



## **Social and Emotional Learning Xavier Project, 2019**

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# Introduction to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

## Why SEL?

Conflict and resulting displacement can have significant psychological and social consequences for children, who make up more than half of the world's forcibly displaced population. Many of these children have experienced or witnessed acts of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, recruitment into armed forces, or gender-based violence. Beyond trauma, displaced youth are exposed to daily stressors as they cope with issues specific to conflict-related displacement. The breakdown of community services, economic hardship, and loss of contact with loved ones are all strong predictors of distress. Inadequate food and shelter and ongoing insecurity have a significant impact on psychological well-being. While the health sector so often focuses on effects of trauma and PTSD, it is often these daily problems that cause primary distress. These adversities in early childhood can lead to lifelong challenges in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health (Riggs, & Davison, 2016; Wessells, 2012).

## Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and young people learn the skills necessary to cope with these challenges and continue to move forward. SEL teaches children to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Five core competencies are addressed through social and emotional learning (CASEL, 2019):



- **Self-Awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a 'growth mindset'.
- **Self-Management:** Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
- **Social Awareness:** Understand the perspective of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds.
- **Relationship Skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- **Responsible Decision Making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

Social and emotional learning can be taught in stand-alone lessons and activities or integrated into other content areas. SEL is embedded in child-adult interactions inside and out of the classroom. Through explicit instruction, ongoing practices, and thoughtful modelling, SEL can have positive impacts on social behavior and academic performance.

### **How to Use This Guide**

This guide includes best practices in social and emotional learning as well as nine stand-alone SEL lessons. In the Best Practices in SEL section, you will find general recommendations that foster psychological well-being in educational settings and other sectors.

The SEL Tools and Activities section includes nine SEL tools and accompanying lessons, aligned with the five SEL competencies. Lessons can be taught in any educational space, be it a formal classroom, child-friendly space, library, or informal school. Each lesson is independent of the rest and can be taught in any order. Minimal materials and preparation are required, though educators should take the time to read through the lesson plans prior to class.

Lessons are built around an SEL tool. The lessons introduce the SEL tools using learning activities. Other lesson components include suggested ongoing practices and supplementary games. Following lessons, SEL tools, including the picture, should be posted in the learning space to serve as reminders for healthy SEL practices. Educators should encourage their students to refer to the tools when they are struggling with strong emotions, behavior, or academics.

The SEL tools are:

- **Identifier Tool:** I can name the emotion I am feeling. I choose how I react to my emotions.
- **Confidence Tool:** I see my strengths. I know I can accomplish great things.
- **Breathing Tool:** I take a deep breath to calm down and prepare.
- **Perseverance Tool:** I keep going, even when things are difficult.
- **Empathy Tool:** I care about others. I can see from their perspective.
- **Ownership Tool:** I take responsibility for my own learning.
- **Listening Tool:** I listen with my ears, heart, and mind.
- **Teamwork Tool:** I ask for help when I need it. I help others when they need it.
- **Courage Tool:** I do the right thing, even when it is difficult.

The appendices of this guide also include facilitator guide for the accompanying PowerPoint training: *Child Well-being and Social and Emotional Learning*. This training should be offered to Xavier Project staff and volunteers prior to implementing the SEL learning activities to provide a baseline of understanding of SEL concepts and research.

## **Best Practices in SEL**

Below is a non-exhaustive list of best practices that promote psychosocial well-being. Though the techniques are focused on learning environments, they can be used in any space working with children and young people.

### **Make Learners Feel Seen:**

A significant portion of social and emotional learning includes building children's confidence and showing them that they have value. Simple practices, such as calling students by name, looking them in the eye when you speak to them, and displaying their work shows learners are valued as human beings.

### **Student Ownership of Learning**

Encouraging students to take ownership of their education and learning space takes the pressure off of the educators. This is especially important with the high pupil-teacher ratios prevalent in many classes. By assigning class jobs and including students in the development of class rules, students come to understand that the learning space belongs to them. The space and staff are there to support student learning, but the responsibility falls to the students. Class jobs might include a librarian, teaching assistant, supply manager, or messenger. Be creative! Feel free to develop your own class jobs specific to your context. If appropriate, have students fill out job applications or participate in an interview.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

Instead of focusing on stopping negative behavior, acknowledge and praise positive behavior as much as possible. Notice out loud when students are on track, working hard, or helping others. Instead of saying "stop talking", say "Thank you, [*student name*] for working quietly on your assignment" or "I notice [*student name*] is focused on her work." Be specific in your praise. This encourages learners to emulate positive behavior.

