



High School

School Curriculum

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & ETHICAL LEARNING

Educating the Heart and Mind

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Center for
Contemplative Science and
Compassion-Based Ethics



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scope and Sequence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 1: Creating a Compassionate Classroom

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

Chapter 2: Building Resilience

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

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

Chapter 3: Strengthening Attention and Self-Awareness

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

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

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

Chapter 4: Navigating Emotions

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

Chapter 5: Learning About and From One Another

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

Chapter 6: Compassion for Self and Others

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

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

Chapter 7: We're All In This Together

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

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

SEE Learning Compassion in Action Project: Building a Better World

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

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

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

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

Adaptations

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

Effectively Implementing SEE Learning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Note about “Mindfulness”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank You

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

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1

Creating a Compassionate Classroom



Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Components of a SEE Learning Experience

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

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

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

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

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

Time and Pacing

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

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

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

Student Personal Practice

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

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

Teacher Personal Practice

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

Further Reading and Resources

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

Chapter 1: Creating a Compassionate Classroom

Learning Experience 1: Exploring Happiness and Well-being

Learning Experience 2: Exploring Common Humanity



Learning Experience 3: Exploring Interdependence and Systems Thinking

Learning Experience 4: Laying the Foundation for Class Agreements

Learning Experience 5: Co-creating Class Agreements

Learning Experience 6: Identifying Thinking Traps

Learning Experience 7: Building Compassion Through Reciprocity

CHAPTER 1	Creating a Compassionate Classroom	
LEARNING EXPERIENCE 1	Exploring Happiness and Wellbeing	
PURPOSE		
<p>In this learning experience, students will explore interpersonal awareness and common humanity through the lens of happiness and wellbeing. Students will be asked to identify how happiness can be cultivated through the development of ethics, the recognition of common humanity, ethics, and wellbeing.</p>		
LEARNING OUTCOMES	PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS	
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify how the orientation to happiness and wellbeing is an area of common humanity• Determine how the orientation to happiness can help to explain many human activities, motivations, and emotions• Describe the relationship between happiness and the four key concepts that will be developed throughout SEE Learning: ethics, common humanity, wellbeing, and interdependence	<div><div></div><div>Interpersonal Awareness</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Recognizing Common Humanity</div></div>	
	MATERIALS REQUIRED	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chart paper• Large “Yes” and “No” signs that are placed on either end of a continuum line• Writing utensils and paper• “Happiness” graphic organizer handout	
LENGTH		
45 minutes		

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 1 | 10 minutes

Where I Stand

Overview

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

Directions

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

Guiding Language

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

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

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

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

Happiness Statement Prompts

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

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

Debrief

Display the statement below.

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

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

Ask a few volunteers to share.

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 20 minutes

Introducing SEE Learning

Guiding Language

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

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

Why might these topics be important to explore?"

Gallery Walk

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

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

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

While at each station you will:

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

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

1. Common humanity.

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

2. Interdependence.

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

3. Wellbeing and Happiness.

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

4. Ethics.

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5-10 minutes

Our Aspirations and Our Wish for Happiness

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

1. What Activities Do I Care About?

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

2. My Hopes and Dreams For This Year.

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

3. My Worries For This Year.

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

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

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

Prompt:

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

Graphic Organizer



Happiness

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

Our Wish for Happiness

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

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

CHAPTER 1	Creating a Compassionate Classroom	
LEARNING EXPERIENCE 2	Exploring Common Humanity	
PURPOSE		
<p>In this learning experience, students will examine the concept of common humanity. Through a series of activities students will determine how all people share a desire to be happy, well, and to experience both kindness and compassion. Students will reflect on how like them others want happiness and to avoid distress, worry, and suffering.</p>		
LEARNING OUTCOMES	PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS	
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate the relationship between common humanity, diversity, and inclusion• Identify how awareness of common humanity supports the appreciation of diversity and the practice of inclusion	<div> Interpersonal Awareness</div> <div> Recognizing Common Humanity</div>	
	MATERIALS REQUIRED	
LENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charts created by class from Chapter 1, Learning Experience 1, Insight Activity 2• Blank index cards• Writing utensils and paper• Colored pencils, markers	
45 minutes		

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Whole group verbal share with the option to “pass”.

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

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

PRESENTATION | 10 minutes

What do we mean by [Common Humanity](#)?

Guided Language

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

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

What is common humanity?

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

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

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

Are we all the same?

Are we each unique?

How does our uniqueness relate to common humanity?

What about our identity?

What types of group identities are there?

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

Do we all share the same identities?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 15 minutes

All People/Not All People

Directions

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

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

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

Debrief the activity in the last four minutes.

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

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

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

Whole group debrief:

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

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Small Group Debrief

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

Whole Group Debrief

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



REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Silent Reflection/Writing Prompt

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

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

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

CHAPTER 1	Creating a Compassionate Classroom	
LEARNING EXPERIENCE 3	Exploring Systems Thinking and Appreciating Interdependence	
PURPOSE		
<p>In this learning experience, students will examine how interdependence affects their life. Through an examination of the concept of interdependence and through the application of systems thinking students will identify the interdependence that exists within a single event, object, or accomplishment. Students will reflect on how an awareness of interdependence can inform the daily decisions they make.</p>		
LEARNING OUTCOMES	PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS	
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the interdependence of objects, people, and events as a feature of our shared reality by using the interdependence drawing.• Examine how the things we need for our happiness and well-being depend on many other objects, events and people.• Recognize interdependence as a foundational aspect of systems thinking.• Reflect on the potential value of recognizing interdependence and cultivating systems thinking.	<div><div><p>Appreciating Interdependence</p></div><div><p>Community & Global Engagement</p></div></div>	
MATERIALS REQUIRED		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chart paper• Markers		
LENGTH		
45 minutes		

CHECK-IN | 8 minutes

Interdependence Mapping Warm Up

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

PRESENTATION | 5 minutes

Interdependence

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

What is interdependence?

