank you. Would anyone like to share? You don't have to.*
- *Now you can place your drawing in your resource kit. Or if you want to share it with me, you can hand it to me. I will keep them private."*

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"When we see other people, how might we come to know what they need?*
- *When we see other people having strong feelings, could we think about what it is they need?"*

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

Emotion Families

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to help students build up their vocabulary of emotion words by creating "emotion families" or collections of related emotions. They will also notice how different families of emotions tend to make us feel different ways, are connected to different sets of sensations, and prompt different types of behaviors.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Develop a wider vocabulary of emotion terms.
- Explore the ways different emotion terms are related to each other.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

LENGTH

20 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Print-outs of the cards at the end of this learning experience

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"We've been talking about emotions and needs.*
- *In order to notice our own emotions and needs, or the emotions and needs of others, we need to be able to pay attention.*
- *So we're going to start by strengthening our attention.*
- *Take out your resource kit and choose one resource. Place it in your desk. It's there if you need it.*
- *Let's pay attention to our bodies for a moment. If your body feels like it needs a stretch, take one.*
- *Let's get back in our chairs, sit up straight, and get comfortable.*
- *This time we're going to focus our attention on our breathing. But if it makes you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to do breathing, you can think about your resource instead and notice how that makes you feel inside.*
- *See if you can notice the feeling in your nose and face when you breath in* [Pause.] *and also when you breath out. Or you can notice the breath in your belly.* [Pause.]
- *Let's try to sit for a few minutes while we practice paying attention to our breathing.* [Have students practice focusing on their breath for about one to two minutes, depending on their ability.]
- *What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 14 minutes

Creating Emotion Families

Overview

In this insight activity students will make "emotion families" to expand their vocabulary of emotions and see how emotions relate to each other.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Emotions can vary in intensity.
- Some emotions are related to each other.

Materials Required

- 5 sets of the print-outs of the emotion cards at the end of this learning experience.

Instructions

- Divide the students into groups of 3-5 or you can choose to do this activity as a whole class. (The script below is written for instruction for small groups.) Each group should be stationed around a table or gather together on the floor.
- Hand out the main emotion cards (happy, kind, sad, angry, afraid) to each group. These can be found at the end of this learning experience. Explain that this emotion is the "parent" of each group.
- Then give each group one set of the rest of the emotion cards. These are for the additional "family members."
- Read all the words with students to be sure they know how to read each card.

- Instruct students that their job will be to create "emotion families" by grouping together the words that go together.
- Do the happy emotion family all together as a class. Ask students to find another word that is similar to "happy." When they find it, they can place it next to the happy card. And so on.
- Have students do the rest of the activity in their small groups, placing all emotions in family groups.

Teaching Tips

- Here is the list of completed emotion families:
  - **Happy:** joyful, excited, content, pleased
  - **Kind:** caring, loving, friendly, empathetic
  - **Sad:** lonely, gloomy, miserable
  - **Angry:** frustrated, impatient, annoyed
  - **Afraid:** worried, scared, nervous
- Each group will need enough room (flat surface like table or floor) to place the emotions cards under each family group card.
- It can be helpful to draw faces or use "emojis" on the emotion cards as well, especially for students who cannot yet read well.

Sample script

- *"Here we have 5 main emotions. I'm going to give one to each of your groups. This is the main "parent" of your emotion family. Let's read them aloud together.*
- *We also have a lot of other emotion cards too. They are like relatives. Each one will go to one of the main groups where it will join its parent.* (Teacher holds up and reads each card with the help of students.)
- *Now let's see where they should go. Let's start with the emotion family of "happy" and do that together.*
- *If I feel happy, what other emotion might I feel? What's an emotion related to feeling happy? Find the card in your deck that has a word that is similar to happy.* [joyful, excited] *Great, I will place joyful right under happy.*
- *What other emotions do we have here that would fit with happy?* [Ask for suggestions.]
- *Now let's do the rest in groups. Find what cards you have that fit with your main emotion parent, and place them around the parent.* [Give enough time for them to work in groups, checking in on each group.]
- *Now let's share. Which group would like to go first? Tell us your emotion parent, and then tell us which other emotions you decided were related.* [Allow each group to share.]
- *Were their any emotion words you didn't understand?"*

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"Why might it be helpful to learn about emotions?"*

Emotions Cards

Happy	Friendly
Kind	Empathetic
Sad	Lonely
Angry	Gloomy
Afraid	Miserable
Joyful	Frustrated
Excited	Impatient
Content	Annoyed
Pleased	Worried
Caring	Scared
Loving	Nervous

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 5

Investigating Risky Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to help students identify the characteristics of difficult or "risky" emotions by engaging in a guided process of inquiry. This process can then be used to think about any emotion and its potential risk for oneself and others if it gets out of hand.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Practice discerning emotions that can be risky when they become too strong.
- Recognize that one can investigate emotions by using a process.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The "emotion families" created earlier in the "Creating Emotion Families" activity, ideally placed on a board so everyone can see
- A large piece of chart paper with the questions from the "Investigating Risky Emotions Checklist" (provided at the end of this learning experience) written on it so everyone can see it

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

- *"We've been talking about emotions and needs.*
- *In order to notice our own emotions and needs, or the emotions and needs of others, we need to be able to pay attention.*
- *So we're going to start by strengthening our attention.*
- *Take out your resource kit and choose one resource. Place it in your desk. It's there if you need it.*
- *Let's pay attention to our bodies for a moment. If your body feels like it needs a stretch, take one.*
- *Let's get back in our chairs, sit up straight, and get comfortable.*
- *This time we're going to focus our attention on our breathing. But if it makes you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to do breathing, you can think about your resource instead and notice how that makes you feel inside.*
- *See if you can notice the feeling in your nose and face when you breath in* [Pause.] *and also when you breath out. Or you can notice the breath in your belly.* [Pause.]
- *Let's try to sit for a few minutes while we practice paying attention to our breathing.* [Have students practice focusing on their breath for about one to two minutes, depending on their ability.]
- *What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Investigating Risky Emotions

Overview

In this insight activity, students investigate risky emotions, thinking about how risky an emotion could be and what those emotions might have in common.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Some emotions are more risky than others, in that they can prompt behaviors that harm ourselves and others if they get out of hand.
- We can identify risky emotions by asking questions about them.
- Once we identify risky emotions, we can be heedful of them (exercise caution) and "hold back" (exercise restraint) when we notice them getting strong.

Materials Required

- The "emotion families" created earlier in the "Creating Emotion Families" activity, ideally placed on a board so everyone can see
- A large piece of chart paper with the questions from the "Investigating Risky Emotions Chart" (provided at the end of this learning experience) written on it so everyone can see it

Instructions

- Show your students the emotion family groupings they created in the "Creating

Emotion Families" activity. Place these on a board where everyone can see them.

- Remind them of the spark and the forest fire analogy. Some emotions can be sparks and can become big forest fires if we let them get out of control. We call these "risky emotions."
- Ask them if any of the emotions on the emotion family cards could start a big fire. These emotions are ones that could become risky. Whichever ones they choose, explain that you will then as a class "investigate" that emotion like a detective, using your "risky emotions checklist." Invite them to come up to the board and put a mark next to whichever emotions they feel might be risky and should be investigated
- Distribute the "risky emotions checklist" to all students.
- Choose one of the marked emotions to start with, then run through the checklist as a class, reading aloud and asking each question in turn of that emotion.
- Move on to the next term they marked and go through the checklist again.
- Debrief by asking if the risky emotions they identified have anything in common, and whether we should be careful if we notice risky emotions in ourselves or others.

Teaching Tips

- Be attentive in case students feel that risky emotions are "bad" or that they need to fear or suppress them. There are many things in life that we need to be heedful of, and exercise restraint around, such as fire, electronics, or valuable and fragile objects. Restraint does not mean repression, but implies dealing with something constructively to prevent harm to self and others. The purpose of identifying risky emotions and strategies for dealing with them is for students to learn to navigate emotions constructively without having to suppress or repress them.
- The purpose of the questions in the "risky emotions checklist" is to get students to think for themselves about how to analyze thoughts and emotions in terms of the potential benefit or l harm they can bring. It is not to provide right or wrong answers. Rather, it introduces them to the concept of questioning the kinds of impact different emotions can have.
- Allow as much time as you have for students to assess other risky emotions.

Sample script

- *"Remember these cards that you created in our last activity? I'm going to place them where everyone can see them.*
- *Who can help us remember what we meant when we talked about the spark and the forest fire? How can emotions be like a spark that leads to a forest fire?*
- *Some emotions can turn into big fires if we let them get out of control.*
- *How did we describe those emotions that can turn into big fires? We call them risky emotions. They are emotions that can grow*

bigger and sometimes cause us to have bigger difficulties.

- *Do any of these emotions on the board seem like they might be risky?* [Call on specific students and have them come up and mark the emotion they feel might be risky and should be investigated.]
- *We're going to investigate these risky emotions, as if we were detectives, to see how risky they are.*
- *Fortunately we have a good detective tool. It is this checklist. It has questions we can use to see if an emotion is risky and if so, how risky.*
- *Using the checklist let's first investigate the emotion "frustration."* (Go through the questions on the checklist with students, asking for how they would answer the questions. Write their answers on the board or chart paper.)
- *Now that we've answered all the questions, let's decide. Is frustration a risky emotion? If so, is it very risky or just a little risky?*
- [Continue on to a few other emotions, as you have time.)
- *Now that we've identified some risky emotions, let's think about what they have in common. What is alike about these emotions?*
- *How can we be careful when we notice risky emotions in ourselves or others?*
- *What is one action you can take if you think you're experiencing a risky emotion."*

[Note: be sure to help students think of ways they can process or handle a risky emotion that does not involve merely suppressing it. Many such strategies have already been presented in the SEE Learning curriculum, such as grounding, resourcing, Help Now! strategies. They can be encouraged to find other strategies too, such as talking to an adult or friend, taking deep breaths, taking a pause, walking away, finding a solution to the problem, etc.]

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

Observing the Mind for Emotions

This is similar to the final reflective practice in Chapter 3, which is found in Learning Experience 6 and is titled "Observing the Mind." The only difference here is asking students what emotions they noticed at the end of the practice. They will raise their hands silently when they notice an emotion, thought, or sensation and lower their hand when it goes away.

Sample script

- *"Let's sit up and get into a comfortable sitting position.*
- *If we're too excited or too tired, or if we're not in our resilient zone, it will be hard to train our attention. Just like in our drawings where we drew our minds when they were too dull or too excited.*
- *So let's sit upright with our backs straight. And so we don't get distracted, let's lower our 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, perhaps think of a favorite person or thing.*
- *Or if you prefer, you can do some grounding where you are sitting. Really feel the chair against your body and imagine you are a sturdy tree, with roots going down into the ground.* [Pause.]
- *Let's focus on our breath now. Be aware of your breath as it goes in your nose and into your body. Then, feel it at you breathe out. 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.]
- *Now let's practice just watching our mind.*
- *We're going to stop focusing on our breath. Instead, we're just going to watch to see whatever comes up in our mind.*
- *But instead of getting caught up in our thoughts or emotions, we're going to see if we can just be observers. That means not following your thoughts or feelings, but just noticing what comes up.*
- *Let's be silent and pay close attention and see if we can do that.* [Pause for 15-30 seconds, or more if your students are comfortable doing so.]
- *When you notice an emotion, a thought, or a sensation, raise your hand silently. Then put your hand down when it goes away.*
- *If we get distracted or caught up in our thoughts or emotions, let's just remember that we're just watching them like an observer. 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.]
- *Now let's open our eyes and share.*
- *What did you notice?*
- *Could anyone watch thoughts coming and going? What was that like?*
- *Did anyone notice a feeling or emotion?*
- *Do you think you'd be able to notice emotions if they happened during the day?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"What did we learn about risky emotions?*
- *How do we know if an emotion is risky or not?*
- *What might happen if we noticed risky emotions quickly?*
- *Have we learned anything that could help us notice risky emotions?"*

Investigating Risky Emotions Checklist

- [ ] Could this emotion become a dangerous forest fire?
- [ ] Does this emotion usually cause stress for myself or others?
- [ ] What might happen if everyone in our school had a lot more of this emotion?
- [ ] What might happen if everyone had a lot less of this emotion?
- [ ] What else comes to mind about this emotion? Are we missing anything?

CHAPTER 4 | Navigating Emotions

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 6

Emotional Hygiene

PURPOSE

The purpose of this learning experience is to introduce the concept of "emotional hygiene" as a way of dealing with or preventing risky emotions before they cause difficulties for oneself and others. Students imagine scenarios and run through a checklist for each risky emotion, seeing what can be done by oneself and what one can do for others experiencing that emotional state.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the concept of "emotional hygiene" as practices of self-care and restraint.
- Identify strategies for dealing with risky emotions in oneself and others.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Attention & Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The emotion families chart (created) earlier on a board or piece of chart paper that students can see
- A piece of blank chart paper or board

LENGTH

25 minutes

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"We've been talking about emotions and risky emotions.*
- *In order to notice an emotion, especially a risky one, we need strong attention.*
- *So we're going to start by strengthening our attention.*
- *Take out your resource kit and choose one resource. Place it in your desk. It's there if you need it.*
- *Let's pay attention to our bodies for a moment. If your body feels like it needs a stretch, take one.*
- *Let's get back in our chairs, sit up straight, and get comfortable.*
- *This time we're going to focus our attention on our breathing. But if it makes you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to do breathing, you can think about your resource instead and notice how that makes you feel inside.*
- *See if you can notice the feeling in your nose and face when you breath in* [Pause.] *and also when you breath out. Or you can notice the breath in your belly.* [Pause.]
- *Let's try to sit for a few minutes while we practice paying attention to our breathing.* [Have students practice focusing on their breath for about one to two minutes, depending on their ability.]
- *What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

What is Emotional Hygiene?

Overview

In this discussion, students will be introduced to and explore the concept of emotional hygiene.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Just as we take care of our bodies (physical hygiene), we can take care of our minds (emotional hygiene).
- Emotional hygiene allows us to "think twice" when we experience a risky emotion, protecting ourselves and others.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Remind the class of the "Creating Emotion Families" activity and which emotions were identified as risky. Hang up the chart that you made or make a list of the risky emotions the students identified so that everyone can see it.
- Refer back to Nelson, from the "Nelson's Difficult Day" or "Nelson's Day at Grandma's House" (found in learning experience 2 of this chapter) stories. Since it may have been a while since they heard the story, you can remind them of the story or re-read the beginning of it.
- As you go through the story, ask students when Nelson may have felt one of the risky emotions.

- When they identify a risky emotion Nelson might be experiencing, use the strategies checklist (provided at the end of this learning experience) to generate ideas about what Nelson could do to help himself handle that particular risky emotion.
- Continue through the story finding other risky emotions and exploring strategies of how Nelson might deal with each one.

Teaching Tips

If the opportunity arises, you can point out that sometimes a strategy might work well for a risky emotion in one situation but not in another situation. This is one reason why it's good to have several strategies for handling risky emotions and not just one.

Sample script

- "*Who remembers when we did the activity about emotion families? Can you share with the group so we can all remember?*
- *Yes, we came up with related words for the emotions.*
- *Can anyone remember an emotion that we decided was a risky emotion?* [Review this with your class, reminding them of which emotions they decided were more risky. Hang up a chart of the risky emotions identified in the previous learning experience.]
- *Does everyone experience this emotion at some point?*
- *Let's go back to the story we read about Nelson visiting his grandmother's house. Do you remember that story?*
- *Nelson was visiting his grandmother's house. When he woke up he didn't remember where he was. Then later he learned that his friend couldn't come play with him. A little later he went to play in the park but the other children wouldn't let him play with them.*
- *Do you think it's possible Nelson might feel some risky emotions during this? Which risky emotions could he be feeling?*
- *If he were feeling that risky emotion, what sensations might he be feeling in his body?*
- *What could he do to help himself if he were feeling that particular risky emotion? Have we learned any strategies he could use?* (Write these on the board under the heading "Things We Can Do For Ourselves")
- *What if we were there with him? What could we do to help him if we saw him feeling that emotion?* (These are strategies for others. Write these on the board under the heading "Things We Can Do For Others")
- *That's wonderful. We've come up with some ways we can help ourselves and ways we can help others. What if Nelson felt one of the other risky emotions? Like if he felt afraid, or angry, or frustrated, or lonely?* [Repeat the above questions of how this would feel in his body, what he could do for himself, and what a friend could do for him, again writing down the students' suggestions.]

- *Imagine if Nelson came to us for help because he kept feeling risky emotions. He heard we are learning about emotional hygiene. What could we teach him that he could do every day to help him feel prepared and confident to keep a spark from turning into a fire?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 9 minutes

What Can I Do When I Feel A Strong Emotion?

Overview

In this reflective practice, students will choose a strong emotion from the emotion families chart that could cause problems for oneself and others. They will then draw what a student of their same age (Nelson) could do if such an emotion were to arise.

Content/Insights to be Explored

We can use strategies for dealing with risky emotions when we or others experience them.

Materials Required

- A piece of drawing paper
- Drawing utensils for each student

Instructions

- Explain that Nelson has learned from our class what he can do to practice emotional hygiene. Because of that, when he starts to experience a risky emotion, he knows some things he can do.
- Explain that each student can choose another risky emotion from the ones identified in the emotion families chart. Then ask them to draw Nelson using the strategies they've learned to deal with that particular risky emotion so that it doesn't cause bigger problems for themselves and others.
- Allow time for sharing of the drawings.

Teaching Tips

- Talking about risky emotions and the potentially harmful behaviors they can lead to can itself be risky if the students immediately talk from their own lives and experience from the start. This is why they are first introduced to it through a third-person fictional character (Nelson). They will naturally apply this learning to themselves. In many cases, it is advisable to start with this indirect method first before having students talk about their own emotional lives in the classroom.