Inevitably, educators will have to stop behavior that is disruptive or unsafe. Use logical consequences. If possible, include learners in figuring out what consequence makes sense. Avoid the word 'punishment' - rather, a *consequence* implies that it is a logical result of the action. For example, if a student is being noisy and disruptive to classmates, they may be told to sit by themselves. If a student makes a mess in the classroom, they might be tasked with cleaning the classroom each day after school for a week. Avoid corporal punishment.

A general rule is 5:1. For every criticism or redirection you give in class, try to make five positive comments. This shows students that you see both the good and the bad.

### **Teamwork**

Education is often teacher-focused, with students interacting primarily with the adult in the room. Whenever possible, allow students to work together and help one another. This encourages positive communication, reinforces academics, and promotes empathy. When students are working on an assignment, you might use the “3 before Me Rule” in which students are required to ask three classmates for help before approaching the teacher or raising their hand. Students are given the chance to support one another. If the question remains, the educator can support a small group at once, instead of repeating the same information multiple times. Teamwork may be useful in the KitKit program with learners at similar levels.

Educators are encouraged to set guidelines for teamwork with the learners. Guidelines should include norms to use positive language, to share ideas but not give answers, and the use of teamwork at appropriate times only.

### **Closing Circles**

Take time to share appreciations and make amends in learning spaces. Holding a closing circle can be helpful. At the end of a lesson or day, take 5 minutes to allow students to share out something they learned, or a goal accomplished from that day. This is also a great space to share appreciations or to make amends. Students can thank a classmate or instructor or apologize for a mistake made. Closing circles ensure that each day ends on a positive note, encouraging students to return. It also gives students a voice, again placing value on what they have to say. Students should not be required to share, as appreciations and amends need to be authentic and meaningful.

### **Promote SEL in Extra Curricular Activities**

Participation in extra-curricular activities, such as sports, drama, or the arts, encourages psychosocial well-being. These activities are great ways to reinforce lessons in all five of the SEL competencies. Taking five minutes to debrief following a sports game or art lesson allows students to understand what skills they are developing and promotes positive behavior. Ask students what skills they practiced, how they solved problems, what they did when frustrated, how they worked together or communicated.

## **SEL Tools and Activities**

The following nine SEL tools and lessons are built around CASEL's SEL core competencies. They can be taught in any educational space and in any order. Please read through the lessons prior to class and feel free to adapt each lesson for your specific context.

SEL Tools and Activities:

1. Self-Awareness
  - Identifier Tool
  - Confidence Tool
2. Self-Management
  - Breathing Tool
  - Perseverance Tool
3. Social Awareness
  - Empathy Tool
  - Ownership Tool
4. Relationship Skills
  - Listening Tool
  - Teamwork Tool
5. Responsible Decision Making
  - Courage Tool

### **Identifier Tool**

I can name the emotion I am feeling. I choose how I react to my emotions.

### **Confidence Tool**

I see my strengths. I know I can accomplish great things.

### **Breathing Tool**

I take a deep breath to calm down and prepare.

### **Perseverance Tool**

I keep going, even when things are difficult.

**Empathy Tool**

I care about others. I can see from their perspective.

**Ownership Tool**

I take responsibility for my own learning.

**Listening Tool**

I listen with my ears, heart, and mind.

**Teamwork Tool**

I ask for help when I need it. I help and encourage others when they need it.

**Courage Tool**

I do the right thing, even when it is difficult.

## Self-Awareness

*The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a 'growth mindset.'*

*(CASEL, 2019)*

Self-awareness refers to the knowledge of one's strengths and limitations and awareness of one's emotions. In order to thrive, children need a well-grounded sense of confidence and must be optimistic about their futures. A 'growth mind-set', in which students are encouraged to focus on their progress instead of levels, should be fostered to booster self-confidence and pride in their education.