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

Why might it be important to explore interdependence?

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

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

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

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

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

Generate a list of "Starting Objects/Events"

"Can anyone give us an example of an item?"

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

How about a particular event or accomplishment?

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Creating a Web of Interdependence

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

Display the instructions below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

starting object or event to exist.

(2 minutes)

- 6. When you're done, sign your drawing with the names of each group member.**
- 7. We will now share our drawings! (you can use the listed questions below that is helpful to guide your presentation of the drawings (2 minutes per group)**
 - a. What was your topic?**
 - b. What are the limits of the connections you could make if you had enough time?**
 - c. What did you realize about yourself and others through this activity?**
 - d. How can you carry those insights with you throughout your day/life?"**

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

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

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

In your small group, discuss your findings."

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 5 minutes

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

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

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

How might your decisions impact the larger systems?”

Laying the Foundation for Class Agreements

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



**Interpersonal
Awareness**



Relationship Skills

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Chart Paper
- Markers
- Gallery Walk printouts for stations

CHECK-IN | 8 minutes

Welcoming

Have the following prompt up on the board.

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

Examples of this can include:

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

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

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

Guiding Language

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

***What is well-being and what leads to it?
What is our common humanity and what is diversity?
And how are we interdependent?***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRESENTATION | 5 minutes

Overview

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

Guiding Language (3 minutes)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're going to make agreements that:

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 25 minutes

Gallery Walk

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

Explain

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

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

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

Please be thoughtful and respectful when writing down your ideas."

Gallery Walk Prompts

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

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Gallery Walk Reflection

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

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Whole Class Discussion

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

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

Think about or imagine a time you were in a class or on a team and you felt successful and supported. Share that instance and tell what it was about the situation that made you feel successful and supported.

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

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

How do we impact and affect one another?

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

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts

Gallery Walk

How do we depend on each other in our classroom?

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

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

Co-creating Class Agreements

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



**Interpersonal
Awareness**



**Appreciating
Interdependence**

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Display the charts from Classroom Agreements Part 1

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Small Group Activity

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

Step by Step Directions

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

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

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

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

Whole Class

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

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

Each group will read out and present their three agreements.

Please explain why you chose that agreement.

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

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

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

Let's remember our three main criteria:

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

Note

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

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

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

DEBRIEF | 5 minutes

Signing the Agreements (2 minutes)



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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 1	Creating a Compassionate Classroom	
LEARNING EXPERIENCE 6	Identifying Thinking Traps	
PURPOSE		
<p>In this learning experience, students will explore the concept of Thinking Traps. Through their inquiry they will relate them to well-being and the class agreements.</p>		
LEARNING OUTCOMES	PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS	
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience examples of perceptual illusions• Understand thinking traps by exploring examples of thinking traps and making connections between Thinking Traps and the principles of Self-Compassion and Compassion for Others• Discuss the significance of understanding Thinking Traps for keeping the class agreements	<div><div><p>Compassion for Others</p></div><div><p>Self-Compassion</p></div></div>	
LENGTH	MATERIALS REQUIRED	
45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceptual illusions examples on a handout if possible, or on the board• A playing card or index card for each student• Thinking Traps handout	

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

[PAUSE]s can be up to 10 seconds each

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Think Pair Share

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

Guiding Language

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

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

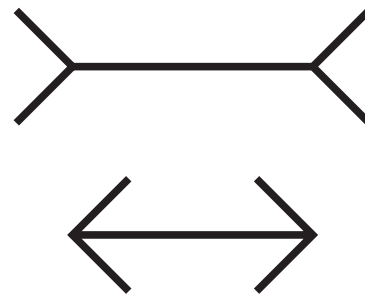
- *emotion (how what we are feeling impacts how we see or experience something).*
- *Understanding Thinking Traps is a powerful tool to explore well-being and human behavior. It may help us to understand why people do not always follow the agreements they make, and why they do not always engage in behavior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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Perceptual Distortion Visual