Sample Script

- *"Let's pretend that Nelson has been in our class with us and has learned the same things as we have. He can practice emotional hygiene. Because of that, when Nelson starts to experience risky emotions, he knows some things he can do to handle them.*
- *Each of you will choose a risky emotion from the ones we talked about in the families chart.*
- *Next think about what Nelson could do to handle that risky emotion so that it doesn't turn into a bigger problem, so the spark doesn't become a forest fire.*
- *Then draw a picture of Nelson using a strategy he has learned to deal with that one particular risky emotion.*

- *After some time for drawing, those who want to can share what they drew with the class."*
- [Allow 5 minutes or so for drawing. Then allow students to share out.]

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"Why do you think emotional hygiene might be useful?*
- *How might we get better at emotional hygiene?"*

Strategies for Dealing with Risky Emotions

Name of emotion:

When might someone feel this emotion?

If someone felt this emotion, what might they be needing?

Does everyone feel this emotion sometimes?

If someone felt this emotion, what sensations might they feel in their body?

Strategies for dealing with this emotion:

Things we can do with our bodies:

Things we can do with our minds:

Things we can do with other people:

What can we do if we see another person having this emotion?

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 5

Learning About and From One Another

Overview

With this chapter, the SEE Learning curriculum turns from the Personal to the Social domain, and the learning experiences here seek to help students turn their attention away from themselves and towards others. Many of the same skills that were cultivated in chapters 1-4 for the Personal domain can be applied here also, but this time while focusing outward towards their classmates and those they encounter on a daily basis.

Children of this age are naturally curious about others and attentive to them, but they sometimes lack the skills to know how to attend to others, ask questions, or explore their similarities and differences with others in meaningful ways. This chapter focuses therefore on three key areas, each covered in a single learning experience: understanding others' emotions in context; mindful listening; and exploring ways in which human beings are the same and different. The continuous theme of these learning experiences is empathy: the ability to understand and resonate with another's situation and emotional state. Empathy, and its attendant skill of mindful listening, in turn lays the groundwork for the following chapter on self-compassion and compassion for others.

At this age, children can on occasion assume that others should always think and feel the same as they do, or if they do not, they may feel that someone else's differences are such that they are completely different, with little in common. The point of this chapter is to explore the middle ground between these two extremes, appreciating both commonalities and differences for what they are, and seeing that neither negates the other. On such a middle ground that seeks to efface neither commonalities or differences, a respectful and genuine compassion for others can emerge.

In the first learning experience, "Understanding Others' Emotions in Context," students explore the ways in which people can have different emotional responses to the same situation. Through the story of Albert and Alice, students see two characters who have very different emotional reactions to the same situation, that of seeing a dog on the playground. Understanding that people might have different emotional responses to the same event is a critical understanding, as it provides the framework for understanding the ways in which context (such as past experiences or other aspects of our identity) informs and shapes our emotional responses to situations and those around us. This is important both for understanding sameness and difference, as well as for cultivating empathy.

Learning Experience 2, "Mindful Listening," explores the impact of poor listening behaviors and introduces the concept and practice of a type of active listening called Mindful Listening. "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 to 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 judgement, 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.

In the Learning Experience 3, "Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities," students explore the ways in which we are different and alike. Students revisit the "Step In, Step Out" activity from Chapter 1 to explore meaningful differences and similarities. This activity can be made most meaningful if tailored to the specific contexts of your students, as recommended and explained further in the teaching tips of the learning experience. Students then identify things that all or most people have in common, as opposed to things that make people different, and lastly, things that make each of them unique. Identifying shared commonalities puts difference in perspective and again supports empathy while moving towards a systems-level appreciation of common humanity, which comes in later chapters.

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 skill of mindful listening, 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 just want to be happy and avoid unhappiness.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting **SEE Learning, Chapter 5, "Learning About and From One Another."**

In Chapter 5, your child will explore differences, similarities, and their own uniqueness, as well as the things that we all have in common as human beings (such as feelings, needs, and the desire to be happy). Identifying shared commonalities puts difference in perspective and supports the ongoing development of empathy. Your child will also learn and practice mindful listening behaviors, which can help them attune their attention to a speaker and listen without interruptions or judgments.

Home Practice

As your child goes through this chapter, you might like to ask your child to demonstrate their mindful listening behaviors. See if you can practice listening mindfully to your child (with full attention, non-judgement, no interruptions, and empathy): your example will be encouraging and demonstrates emotional attunement. Emotional attunement is an important aspect of empathy, which involves understanding and caring about how someone else feels. Your child is learning to look for clues, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, to help them identify another person's feelings. You can help your child improve their empathy skills by asking them questions about how they think another person feels, and noticing clues together.

Earlier Chapters Included

- Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and happiness through helping to form of class agreements.
- Chapter 2 explored the important role that our bodies, and in particular our nervous system, play in our happiness and well-being.
- Chapter 3 addressed to the topic of attention, including why it is important, how to strengthen it, and how we can use it to cultivate insight into ourselves.
- Chapter 4 explored the topic of emotion and emotional hygiene, how emotions arise, and how to better "navigate them."

Further Reading and Resources

Remember that the SEE Learning Framework, contained within the *SEE Learning Companion*, contains an explanation of the entire curriculum. You may access it on the web at **compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER 5 | Learning About and From One Another

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Understanding Others' Emotions in Context

PURPOSE

Compassion and kindness flow more easily when we recognize that others' behaviors and emotions arise within the specific context of their lives and past experiences. Students will be provided with scenarios in which characters react differently to similar situations, giving them the opportunity to explore why people might have different emotions to the same events.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the ways in which different situations might impact someone's feelings.
- Consider the ways in which people can have different emotional responses to the same situation.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Alice and Albert story (provided)
- Paper and drawing utensils for each student

LENGTH

25 minutes

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Albert and Alice See a Dog

Overview

In this story reading and discussion, students will explore how and why different people react with different emotions to the same situation.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can have different reactions to the same situation and different feelings about it.
- By paying close attention, we can see if another person's reaction is different to ours, and we can ask them, too.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Tell students you are going to read a story together and pay attention to how the characters might be feeling. Tell them that sometimes the characters may be feeling different things to each other.
- Read the story aloud.
- Discuss the story and the characters' feelings using questions such as:
- What was Alice feeling in the story? Why do we think she was feeling that way?
- Raise your hand if you would have felt the same as Alice?
- What about Albert, how was he feeling? Why do we think he was feeling that way?

- Raise your hand if you would have felt like Albert?
- Why do you think Alice and Albert had different feelings to the same dog?
- If time permits, re-read the story and ask students to raise their hands when they think a character is feeling something and know what that character might be feeling. Ask them to explain what the character might be feeling and why.

Teaching Tips

- Note that this story also appears in Chapter 4 and an illustration can be found there that may be useful to use again.
- You may alter the story to make it more applicable to your own students and a situation they can relate to.

Story: Albert & Alice See a Dog

"*Albert and Alice go to the same elementary school. One sunny, warm day when they are outside in the school yard, they hear a dog barking. It sounds like it's getting closer to the field they are in. Alice smiles and her brown eyes widen. She looks around excitedly for the dog. She thinks of her own dog, Pupper, who often sleeps curled up by her feet at home, and she feels warmth in her chest. She starts calling out for the dog. On the other hand, Albert heard the dog barking, too. Albert's body gets a bit stiffer, and his eyes widen. He frantically looks around the open field. He feels his palms start to sweat and his heart starts beating faster. A jolt of energy runs through his arms and legs. He can't see the dog anywhere, but he begins to walk quickly to the large, painted school door. From inside the school, Martin sees Alice playing with the dog who is wagging its tail, and he sees Albert walking hurriedly through the school door and down the hallway.*"

Sample Script

- "*What was Alice feeling in the story? Why do we think she was feeling that way?*
  - *Raise your hand if you would have felt the same as Alice?*
- *What about Albert, how was he feeling? Why do we think he was feeling that way?*
  - *Raise your hand if you would have felt like Albert?*
- *Why do you think Alice and Albert had different feelings to the same dog?*
- *I'm going to read the story again, and I want you to raise your hand when you hear something that tells you how a character might be feeling. You'll then explain what that character is feeling and why you think they are feeling that way.*
- [Read the story aloud again, stopping to discuss when students notice clues about feelings.]
- [Discuss the following questions.]
  - *How might we be able to notice how others in our class are feeling?*
  - *Can you think of a time when you felt one way about something but your parent (or guardian or friend) felt another way? How*

did you know they were feeling differently? How did you find out what they were thinking?

- *Can you think of things that you like a lot, but other people don't like very much?* (Examples can include games, types of food, sports or other activities.)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

We Can Experience Things Differently

Overview

Students will think of a time when they were really excited about something, then imagine other people they know who might not react the same way.

Content/Insights to be Explored

Even when we feel strongly about something, others can have different feelings and reactions to the same thing.

Materials Required

Paper and drawing utensils for each student

Instructions

- Distribute the paper and drawing utensils to each student.
- Ask them to think of a time when they were really excited about something. Ask them to raise their hands when they have thought of something like this. Ask for a few students to share their moments of excitement so that it can prompt ideas for others in class or give examples yourself.
- Ask each student to do a drawing illustrating themself and their moment of excitement, including what they were excited about.
- Then ask them to include a few family members or friends in the drawing. Ask them to consider the following questions: Would they also be excited about the same thing? Why or why not? Would some of them feel differently?
- Ask them to include at least one person who might not be excited about the same thing.
- Ask students to share out to the whole group what they draw, and why the characters might share the same feelings or why some of them might not.

Teaching Tips

None

Sample Script

- *"Here is a piece of paper for each of you and something to draw with. Please wait for the instructions before you begin this reflective practice.*
- *Imagine a time when you were really excited about something. Raise your hand when you have thought of something.*
- *Let's hear from a few of you.* [Invite a few students to share; give your own example.]
- *Ok, next I'd like to invite you to close your eyes or lower your gaze to the floor. Imagine this time of excitement again, and this time, include a few family members or friends. Are*

they excited too? Why or why not? Would some of them feel differently? [Pause for 30 seconds.]

- *Open your eyes. Now we're going to draw. Draw yourself being excited about something and a few family members or friends with you. make at least one of them NOT excited about the same thing you are excited about. You'll do this quietly and on your own, and we'll have time to share at the end. You may begin drawing.* [Provide time for drawing.]
- *Who would like to share?*
  - *Tell us what is happening in your drawing.*
  - *Who is excited and who is not? Explain why."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"When something happens, like Albert and Alice seeing the dog, why do you think we sometimes feel the same way but sometimes we feel differently to each other?*
- *If someone is feeling differently to us, what questions could we ask them to make sure?"*

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Mindful Listening

PURPOSE

This learning experience introduces "mindful listening." 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. This kind of listening takes well-honed attentional skills because it requires that we focus solely on what the other person is saying, rather than on what one wants to say in response. Mindful listening provides an opportunity for students to learn from and about each other without judgment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Identify mindful listening behaviors.
- Practice the skill of listening mindfully without interrupting or shifting the focus to oneself.
- Consider the ways in which mindful listening can be used at school or in life.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Interpersonal Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper with three headings: "Not Being Listened to Feels Like…," "Being Listen To Feels Like…," and "Mindful Listening Behaviors"
- Markers
- A timer or watch

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 8 minutes

Mindful Listening Role Play

Overview

In this reflective practice students observe you and another student perform a listening role play. They reflect on what they saw and discuss the impact of mindful listening.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can get better at listening to each other in a more mindful way.
- When we engage mindful listening with each other, we are gaining an opportunity to really communicate with one another and to provide the gift of mindful listening.

Materials Required

A timer or watch

Instructions

- When you introduce this activity to the rest of the students, do not tell them that you are demonstrating poor listening. Instead, just let the students know you will be doing a skit and to try to figure out what is happening.
- The speaker in the role play will be invited to speak to you about something they like to do during the weekend. (You can use another topic if you feel there is one in particular that would particularly engage your students.) They should already be prepared by knowing the purpose of the skit and how you will behave with poor listening skills, so that they will not be upset by this.

- Start the timer for 45 seconds (or use a watch or clock to keep track of the time) and ask the speaker to begin. While they are speaking, you will clearly engage in poor listening skills such as: interrupting, rolling your eyes, turning away, looking at your watch or phone, etc. The speaker's job will be to try to continue speaking during the 45 second role play, as you engage in exaggerated poor listening skills. (See the note about preparing for this activity under Teaching Tips below.)
- When 45 seconds has elapsed, thank the speaker, and invite the class to give your student or colleague a warm round of applause for their performance.
- Ask students to reflect on what they observed, using the debrief questions provided in the script.

Teaching Tips

- It is advised that you practice the role-play in advance with the student or colleague you will be doing it with. Be sure that they understand that this is a role-play and be sure they feel comfortable in their role. If it is a student, they should know what they are going to say so in advance, so that they are ready to speak about the topic from the beginning of the role play.
- Students might laugh during this activity. They might find some of the behaviors you do to be funny, or they may find that watching bad listening makes them nervous. You can ask them non-judgmental questions about their reactions to help them understand why they might have laughed at the skit. (They will likely understand that poor listening might seem funny when it's just pretend, but not when it's actually happening to you.)

Sample Script

- *"Please direct your attention to (skit partner) and me. We'll be doing a little skit for you and when we're done, I will ask you what you noticed.* [Set the timer for 45 seconds. Start the role play by greeting your partner and asking them to tell you about something they did over the weekend. End when the timer ends.]
- *Thank you. Let's all give* (skit partner) *a round of applause for doing a great job.*
- *Now what did you notice about what just happened?*
- *Did you notice anything about my behavior? What kinds of things was I doing?* [Take responses and encourage students to describe the actual behavior they observed. If a student says "You were being rude" ask what specific behavior made them think that, such as: "You interrupted the speaker."]
- *What did you notice about the speaker? How did they react? If you were in their position, how might you feel?*
- *Let's ask the speaker: How did it feel to be on the receiving end of my poor listening skills? Did you notice any sensations in your body? Did you notice any feelings or emotions?*

- *What kinds of things do you think the speaker would have liked me to do instead?*
- *When might it be important to listen to others mindfully and with attention?*

PRESENTATION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

15 minutes

Mindful Listening*

Overview

In this activity students will contrast how it feels to be listened to in a mindful way, versus not being listened to mindfully. Students will generate a description of mindful listening behaviors. Then, they briefly practice using mindful listening behaviors in pairs.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- There is a difference between just listening without much attention and mindful listening.
- Mindful listening can affect us as speakers, listeners, and as a whole classroom and community at large.

Materials Required

- Markers
- A timer, watch or clock
- Chart paper with three headings: "Not Being Listened to Feels Like…," "Being Listen To Feels Like…," and "Mindful Listening Behaviors"

Instructions

- Explain that today you will talk about what it means to really listen to someone with full attention.
- Ask for examples of what it feels like when someone isn't really listening to you. Write student suggestions on a piece of chart paper under the heading "Not Being Listened To Feels Like..." You can refer to the poor listening skills skit you just completed.
- Ask for student ideas of what it is like when you are really listened to with full attention and without judgment. Write their ideas on a piece of chart paper under the heading "Being Listened To Feels Like..."
- Take a moment to note with them the differences between the two lists.
- Ask what it would look like for us to listen to someone else with full attention. Explain that you will call that "Mindful listening" in class. Write their ideas down under the heading "Mindful Listening Behaviors." (Note: You will save this chart.)
- Recruit two students to do a practice with your coaching in front of the class. (If there are no student volunteers, you can demonstrate mindful listening yourself with a student speaker.) The student who is a speaker will talk about an activity they enjoy. Before the demonstration begins, help the listener to sit prepare their body and mind to be a mindful listener. Ask them to explain what behaviors they will use, encouraging them to refer to the behaviors on the chart. Ask

other students to pay attention to the mindful listening behaviors they see during short demonstration.

- Have them begin the demonstration and start the timer for 60 seconds.
- When time is up, ask the two students to stop. Then ask the rest of the class to share what good mindful listening behaviors the noticed. If they noticed anything new that wasn't yet on the Mindful Listening Behaviors chart, add it to the chart. If students point out poor listening behaviors, remind them that you are only looking for examples of good mindful listening for now.
- Congratulate and thank the students for doing the demonstration and allow them to return to their seats.
- Place students in pairs so they can practice mindful listening. Pairs will decide who will speak first, and who will listen. The speaker will have 90 seconds to talk about an activity they enjoy doing while their partner listens mindfully. They can explain the activity and talk about when they do it, why they like it, when they first started doing it, etc.
- After 90 seconds have elapsed, let them know to switch roles, so that the one who was listening will now speak, and the one who was speaking will practice mindful listening.
- Debrief the activity, asking questions such as:
  - *"What mindful listening behaviors did you notice?*
  - *How did it feel to be listened to? To be a mindful listener?*
  - *What was challenging about mindful listening?"*

Teaching Tips

- Save your mindful listening behaviors chart for later use.
- In SEE Learning, mindful listening means to listen attentively without interrupting, without being distracted, without giving advice, and without turning the conversation towards oneself. Often when listening to others, we are only partially paying attention to the other person and what they are saying; part of our attention is on our own reactions, our thoughts, and what we are going to say once the other person finishes or gives us a chance to speak. Mindful listening involves just listening with full attention and without judgment. Just like compassion itself, mindful listening is other-focused, rather than self-focused.
- Remember to only focus on the positive mindful listening behaviors of the students who volunteer to demonstrate in front of the class. If no mindful listening behaviors are present, ask for further volunteers or demonstrate yourself. But avoid criticizing the student's listening behaviors in front of the whole class, reserving this for a one-on-one discussion if necessary.