The SEL skills that fall under self-awareness include:

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

### Identifier Tool

I can name the emotion I am feeling. I choose how I react to my emotions.

### Learning Activity: Emotions Chart

#### Time

Approximately 30 minutes

#### Learning Objective: Identifier Tool

I can name the emotion I am feeling. I choose how I react to my emotions.

#### Educator Guidelines

- It is okay for children to have negative emotions. By encouraging students to understand and express all emotions, it becomes easier for children to cope with strong feelings.



- Educators should not try to ‘fix’ negative emotions. Rather, this activity focuses on gaining the skill of identifying emotions. By listening and describing feelings, children will feel heard and valued.
- Children may struggle to differentiate between similar emotions, such as anger and frustration. Educators are encouraged to discuss the feelings and situations in which they arise with students to understand the nuances. This allows students to think deeply about what they are feeling and name their emotions with specificity.
- When discussing emotions, feelings related to trauma or abuse may arise. Please refer to your school or organization’s guidelines about referrals for mental health services as needed.

### Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker

### Procedures

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
  - c. Ask students what the objective means. Brainstorm with the class, ensuring they understand the meaning of the word *emotion* (*emotion: a strong feeling*). Write the definition on the flip chart paper.
2. Brainstorm Emotions and Create Chart
  - a. Ask students: “*Who can give an example of an emotion they sometimes feel?*” Call on a student with a raised hand to share an example of an emotion.
  - b. Facilitate a short discussion about each emotion. Question prompts:
    - i. *Has anyone else felt [that emotion] before?*
    - ii. *When do you feel [that emotion]? What makes you feel that way?*
    - iii. *What do you look like when you feel [that emotion]? How do you act?*
  - c. Draw a face or simple icon that represents that emotion. Write the emotion below the drawing. Teachers are encouraged to write the emotion in multiple languages.
  - d. Repeat the discussion for 4 to 10 emotions (depending on the students’ age and the amount of time).
3. Discussion
  - a. Choose one negative emotion shared in class (ex: bad, sad, frustrated, angry).
  - b. Tell students: “*Sometimes we feel negative emotions. What can we when we feel [negative emotion]?*”



## Confidence Tool

I see my strengths. I know I can accomplish great things.

### Learning Activity: Superhero Self Portraits

#### Time

60-90 minutes

#### Learning Objective: Confidence Tool

I see my strengths. I know I can accomplish great things.

#### Educator Guidelines

- This activity can be realistic or not realistic. Either is okay! The goal is for students to recognize something they are good at and how that skill can help their community.
- At times, students might make fun of or disagree with a students' self-identified skill. Remind students that this is a positive space and no teasing will be tolerated.

#### Materials

- Blank paper (one per student)
- Crayons, markers, or paint
- Flip chart (for example)

#### Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students. Tell them that today, they will be sharing their special skills with the class.
2. Conversation Circle
  - a. Sitting in a circle, ask students to brainstorm about things they are really good at.
    - i. Ask about both external and internal skills. For example, external skills could include running fast, having good handwriting, or being good at math. Internal skills might include caring deeply for others, being very observant, or being patient.

- b. Say: *'I've been reading about superheroes. I notice that all of them have special skills. For example, Superman has super strength. Iron Man used his knowledge of technology to build an iron suit that has lots of powers. What do these superheroes use those skills for?'*
    - i. Facilitate a discussion about how superheroes use their skills and powers to help their communities. Take time to listen to specific examples from students.
    - ii. If students get stuck, brainstorm how superheroes *could* use their skills, again, focusing on supporting their communities.
  - c. Say: *'We discussed special skills that each of you have. Now, we're going to imagine ourselves as superheroes. How could we use our skills to help the community?'*
    - i. Facilitate discussion around using special skills to help the community. For example, students who are good at math might imagine tutoring younger children. Those who run fast might imagine catching thieves. Ideas can be realistic or a bit silly.
3. Guided example
- a. Say: *'Now that we know how to use our skills to help our communities, we're going to turn ourselves into superheroes! Let's try one together.'*
    - i. Using flip chart paper, encourage students to help you create your own self-portrait as a superhero.
    - ii. Have students help you identify your own special skill and how it could help the community.
    - iii. Draw a simple self-portrait of yourself as a superhero (consider including a cape or mask in your superhero uniform).
    - iv. Underneath your self-portrait, write:
      - I am [Superhero Name]*
      - My superpower is \_\_\_\_\_!*
      - I use my superpower to \_\_\_\_\_!*
4. Student Work Time
- a. Pass out art materials and allow students time to create their own self-portraits as superheroes.
  - b. Support students to write the prompts underneath their portraits.
  - c. Take 10 minutes at the end of the session to allow students to share out.