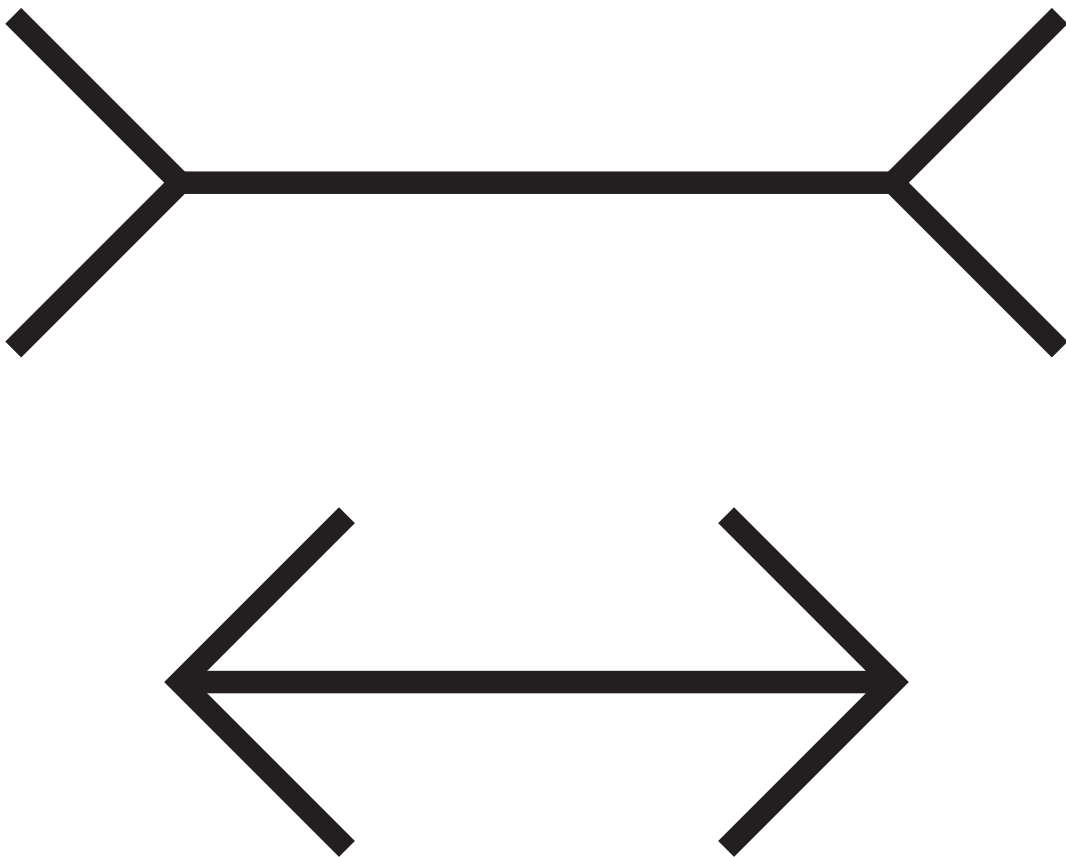
"Take a look at these two lines."

Large version on page 54.



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

Perceptual Distortion Visual



Playing Card Perceptual Distortion Visual

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY 2 | 10 minutes

Thinking Traps

Guiding Language

- *"In addition to perceptual illusions, we can also experience cognitive distortions. This is when our mind tells us that something we are thinking is true, but in reality, it isn't true.*
 - *Like perceptual distortions, cognitive distortions can be persistent. Cognitive distortions can be dangerous because we may fall for distorted thinking and give up, missing the opportunity to improve the skill. Just because we struggle to play the*
- guitar or learn to solve a math equation at first, does not mean that we will not improve with practice.*
 - *When it comes to cognitive distortions, however, we have more flexibility. We can not only learn to recognize cognitive distortions, but we can potentially change the way we react when they arise.*
 - *Once we recognize that our minds sometimes like to play tricks on us, we can catch thinking traps before they cause us too much trouble. We can learn to see, "Oh, this is just a thinking trap. This is just my mind playing tricks on me."*
 - *There's no reason to judge ourselves negatively when this happens, because it is a common human experience. We can offer ourselves self-compassion when we notice this happening.*
 - *The question becomes, "How can I learn to recognize thinking traps and do something about it when they occur?"*
 - *Take a look at your handout that has a description for three different types of thinking traps and decide on one that you think you might be able to come up with a few examples of.*
 - *Hold up one, two or three fingers to show which of the thinking traps on your handout you want to talk about. Find a partner with the same number and together create a list of examples of when this could happen.*

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

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

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

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

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

Written Response/Verbal Share:

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

Thinking Traps

1 Jumping to Conclusions

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

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

2 Catastrophizing

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

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

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

3 Overgeneralization

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

Building Compassion Through Reciprocity

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



**Compassion
for Others**



**Attention &
Self-Awareness**

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Guiding Language

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

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

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Guiding Language

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

Step 1:

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

Step 2:

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

Step 3:

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

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 1 | 10 minutes

Guided Language

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

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

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

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

Revisit guidelines for MINDFUL DIALOGUE (3 minutes)

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

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

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 2 | 10 minutes

Remembering and Drawing an Act of Kindness, Compassion and Reciprocity

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

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

The Rich Person and the Charity

Narrator:

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

Charity representative:

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

Potential Donor:

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

Charity representative:

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

Potential Donor:

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

"Will it be in the news?"

Charity representative:

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

Potential Donor: [smiling]:

"In that case, I agree."

The Basketball Captain and the Recruit

Narrator:

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

Team Member 1:

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

New Student:

"Thanks, but what for?"

Team Member 2:

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

New Student:

"Thanks! You really think so?"

Team Member 1:

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

New Student:

"Aw, thanks, you guys."

Team Member 2:

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

New Student:

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

Team Member 1:

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

Team Member 2:

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

New Student: "

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

Team Member 1:

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

Team Member 2:

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

HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 2

Building Resilience

Overview

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

The Science of Resilience

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

The Resilient Zone

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

Sensations

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

Tracking

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

Personal Resources

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

Grounding

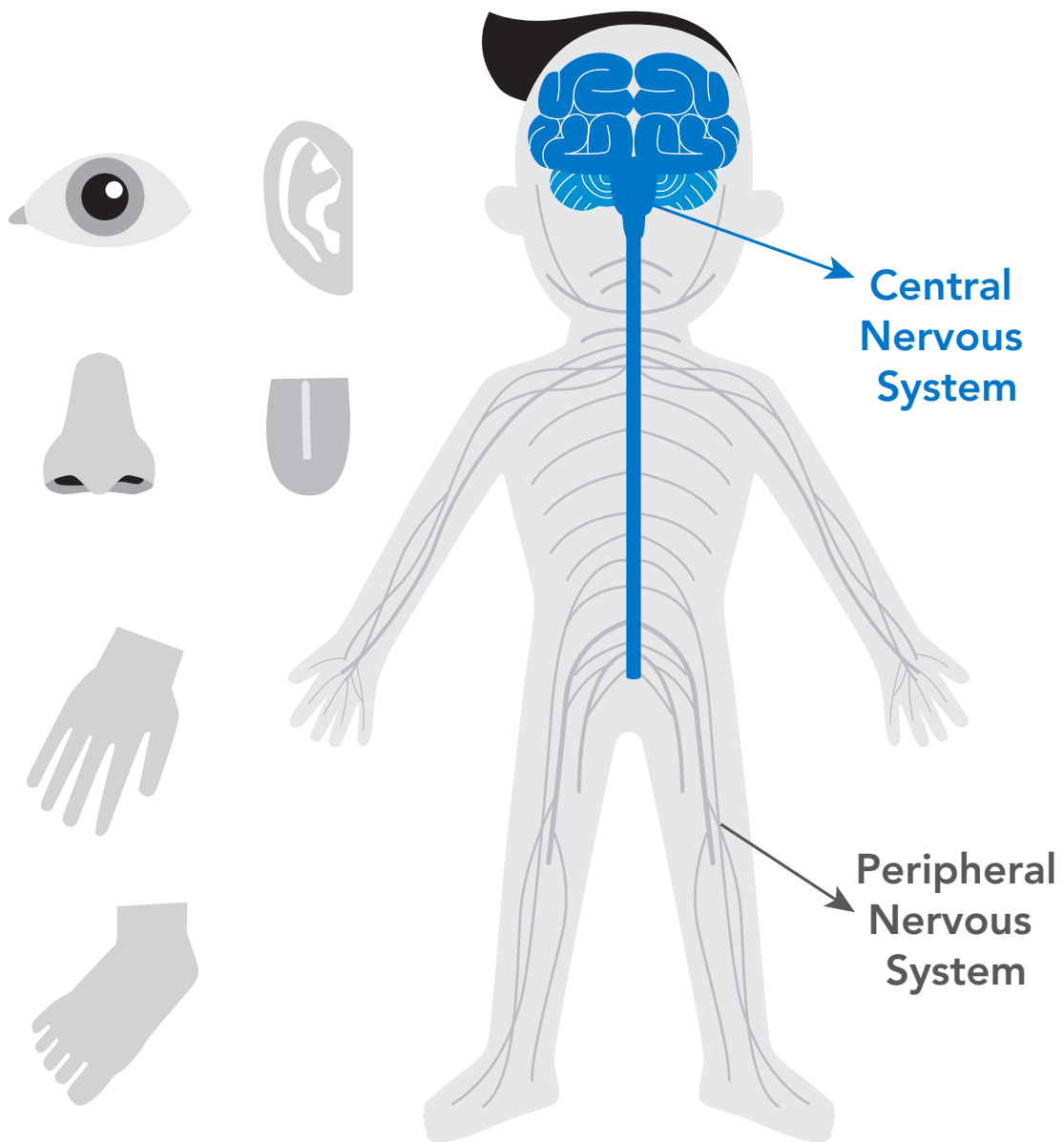
Attending to the sensation at the point of contact of one’s body with objects or the ground in order to return to or stay in the resilient zone.

Help Now! Strategies

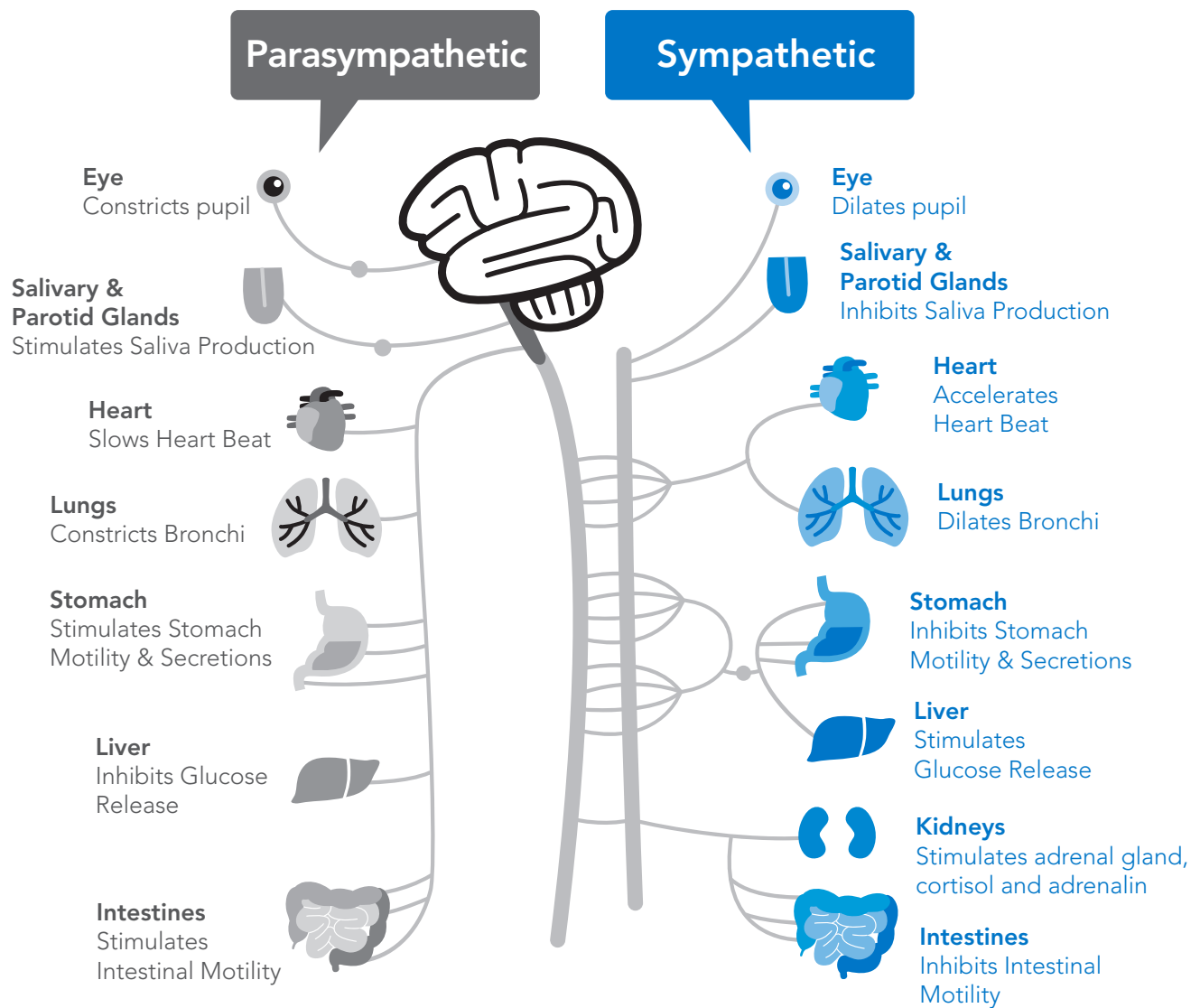
Simple and immediate techniques for helping students return to their resilient zone when they get “bumped out” of that zone.