Sample Script

- "*Now that we've seen an example of poor listening, we're going to learn how we can avoid that, and be a mindful listener instead.*
- *Let's review your ideas about what it feels like to be NOT listened to. What does it feel like?* [Ask for student ideas and write them on a piece of chart paper under the heading "Not Being Listened To Feels Like..."]
- *What does it feel like when listens to you fully* [Ask for student ideas and write them on a piece of chart paper under the heading "Being Listened To Feels Like..."]
- *Let's look at these two lists we made. What are the main differences we notice?*
- *What kinds of things can we do to be a great listener, to listen mindfully when someone else is speaking. Let's identify mindful listening behaviors.* [You can refer back to the discussion you had about the poor listening skit to think of opposite behavior than were shown.]
- *What kinds of things can we do with our eyes? Our facial expression? Our hands? Our whole body? Our minds? Our feelings?* [Take responses and help students be specific about the behaviors of a mindful listener. Write student ideas on a piece of chart paper under the heading "Mindful Listening Behaviors."]
- *Just like we can strengthen our attention like a muscle, we can also strengthen our ability to listen mindfully by practicing these behaviors.*
- *We're going to try it right now. Our sharing topic will be an activity you enjoy. Think of an activity you enjoy. I'll be asking you to talk about that activity with a partner.* [Wait a moment.] *Does everyone have something in mind?*
- [Then, recruit two students to do a practice with your coaching in front of the class. The student who is a speaker will talk about an activity they enjoy. Before the demonstration begins, help the listener to prepare their body and mind to be a mindful listener.] *Let's review the mindful listening behaviors. What do you want to remember to do with your body? Your mind?*
- [To the rest of the class] *Let's pay attention to this demonstration, and see what mindful listening behaviors we notice.* [Set timer for 60 seconds and ask students to begin.]
- *Thank you! What mindful behaviors did you observe?* [Take responses. If students begin to offer a criticism, refer them back to the question, which is about which good mindful listening behaviors they observed.]
- *Did you notice our listener do anything helpful that isn't included on our mindful behaviors list?* [Add additional points to the chart.]
- *Now, we'll all practice in pairs.* [Place students in pairs.] *You will each have 90 seconds to practice mindful listening to your partner. Remember, the speaking topic is "an activity you enjoy doing." Now decide who will be the speaker first, and who will be the listener.* [Pause.]

- *When I say begin, the first speaker will talk about an activity they enjoy and the listener will practice mindful listening, by using the behaviors of a mindful listener we just discussed. I will let you know when 90 seconds have passed, and then the person who was speaking will become the listener.*
- *Ready?* [Facilitate the activity. Circulate around the classroom to observe students' behavior.]
- *What mindful listening behaviors did you notice?*
- *How did it feel to be listened to? To be a mindful listener?*
- *What was challenging about mindful listening?*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Can you think of a time yesterday when someone was mindfully listening to you? Who was it? How did you know they were listening mindfully?*
- *Can you think of a time yesterday when you were mindfully listening to someone? What do you remember them saying or feeling?*
- *We'll be practicing mindful listening more together in the classroom now that we know how to do it."*

CHAPTER 5 | Learning About and From One Another

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Appreciating Diversity and Shared Commonalities

PURPOSE

This learning experience explores the ways in which we are similar and different. Difference is explored with curiosity, rather than judgement, to convey the understanding that diversity is something to be appreciated, rather than feared or seen as negative. Despite our differences, we are also the same in many important and fundamental ways. Some of these commonalities include having bodies that experience sensations, living together in communities, having basic needs, desiring to be happy, appreciating and wanting kindness from others, and experiencing emotions. This approach to diversity and difference, contextualized in our common experiences as human beings, can lead to an understanding of why appreciating differences is so important.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore ways in which all human beings are the same and ways in which we are different.
- Recognize that despite our differences, we have shared needs and wishes.
- Recognize some things we think might be true for all people might not actually be.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Recognizing Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Mindful listening behaviors chart
- Chart paper and/or whiteboard with the columns:
  - "Ways Most People are the Same"
  - "Ways People Are Different"
  - Room for one more column
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Step In, Step Out Activity

Overview

Using the Step In, Step Out activity, students will explore things that are the same among them and things that are different.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- As human beings, we all have differences, as well as things we share in common based on our common humanity.
- In addition to our shared humanity, each person has things that make them unique.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Have students form a circle.
- Read statements in the script one at a time.
- Students will take one step into the circle if the statement applies to them. If the statement doesn't apply to them, they should remain standing in their spot.
- Students should remain silent (no discussion), but you will be asking them to notice how the circle looks and who is on the inside and who is on the outside. Then say "Thank you, step back out" and have students step back out to their original place.
- Once you have read all the statements, have students sit down in place or return to their desks and debrief with the following questions:

- *"In what ways are we different?*
- *In what ways are we the same?"*

Teaching Tips

- This activity will be much more meaningful if you are able to take a moment to think about the ways in which the students in your class are diverse, be it religion, ethnicity, where they live, what they eat, their family structure, socio-economic background, and so on. Then you can replace some of the prompts at the beginning of the activity with concrete questions that bring out these differences and commonalities specific to the context of your students. Be sure to avoid questions that would force students to share things that would make them uncomfortable. Begin with things that the students do not all have in common, such as preferences or aspects of their identity, then move towards what we all have in common that we have explored in the SEE Learning Curriculum this far: the experience of emotions, sensations, needs, attention, kindness, etc.
- You will want to have a large enough area for students to gather in a large circle to step in and out of. You may need to move desks/tables or use a larger space like a gymnasium or an outdoor space.
- *Alternatives:* Instead of having students step in and step out of a circle, you can have students form a circle of chairs and have them stand up or remain seated. Or you could have them raise their hands instead of stepping in. Whichever method you choose, make sure that students can see each other, so they can see how their classmates answer each question.
- You can point out who has what in common with whom as you go through the activity to help students start to notice these things themselves.
- Avoid questioning why students are or are not stepping into the circle. If some students don't step in during the last few questions, they may not have heard or understood the questions. Repeat the question if you believe this is the case, but allow for students' responses to stand on their own without judgment.

Sample script

- *"Let's all form a circle.*
- *If I say something that's true for you, then you'll take one step forward, into the circle. If what I say doesn't apply to you, just remain where you are. This time, I'd like you to pay special attention to who steps into the circle when you step in. See if you can pay attention and remember, because this will help in our next activity.*
- *Let's start.*
- *Step into the circle if you like to make art or draw. Take a look at the circle and see who else likes to make art. Step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if you have a pet. Now take a look and see who else has a pet and who doesn't. Try to remember who is stepping in. Step back out.*

- *Step into the circle if any member of your family or household is a vegetarian. Thank you, step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if people in your family or household speak more than one language. Thank you, step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if someone in your family or household was born in another country. Thank you, step back out.*
- *I'm noticing that only some of you are stepping in each time. Let's see what happens if I ask this: Step into the circle if you experience sensations in your body. Now, take a look around. What do you notice about this?*
- *Step into the circle if you have the ability to focus your attention on something you like to do. Thank you, step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if you have a resource you can use or think of to calm your mind or body. Thank you, step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if you need food to live. Take a look at who is in the circle now. No matter who we are, we have some needs in common. Thank you, please step back out.*
- *Step into the circle if you need other people to live, like to provide food and clothing.*
- *Step into the circle if you'd rather feel happy than sad. Ah, look! All of us (or most of us) are in center! It seems that we all like to be happy rather than sad. Now let's step back.*
- *This is the final one! Step into the circle if you like it when people are kind to you, rather than mean. Let's look around. Are we all here? It seems we feel happier when people are kind to us.*
- *Thank you, let's have a seat.*
- *In what ways are we different?* [You may want to remind students of the statements you made]
- *In what ways are we the same?* [You may re-read the statements to students to remind them of the statements where everyone, or almost everyone stepped in.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

How Are We the Same? How Are We Different?

Overview

In this activity, students explore what they have in common with each other.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- As human beings, we all have things in common that we share.
- Some things we think might be common or true for all people might not actually be.

Materials Required

- Mindful listening behaviors chart
- Chart paper and/or whiteboard with the columns: "Ways Most People are the Same," "Ways People Are Different," and room for one more column
- Markers

Instructions

- Before you begin this activity, review your class's mindful listening behaviors.
- Brainstorm together as a group:
  - Let's name some ways in which most people are the same. (We all have bodies. We all wear clothing. We need water and food.) Now let's name ways in which people are different. (We have different names. We wear different types of clothing.) Write these on a piece of chart paper or the whiteboard. Encourage them to try to go beyond things they can't see just by looking at each other.
- Repeat and ask them to think of two more ways in which people can be different. Add their ideas to the chart.
- Take a look at the chart together. Ask students:
  - *"Does everyone agree that most people share these things in common? Are they the same for most people? If you agree, raise your hand. If one or more students does not agree, ask them to explain why.*
  - *Is this something that everyone in the world has in common? If you agree, raise your hand. If one or more students does not agree, ask them to explain why.*
  - *Are there other ways we can be different that we could add to this second list?"*
- Read this first list aloud once every group has shared. Note which of these are part of our shared "common humanity" and write the words "common humanity" on the chart paper.
- Create a new column called "Something Unique to Me." Explain that this means something about them that is not the same for anyone else, like their name. Invite students to share one thing that is unique about them. Write this on the chart in a new column labeled "Something Unique to Me."

Teaching Tips

- Be sensitive to issues that come up when students are deciding whether or not everyone in the class has something in common. For example, someone might suggest that "We all have a father." Don't challenge or single out students, but leave it up to the students if they want to speak up and share about what applies or doesn't apply to them.
- After asking students to think of a few things most people have in common, ask students to get into pairs or trios to think of two more ways in which most people are the same. Then ask them to share out and add their ideas to the written chart.

Sample script

- *"Let's look over our mindful listening behaviors chart. Which ones might we focus on in our work today?* [Allow time for sharing.]
- *Ok, let's brainstorm together. What are some ways that most people are the same?* [Allow time to share ideas; write them on whiteboard/chart paper.]

- *Let's see if we can think of a few more ideas, maybe thinking of things we can't see just by looking at each other.*
- *Ok, these are great ideas. Now, what are some ways that people can be different?* [Allow time to share ideas; write them on whiteboard/chart paper.]
- [At this point, if you want to, you can have students get into pairs or trios to think of more ideas.]
- *Let's see if we can think of two more ways people can be different.* [Allow time to share ideas; write them on whiteboard/chart paper.]
- *Ok, great. Now, let's look at all of our ideas on the chart.*
- *Does everyone agree that most people share these things in common? Are they the same for most people? If you agree, raise your hand.* [If one or more students does not agree, ask them to explain why.]
- *Is this something that everyone in the world has in common? If you agree, raise your hand.* [If one or more students does not agree, ask them to explain why.]
- *Are there other ways we can be different that we could add to this list?* [Add ideas to list.]
- *Now I'll read the "Same" list aloud for us. These are things that we share in common as humans. We can call this list "common humanity."* [Write these words on the chart paper.]
- *Now we'll make a new column: "Something Unique to Me."* [Write this heading on the chart paper.]
- *This means something about you that is not the same for anyone else, like your name.*
- *Who would like to share one thing that is unique to them?"* [Write shared items in the column.]

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Were you surprised by any of the things that were the same for all of us? What about differences?*
- *How might it be helpful for our class to know how we are the same and how we are different?*
- *Could knowing about this help us to be kinder and more compassionate to each other? How or why?"*

EXTENSION ACTIVITY IDEAS

Have students create and decorate two posters:

- one that includes a list of the things all your students share in common with each other and other people in the world
- another that includes a list of the things that make each of them unique.

Hang these posters in the classroom. When you have a class visitor, ask them to read the posters, and then share one thing that they have in common with your students, and one thing that makes them unique.

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 6

Compassion for Self & Others

Overview

Young children can recognize that even animals constantly seek out well-being and avoid suffering. They seek food and warm shelter, and they avoid predators. Some can be befriended by those who are kind to them, but they will flee those who seek to harm them. Even animals prefer kindness and compassion to meanness and cruelty, as do human beings.

This chapter focuses on how we can learn to be more kind to each other and to ourselves. This comes not just from wanting to be kind, but knowing how. Principally, this involves helping students increase their awareness of their own emotional lives and those of others. If students are able to understand others' emotions and behaviors in context, they will be able to empathize with others better. This in turn can lead to feeling more connected with others, and thus less isolated and lonely. Moreover, the ability to understand others better and cultivate a caring attitude towards others parallels the same process of understanding and caring for themselves better.

The overarching theme of this chapter is therefore compassion and self-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."[1] Compassion therefore 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. These qualities are also important for 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] It is important to help young students explore self-compassion, because they are just entering a stage in life where they will be increasingly evaluated in numerous ways by their teachers, their parents and guardians, and their peers. It is therefore critical that they learn that any setbacks they encounter in learning or in life do not reflect any lack of personal worth on their part, but can serve as learning experiences for their future development.

Learning experiences 1 and 2 introduce self-compassion by showing that many of the behaviors and types of speech that one would use to encourage a friend in their difficulty can be used to encourage and help oneself. Moreover, it encourages students to cultivate a "growth mindset" that recognizes that learning takes time and that setbacks are natural and not a reason to give up or feel bad about oneself. Relaxing unrealistic expectations (such as that everything will come easily, that one will always be the winner, or that one will never experience failures or setbacks) is an essential

[1] Jinpa, Thupten. *A Fearless Heart: How the courage to be compassionate can transform our lives* (Avery, 2016), xx.
[2] https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/

component of self-compassion, because it undermines the foundation for the self-criticism and low self-worth that can come when students meet with adversity.

Learning experiences 3 and 4 then turn to compassion for others. For compassion to arise, one must be aware of others' needs, and one must also feel some kind of emotional connection with them. As noted in the SEE Learning Framework, compassion therefore depends on awareness, and leads towards engagement in the interests of the other.

Learning experience 3 explores this through a story of compassion and forgiveness. In the story, three friends are bullied by a boy called Teddy and get angry with him. Later, however, upon learning about Teddy's family situation, they develop empathy for him. They end up deciding to take personal action to reach out to Teddy in friendship and forgiveness.

This learning experience introduces a few key concepts regarding forgiveness and compassion. It introduces the idea that forgiveness involves a releasing of negative emotions towards another person, and that this can be helped through understanding that person's situation in context. Furthermore, it shows that "active compassion" involves a sense of responsibility towards the other person that translates into a decision to help them.

It is important, however, that students realize that compassion and kindness do not mean that one always has to go along with others, say yes to everything, or give people everything that they want without any consideration for the consequences to them or to oneself. If so, compassion could be quite self-destructive. Rather, compassion must be combined with discernment. If giving someone something they ask for would harm them, then compassion in that situation might dictate that one must say no.

Therefore, the final learning experience involves cases where compassion means saying no or setting limits and boundaries. The example given is that of a teacher who explains that the students cannot climb trees, since they could harm themselves. Students should explore other ways in which they will sometimes need to stand up for themselves or others, and also how, when adults sometimes set limits or boundaries for their own safety and happiness, this is also a manifestation of compassion.

Earlier chapters introduced the idea of an ethics of restraint, meaning refraining from harming others. In this chapter, a further level of ethics is introduced: an ethics of care. When properly understood and exercised with discernment, genuine care for oneself and others naturally leads to greater happiness and flourishing. On the basis of this sense of caring for the long-term interests of oneself

and others, many other qualities beyond compassion and forgiveness can be cultivated, such as generosity, self-discipline, honesty, integrity, love, and so on.

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! in Chapter 2 are practices of self-compassion. Navigating one's emotions can also be a practice of self-compassion, as can 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 what 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, and encourage them to engage in this even more.

Teacher Personal Practice

The expectations on educators, and those that educators place on themselves, can sometimes be extraordinarily high. 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 realistic? What practices of self-compassion and compassion for others are you already engaged in, and how could you build on these and practice them more, or add to them?

Further Reading and Resources

- Kristen Neff's book *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* (William Morrow, 2015) is an excellent introduction by the leading researcher on the topic of self-compassion and is also available in audiobook format. Neff's website also contains a number of helpful resources: www.self-compassion.org
- Also recommended is Thupten Jinpa's book *A Fearless Heart: How the Courage to Be Compassionate Can Transform Our Lives* (Avery, 2016), where the section on self-compassion is especially relevant for this chapter of SEE Learning.

Two story books on forgiveness and compassion that may be useful, if they are available in your region, are:

- *The Forgiving Lion* by Efrat Haddi.
- *Friends through Sand and Stone* by A.M. Marcus and Lizbeth Jane Amantillo.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting **SEE Learning, Chapter 6, "Compassion for Self and Others."**

In Chapter 6 , your child will practice applying self-compassion and compassion for others. This chapter addresses how to treat oneself kindly through positive self-talk, and examines the ways in which our intention and motivation is connected to compassionate action. We also explore forgiveness as the release of negative emotions towards another, and consider the ways in which understanding someone's feelings and circumstances might help us generate forgiveness and compassion to towards them.

Home Practice

As your child goes through this chapter, it will be helpful for you to ask them what self-compassion, and being compassionate to others, means to them. You might also like to share a story with your child about a time when, despite the difficulty in doing so, you forgave someone and it led to a positive result of more happiness.

Earlier Chapters Included

- Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and happiness.
- Chapter 2 explored the important role that our bodies, and in particular our nervous system, play in our happiness and well-being.
- Chapter 3 addressed the topic of attention, including why it is important, how to strengthen it, and how we can use it to cultivate insight into ourselves.
- Chapter 4 explored the topic of emotions, how they arise, and how to better "navigate them."
- Chapter 5 addressed appreciating differences and recognizing our shared common humanity. It also introduced the practice of mindful listening.

Further Reading and Resources

Remember that the SEE Learning Framework, contained within the *SEE Learning Companion*, contains an explanation of the entire curriculum. You may access it on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics

EMORY UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER 6 | Compassion for Self & Others

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

Exploring Kindness to Oneself, Part 1

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students explore the concepts of positive and negative talk, especially as it manifests in self-judgment and self-criticism when facing an obstacle or challenge. Through a story, they explore how having difficulty with new tasks is normal and can often be accomplished with practice and help from others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the concept of positive (helpful) and negative (unhelpful) talk to oneself and others.
- Explore the idea that one can be kind and encouraging to oneself, just as to a friend.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- The "Nelson The Photographer" story (included here)
- Cards that say "Positive" and "Negative" (included here)
- Three puppets for Nelson, Theresa, and Teddy (or printouts of the three pictures included here)

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- "*Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?*" [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 7 minutes

Positive Talk

Overview

This discussion explores the idea of whether one can be kind to oneself and what that might look like. One can learn to recognize negative self-talk and its unhelpful effects. One can also learn to offer oneself the kindness one would offer a friend.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can talk positively to a friend experiencing difficulties.
- We can talk positively to ourselves when we face difficulties.