## Supporting Practices

- Post self-portraits on the walls of the learning space. This allows students to see that their work is valued and reminds them of a skill they are proud of.
- Reinforce students' special skills when you see them in class and encourage students to use them when they are needed.
  - For example, if a student's special skill is math, ask if they can use their 'superpower' to help a student who is struggling.

## **Supplementary Game: Catch a Compliment**

### **Materials**

- A ball (or anything that can be tossed)

### **Procedures**

1. Gather the players into a circle.
2. Players take turns tossing the ball to different players in the circle. As each toss is made, the tossing player gives the receiving player a compliment.
3. The receiving player then tosses the ball to someone else, again, giving a compliment as they throw the ball.
4. At the end of the game, have a quick discussion. Ask players to share one compliment they received.

### **Additional Game Rules (Optional)**

- If desired, you can gradually add more balls. This will increase the pace and the level of challenge to players as they try to think of compliments to give.
- The game can go on as long as you want. If you are limited on time, have students sit down after they have given and received a compliment. Players only throw to students still standing. This ensures that full participation and gives the game a clear end-point.

# Self-Management

*The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations – effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.*

*(CASEL, 2019)*

Self-management refers to the ability to manage stress, control one's impulses, and stay motivated. An important component, especially for youth, is the ability to set, develop a plan for, and achieve a goal.

The SEL skills that fall under self-management include:

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal setting
- Organisational skills

## Breathing Tool

I take a deep breath to calm down and prepare.

### Learning Activity: Mindfulness- The Breathing Tool

#### Time

20-40 minutes

This lesson can be split into two 20-minute sessions or combined into one lesson.

#### Learning Objective: Breathing Tool

I take a deep breath to calm down and prepare.

#### Educator Guidelines

- There are many different types of mindfulness, meditation, and calming strategies. Educators are encouraged to try a few different techniques and identify what works best for their students and context.

- You can do these activities in one lesson or split them into two lessons, practicing one technique each day.
- At the end of the lesson, whether you teach one technique or both, have students share out how these strategies will help them to be ready for learning.
- During the Body Scan, students might not understand every word. That's okay. The idea is simply to make them aware of their bodies and to physically calm down. They will be able to do so as long as the educator's voice remains calm.

## Materials

- None

## Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
  - c. Say: *'Sometimes, when it is time to learn, we are very excited and energetic. Sometimes we might feel happy, or angry, or worried, or relaxed. Today we are going to practice ways to calm ourselves to be ready to learn.'*
2. Breathing Tool: 10 deep breaths
  - a. The simplest way to calm down if you are feeling worked up is to take 10 deep breaths.
  - b. Guided practice:
    - i. Students can either stand up or sit up straight with good posture. Have students close their eyes.
    - ii. Tell students to place a hand on their stomach and to try to feel their breathing in their belly.
    - iii. Have students take a deep breath in for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, then breath out for 5 seconds. Repeat ten times.
    - iv. Use a calm voice as you tell students to breathe in, hold, and breathe out.
    - v. Instruct students to open their eyes and show that they are ready to learn (with their body language).
  - c. Second practice:
    - i. Allow students to talk or play for a few minutes. Then, call them back together.
    - ii. Practice the Breathing Tool (10 deep breaths).
    - iii. Ask students to show that they are reading to learn.
  - d. Reflection:

- i. Facilitate a class discussion about how the Breathing Tool will help them to be ready to learn.
3. Body Scan (can be taught in separate lesson)
  - a. The Body Scan strategy can help students to become more aware of their bodies. It allows them to calm down physically before starting a lesson.
  - b. Guided Practice:
    - i. Students should sit up straight with good posture, hands on their legs. Have students close their eyes.
    - ii. Remind students to take deep breaths as they listen to instructions.
    - iii. Guide students through the body scan. Speak slowly. Pause for a few seconds between sentences.
    - iv. Script (should take about 3 minutes):

*Pay attention to your body. Take a few deep breaths.*

*Notice the weight of your body. Feel the weight of your body in your chair.*

*As you breathe in, oxygen is enlivening your body. As you exhale, relax.*

*Feel your feet on the ground. Feel the texture of the ground or your shoes.*

*Notice your legs against the chair. Feel the pressure and heaviness.*

*Press your back against the chair. Feel the length of your spine*

*Notice your arms. Relax your shoulders. Feel the tips of your fingers on your legs.*

*Pay attention to your chest. Feel your heart beating.*

*Feel your neck and throat.*

*Let your jaw relax. Relax your facial muscles.*

*Notice your whole body.*

*Take one more deep breath.*

*When you're ready, quietly open your eyes.*
  - c. Practice the Body Scan again after an active break.
  - d. Reflection
    - i. Facilitate a class discussion about how the Breathing Tool will help them to be ready to learn.

### Supporting Practices

- Practice a mindfulness activity before starting the lesson each day.
- When you notice that a student is worked up, encourage them to choose a mindfulness strategy to calm themselves down.

### Supplementary Game: Mindful Movement



**Materials:**

- No materials are required. Students do need space to move around with a start and finish line (outside generally works best).

**Procedures:**

1. Designate a start and finish line. Remind students that this is not a race.
2. Say: *'Sometimes we are mindful when we are still, but we can also be mindful when we move. First, walk to the finish line. Pay attention to the way your legs move, how your arms move, how you hold your head.'*
  - a. Once everyone is at the finish line, ask them to share about what their body did as they walked.
3. Say: *'But, we don't always just walk, do we? What are some other ways you move?'*
  - a. Have students share other ways they move. For each share out, have students try that movement. Each time, they should pay attention to their body, then share out what they notice. Encourage students to notice differences in the movements.
    - i. Examples: running, skipping, hopping, crawling
4. Say: *'Do all animals move in the same way? I wonder if animals are aware of their bodies like we are right now. Let's try to imagine the way an antelope would move.'*
  - a. Have students move from the start to the finish line imagining how an antelope would move. Reflect on what they did with their bodies.
  - b. Ask students to share out other animals and repeat the activity with animals.
    - i. Examples: elephants, chimpanzees, ants, lion
  - c. It's okay to be silly! The idea is simply to pay attention to how our bodies move.

**Perseverance Tool**

I keep going, even when things are difficult.

**Learning Activity: Guided Story-Telling****Time**

120 minutes

**Learning Objective: Perseverance Tool**

I keep going, even when things are difficult.

## **Educator Guidelines**

- Every guided story-telling lesson turns out differently. Students will work together to create a character, setting, and plot.
- Use positive reinforcement and positive redirection as much as possible. Telling students ‘no’ or that they are ‘wrong’ while creating a story can stifle creativity.
- This lesson can be taught all at once or split into several lessons. For example, in one lesson, you might create the character, the setting in the second lesson, and story/plot in the third.
- Educators are encouraged to use the story for future reading materials. Students can write down the story in their own notebooks. They can also be given the opportunity to illustrate the story.

## **Materials**

- Flip chart paper (at least 5 pages)
- Marker
- Notebooks and pencils (optional)
- Art supplies (optional)

## **Procedure**

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
  - c. Review the word *perseverance*. *Perseverance is when you keep trying despite challenges.*
2. Introduce Guided Story-Telling
  - a. Say: *Today we are going to create a story about a character that demonstrates perseverance. We will work together to create one story. We can use inspiration from your lives or create an entirely new story.*
3. Develop the Main Character
  - a. As you ask students questions about the main character, draw and label a picture of the character.
  - b. Say: *We need to create a character that represents us. We need to know everything about this character- who they are, their personality, what they like, what they are afraid of.*
  - c. Working together, answer questions about the character. Encourage students to share ideas, and then decide together on one answer. Feel free to include your own questions.