The Nervous System

The Central and the Peripheral



The Autonomic Nervous System



The Nervous System

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Check-ins and Repeated Practice

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

Time and Pacing

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

Student Personal Practice

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

Teacher Personal Practice

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

Further Reading and Resources

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

Chapter 2: Building Resilience

Learning Experience 1: The Science of Stress and Resilience

Learning Experience 2: The Neuroscience of Resilience

Learning Experience 3: Reinforcing the Resilient Zone

Learning Experience 4: Exploring Sensations and Help Now Strategies

Learning Experience 5: Resourcing to Address Thinking Traps

Learning Experience 6: The Practice of Grounding

Learning Experience 7: Responding to Harmful Behaviors

Learning Experience 8: How Compassion and Safety Affect the Body

The Science of Stress and Resilience

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



**Attention &
Self-Awareness**

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

Guiding Language

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

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

Picture that moment vividly in your mind.

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

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

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

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

Check-in (2 minutes)

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

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

Whole group (2 minutes)

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 7 minutes

Explain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teaching Tip

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15-20 minutes

Activity Overview

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

JigSaw

Split students up into groups of 3

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

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Noticing Sensations: The Language of the Survival Brain

Explain (2 min)

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

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

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

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

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

Partner Debrief (4 min)

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

Close (1 min)

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

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

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

This happens through sustained practice.

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

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

Our Brain: Complex structure with simple goal

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Three-part Model of the Brain

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

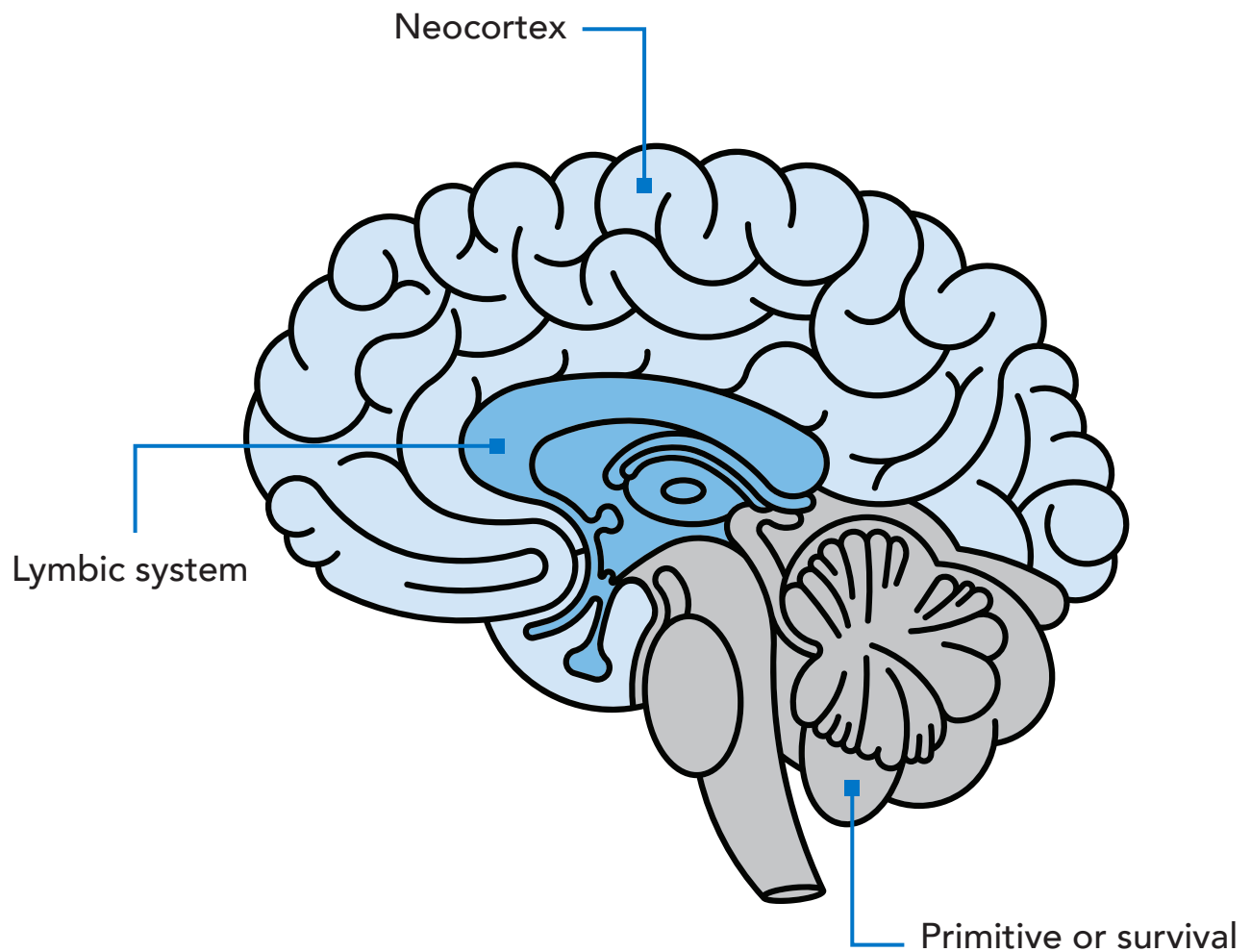
The top layer is the neocortex. The neocortex is the outer surface of the brain, and is responsible for thought, speech, reflection, and decision-making. The neocortex is the most recently evolved part of the brain and is most developed in humans and non-human primates.