Materials Required

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers

Instructions

- Nelson says: "I tried to ride my bike without training wheels and I couldn't do it. I'll never be able to do it." Theresa is the other puppet. Is there anything she can say to help Nelson feel better? What could she say? Show Nelson being happier/moving in a happy way. When we say something that is helpful, we call that "positive talk" (write on board). Then Teddy comes along. "It's true, you'll never learn how to ride a bike without training wheels." Now Nelson looks sad. Ask: What happened just now?" Explain: This is an example of negative talk (write "negative talk" on board). Repeat with puppets or pictures.

- Then go through it again. Nelson comes along and doubts himself. What could Nelson say to himself? This is self-talk. Self-talk can be positive or negative.
- Lead a discussion with your students about the difference between positive (helpful, true, kind, encouraging) talk and negative (unhelpful, untrue, unkind, discouraging) talk.
- Ask them whether we might be able to have positive talk with ourselves when we face difficulties (self-talk).

Teaching Tips

- If possible, use puppets or the picture of Theresa comforting Nelson.
- At this age, not all students may experience negative self-talk, and not all may feel like not succeeding in something makes them feel like a failure or makes them feel severely discouraged. Even so, they may still be able to recognize negative self-talk in others, and this is valuable both for empathizing with others and for themselves in future when they may feel this way.

Sample script

- *"We've been learning a lot why it's important to show kindness. And we've learned different ways of being kind to each other.*
- *Let's say we have a close friend or family member and they try to do something but it doesn't work. Like maybe it was their job to take pictures at a party, but none of the pictures came out right, and they feel really bad about it.*
- *What might we say to them to be kind and help them to feel less sad? How might we try to encourage them?*
- *We can call saying things that are helpful and kind "positive talk."* [Write the words "positive" and "kind" on the board.] *When we say the word "positive" here, we mean things that are helpful, kind, nice, useful.*
- *Are there any helping activities we've learned that could be useful in such a situation?*
- *If we were to discourage someone or say things that are mean or not helpful to them, we would call that "negative talk." Negative is the opposite of positive.* [Write the word "negative" on the board.]
- *Do you think we could have positive and negative talk towards ourselves?*
- *What if it was us ourselves who had not succeeded and we were the ones feeling sad? Like 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. Do you think that could happen sometimes?*
- *These aren't very kind things for me to say to myself. They're not things I would say to a friend. They're not even true.*

- *If I said things like that, would that be positive or negative talk?*
- *But if I were kind to myself, the way I'm kind to a friend who is having problems, then that would be positive.*
- *We're going to read a story about Nelson and Theresa, and I'd like you to pay attention and see if you can find any times when one of them is doing negative or positive talk."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 12 minutes

Nelson the Photographer

Overview

This insight activity invites students to think about and discuss failure and how one can show kindness to oneself and others during such situations.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Sometimes if we don't succeed to our expectations, we may feel discouraged.
- Having difficulty with new tasks is normal and can often be accomplished with practice and help from others.

Materials Required

Printouts of the "Positive" and "Negative" cards at the end of this learning experience (or you can make your own).

Instructions

- Read Part 1 of the story below. Ask students to raise their hands if they hear a character doing negative or positive talk to another person or to themselves.
- When students raise their hands, ask them to explain where they saw negative or positive talk.
- At the points marked with an asterisk (*), you can pause to ask your students questions such as:
  - *"What do you think Nelson might be thinking now?*
  - *What emotions do you think Nelson might be feeling?*
  - *What do you think the other characters in the story are thinking or feeling now?*
  - *Is anyone doing positive or negative talk right now?"*
- After finishing Part 1, ask the students to describe what has happened in the story thus far and what they think might happen next.
- Have a few children volunteer to choose one of the cards that say "positive" or "negative" and give actual examples of things they could say at that moment.
- Read Part 2 of the story, using the same method noted above.
- Conclude with the questions below, which encourage the students to think about what it means to be kind and encouraging to oneself with positive talk when facing difficulties.

Teaching Tips

- You can use the puppets to act out the story as well.
- You may want to record students' words of kindness for Nelson on a poster so they can be displayed in your classroom as a resource. You may consider writing these out generically (i.e. "You're not good at that yet.") so they can be used in a more universal way.

Story: Nelson the Photographer

Sample Intro Script

"This is a story about Nelson and Theresa. I'd like you to pay attention and see if you can find any times when one of them is doing negative or positive talk. They could be doing this to another person or to themselves. Raise your hand when you think one of them is doing negative or positive talk to someone else or to themselves. I'm going to pause at certain points and ask you what you think they are feeling or thinking at that moment."

Part 1

*"Nelson arrived at Theresa's birthday party and he was very excited. There were lots of kids there, and even though he didn't know all of them, he did know Theresa. He had attended Theresa's birthday party the year before, so he knew that there would be lots of good food and cake and fun games to play. He was especially looking forward to playing with Theresa and his other friends.**

As Nelson was eating some cake, he noticed Theresa's father was taking photographs of the party using a camera. Nelson had always wanted to use a camera, but he had never had the chance before.

"Can I use the camera to take pictures?" Nelson asked.

"Do you know how to use a camera, Nelson?" Theresa's father asked.

"Yes," Nelson said, even though he didn't really know how to use it. He saw people using cameras all the time, so he didn't think it could be very hard.

Theresa's father gave Nelson the camera and showed him how to hold it. "Just press this button to take the photos, but make sure the camera is pointed at what you want to shoot and make sure it's in focus. Otherwise all the photos will be blurry. Also, remember to take a photo of Theresa when she blows out the candles on her cake."

*"No problem!" said Nelson confidently. For the rest of the party, Nelson ran around taking photos of his friends.**

The time came for Theresa to make a wish and blow out the candles on her cake as was the tradition in her family. Theresa's father looked for Nelson, because he wanted Nelson to take a picture. But nobody could find Nelson because he was playing soccer outside."*



Part 2

"Later on the party was ending and people started going home. Nelson gave the camera back to Theresa's father.

*"Shall we look at the pictures?" Theresa's father asked. They looked at them together, but Nelson saw that they were all blurry. None of them had come out well. Then he remembered he had forgotten to take a picture of Theresa with her cake.**

"Oh no," Nelson thought to himself. "I did a terrible job. Theresa's never going to be my friend again after this."

*Later when he went home he was still feeling bad. He thought to himself, "How come I can never get anything right?"**

*The next day Nelson tried to avoid Theresa at school. He knew she would be upset at him.**

But at the end of the school day, Theresa found him. "Hi Nelson! Thanks for coming to my party!" she said.

*"I'm sorry about the photos," Nelson said. "I messed up again. I always mess up."**

"That's okay. Other people were taking photos too," said Theresa. "I thought your pictures were funny! Maybe you'll be a photographer when you grow up."

"But I'm terrible," said Nelson. "I can't do it. I saw the photos and they were awful!"

"Don't feel bad. Taking good pictures is hard at first," Theresa said. "My father taught me how to do it, and it takes a while to learn. Do you want to come over to my house another time and we can practice together?"

"Do you really think I could learn to do it?" Nelson asked.

*"If you practice, then of course you can!" Theresa said.**

Nelson thought for a while and then said, "I guess I just didn't know what I was doing. I thought it would be easier than it was. But, Theresa, if you learned how to do it over time, then I suppose I could learn to do it too. Okay, I'll give it a try!""

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *"Why did Nelson think he could never become good at photography?*
- *Why did Theresa think Nelson could become good at photography?*
- *What did Nelson think to himself when he realized that the pictures he had taken came out blurry?*
- *How did Theresa react to the blurry pictures? What kinds of things did she say to Nelson?*



- *What would the kindest person in the world say to Nelson?* [Examples below.]
- *You will do better next time.*
- *You can learn how to take good pictures with practice.*
- *You're not terrible, you're just not a very good photographer yet.*
- *If Theresa or the kindest person in the world weren't there to encourage him, how do you think Nelson could encourage himself? What could he say to himself?* [Examples below.]
- *I made a mistake.*
- *I will do better next time.*
- *I can learn how to take good pictures with practice.*
- *I'm not terrible, I'm just not a very good photographer yet."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Can anyone think of a time when something was really difficult at first, but you became better at it with practice and time?*
- *What encouraging things could we say to ourselves when we have difficulties?*
- *What would you like to remember from what we learned today?"*

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Exploring Kindness to Oneself, Part 2

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students explore how to express tenderness and kindness towards themselves, much in the way they would express it to a close friend or family members especially in the face of adversity or difficulties. This learning experience is best done following closely on the previous one, which explored positive and negative talk.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the idea that one can be one's own friend.
- Explore practices of kindness to others that could be extended to oneself.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Compassion

LENGTH

25 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Paper
- Utensils for drawing
- Chart paper or white board

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- "*Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 8 minutes

Being Kind to Ourselves Like a Friend

Overview

This activity invites students to collectively brainstorm how we might be kind to someone who is discouraged and then act out some of those actions in pairs. They then explore which actions and positive talk could be done by oneself, even if a friend were not around.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- There are specific things we can say and do to encourage and help someone who is discouraged.
- Some of these things we can also say and do for ourselves when we are discouraged.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Ask students to imagine two close friends. Remind them of the recent story "Nelson the Photographer" and how Nelson and Theresa are friends.
- Ask students how someone would treat their friend with kindness if their friend were sad, unhappy, or had just faced a difficult challenge, just like Nelson had. What are things that person might feel, say, or do, seeing their friend was unhappy?
- Write their suggestions under the headings "Feel" "Say" and "Do."

- Ask for two volunteers. One will be discouraged like Nelson after seeing none of his pictures turned out well. The other will be like Theresa, encouraging her friend. Ask the encourager to choose from one of the "Say" or "Do" actions and act it out towards the character being like Nelson. Then ask the student playing the part of Nelson to express how he or she feels after being encouraged in that way. Repeat this 3 or 4 times with new volunteers.
- Point out that our friends aren't always around. Ask if we could do any of these things for ourselves if a friend were not around. Use the example of Nelson again if this is helpful.
- Put a check next to those things we could say, feel or do for ourselves.
- Ask if there's anything we could add to the list. What could we say, feel or do if we faced difficulties that would be kind to ourselves and helpful?

Teaching Tips

For the paired volunteer activity, you can model this once with a single student and yourself first so that students can see a clear example.

Sample script

- *"Remember the story we heard last lesson, called Nelson the Photographer, that involved the camera, Nelson, and Theresa at her birthday party?*
- *How did Theresa respond when she saw Nelson's pictures?* [Take responses.] *Theresa was a good friend and used kind words to help Nelson.*
- *Now we're going to imagine that you were in Nelson's shoes and felt badly about taking blurry birthday pictures. What would you want a good friend to say to you?* [Take responses, and write students suggestions under headings "Say" and "Do."] *Ok, let's review the things a good friend could say or do to help us when we're sad or discouraged.* [Read answers again.]
- *Now, let's see if we can put these ideas into practice. I'll need two volunteers who can do a skit. One of you will play the part of the friend who messed up the birthday pictures. You made a mistake and feel badly about it. The other part is that of a good friend. Good friend, you can act out anything from the list we just created. Let's see what happens. How was that?*
- *But what if a good friend isn't around and you're feeling mad, sad, scared, or discouraged? What could say or do for yourself in that case?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Being Kind to Ourselves

Overview

In this reflective practice, students apply what they have been learning to their own lives by writing and drawing the ways they are already practicing self-kindness when they are discouraged. They then add additional ways they think they could be more kind to themselves.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We already engage in many acts of self-kindness.
- We can learn more acts of self-kindness from others.
- We can add to our tools of how to be kind to ourselves.

Materials Required

- Paper
- Utensils for writing and drawing
- Illustration of a thought bubble (included here)

Instructions

- Provide each student with a piece of paper and drawing utensils.
- Show them the thought bubble illustration provided. [Copy for each student if possible.]
- Ask students to draw a time when they needed to use positive talk to themselves.
- What is something positive that you could say to yourself next time?
- Ask students to share if they are willing.
- Having heard all these ways of being kind to oneself, ask them to return to their drawings and add any new ways they could be kind to themselves in future. These could be things they have heard from others, or new things that they imagine they could do.
- Collect the drawings and put them on a bulletin board or on the class wall.

Teaching Tips

You can copy the provided illustration and provide to students as a worksheet if you prefer.

Sample script

- *"So, we just practiced how we might be kind to our friends and then to ourselves. We're going to go a little further with this as we reflect through drawing.*
- *I want to invite you to draw a time when you needed to use positive talk for yourself. Here is a thought bubble. In the thought bubble, write what you said to yourself and what you might say to yourself next time.* [Provide time for students to draw and write.]
- *Who would like to share their drawing or what positive talk they wrote in the thought bubble?* [Provide time for sharing.]
- *Thank you for sharing. Now that you have heard from the group about what positive talk they use, is there any positive talk you would like to add to your thought bubble so you might use it in the future?* [Provide a few minutes for additions to the thought bubbles.]
- *Wonderful - now I will collect your drawings. Thank you."*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"What are some things we could do to be kinder to ourselves?*
- *What did you learn that you would like to remember?"*

Positive Self-Talk



Draw yourself during a time you needed to use positive self-talk.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Exploring Forgiveness

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students explore forgiveness as the letting go of negative emotions towards another person without necessarily approving of that person's action. A story is presented in which seeing another child's behavior and emotions in context allows anger to turn into forgiveness and compassion. Students then reflect on experiences they may have had in which they let go of anger.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore the concept of forgiveness as a releasing of negative emotions towards oneself or another person.
- Explore the word compassion and its meanings.
- Explore how seeing another person's behavior and emotions in context may help us understand that person and have compassion for them.
- Explore the relationship between feeling unhappy and choosing to hurt others or be mean.
- Reflect on times when they felt anger towards someone but were able to release it.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Compassion for Others

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- White board or chart paper
- Markers

CHECK-IN | 4 minutes

- "*Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?*" [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

Overview

Students will explore the meaning of the word "forgive" using a word map and examples from their experience.

Content/Insights to be Explored

Forgiveness means letting go of the anger and negative emotions we hold towards ourselves or someone.

Materials Required

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers

Instructions

- Explain that today your class will explore forgiveness and what it means to forgive someone.
- Write the word "forgive" on the board.
- Ask if anyone knows what this word means or words that could be connected with "forgive." Write these words around the word "forgive."
- Give an example of forgiveness yourself, starting with something small, then ask if anyone can share a similar example of someone forgiving another person.

Teaching Tips

- If you choose to give examples of forgiveness, including examples from your own life, begin with very small things, such as minor inconveniences. Be sure to avoid any major transgressions. Start with forgiveness of another person, rather than self-forgiveness.

- Try to reinforce the ways people regularly forgive minor transgressions, rather than the times people are unable to forgive. This is the way to adopt a strengths-based approach, rather than a deficit-based approach.

Sample script

- "*Today we're going to learn more about forgiveness and what it means to forgive someone.* [Write forgive on the board.]
- *What do you think the word forgive means? What does it relate to?*
- *Does anyone have a story about someone forgiving someone else?* [If students don't have stories to volunteers, please share from your own experience.]
- *Have you ever said you're sorry when you didn't really mean it? Why?*"

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 13 minutes

Overview

In this activity, students will hear a story about a person being harmed, learning information that leads to understanding, forgiveness, and compassion, and then reaching out to help the person who caused the harm. They will explore why anger might turn into compassion and forgiveness, and what would happen if anger never turned into compassion or forgiveness.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can hold onto negative emotions but this can affect our happiness and ability to enjoy life.
- Forgiveness is the letting go of negative emotions to another person, even if what they did was wrong.
- Understanding another person's behavior in context can help us have compassion towards that person.
- Strong compassion for another person can lead us to want to help them, even if other people don't want to.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Read the story below, pausing appropriately when there is an asterisk (*) to ask one or more of the following questions:
  - "*What emotions do you think Nelson is feeling right now?*
  - *What might he need right now?*
  - *What might he be thinking or saying to himself?*
  - *What do you think the other students are feeling or thinking?*
  - *What might they need?*
  - *What do you think Nelson should do?*"
- When you've finished reading the story, ask your students about what happened using the questions provided below the story (labeled "Discussion of the Story").

Teaching Tips

- If the story is too long to read all at once, it can be broken up into smaller parts. The parts are labeled as Part 1, 2, and 3.
- If you can have two sessions in close succession, consider reading Parts 1 and 2 and then pausing to discuss how the story might continue. Then read Part 3 for the next session and continue.

Sample script

- "*I'm going to read a story about Nelson, Theresa, and Albert.*
- *Please think about what each person is thinking and feeling. Because at certain points I'm going to pause and ask you about this.*" [Read the story below and stop and ask questions at the asterisks or where you feel it is appropriate. Discussion questions follow the story.]

Story: Nelson Forgives

Part 1

"*One day Nelson was outside playing with a ball with Albert and Theresa at school. When the ball came to Nelson, he was about to throw it to Theresa, but another boy came over and pushed him. Nelson fell into a pile of mud.*

"Hey, what are you doing?" asked Nelson. The boy just laughed and picked up the ball Nelson had dropped.

*"I'm taking this ball from you," he said and he walked away.**

"That's so rude," said Theresa.

"It's not just rude. It's mean," said Albert. "That's Teddy. He's always picking on us."

Nelson stood up and tried to wipe the dirt from his clothes, but he couldn't get it out.

*"I wish there was something we could do," he said. But Teddy was a lot bigger than Nelson, so Nelson didn't do anything.**

Part 2

"*Later that day Nelson went home from school. His mother saw his dirty clothes and asked him what had happened. He remembered Teddy pushing him, and he felt himself getting really angry. In fact, he was so upset he couldn't enjoy his dinner later that evening.**

*The next day Nelson was still in a bad mood. Even when he saw Albert and Theresa, he didn't feel that happy. At lunch they all sat together. Nelson saw that Teddy was also having lunch, but he was sitting by himself.**

"See, no one wants to sit with Teddy," said Theresa. "Everyone dislikes him. Even most of the teachers don't like him."

*Nelson watched but didn't say anything. Then he saw Ms. Kelly, a teacher, go over to Teddy. Ms. Kelly put her hand gently on Teddy's back and she spoke to him in a soft voice. It seemed she was being kind to him.**



When Ms. Kelly was walking away, Nelson went up to her. "You shouldn't be nice to Teddy, Ms. Kelly. He pushed me onto the ground yesterday and stole my ball. He's always mean to everybody. He should be punished."

*Ms. Kelly smiled at Nelson. "If he pushed you and took your ball, then that was wrong of him, and I will have a talk with him later about it. But we should also be kind to Teddy. His mom is sick right now. So we also need to be part of his family now."**

Part 3

After lunch, Nelson went out with Theresa and Albert to play for a little while. They were kicking the ball around to each other when Nelson saw Teddy standing all by himself on the field. Nelson remembered what Ms. Kelly had told him and he noticed he didn't have that tight feeling of anger in his chest any more when he saw Teddy.

*"Hey, maybe we should ask Teddy if he wants to play with us," Nelson said.**

"Are you kidding?" said Albert. "He's the one who pushed you yesterday and ruined your clothes!"

"Yeah, but I think he's lonely," said Nelson. "Ms. Kelly told me his mom is sick. That must make him sad and maybe even afraid."

"That doesn't mean you can push people around," said Albert.

*"That's true," said Nelson. "Ms. Kelly said people don't choose to do mean things unless they're unhappy on the inside. I think he was just feeling unhappy. It was wrong for him to push me, but I don't feel angry at him any more."**

"I can't imagine what it would be like to not have your parents," said Theresa. "No wonder he's rude sometimes. And he doesn't have any friends. If we're not kind to him, who will be?"

Theresa took the ball and walked over to Teddy. "Hey, Teddy. We're playing ball. Want to join us?"

Teddy looked surprised. He looked at all three of them. "Do you really want to play with me?"

*"Yes," Nelson said. "I'm not angry with you any more. Please don't do that again, though."**

That afternoon when Nelson went home, his mother asked him, "How was school today?"

"Good," said Nelson. "We played with Teddy."

"Isn't he the boy who was mean to you yesterday?" asked his mother. Then she smiled at him. "I'm very proud of you, Nelson.""

DISCUSSION OF STORY

After reading the story, ask some or all of the following questions:

- *"Why do you think Teddy pushed Nelson?*
- *How long did Nelson hold onto his anger? How did it make him feel when he was holding onto anger?*
- *Do you think Nelson forgave Teddy? How do you know?*
- *Why did Nelson suddenly become kind to Teddy?*
- *What do you think would have happened if Nelson and his friends had stayed angry with Teddy forever?*
- *Have you ever said sorry but felt angry inside? Is that forgiveness?*
- *What could Teddy have done instead of pushing Nelson?*
- *What could Teddy do to show he's sorry for having hurt Nelson?*
- *After Nelson forgave Teddy, how do you think Teddy felt about taking Nelson's ball?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"How would you explain forgiveness to someone who didn't know what it was?*
- *Have you learned something today that you'd like to remember?"*



LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

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 help and protect them. Through discussion of a few scenarios, they will explore 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 can involve saying no and setting boundaries.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Explore three components of active compassion: affection for someone, understanding their needs and wants, and taking responsibility to help them.
- Explore how compassion sometimes requires saying no or standing up to someone.
- Recognize the difference between being assertive and being mean or unkind.

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Compassion for Others

LENGTH

30 minutes

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Paper
- Drawing utensils for each student

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 8 minutes

Active Compassion is Strength

Overview

By using a story and then other scenarios, students explore how compassion is about protecting others and doing what is best for them, not just saying yes or giving people what they want without thinking about whether it is good for them.

Content/Insights to be Explored

Explore how active compassion means we have to think about what is best for another person and take responsibility for them.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

- Explain that you will read a story and ask students to pay attention to moments of kindness and compassion.
- Ask them to raise their hand if they notice any moment of kindness or compassion. When they do, have them share why they raised their hands.
- After reading the story, ask a few debriefing questions.

Story: Alice Climbs a Tree

"One day Theresa was playing outside on the playground at school with Nelson and Albert. She saw Alice, a younger girl, climbing a tree by herself.

Later when they went back inside, their teacher Ms. Kelly asked the students what they had done outside.

"We played ball and I saw a girl in another class climb a tree," said Theresa. "So next time I'm going to climb a tree too!"

Ms. Kelly looked concerned. "That's dangerous. Last year a student fell from a tree and hurt her arm. So we made a rule that students cannot climb the trees."

Albert looked unhappy. He thought to himself, "That's mean! Climbing trees is fun."

Ms. Kelly asked Theresa, "How old was the girl who was climbing?"

Theresa said, "It was Alice. She's small. She's in a lower grade than we are."

Ms. Kelly said, "Then you can help her. Next time you're on the playground, please tell her she can't climb the trees because it's a school rule. I'll do the same if I see her."

Theresa said, "She might not like it. She might get angry at me and think I'm being mean."

Ms. Kelly said, "That is possible. But if we don't say anything to her, she won't know. Then the next time she climbs a tree, she might fall and hurt herself."

"I don't want that to happen," said Theresa. "I'll definitely tell her tomorrow.""

Questions

- *"What did you find interesting in this story?*
- *Why was Albert unhappy when he heard they couldn't climb trees?*
- *Why did the school make a rule to stop students from climbing trees?*
- *Why didn't Theresa want to tell Alice she couldn't climb trees?*
- *Why did Theresa change her mind and decide to tell Alice the school rule?*
- *Do you think Theresa cares about Alice? Why or why not?*"

Sample script

- *"We've been talking about kindness, and we've also talked about how kindness can be an inner quality.*
- *Remember we talked about how saying some sweet words to someone might not be kindness if the wish is to trick them.*
- *I'm going to read you a story and I'd like you to watch to see if you can find any moments of kindness. Some of them might be hidden.*"
- [Read the story. If students raise their hands, ask them to explain the moment of kindness they observed. After the story, use the questions above.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Practicing Active Compassion Through Role Play

Overview

In this activity, students will role-play the continuation of the above story in order to practice what it feels like to say no to someone with compassion and kindness, and what it feels like to hear that from someone else.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Explore how compassion sometimes requires saying no or standing up to someone.
- Recognize the difference between being assertive and being mean or unkind.

Materials Required

None; the dialogue cards (optional)

Instructions

- For each round of the role-play, ask for student volunteers to do a role-play. Students can choose one of three roles: Alice, Theresa, Ms. Kelly, or Albert. You can run the role-play with Alice and any number of other characters (two, three, or four), but it will generally work best when one student is playing the role of Alice.
- Explain that it is the next day, and Alice is on the playground about to climb a tree.
- Make sure each student understands their role. To the student playing Alice, explain "You are Alice. You really want to climb the tree!" To the student playing Ms. Kelly or Theresa, explain, "You are concerned about Alice because you don't want her to get hurt." To the student playing Albert, explain, "You think it's mean and unfair that students can't climb trees." Explain that they will take turns in speaking.
- Say "Start!" to begin the role play. Ask each character in turn what they would like to say or do.
- After they have each had a chance to speak, end the role-play. Ask the debriefing questions.
- Ask for new volunteers and begin the round again.

Teaching Tips

- As aids to your students, you can use the dialogue cards provided at the end of this learning experience. You can have the students playing Alice or Albert choose from among the first set of cards, and those playing Ms. Kelly or Theresa choose from among the second set of cards. Allow them to choose what they would like to say, then allow the other side to reply. Then allow the first side to choose a new card and continue until they have finished the role-play. (They do not need to use all the cards.) After they have done this once or twice, they may feel confident to come up with their own dialogue.
- Alternatively, use the dialogue cards as suggestions for when a student has volunteered to role play but can't think of anything to say. In this case, you can have them choose a card or you can suggest things for them to say from the dialogue cards.

- A script is not provided, but the dialogue cards and discussion questions are included.

Questions for Role-Play

(Note that each question can be used for any character)

- *"What can Theresa say to Alice?*
- *What might Alice say in return?*
- *How do you think Theresa feels right now?*
- *How do you think Alice feels right now?*
- *What do you think Theresa needs right now?*
- *What do you think Alice needs right now?*
- *Is Theresa being kind to Alice?"*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 6 minutes

Overview

Students will take a moment to think of an example from their own life, where kindness and compassion involves recognizing needs and taking responsibility for another person or animal to protect them.

Content/Insights to be Explored

Explore how active compassion involves recognizing the needs of another and taking responsibility to help and protect them.

Materials Required

- Paper
- Drawing utensils for each student

Sample script

- *"We just read a story in which Theresa had to tell Alice that she couldn't climb the tree.*
- *She didn't do it to be mean, but to be kind. She took responsibility because she wanted to protect Alice.*
- *Let's take a moment to think if anything has happened in our life that is like that.*
- *What does it mean to protect someone? If you saw a smaller child playing near the fire and you tell them to stop, or take them away from the fire, you are protecting them from getting hurt. You're not doing it to be mean, but to be kind.*
- *Can anyone think of other examples? Can you think of a time when you protected someone or someone protected you?*
- *Maybe you cared for an animal or pet, and you had to keep them safe by keeping them indoors or in a special place. Maybe you have cared for a family member like a brother or sister, or a friend.* [Ask for examples.]
- *Let's now take a moment to sit quietly and think of a time when we protected someone else, or someone else protected us. You can close your eyes while we think of something.*
- *Now let's draw what we remembered or thought of. If you couldn't think of a time from your own life, you can imagine something. Or you can draw the Theresa and Alice story we just heard. Our drawing is going to show a person helping and protecting another person.*

- [Allow time for drawing. Share out after drawing.]
- *What does it feel like inside when we think of being protected? Does anyone notice any sensations?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"Why might it be important for us to protect each other?*
- *Can you think of a time when you were upset because someone said no to you, but later you realized they were being kind?*
- *What have you learned or thought about today that you'd like to remember?"*

Dialogue Cards

Set One: Alice/Albert

I want to climb the tree! It's fun!	Thank you for being worried about me.
I'm going to be very upset if anyone tries to stop me from climbing this tree!	I understand why students are not allowed to climb trees.
I don't understand.	

Set Two: Theresa/Ms. Kelly

We're worried about you.	*Last year, a student fell and she got hurt.*
No, you can't climb the tree.	*There's a school rule that students cannot climb trees.*
If you climb, you might fall and hurt yourself.	*I'm not trying to be mean. I care about you.*

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 7

We're All in This Together

7

Overview

In our increasingly complex world, care and compassion alone are insufficient to ensure effective ethical engagement in the world. Rather, good intentions must be complemented with responsible decision-making based on an understanding of the wider systems within which we live. Students must be prepared to grapple with issues of complexity so that they can better understand the world around them, and better engage with and within it.

Chapter 7 of the curriculum focuses on systems and systems thinking. These are not entirely new topics, but have 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 within a context, and that a spark can turn into a forest fire, affecting everything around it. Systems thinking is 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."

While this may sound complicated, even small children have an innate capacity for systems thinking. Although they may not use the term "system," they have an innate understanding that their family or home environment is a complex unit with specific dynamics. Not everyone in a family or classroom likes the same things or acts the same way, and changing one thing in these systems can affect everyone. What is necessary in education is to take this innate capacity for systems thinking and cultivate it further through practice and application.

A system is something that has parts that are interrelated. It is complex, meaning that it cannot be reduced to just a single process, and it is dynamic, meaning the parts are continually changing and even the rules of the entire system can change over time. The human body, therefore, is a good example of a system, as is our ecosystem. A heap of laundry clothes piled on the ground does not appear to us to be a system, because its parts don't seem related to each other in any clear way.

Interestingly, however, systems thinking does not mean a type of thinking that only applies to a subset of things we might call "systems." It is rather a type of thinking that can be applied to anything, including any object, process, or event. This is because it is an approach to thinking about things. Its distinctive feature is that it approaches things not as isolated, static entities, but as interactive, dynamic entities within context—that is, as interdependent parts of larger, complex

wholes. From this perspective, we can see that a heap of clothes can in fact function as a system, such as when the moisture of one soggy piece of clothing begins to seep into the other pieces, and mold then begins to grow and spread throughout the whole pile. The opposite of systems thinking is thinking about things as if they were static, independent, unconnected, and unrelated to anything beyond themselves.

Being able to engage in the process of thinking intentionally—and become more skillful at it—is the intention behind including systems thinking in SEE Learning. This doesn't always have to be through explicit teaching about systems. As Daniel Goleman and Peter Senge point out, systems thinking skills can be cultivated in simple ways by having students work and learn together; by keeping the focus on action and thinking together; and by facilitating opportunities for students to learn from each other.[1] Again, you will note that these are all principles built into each chapter of the SEE Learning curriculum. Your students arrive at this chapter already having cultivated some systems thinking skills, and will now benefit from a deeper exploration.

Systems Thinking and Ethical Engagement

Sometimes students are taught to analyze systems without a clear connection being made to basic human values and ethical engagement. In SEE Learning, however, one of the important reasons to include systems thinking is because it is an essential part of ethical and responsible decision-making. If decisions are repeatedly made without thinking about the longer-term consequences for oneself and others, they are far less likely to be responsible and beneficial. In SEE Learning, ethics is not presented as a set of mandates from an authority. Rather, students are encouraged to cultivate discernment about their decisions and the impact those decisions have on themselves and others. Systems thinking becomes especially powerful and relevant when it is combined with empathy and concern for all involved, as well as a recognition of our common humanity. It should also empower students to know that their choices and actions matter, and can have impact beyond their immediate circle.

The Learning Experiences

Learning Experience 1, "It Takes a Village," returns to the idea of interdependence, first explored in Chapter 1, which is central for understanding systems. By using the example of a child their age, students identify the many forms of care and support a child needs from others to arrive at their current age. Recognizing the value and care that one has received and that one still receives on

[1] Goleman and Senge, *Triple Focus*.

a daily basis can help students realize that they are not alone, that they are valued, and that they can be confident in moving forward knowing that others are supporting them. It also shows that all individuals live within and are shaped by a systems context.

Learning Experience 2 introduces students to the terms "system" and "systems thinking." First they are shown visual examples of very simple systems processes, for which you can use a variety of objects or sets of objects. They then identify additional systems using a simple "Systems Checklist" that can be used to approach any person, object or event through a systems thinking lens. Lastly, they analyze the school as a system and explore the various people in the school and how the school is connected to and depends on each person.

In Learning Experience 3, students learn about feedback loops through a simple story. A feedback loop is a circular process that keeps getting stronger and building on itself unless some internal or external change breaks the cycle. In the example story, two students act unkindly towards each other, creating a reinforcing negative feedback loop. Later in the story, two other students act kindly towards each other, strengthening their friendship in a positive feedback loop.

In Learning Experience 4, students explore how feedback loops have effects that go beyond the immediate individuals involved and can impact entire systems. Taking the same story used in the previous learning experience, they create an interdependence drawing that maps the effects of such actions within a system. They then look at a simple helping action that they themselves can take, how it could lead to a feedback loop, and what other people it could affect.

These learning experiences cover some of the basic concepts and approaches of systems thinking, and lay the foundation for the final Capstone Project, which reinforces their learning and allows them to put it into practice around a particular issue.

Student Personal Practice

Once students learn how to find feedback loops and systems, and map them using interdependence drawings, they can use this skill again and again, finding new applications. These methods can also be used to teach history, social studies, science, and other subjects. Encourage your students to look for systems 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 like and are interested in. This sustained practice will help them gain ever increasing familiarity with this type of thinking.

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 reflect upon the concepts in this chapter personally and on a regular basis.

Sometimes when we think about the systems we live in, 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 to, or in your classroom. Can you identify systems and feedback loops 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? Don't be frustrated if at first your experiments do not yield immediate results.

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 then 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, do you see any 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.

Letter to Parents and Caregivers

SEE Educating the Heart & Mind LEARNING

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

This letter is to inform you that your child is now starting the last chapter in **SEE Learning, Chapter 7, "Building a Better World."**

In Chapter 7, your child will focus on systems and systems thinking. Systems thinking is the ability to understand how persons, objects, and events exist interdependently with other persons, objects, and events. Fundamentally, it is about thinking about the relationships between things. While this may sound complicated, leading psychologists and educators have noted that even small children have an innate capacity for systems thinking. Although they may not use the term "system," they already have an understanding that their family or home environment is complex unit of relationships. Not everyone in a family or classroom likes the same things or acts the same way; and changing one thing in these systems can affect everyone.

Home Practice

A system is something that has parts, and its parts are connected to each other, such that if we change one part, we affect other parts or even the whole system. Your child will be learning a simple way of approaching systems using a checklist. Consider helping your child develop their systems thinking by identifying things with you at home and outside the home that could be systems using this checklist.

Systems Checklist:

- Does it have parts and what are they?
- Are the parts connected to each other? How?
- If we change one part, does it change other parts? How?
- Are the parts connected to other things on the outside? How?

Earlier Chapters Included

- Chapter 1 explored the concepts of kindness and happiness.
- Chapter 2 explored the important role that our bodies, and in particular our nervous system, play in our happiness and well-being.
- Chapter 3 addressed the topic of attention, including why it is important, how to strengthen it, and how we can use it to cultivate insight into ourselves.
- Chapter 4 explored the topic of emotions, how they arise, and how to better "navigate them."
- Chapter 5 addressed appreciating differences and recognizing our shared common humanity. It also introduced the practice of mindful listening.
- Chapter 6 explored the concepts and skills related to positive self-talk, forgiveness, self-compassion, and compassion for others.