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

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

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

The Three-part Model of the Brain



Learning to Direct Attention

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma. Penguin Books, 2015.

The Neuroscience of Resilience

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



**Appreciating
Interdependence**



Self-Regulation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

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

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

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

Resilience can be cultivated on:

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

Guiding Language

"Let's look at this Resilient Zone graphic.

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

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

Writing a Microfiction

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

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

Small Group Share

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Reflect, Write and Share

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

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

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

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

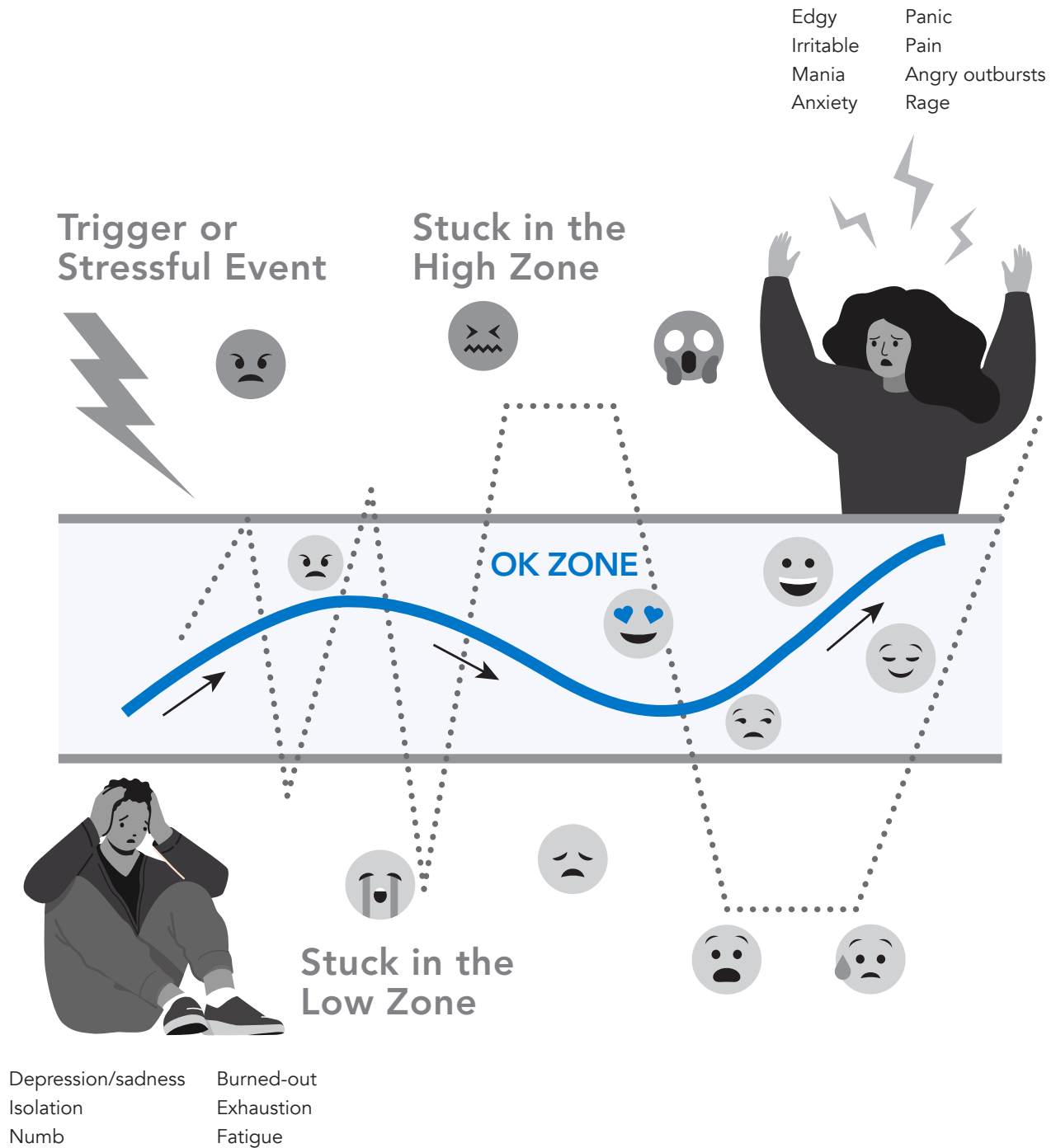
What fills one person with huge energy might make another person want to just go to sleep. As we've seen through our stories, many different life events can have a similar effect.

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

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

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

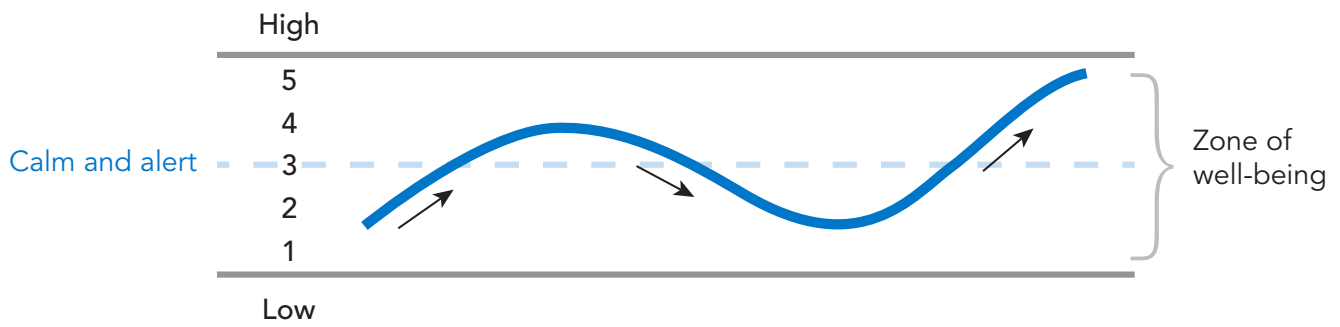
The Resilient Zone



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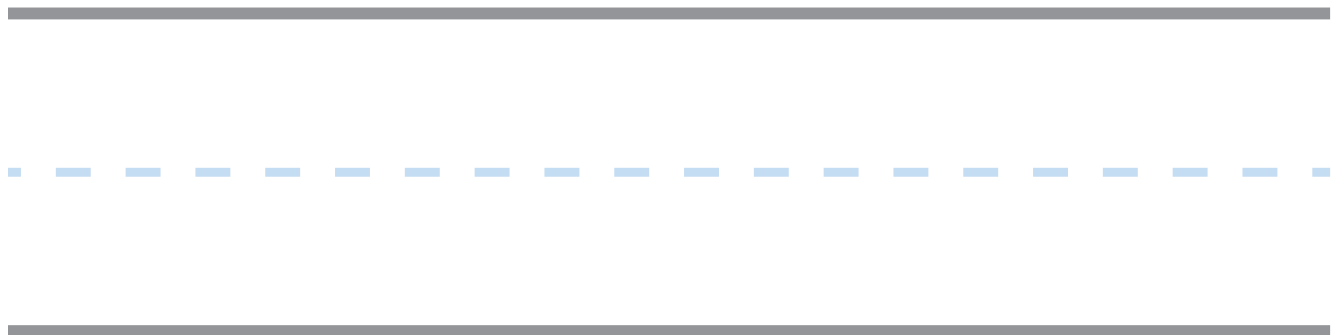
Graphic adapted from an original graphic of Peter Levine/Heller, original slide design by Genie Everett

THE RESILIENT ZONE



(c) Trauma Resource Institute

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



Emotions

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

Reinforcing the Resilient Zone

PURPOSE

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

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Settling Activity (2 minutes)

Guiding Language

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

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

Further Exploration of Resiliency

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

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

Guiding Language

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

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

areas to visually reinforce the scenario you’re describing.

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

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

Guiding Language

Introduce the “Clarifications and Champions Handout.”

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

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

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

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

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

Resilient Zone Partner Brainstorm Notecatcher

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

Trigger or stressful event:

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

Bumped to High Zone

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

Bumped to Low Zone

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

Stays in Resilient Zone

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

Partner Brainstorm Example

Trigger or stressful event:

What happened:

Bumped to High Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

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

Bumped to Low Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

Stays in Resilient Zone

How PJ felt and reacted:

Clarifications and Champions Activity

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

Resilient Zone

High Zone

Low Zone

Tracking

Resourcing

Grounding

Help Now! Strategies

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

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

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

NOTES:

Exploring Sensations and Help Now! Strategies

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

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

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

Debrief (5 minutes)

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

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

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

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

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

identify three sounds inside the room.

(PAUSE 30 seconds)

- *Now see if you can identify any sounds outside the room. (PAUSE 30 seconds)*

• Pair up and answer the following questions:

- *What sounds did you notice?*
- *Were you able to identify where they were coming from?*
- *What was making the sound? Or*
- *Tune in to your vision, your sense of sight. Identify three or more colors or items inside the room.*

(PAUSE 30 seconds)

• Pair up and answer the following questions:

- *What did you notice?*
- *As you noticed the colors and items in the room, where you in the high, low, or okay zone?"*

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 5 minutes

The Nervous System & Sensations

Display an image of the nervous system.

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

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

and the functioning of our internal organs.

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

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

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

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

Sensations can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

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

when we are feeling embarrassed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

effect on the body, sometimes within seconds.

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Help Now Strategies

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Applying the Practices

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

Rainstorm

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

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

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

Leader Actions:

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

"So! There were some sensations!




























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

What do you notice on the inside?

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

Exploring Sensations Through the Help Now! Strategies

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

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

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

coolness	looseness	tingling
heaviness	openness	warmth
lightness	tightness	

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

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?