Further Reading and Resources

Remember that the SEE Learning Framework, contained within the *SEE Learning Companion*, contains an explanation of the entire curriculum. You may access it on the web at: **www.compassion.emory.edu**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics
EMORY UNIVERSITY

_____

Teacher/Educator Signature

Teacher/Educator Printed Name: _____

Teacher/Educator Contact Info: _____

CHAPTER 7 | We're All in This Together

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1

It Takes a Village

PURPOSE

By using the example of a child their age, students will explore interdependence, a vital aspect of systems thinking, by identifying the many forms of care and support a child needs from others to arrive at their current age. Recognizing the value and care that one has received and that one still receives on a daily basis can help students realize that they are not alone, that they are valued, and that they can be confident in moving forward knowing that others are supporting them. It also shows that all individuals live within and are shaped by a systems context.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Enumerate the many acts of kindness, care, and support a child receives while growing up.
- Explore systems thinking by examining how an individual depends on and is affected by many members of a community.

LENGTH

35 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating Interdependence

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 4 large pieces of paper or a board that both the teacher and students can draw on
- Student-made posters about caring for all age-levels displayed
- Paper and writing/drawing utensils for each student

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 7 minutes

What is Caring and How Have We Experienced It?

Overview

In this presentation/discussion, students will talk about what "care" means, concrete examples of things they have cared for, and people who have cared for them.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We tend to care for things that we find valuable.
- Everyone has received care from many others throughout their life.

Materials Required

None

Instructions

Using a few concrete examples, discuss the meaning of care. The sample script below provides discussion questions you may ask.

Teaching Tips

Allow students to guide this discussion.

Sample script

- *"All right. We just did the check-in, in which we showed caring for ourselves by allowing ourselves to get settled and grounded.*
- *What does it mean to "care" for something?*
- *What are some things or people you have cared for?* [pets, plants or a garden, younger siblings, grandparents, etc.]

- *What are some examples of caring acts [for one of these examples]?*
- *What are some of the reasons we care for something or someone? [because we value it; it's important to us; we love it]*
- *How have we ourselves ever been cared for? By whom and what did they do?*
- *Do you think you could count up how many people have cared for you in your whole life?*
- *Thank you for participating in this discussion about caring. Next, we'll do an activity together where we explore the idea of caring further."*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Overview

This insight activity offers students the opportunity to explore how many people and how much love, work, and energy go into raising a single child to age 5, 6, or 7 (choose the age that most of your students are). This activity is somewhat similar to the interdependence drawing activity done in Chapter 1.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- It takes a great deal of care from many people to raise a single child.
- The caring of others helps us survive, thrive, and be healthy and happy.
- Much of this care is not given in order to receive something back in return.

Materials Required

4 large pieces of paper or a board that both the teacher and students can draw on.

Instructions

- Tell students you are going to think about all the people that help to raise a single child and all the things needed for the child to be provided for, protected, fed, clothed, and cared for. You will go through four stages: (a) pregnancy, (b) infancy age 0-1, (c) pre-school age (2-4) and (d) current age (5-7).
- First draw a pregnant woman in the center of the chart paper. Ask students who cares for the child and what it needs at this point in its life. Either write what they say or invite them to draw who cares for the child and what it needs at that point in its life.
- Then, ask students to write what kind of care or support next to each person who provides to the child for the child to survive and thrive. Draw lines out from each person and write the kind of care or support they provide.
- Repeat the above steps for the remaining 3 stages.
- Ask the whole group to look at all four stages. Ask them what observations they have at this point.
- If it does not come up, ask:
  - *"What is expected back in return from the child for all of this care? Nothing, from the child. It is the joy and responsibility of the*

adults to create a caring environment for the child. True, not every child experiences this in the same ways, or perhaps as fully or easily as every other child. But the adults in every child's life love and care for them, the best they can."

- If you have time, discuss the "It Takes a Village" learning experience title with the group.

Teaching Tips

- Keep in mind that among the caring experiences your students have had growing up, some will be shared (being fed, clothed, and cared for, etc.) and some specifics may not be shared (receiving presents, having both parents around, having a loving extended family, having a stable home or stable housing). Some of your students may have experienced separations from family members or other difficult experiences. It should not be about comparing how some students received more care than others, but on the basic care that anyone would have had to receive to reach their current age. Try to keep the focus on appreciating that which was received. If difficult emotions arise, always remember that you can use the resilience skills of resourcing, grounding, and Help Now! with your students at any time.
- If you have time, you may want to draw the four stages of life posters before you begin class.
- If your students are prepared for it, you may try this activity in small groups, assigning each group an age-level. Then after all groups have time to brainstorm and draw, you can have them share out, either verbally or with a gallery walk.

Sample script

- *"One of the basic parts of being human beings is needing to be cared for, and appreciating being able to care for others. From the time we are babies, we count on others to care for us, to be a part of making our lives safe and comfortable.*
- *And even as babies, and even more as we grow, we can contribute too, showing care for others and for our surroundings. Let's think for a moment about the people, our family, caregivers, friends, or neighbors, who do things and act in ways that show they care about us and how we care for others. Let's start with in the mornings. What are some ways people help to care for one another in the mornings?* [Pause.]
- *What about in the evenings? What are some ways we can see people doing caring things for one another in the evenings?* [Pause.] [Allow time for sharing.]
- *Ok, great. Now, we're going to think about all the people that it takes to raise a single child. Let's start with a pregnant mother and a baby before it's born. I'm going to draw them here.* [Draw the pregnant woman on the chart paper.]

- *At this point in a baby's life, who cares for it?* [Write or draw what students say or invite them to do so.]
- *Next, let's say what each of these people do for the child - what kind of care or support does each person provide to help the child survive and thrive?* [Draw lines out from each person and write students' ideas of the kind of care/support they provide.]
- *Ok, these are wonderful ideas. Let's go to the next stage of life, newborn to 1 year old. I'll draw the baby here.* [Draw the baby on the next piece of chart paper.]
- *At this point in the baby's life, age 0-1 year, who cares for them?* [Write or draw what students say or invite them to do so.]
- *Next, let's say what each of these people do for the baby - what kind of care or support does each person provide to help the baby survive and thrive?* [Draw lines out from each person and write students' ideas of the kind of care/support they provide.]
- *Ok, these are wonderful ideas. Let's go to the next stage of life, ages 2-4 years. I'll draw the young child here.* [Draw the child on the next piece of chart paper.]
- *At this point in the child's life, age 2-4 years, who cares for them?* [Write or draw what students say or invite them to do so.]
- *Next, let's say what each of these people do for the child - what kind of care or support does each person provide to help the child survive and thrive?* [Draw lines out from each person and write students' ideas of the kind of care/support they provide.]
- *Ok, these are wonderful ideas. Let's go to the next stage of life, ages 5-7 years. I'll draw the child here.* [Draw the child on the next piece of chart paper.]
- *At this point in the child's life, age 5-7 years, who cares for them?* [Write or draw what students say or invite them to do so.]
- *Next, let's say what each of these people do for the child - what kind of care or support does each person provide to help the child survive and thrive?* [Draw lines out from each person and write students' ideas of the kind of care/support they provide.]
- *Thank you! Now let's look at all four stages together. What do you notice?* [Allow time for observing and sharing.]
- *What is expected back in return from the child for all of this care? Nothing, from the child. It is the joy and responsibility of the adults to create a caring environment for the child. True, not every child experiences this in the same ways, or perhaps as fully or easily as every other child. But the adults in every child's life love and care for them, the best they can."*

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

Overview

In this reflective practices, students make the previous activity personal by writing or drawing all of the people who have been involved in caring for them during their whole life. They will come up with the ways they have been cared for by these people. They will notice what sensations they have in their bodies while they do this and then will have the opportunity to share, as desired.

Content/Insights to be Explored:

- It takes a great deal of care from many people to raise a single child.
- Much of this care is not given in order to receive something back in return.
- We tend to care for things that we find valuable.
- The caring of others helps us survive, thrive, and be healthy and happy.
- Everyone has received care from many others throughout their life.

Materials Required

- Student-made posters about caring for all age-levels displayed
- Paper and writing/drawing utensils for each student

Instructions

Use the script below to facilitate the reflective practice.

Sample script

- *"In the center of your sheet of paper, write your name and/or draw a picture that represents you.* [Allow for 1 minute.]
- *Looking at our charts, or thinking about another example from your own ideas, choose one person, one act of caring, to draw and/or write now.* [Allow for several minutes for drawing.]
- *If you want to, you can include more people and more acts of caring to your drawing.*
  - If students are struggling here, ask them to consider: *"Who helped you this morning? Who made your lunch today? Who taught you today? What are some ways people help you in the evenings?"*
- *Now see if you can count: How many people provided care for you today (or yesterday)? How many people do you think have provided care for you in your whole life?* [Provide 1 minute.]
- *How did it feel in your body while you did this reflection? Did you feel any pleasant or neutral sensations?*
- *What would you like to share with the group about your reflection? Do any realizations or ideas pop into your head?* [Allow time for sharing.]

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- *"What was it like to think and talk about caring today?*
- *Today you shared so many wonderful ideas about how people show caring for each other. As we get ready to (insert name of your next activity), think for a moment about a way that you can show caring and kindness during (activity name).* [Pause.]
- *When you have an idea, give me a thumbs-up.* [Pause.] *Wonderful!"*

CHAPTER 7 | We're All in This Together

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2

Exploring Systems Thinking

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students are introduced to basic principles of systems thinking through a simple checklist, and they use it to identify various systems. They then analyze the school as a system and explore the various people in the school and how the school depends on them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Learn how to engage in systems thinking by considering the questions in the systems checklist.
- Explore the ways in which their own school is a system through naming the people involved in it and what they do.
- Draw their school as a system.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating Interdependence

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Copy of the Systems Thinking Checklist at the end of this learning experience

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 9 minutes

What is Systems Thinking?

Overview

In this presentation, students are introduced to basic principles of systems thinking through a simple checklist.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- A system is something that has parts, and its parts are connected to each other.
- When we look for the ways that things are connected, we are doing systems thinking.
- Systems are everywhere!

Materials Required

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers
- Copy of the Systems Thinking Checklist at the end of this learning experience

Instructions

- Tell students you will be talking about systems thinking today. Give them the definition of a system.
  - *"A system is something that has parts. And its parts are connected to each other. If we change one part, we change the whole system."*
- Provide a visual example of a system. You can stack up some cards in a house of cards, or stack up some blocks or books. Ask:
  - *"What will happen if I remove one of these cards (or blocks) at the bottom? What affect will it have on the whole system?"*

- Alternatively, if you have a bowl with water and some dye, you can ask:
  - *"What will happen if I pour this dye into the water. Will this change the whole system?"*
- Explain what systems thinking is:
  - *"When we look at something and its parts, and then think about how the parts are connected, we are doing systems thinking. Systems thinking means to look at something as a system."*
- Introduce your students to the *Systems Checklist*, which helps us to explore things as systems. Use the checklist with them to explore a few more examples of systems, such as the human body, a bicycle, a car, a group of friends, a family, etc.
  - *Systems Checklist:*
    1. *Does it have parts and what are they?*
    2. *Are the parts connected to each other? How?*
    3. *If we change one part, does it change other parts? How?*
    4. *Are the parts connected to other things on the outside? How?*
- Allow students to suggest additional things that they could explore as systems. Run each suggestion through the systems checklist.
- Conclude the discussion by reminding students that systems thinking means looking for connections.

Teaching Tips

Almost everything has parts and can be thought of as a kind of system. Since the point is not to correctly identify what is and what is not a system, but rather to teach a certain way of looking at things as systems, be encouraging even when students suggest things that may not immediately appear to be systems.

Sample script

- *"Today we're going to learn about an interesting way of thinking. It's called systems thinking.*
- *A system is something that has parts. And its parts are connected to each other. When we look at something and its parts, and then think about how the parts are connected, we are doing systems thinking.*
- *Let's think together. Is your body a system? We can use the checklist to see.*
  - *Systems Checklist:*
    1. *Does it have parts and what are they?*
    2. *Are the parts connected to each other? How?*
    3. *If we change one part, does it change other parts? How?*
    4. *Are the parts connected to other things on the outside? How?*
- *Let's think of other things. What else might be a system?* [Take examples from the class. Spend time going through at least one more

example, using the checklist to see if the example is a system. If time permits, use the checklist for more examples.] *Many things are systems.*

- *Remember, systems thinking means looking for connections. Once we start looking for connections, we find that systems are everywhere!"*

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Seeing the School as a System

Overview

Students will look at their school as a system and all the people involved in maintaining and running it. They will also recognize the ways the school needs each these people, and some of the things these people share in common.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can look at our school as a system.
- The school depends on many types of people, who share common human experiences and feelings.

Materials Required

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers

Instructions

- Remind students of the drawing they did together back in Chapter 1 where they explored interdependence and how we are connected to and dependent on other things. Tell them the class is going to do another drawing today with the school as the focus.
- Draw a representation of the school in the center of a large piece of chart paper.
- Discuss with them whether the school is a system by using the systems checklist.
- Explain that you will now explore the parts of our school. Ask who or what kinds of people we need to have a school. Ask them to see if they can think of at least 10 actual people or people's jobs the school connects to, needs, or depends on. Draw or write the people/categories they offer.
- Point to certain groups of people on the chart paper and ask students: In what ways are these people the same as us? In what ways are they different? (As explored earlier, they may suggest that all the people have emotions and feelings; they all want happiness; they all want to be treated with kindness.)
- Remind them that one question of the systems checklist asks whether the larger system changes if we change one part of the system. Ask them to consider that concept about each group of people noted.

Teaching Tips

- Examples for systems might include a bicycle, the weather, a garden, a family, and so on. **Save the drawing of the school as a system, as you will need again this for Learning Experience 4.**

- This activity works great with students standing around the whiteboard or with a piece of chart paper on the floor in the center of a circle of students.
- As in every insight activity, students may have other critical insights as you go along—if so, record them or note them on the board so that you can return to them later.

Sample script

- *"A while ago, we made a drawing of [whatever your class drew] and we connected all the people and things needed to make that [thing] possible. Who remembers that activity?*
- *When we did that we were talking about interdependence, and we're going to do another drawing today that is similar to that. For this drawing today, however, we are going to use the school as the focus. I'll draw the school here in the center.*
- *So, before we draw any more, I wanted to ask you to decide if the school is system by using our systems checklist. What do you think?*
- *Let's explore our school as a system. Think about these three questions for a few seconds: Which people do we need to have a school? Do we need certain people? Who might we need?* [Pause for students to think.]
- *Which 10 actual people or people's jobs does the school connect to, need, or depend on?* [Allow time for sharing; draw or write the people/categories students share.]
  - If they need additional prompting:
    - *"Who do we need to have food for our school?*
    - *Who do we need to teach in our school? If we only had teachers, would we have a school, or do we need other people?*
    - *Who helps keep the school clean? Can we have students without people to look after them? So who else would we need?"*
- *"Let's look at this group of people - the teachers. In what ways are they similar to you? In what ways are they different?* [Draw or write the similarities and differences. Repeat for other groups of people on the chart.]
- *So it looks like the school has a lot of parts and they are connected to each other. The next requirement for a system is that if one part of the system changes, the whole larger system changes. Is that true for the school?*
- *Let's see: what if some of these people were to not be able to come to school? What would happen? Would it change anything for us?* [For example, if students didn't come, teachers wouldn't have anyone to teach; if individual students didn't come, we would miss them…]
- *If we look at the school as a system, how is our class a part of that system?*
- *What about each of us? Are we each part of the system of the school?*
- *How we affect each other? How do we affect people outside our class?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

- "*Thinking about systems helps us realize how important each part is and how important each person is, because each person's actions affect other people. Who are the people you affect? Who is changed by your actions and your decisions?*
- *How would we name some of the systems that we are part of?*" [This question can build on and follow from the first.]

Is It a System?

Systems Checklist

- [ ] Does it have parts and what are they?
- [ ] Are the parts connected to each other? How?
- [ ] If we change one part, does it change other parts?
- [ ] Are the parts connected to other things on the outside? How?

CHAPTER 7 | We're All in This Together

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3

Feedback Loops

PURPOSE

In this learning experience, students learn what a feedback loop is through a story. A feedback loop is a circular process that keeps getting stronger and building on itself unless some internal or external change breaks the cycle. Students explore positive feedback loops (such as kind actions back and forth between two people growing and building up a stronger relationship over time) as well as negative ones (such as meanness between two people that escalates).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Recognize feedback loops, both positive and negative.
- Explore how kindness and meanness can lead to positive and negative feedback loops.

LENGTH

30 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Appreciating Interdependence

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- The Cupcake Story, Parts 1 and 2 (provided)
- Markers
- Whiteboard/chart paper
- Paper
- Markers or crayons for drawing

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- "*Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?*" [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 17 minutes

Feedback Loops

Overview

In this learning experience, students learn what a feedback loop is through a story of two children who act unkindly towards each other. This is then contrasted with two children who act kindly towards each other.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- A feedback loop is when something goes round and round like a circle and keeps building up until something stops it or changes its course.
- Feedback loops can be positive or negative.
- Kindness and meanness can lead to positive and negative feedback loops.

Materials Required

- The Cupcake Story, Parts 1 and 2 (provided)
- Markers
- Whiteboard/chart paper

Instructions

- Remind students of the example of the spark and the forest fire, used in Chapter 3.
- Explain that you're going to read a story that shows how this can happen between two people, when a problem gets bigger and bigger if no one stops it.
- Read students the story:

The Cupcake Story, Part 1

(The Negative Feedback Loop)

"Alice is excited that today is finally their snack day! Alice and her mom made special cupcakes to share with the class. All of the kids are looking forward to tasting them. The teacher asks Alice to hand out the cupcakes. But as Alice is handing out the cupcakes, she remembers an argument she had with Kofi, one of her classmates, and on purpose [Pause.], *deliberately skips Kofi when handing out the cupcakes! This surprises Kofi and hurts Kofi's feelings. Kofi says, "I don't like you," to Alice. Alice makes a face at Kofi and says, "You're mean!" Some of the other students in the class notice this and quietly laugh."*

- Explain that you're going to use a drawing to understand what happened in the story. This is a drawing of a feedback loop.
- Draw a diagram of a feedback loop like the one provided at the end of this learning experience.
- Ask the students to help fill in the feelings and actions of Alice and Kofi the loop goes around. Use the provided questions. Write their responses on the diagram.
- Negative Feedback Loop Questions
  - *"What was Alice feeling when she began giving out cupcakes?*
  - *When Alice skipped Kofi, what do you think Kofi was feeling?*
  - *What happened next?* [Prompt students to suggest a few more back and forth actions between Alice and Kofi.]
  - *What might happen if they keep feeling hurt and doing unkind things to each other?*
  - *Where do you think they are in their zones—high zone, low zone, or OK zone?*
  - *What do they need?*
  - *What risky emotions might they be feeling?"*
- Explain that what they have created is called a feedback loop.
  - *"A feedback loop is when something goes around in a circle and grows bigger and bigger unless something stops it. A loop means a circle. "Feedback" is because it keeps feeding on itself and growing and growing."*
- Explain that this diagram is called a negative feedback loop because it is making things worse:
  - *Unkind action* ⟶ *Hurt Feelings* ⟶ *Unkind action* ⟶ *Hurt Feelings*
- Ask students: *"What happened? What would help break this negative feedback loop so that things wouldn't keep getting worse? Could Alice or Kofi make a choice?"*

- Next, read students:

The Cupcake Story, Part 2
(The Positive Feedback Loop)
"Meanwhile, at the other side of the classroom, something else was happening. Theresa knew that her friend Nelson loved cupcakes very much. So when Theresa got her cupcake from Alice, Theresa decided to give it to Nelson.

"Thank you so much," Nelson said. "Next time when we get a snack that you like especially, I'll give mine to you."

"That's very kind of you, Nelson," said Theresa. "You're my friend, Nelson."

"Thanks, Theresa," said Nelson. "You're my friend too."

- Use the same format as above to draw a positive feedback loop on a separate piece of chart paper or on the board next to the negative feedback loop. Follow the same method as above, asking the provided questions. Write their responses on the diagram.
- Positive Feedback Loop Questions
  - *"What do you think Theresa might have been feeling when she gave Nelson her cupcake?*
  - *How do you think that made Nelson feel?*
  - *What did Nelson do?*
  - *How do you think that made Theresa feel?"*
- Ask students: *"How might the story and the positive feedback loop might continue?"*
- Explain that this is a positive feedback loop:
  - *Kind Words* ⟶ *Warm Feelings* ⟶ *Kind Words* ⟶ *Warm Feelings*
- Finally, place the two feedback loops side by side so that your students can see both. Tell them that we now know what a negative feedback loop is and what a positive feedback loop is.
- Use the provided compare/contrast questions below to help students compare and contrast the two loops and then focus on changing the negative feedback loop.
- Compare/Contrast the Loops and Change the Negative Feedback Loop Questions
  - Ask students to compare the drawings of the two feedback loops: *"What's different about these feedback loops? What's the same?"*
  - Focus on the negative feedback loop.
    - *"When Alice skipped giving Kofi a cupcake, what could Kofi have done instead of saying "I don't like you"?*
    - *Which Help Now! strategy Kofi could use in that moment?*
    - *What else could Kofi have done to change or stop the feedback loop?*
    - *What about Alice? What could she have done to change or stop the feedback loop?"*

- When the students suggest a kind or helpful action, write down the new action. Then ask:
  - *"If Kofi/Alice did that, how might that have made them feel?*
  - *What might they have done next, instead of doing an unkind action?"*
- Explain how the positive feedback loop is one that we have the choice to create. At some point, someone in the loop has to make a choice to stop things or change things, so that the loop doesn't go on forever. If no one makes that choice, things could keep getting worse.
- Explain how the positive feedback loop is one that we have the choice to create.

Teaching Tips

It is ideal for this insight activity to be done whole and in one day; however, if you you need to break it up, you can do the comparison of the two feedback loops on another day.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

Changing a Negative Feedback Loop into a Positive One

Overview

In this reflective practice, students imagine the perspective of Alice or Kofi and come up with a way to change their negative feedback loop into a positive one and then draw it.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- A feedback loop is when something goes round and round like a circle and keeps building up until something stops it or changes its course.
- Feedback loops can be positive or negative.
- Kindness and meanness can lead to positive and negative feedback loops

Materials Required

- Paper
- Markers or crayons for drawing

Instructions

- Use the provided script to facilitate this reflective practice.
- Collect student drawings at the end of the practice to check for understanding.

Teaching Tips

None

Sample script

- *"Now we are going to do an individual reflective practice.*
- *I invite you to select either Alice or Kofi and pretend that you were one of them in the story.*
- *Imagine what you could have done to change the negative feedback loop into a positive one and draw the action.* [Provide 4 minutes for drawing.]

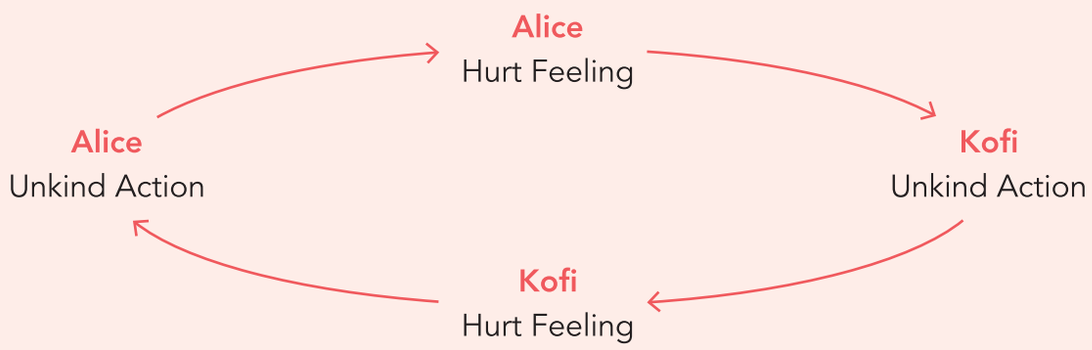
- *Let's share some of our ideas. Who would like to start us off?*
- [For each student who shares the action they drew:] *How might that action lead to a positive feedback loop?"*

DEBRIEF | 3 minutes

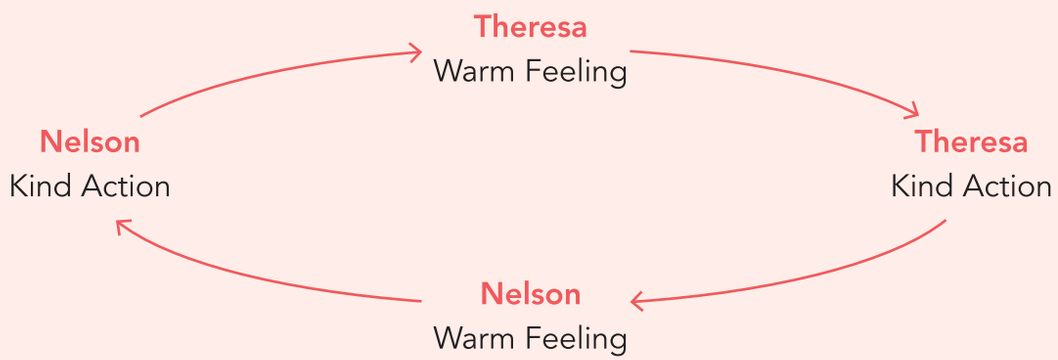
- *"Have you seen positive feedback loops in our classroom?*
- *Have you ever been part of a positive feedback loop?*
- *How can we create more positive feedback loops in the classroom?"*

Feedback Loops

Negative Feedback Loop



Positive Feedback Loop



CHAPTER 7 | We're All in This Together

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4

Life Together

PURPOSE

Students will explore how actions take place within a broader system and can affect that system, beginning with examples from the Cupcake Story in the previous learning experience. They create an interdependence drawing that maps the effects of such actions within a system. They then look at a simple action that they themselves can take, how it could lead to a feedback loop, and what other people it could affect.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Recognize how feedback loops have effects beyond the loop that impact entire systems.
- Explore how their own actions can lead to feedback loops with others and can affect others in a system.

LENGTH

25 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Recognizing Common Humanity

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- A large piece of chart paper or board to make an interdependence web
- Paper and drawing utensils for each student
- The class agreements made in Chapter 1
- The example of a positive feedback loop
- "Seeing the School as a System" class drawing from Learning Experience 2
- Optional: Systems Checklist Poster

CHECK-IN | 3 minutes

- *"Let's do a short attention practice. How do we want our body to be?*
- *First we'll take a comfortable and upright posture. I'll be keeping my eyes open, but you can close them or look at the ground.*
- *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. What did you notice?"* [Share aloud.]

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 13 minutes

The Effects of Our Actions in a System

Overview

Students will take the Cupcake Story example and create an interdependence drawing that maps the effects of the actions on the broader class and school.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- We can map and draw the way actions impact others in a system.
- Feedback loops don't just affect the people inside them, but can affect others in a system, or even an entire system!

Materials Required

- "Seeing the School as a System" class drawing from Learning Experience 2
- The Cupcake Story, Part 1 (provided)
- Markers
- Optional: Systems Checklist Poster

Instructions

- Hang up the drawing made during Learning Experience 2's insight activity, "Seeing the School as a System."
- Tell students you are going to review what we learned about systems thinking. Ask them what they remember. After a few students share, ask them, *"How is our school a system?"*
- Review the questions from the Systems Checklist in Learning Experience 2.

- Explain that now you're going to think together about the Cupcake Story and do some systems thinking.
- Write "Feel," "Need," and "Do," as three columns on the board.
- Re-read the Cupcake Story, Part 1. Ask how Kofi and Alice's actions might make the other students in the class feel. What might those students need? What might they do? What about their teacher—what might she feel, need, or do? Write their responses on the board in the appropriate column.
- Do an interdependence drawing that illustrates how others are affected by Alice and Kofi's actions. Either draw it yourself with prompts from your students, or ask your students to help you in making the drawing. Start with Alice and Kofi in the middle, then other students and the teacher, and then others beyond the classroom. An interdependence drawing uses lines to show the connections between people and events.
- Repeat these three questions for other people who might be involved (How might it make them feel? What might they do? What might they need?), starting with other students in the classroom, then Kofi and Alice's teacher; the parents or caregivers of the students; and other students and teachers in the school. (For example, their teacher might keep the children in at recess time to problem solve about this incident. How would this make them feel? Their friends feel? How would it impact the rest of their morning, if they weren't able to play and get fresh air and exercise because of this?)
- After you have created the interdependence drawing, ask the class to look at the entire drawing and share what they notice.
- Conclude with the following questions:
  - *"What needs are the same for these people? What feelings are the same for them?*
  - *Where are places people could intervene to help with this conflict?"*

Teaching Tips

For your convenience, the Systems Checklist and Cupcake Story, Part 1 are given below.

Systems Checklist

1. *Does it have parts and what are they?*
2. *Are the parts connected to each other? How?*
3. *If we change one part, does it change other parts? How?*
4. *Are the parts connected to other things on the outside? How?*

The Cupcake Story, Part 1

(The Negative Feedback Loop)

"Alice is excited that today is finally their snack day! Alice and her mom made special cupcakes to share with the class. All of the kids are looking forward to tasting them. The teacher asks Alice to hand out the cupcakes. But as Alice is handing out the cupcakes, she remembers an argument she had with Kofi, one of her classmates, and on purpose [Pause.],

deliberately skips Kofi when handing out the cupcakes! This surprises Kofi and hurts Kofi's feelings. Kofi says, "I don't like you," to Alice. Alice makes a face at Kofi and says, "You're mean!" Some of the other students in the class notice this and quietly laugh."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 7 minutes

Overview

Students will draw themselves taking a helping action related to a class agreement as a feedback loop, and then how it affects others beyond the immediate feedback loop.

Content/Insights to be Explored

- Feedback loops don't just affect the people inside them, but can affect others in a system, or even an entire system.
- Our decisions and choices affect many others in our system(s), and we can reflect on and map this.

Materials Required

- Paper for drawing
- Markers or crayons for each student
- The class agreements made in Chapter 1
- The example of a positive feedback loop

Instructions

- Take a look at the class agreements made with your students in Chapter 1. (Refer also back to the list of Helping Actions made for the class agreements in Chapter 1, Learning Experience 3.)
- Remind the students that they made these agreements to show what kind of a classroom they wanted to have. Remind them that the classroom is a system with many parts, and we each are a part of that system. Read the agreements aloud together.
- Ask each student to pick a class agreement they like and name some helping actions related to that agreement.
- After a few people have given suggestions, show students the positive feedback loop again to remind them of what it looks like and explain that each student will now draw themselves doing one of the helping actions and a positive feedback loop. You can also remind them of the feedback loop created by Theresa and Nelson in the Cupcake Story, Part 2. In a positive feedback loop, warm feelings and helpful actions repeat between two people.
- Ask students first to draw themselves in the middle of the paper doing a helping action for the class agreement they have chosen.
- After a few minutes, ask them to draw another person who is helped or affected by this. Ask them to draw how that person feels, and what helpful or kind thing that person might do in return.
- Lastly, ask them to draw anyone else they can think of who might be affected by these kind actions.
- Invite students to share their drawings.

Teaching Tips

If appropriate to your students, you can have groups of students each perform a skit that shows people following one of the class agreements in a positive feedback loop.

Sample script

- *"We can think about how we're part of a system here, as our class, and how the choices we make sometimes help things go smoother, be more enjoyable, and help all of us learn, and sometimes our choices do the opposite, even when we didn't mean that to happen.*
- *Here is the poster of our class agreements that we all made together. They remind us what kind of system we all want to be in together. Let's read them out loud together.* (Read each agreement, pausing between for a moment of private think time.)
- *Let's imagine some ways our system in this room can be affected by whether or not we keep these agreements well with each other. Which helping actions go with the first agreement?* [Continue discussion going through a few of the agreements.]
- *Thank you for sharing your ideas. Now, let's look at the positive feedback loop. In a few moments, you're going to draw one of your own. What do you remember about the positive feedback loop about Theresa and Nelson in the Cupcake Story, Part 2?* [Allow time for sharing and remembering.]
- *Yes, it sounds like you remember that in a positive feedback loop, warm feelings and helpful actions repeat back and forth between two people.*
- *Now, you're going to work independently. Here is a sheet of paper for you. First, select a class agreement you like and please draw yourself in the center of the paper doing a helpful action related to that agreement.* [Provide a few minutes for drawing.]
- *Next, please draw another person who could be helped or affected by this action that you are doing. If you can, draw how that person feels and what that person might do in return.* [Provide a few minutes for drawing.]
- *Finally, draw anyone else you can think of who might also be affected by these kind actions."* [Provide a few minutes for drawing.]

DEBRIEF | 2 minutes

- *"Everything we do has an effect; everything we say matters. The more thoughtful we can be in our actions and words, the better our impact on our systems can be! Think for a moment about someone in this room who helps you enjoy being a learner in this system.* [Pause.]
- *In a moment, I'll ask you to give them a "thumbs up" or smile from wherever you are sitting. Thank them with your eyes for being caring about our system!*
- *Ready, GO!"*

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Building a Better World

SEE Learning Capstone Project:
Building a Better World

The Purpose

The purposes of the SEE Learning Capstone Project are:

1. To provide students with an opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired through all the previous learning experiences;
2. To collaboratively develop compassionate systems thinking skills by exploring a particular issue of concern;
3. To invite students to engage in compassionate action that will have a beneficial impact on themselves, their school, and the wider community.

Primary Core Component



Community & Global Engagement

Overview

The SEE Learning Capstone Project is a culminating action activity for all the students in your class. It is sequenced in eight steps, each of which can be done in one or more sessions. First, students reflect on what it would be like if their entire school were a school of kindness and self-compassion, engaged in the practices of SEE Learning. After imagining and drawing what that would look like, they compare their vision to their own experiences in their school. They then choose a single area to focus on, and create a set of individual and collective actions. After engaging in these actions, they reflect on their experiences and share their knowledge and insights with others. For further information on the principles of the process for the culminating project and the role of the teacher in it, please go to the end of this section.

Implementing the Project

The project consists of eight steps, and will take a minimum of eight sessions to complete. Providing consistent time for students to work on the project over the course of several weeks supports students in engaging fully in the process, and will provide opportunities for embodied understanding to develop. Read through all the steps and the notes at the end of this section before beginning with your students.

Step 1: Visioning a kind, compassionate school

Learning objective
Students will create drawings in groups that show what the kindest, most compassionate school might look, sound, and feel like.

1. Start with a check-in, selected from the curriculum, to allow students to center themselves and get ready for learning.

2. Explain what will be done today.

> "*Let's think about what we've been learning about kindness, our resilient zones, emotions, and compassion. What would it be like if everyone in this school were learning what we have been learning? What kind of things would they be doing? What would the school be like? Let's imagine that for a minute, with our eyes closed.*
>
> *Let's imagine walking around the school. What do you see? What are people doing? What kinds of things are they saying?*"

3. Record students' responses on a piece of chart paper with three headings: See, Hear, Do. Under each, place what students suggest that they imagine they see, what they hear people saying, and what people are doing in this imagined kind and compassionate school. Then ask additional questions and expand the lists:

> "*How are they feeling in their bodies? What are they doing to stay in their resilient (OK) zones?*
>
> *How do these people respect each others' differences?*
>
> *How are children practicing self-compassion or self-kindness? What did you imagine it could look like?*
>
> *What if something difficult happened? What would they do?*"

4. Create student groups of 2 or 3 and ask them to draw on large sheets of paper.

> "*Think about all of these wonderful ideas you've generated, all of the ideas on our chart.* [Pause.] *Choose one that you'd like to illustrate, one that you think is valuable to share with others so they'll understand more about our vision for a kinder school.* [Pause.] *Raise your*

> *hand when you have an idea for the one you'd like to draw. And then you can choose two art-partners to help you create your masterpiece. Make sure everyone is adding color and design to your drawing."* [Repeat until all children are grouped and have a specific idea in mind to illustrate.]