Station 3



Look around the room and notice what catches your attention.

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

Station 4



Count backwards from 10 as you walk around the room.

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

Station 5



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

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

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?

Station 8



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

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

Help Now! Strategy

Station 9



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

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

Resourcing to Address Thinking Traps

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Attention &
Self-Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

CHECK-IN | 10 minutes

Settling Activity (5 minutes)

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

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

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

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

Check-in (5 minutes)

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

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

Person I admire _____

3 traits you admire about them:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY & PRESENTATION

20 minutes

Self-Regulation Skills Gallery Walk

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

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

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

Personal Resourcing

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Explain

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

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

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

Let's think about that for a bit."

Writing Prompt

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

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

How could you extend that same advice to yourself?"

Whole Group Share

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

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

Sensations

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

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

Resourcing

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

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

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

Tracking

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

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

Shift and Stay

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

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

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

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

Shift and Stay

(continued)

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

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

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

Self-Regulation Strategies, Benefits & Terms

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

- mixed resource
- personal resource
- body literacy
- sensations

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

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

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

Self-Regulation Strategies, Benefits & Terms

(continued)

SHIFT & STAY	
What is it? How do I do it?	When/why use this strategy?

REFLECTION
What are the benefits of practicing these strategies?

The Practice of Grounding

PURPOSE

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Self-Compassion

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

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

Guiding Language

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

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

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

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

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

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

Guided Language

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

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

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

Sitting

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

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

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

Standing

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

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

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

Pushing Down on the Desk

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

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

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

Leaning Against/Pushing Against the Wall

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

*What sensations are you noticing now?
Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?
(Invite students to share.)*

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

Holding an Object

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

What do you notice?

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

Grounding Practice of your Choice

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

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

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

*Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?
(Invite students to share.)*

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

Debrief

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

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

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

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

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

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

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

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

Teaching Tips

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

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

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

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

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

Grounding Station 1

Sitting

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

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

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

Grounding Station 2

Standing

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

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

Grounding Station 3

Pushing Down on Desk

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

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

Grounding Station 4

Leaning or Pushing Against the Wall

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

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

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

Grounding Station 5

Holding an Object

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

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

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

Grounding Station 6

Grounding Practice of Your Choice

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

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

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

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

Responding to Harmful Behaviors

PURPOSE

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

Teacher Tip

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

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

LENGTH

45 minutes

PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS



Self-Regulation



Interpersonal
Awareness

MATERIALS REQUIRED

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

CHECK-IN | 5 minutes

Settling Activity (3 minutes)

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

Guiding Language

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

Harmful Behavior, Impact and Intent

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

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

- *The impact of our behavior can be positive, negative or neutral. Today we are going to focus on small to medium behaviors that are considered harmful. Harmful behaviors have a negative impact on others. There are many different kinds of harmful behaviors. They can be expressed through words, actions, or inactions.*
- *One example of a harmful behavior is bullying which is something that is done intentionally and repeatedly. Other harmful behaviors can be brief, hostile manipulations, or derogatory comments. An example of a brief harmful behavior couple be a one-time negative slight such as pointing out a person's differences in a negative light. For example: Johnny, why are your ears so big? Can you hear noises from the other side of the building with those ears?*
- *How do harmful behaviors impact others?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

How to Work Through and With Harmful Behavior

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

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 20 minutes

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

Trigger or Stressful Event

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

Bumped to the High Zone possible reaction

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

Bumped to the Low Zone possible reaction

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

Return to the Resilient Zone possible action

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

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

Debrief Question

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

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

Information and Guidelines for Today's Group/Partner Work

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

or low zone, and return to the Resilient Zone.

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

Instructions

Part 1

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Grounding

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

Reflective Prompt (Written and/or Verbal)

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

Closing Statement



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

Responding to Harmful Behaviors

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

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

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

CHAPTER 2	Building Resilience		
LEARNING EXPERIENCE 8	How Compassion and Stress Affect the Body		
PURPOSE			
<p>In this learning experience, students will read, annotate, and discuss the Stress Contagion Article to develop a deeper understanding of shared impacts of our nervous systems, our levels of awareness, and our personal locus of control over sensations, thoughts and feelings. Students will also envision through reflection how society would be changed if others understood stress contagion.</p>			
LEARNING OUTCOMES	PRIMARY CORE COMPONENTS		
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine their understanding of interdependence• Define the concept of stress contagion• Describe examples of mirror neurons in action	<div><div></div><div>Appreciating Interdependence</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Interpersonal Awareness</div></div>		
	<div><div>LEARNING EXPERIENCE 8</div><div>45 minutes</div></div> <th colspan="2">MATERIALS REQUIRED</th>		MATERIALS REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help Now! Strategy images in Chapter 2, Learning Experience 4• “Stress Contagion Article” (1 copy per student)• 4As Note Catcher (1 copy per student)• Writing utensils and paper		

CHECK-IN | 9 minutes

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

Instructions and Guiding Language

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

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION | 10 minutes

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

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

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

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

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

INSIGHT ACTIVITY | 15 minutes

Activity Overview

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

Review

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

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

Introduce New Information

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

Independent Reading and Annotating Exercise

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

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

Small Group Work

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

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | 10 minutes

Instructions

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

Resilience for All Reflective Practice Script

(6 min)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notice what you feel on the inside. [PAUSE]

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

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

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

Notice what you feel on the inside. [PAUSE]

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

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

Thank you."

Written or Verbal Reflection

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

Stress Contagion Article

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stress Contagion Article *(continued)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stress Contagion Article *(continued)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Four "A"s Protocol Template

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