Note: If this is one of the first times your students are creating a group illustration, make another chart with group input into what skills a caring partnership will need practiced, so that all of the artists feel proud and satisfied with the creations we'll be making together today.

5. Hang up the drawings on the wall in the classroom or hallway. Ask students to do a "gallery walk." This means they will walk around and look closely at the images in silence or while you play soft music. Ask them to find one thing that they really like seeing and be ready to share why they had appreciation for that.

6. Have students take their seats again, or gather in a circle, and share with the class one thing they really valued in the drawings, and why.

Note: If time permits, have everyone share with the whole group. If less time is available, have the students do a "Turn To Your Partner" (TTYP), in which their pair up and share, reminding them that the goal of partner conversations is that our partner feels heard and understood. Close by asking for 2-4 "nominated volunteers"—students who encourage their partner to share the idea they heard in their partnership, with the whole group. If they are unfamiliar with such paired sharing, remind them of the mindful listening practice and consider modeling TTYP first.

7. Explain that next time our class will be thinking together about ways to help the school get closer to these pictures.

Notes

Step 2: Comparing the vision to reality

Learning objective
Students will compare their vision of the "kindest school ever" with what actually happens at their school, in order to see strengths and areas for improvement.

1. Start with a check-in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Explain what will be done today.

> *"Because we've been learning about how to be kind to ourselves and others, we want to share this with others in the school. So we want to find something that isn't quite as kind as it could be in our school. Then we'll try to see if we can do anything to make that better."*

3. Ask students to do a gallery walk again, revisiting their displayed drawings, and paying attention to these questions:

> *"What is already happening at our school that looks like this? What is not happening yet?"*

4. Ask your students to list out some of the ways "this is already happening" and some ways "it's not happening yet, as fully as we know it can be." Generate a list to help decide on one thing to work on together. (Their ideas may include such ideas as: being more inclusive during lunch time or recess; keeping the school cleaner; making everyone feel like they belong; creating a plan so that everyone has the same ideas about how to show respect for each other; and so on.)

Note: When students identify problems that single out a particular person or incident (like "Thomas pushed me"), reframe to generalize it (e.g., record "Sometimes children push other children.")

5. Work toward consensus about which area of growth you will all focus on together. You may wish to ask for a volunteer for each item, to say why it is of high value as a point of change, continuing until all items have been spoken to. You might also divide the class into the number of groups that match the number of suggestions on the list, and give those advocacy groups some time to think together about reasons their assigned item would be a good choice for the class to focus on. This stretches the students to take a positive stand for an idea that was very likely not their own, building perspective-taking and empathy. Differentiate for your own

context, taking an added day for this lesson as best suits your students' current abilities and desire to think deeply about this choice. Relish the benefits of the process, along those of the practical choice they end up making.

6 After discussing all of the ideas, use a strategy to gather input to narrow down the focus area choices. Work to build a consensus among the class on one particular item. You might give each student two color-dot stickers and let them choose which item(s) to put their votes on; publicly tally which get the top two amounts of votes; determine if the group can live with starting with one of those two for the "first item we pay attention to together," keeping the others on a Kindness-to-Come "parking lot / waiting list." These can be referenced as short-term areas of attention over the remainder of the year, before recess, lunch or an assembly, for example, or when planning with the group for a substitute teacher's arrival.

7 While allowing the students to develop a consensus, keep in mind that the best issues for helping them develop systems thinking will be ones that are of a medium level of complexity (not too difficult but not too simple; not too big and not too small) and that are relevant to your students (i.e., they care about it).

8 When the class has determined one focus area, explain:

> *"Tomorrow we're going to make an interdependence drawing of the opportunity we chose, thinking about all the people involved, all reasons why this problem might exist, and how these things are connected.* [Pause.] *Take a moment and think about one thing that we could teach or do for others that would help with the problem we've chosen.* [Pause.]
>
> *TTYP. Turn to your closest neighbor to make a partnership or trio and share one of your ideas. Listen carefully to the ideas you hear from others.* [Pause for student conversations.] *We'll hear just a few of our ideas today, and then talk more about them tomorrow in our next Capstone Lesson.* [Pause.] *Whose partner(s) had an interesting idea, that you'd like to encourage them to share? Take 2-4 volunteers to prime the pump for tomorrow's conversation. Express your sincere admirations and appreciations for the process and outcomes of the group's work, and let them know you're excited to see what happens in the next step."*

Notes

Step 3: Exploring the issue through interdependence

Learning objective
Students will explore the many people and things connected to the issue they have chosen through interdependence drawings.

1. Start with a check-in to allow everyone to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Remind the group of their previous discussion, during which they generated a topic to focus on and brainstormed some possible ideas for ways to address it. You may wish to continue this step for a while today, if that best suits your group.
3. Explain what will be done today. (If you have older student "class buddies" this is a great place to take advantage of their talents as recorders and guides in the small groups.)
4. Create five columns on a chart or the lesson board: Who, What, Where, When, Why.

   > "*Who is involved? Let's draw or list the people involved.*
   >
   > *What are they doing? What is happening?*
   >
   > *When is this happening?*
   >
   > *Where is it happening?*
   >
   > *Why is it happening?*"

5. Ask students to get into groups of 4-5. Use your professional judgment to decide whether these should be voluntary groupings or if you've already pre-determined groups that reflect a diversity of developmental and academic strengths and needs.
6. Explain that each group is going to write or draw the focus issue in the middle of a large piece of paper. Around that they will all draw or write about anything or anyone connected with that focus issue, connecting it to the center topic with a line.

   > "*To start, you can choose things from the Who/What/Where/When/Why exercise.*
   >
   > *Who else is involved?*" (For example, if the issue is trash around the school, this would include the people who left the trash there, all the people who have to see it, the people who have to tidy it, and so on. If the issue is bullying, this would include bystanders,

teachers, other adults, the family of the bullying child, the family of the bullied child, etc. Note that although bullying is given as an example here, you are encouraged to find an issue that your students can address more easily and concretely.)

7 Move around and help the groups of students think through the various aspects of the interdependence drawing, supporting them in increasing their complexity by including more situations and people that are connected.

8 When the flow of ideas begins to ebb, get the whole group's attention and explain:

> "*All the things you've drawn are connected to the main issue in the middle. Now let's think of another level of connections! In what ways are any of the ideas you drew also connected to each other? Talk with your group to see what other connections you see. Then you can draw lines showing those connections.*" (Model on the classes' example chart as you introduce this idea.)

9 Have each group share their drawings with the whole class, asking the class:

> "*What else could we add to our drawing, that is connected?*"

10 After every group has shared, ask:

> "*What would it look like, sound like, and/or feel like if this problem were fixed or solved? If it just wasn't a problem here any more? What would that look and sound and feel like?* [Pause.] *Brainstorm a few ideas before letting students know that working toward this very outcome is our next step!*"

Notes

Step 4: How to Make Things Better

Learning objective
Students will explore helpful actions that could be taken to address the issue they identified in the school.

1. Start with a check-in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Remind students about yesterday's collaborative work and refresh the energy and excitement they were feeling as they generated their interdependence webs. Explain what will be done today, that they will think together about helpful actions that could help change *(name their focus issue).*
3. Return to yesterday's groups and ask them to look at their interdependence drawings.

   > *"When we look at the people in our posters, what are their needs? What are they feeling? What would help them?*
   >
   > *What can we find in our posters that is something we could help with, as a whole class, that would make things better?*
   >
   > *What can you find in your poster that shows something maybe you could do by yourself that would make things better?"*

4. Publicly chart their suggestions in a numbered list under two headings "Individual Helping Actions" for things that a single student could do and "Whole Class Helping Actions" for things they suggest the whole class could do. You could also head the columns: "I Can…" and "We Can…"
5. Provide guiding questions to help them generate more ideas as necessary. *(Often when someone drops some trash, there are other people who see it. What could they do? Or later some students might walk by. What could they do?)*
6. Explain that next time, you will start taking these actions to help make things better.

Notes

Teaching Tips

For example, tailored to their identified focus issue, the whole class actions for the example of trash in the school might include things like:

- As a class we could:
  1. Make posters that say things about the issue (respecting our school; being kind to one another);
  2. Talk to adults in the school about how to keep the school clean (or prevent bullying);
  3. Teach children in other classes of the school about the issue;
  4. Take turns in class meetings or at circle time, talking about their experiences related to the issue, what it feels like, and what they need from other children and adults.
- Individual student actions could be things like:
  1. I could tell an adult about it;
  2. I could speak up to the person who is dropping trash (or being unkind) and ask them to stop;
  3. I could offer encouragement to others when I see them doing the right thing.

Encourage students to find ways to research and learn more about the problem. For example, if possible:

- Arrange for people who were listed in the Interdepence Webs to visit with your class, so that your students can hear perspectives and ask that person questions.
- Ask students to come up with questions that they would like to ask their caregivers or parents. Incorporate these in take-home notes about the progress of the Capstone Project. Make returning a response optional; integrate responses into your on-going discussions.
- Encourage students to directly observe things in the school related to their focus issue. Help them identify specific things they can pay attention to and then share in future discussions.

Step 5: Planning Individual Action

Learning objective
Students will choose which helpful actions they would like to take individually that would help with the issue they chose as a class.

1. Start with a check in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Explain what will be done today.
3. Review the previously generated "I Can…" or "Individual Helping Actions" list. Talk about what might help or get in the way of them actually doing whatever action they choose… (e.g., remembering, being brave, being persistent…) Let them know how you'll be regularly checking in as a class on progress.
4. Give each student a post-it note and ask them to write on it their name and which action they would like to do (or just the number of that item). Ask them to put their post-it note on the board or list next to the item they chose. If you don't have post-it notes, ask them to write their name on the list next to the item they would like to do. You might choose to prepare an extension to the chart that will hold the post-its / names, that will appear as a bar graph.
5. Ask if there is anyone ready to do two of the things on the list. If so, they add their post-it or name to a second idea.
6. Gather in group or circle, with full view of the expanded "I Can…" or "Individual Helping Actions" chart. Ask them to notice where other classmates put their names, and to take some private think time to form an appreciation/because for an individual or that small group. Model an example from each category. (e.g., "I appreciate that xxx said they would focus on inviting people into games because sometimes I am looking for who I can play with." (*Rather than singling out one student for this, consider using the name of a class pet or an adult who everyone knows and respects, like the principal, nurse, librarian, custodian…*) and ("I appreciate that six people said that they will take action on saying kind things because that will help all of us feel better as we work and play together.") Be sure there's time for each person to share their appreciation/because, knowing there's always the option to pass.

7 Remind them of our class commitment to really taking the actions we put our names next to. As their "exit ticket" from the group to the next activity, each student speaks their own chosen action aloud and gets a high five (from the teacher if time for this to happen individually; or from a partner after they exchange their focus area.)

Notes

Step 6: Planning Collective Action

Learning objective
Students will choose which collective helpful actions they would like to take as a class that would help with the issue they chose.

1. Start with a check-in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Explain what will be done today.

> "*Let's think about the helpful actions we've done since we our last discussion.* [Pause.] *Talk to your partner and tell them one thing you did in the area you chose and how that felt. And if you didn't yet, tell your partner what you think got in the way of doing what you wanted to do.* (Allow time for both partners to share.) *We'll take one example from each of our focus categories. Who would like to nominate their partner in Category #1?* (Read the description from your numbered chart. Repeat for each category.) *Thank you to those who shared and those who nominated today! Everyone wish your partner well as they continue to try hard to live out this commitment.*"

- If appropriate in your context, you can expand this learning experience by hearing from volunteers, from some of the students who haven't yet done something in their chosen area, brainstorming what got in the way of that, and supporting with ideas or encouragement as best suits your group.

3. Remind them of the list of "We Can…" or "Whole Class Helping Actions."
4. Ask students to decide on three things from the list of "Whole Class Helping Actions" that they would like to do as a class. Take time to discuss this before working toward a consensus of three actions.
5. Students will get into groups around the particular class actions. Try to have at least two groups of students for each of the three class actions that they chose.
6. Each group will draw (and/or write) the class action in the middle of a large piece of paper. They will then write all the things they need or that are connected to this action, again in the fashion of an interdependence drawing. (For example, if they decided to make awareness posters for the school, they would draw the poster in the middle, and then around it would be

all the things they would need, such as a large piece of paper, colored markers, a place to hang the posters, permission from teachers to hang the posters up, etc.)

7. Ask students to walk around to look at the other group's drawings for the same class action to see if this makes them think of anything they'd like to add to their own drawings.

8. When they are done, ask each group to choose one spokesperson who will speak when their group stands to share their drawing with the whole class.

9. Based on what they share, write a list of "action steps" needed for each of the three class actions. "So to do that, we need to first do this…"

10. Explain that next session, you will all get started on working on those collective actions. But for now, show them the list of individual actions again. Invite them to move their post-it note or leave it where it is, and then to commit to putting that idea into action in a way they can report back on it next session.

Teaching Tips

Consider writing out the issue and the things the whole class can do as statements, such as "To make things better with ___, our class has decided to do ____." Then you can place these statements one the wall to remind the class of what you are all doing.

Notes

Step 7: Taking Collective Action

Learning objective
Students will take actions individually and collectively to help the school, reflecting on and improving the process in an ongoing manner.

1. Start with a check-in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Ask them to sit in pairs. Ask:

   > "*What progress did you have in actually doing the helpful actions we talked about last time? If so share with your partner. If not, tell your partner why you think that is….*"

3. Debrief the partner share with the whole group, reflecting about what actions they took using a few of the questions below.

   > "*Which action did you do and what happened?*
   >
   > *Did anything good happen?*
   >
   > *Did anything unexpected happen?*
   >
   > *How did it feel to do that action?*
   >
   > *Did you learn anything?*
   >
   > *Would anyone like to try a different helping action from the list we made?*
   >
   > *Is there any helping action we should add to the list?*"

4. Review the lists of preliminary steps for the collective class action. Decide on what will be done and in which order. See if anything else needs to be added.
5. Make a plan on specific ways you'll get started on the first item in the list, collectively as a class. Make sure every student is involved; identify, or have students identify something specific they will take on. Many students may be choosing to take the same action, which is fine.
6. Over time, repeat this step (**Taking Collective Action**) as students make progress on their collective action, while checking in on individual acts each time, and encouraging them to do additional ones.

Teaching Tips

- You can either take the "Whole Class" actions one by one and complete each one step by step before moving on to the next, or you can tackle multiple whole class actions together.
- Keep your action plan visibly posted and check in on it regularly as a class.
- Allow for ongoing alteration of the plan if it seems to students that certain actions are working better than others, and/or that other actions need to be added.

Notes

Step 8: Evaluating, Reflecting, Celebrating!

Learning objective
Students will reflect on their experiences and share them with others.

1. Start with a check-in to allow the students to center themselves and get ready for learning.
2. Explain what will be done today. If your class has learning buddies, this would be an excellent use of their weekly time with you. The older student could "interview" their buddy from your class, reading the list below and asking which question or two their Buddy would like to answer. The Big Buddy takes notes and records the Little Buddy's responses. They can illustrate together. These reflections would make a great class book and/or hallway display.
3. After students complete the entire action plan, reflect as a class by asking:

   > *"What do you want to keep doing for the rest of the year?*
   >
   > *What do you feel most proud of?*
   >
   > *What worked best? How do we know?*
   >
   > *What didn't work that well? How do we know?*
   >
   > *What did you notice about your classmates as we did this project?*
   >
   > *If we could do the project again, is there anything we should change about it, or anything we should do differently?*
   >
   > *What did you learn about creating a kinder classroom/school/community?*
   >
   > *How can we continue to do the things that worked well?*
   >
   > *How can we share what we have done and what we have learned?*
   >
   > *How might we celebrate our work together?"*

4. Consider celebrating your students' efforts through sharing the project with others, such as through a presentation to the school or to parents and caregivers.

Notes

Principles of the Capstone Project Process

The process, rather than the end goal, is the most important part of the project. This process is designed so that it sequentially builds systems thinking skills, while keeping the focus on kindness and compassion for all involved. Consider documenting the process (as well as the final product) so that you can share it with other teachers, administrators, parents, and guardians. Also consider sharing it with the Emory SEE Learning program, making sure to obtain permissions before you distribute student work beyond the school.

The project can also be run prior to completing all the SEE Learning chapters. In this case, make minor adjustments as necessary, such as removing questions that use terms that would be unfamiliar to them.

SEE Learning always strives to maintain a strengths-based perspective (rather than a deficit-based one) that acknowledges an existing basis for constructive change. As your students focus on what can be improved in the school, help them to also remember the ways kindness and compassion are *already* being shown and received in our school. SEE Learning also emphasizes the agency of students and their ability to make a difference. As stated in the SEE Learning framework, "If students cannot bring about a large-scale change immediately, even the smaller scale changes they can affect are worthwhile, because small scale changes can grow into larger changes, and cumulative larger changes can be created through collective smaller actions."

Role of the Educator

The role of the educator throughout this process remains that of facilitator. Your students will need to be guided through this process, and provided with support in carrying out their planned actions. This guidance should not involve giving them answers or telling them what to do, but rather involve prompts that direct them back to their own inquiry as well as to previous knowledge and skills they have already explored in SEE Learning. While this more gentle guidance can take more time, it allows students to learn from their own mistakes or missteps, and from each other.

Throughout the project, you can prompt them at appropriate times to remember previous activities and practices they have done in SEE Learning. (e.g., "Remember when we did the interdependence drawing and you drew it about a book? How is this like that?") Encourage them to make space for those students who seem quieter or less engaged, so that everyone is involved and no one is left out. Feel free to supplement the steps given above with additional activities taken from the curriculum, such as mindful listening exercises and reflective practices.

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

DOMAINS	DIMENSIONS: AWARENESS	COMPASSION	ENGAGEMENT
PERSONAL	 Attention & Self-Awareness	 Self-Compassion	 Self-Regulation
SOCIAL	 Interpersonal Awareness	 Compassion for Others	 Relationship Skills
SYSTEMS	 Appreciating Interdependence	 Recognizing Common Humanity	 Community & Global Engagement

Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics

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