- i. *What is our character's name?*
- ii. *Is our character a girl or boy?*
- iii. *How old is he/she?*
- iv. *Who does he/she live with? Does he/she have any brothers or sisters?*
- v. *Does he/she go to school?*
- vi. *What is something the character is really good at?*
- vii. *What is something our character is afraid of?*

4. Develop the Challenge in the Story

- a. Ask your students to imagine one big challenge that the main character faces. The challenge can be realistic or fantasy. Remember, you are going to be writing a story about overcoming this challenge.
- b. Encourage students to imagine several challenges, and then choose one to write about together.
  - i. Examples:
    1. *Someone kidnapped her pet dog.*
    2. *The character moves to a new town where she does not know anyone.*
    3. *A monster stole all of the adults away from a village.*
    4. *He has no money to pay school fees.*
- c. Record the challenge on the character page.

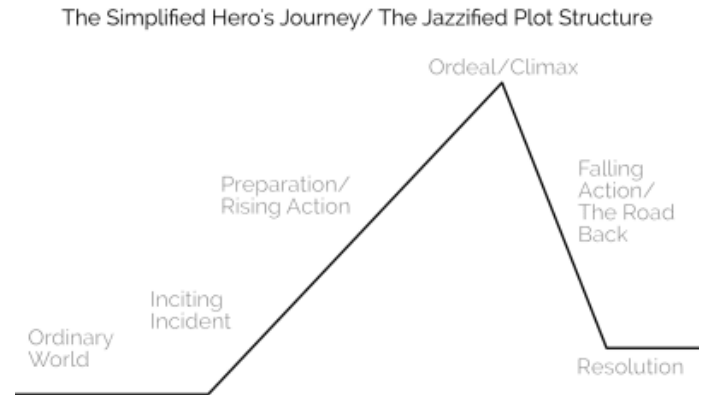
5. Develop the Setting

- a. As you ask students questions about the setting, draw and label a picture or map of the setting.
- b. Working together, answer questions about the setting. The setting might change during the story (a character might travel away from this setting)- that's okay! This practice just gets students thinking about settings.
  - i. *Where does our story take place?*
  - ii. *Is it in a city, a village, in the wild?*
  - iii. *Close your eyes and imagine the setting. Describe what you see when you look around.*
  - iv. *How does the setting make our character feel?*

6. Develop the Plot and Write the Story

- a. Working with the class, create the story together. Record the story on flip chart paper to be read together.
- b. The story can be any length, depending on the age and levels of the students.
- c. It should generally follow the structure of a story:
  - i. Start in the ordinary world

- ii. Inciting incident (the main character faces a challenge)
- iii. Rising action (the challenges get more difficult)
- iv. Climax (the main character overcomes the challenges)
- v. Falling Action (the main character moves on)
- vi. Resolution



7. Read the Story Together and Reflect

- a. Read the story out loud together.
- b. Ask students to reflect about how the main character demonstrated perseverance.
- c. Ask how the class used perseverance in the writing process.

**Optional Additional Lessons (that build on the story)**

- Have students write and illustrate the story in their own notebooks.
- Write and illustrate the story with the students to be displayed in the learning space (one sentence or paragraph with an illustration on each page). Have a student or pair of students illustrate each page.
- Use the story as reading material for future lessons. For example, look for spelling patterns, punctuation, practice reading aloud, etc.

**Supporting Practices**

- At the beginning of each day, ask students to name goals. Goals can be academic (such as learning a new math skill or finishing writing a story) or behavioral (such as actively listening or finishing all work). At the end of the day, ask students to share about how they did on their goals.
- Conduct a closing circle. Ask students to share about a challenging they overcame today. Challenges could be academic or personal.

# Social Awareness

*The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports*

*(CASEL, 2019)*

Social awareness refers to one's ability to interact positively with other members of society. This includes the ability to understand others' perspectives and empathize with them, even when they are from different backgrounds or cultures. At the heart of social awareness is respect for others.

## Social Awareness

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

### Empathy Tool

I care about others. I can see from their perspective.

## Learning Activity: Cross the Line

### Time

40 minutes

### Learning Objective: Empathy Tool

I care about others. I can see from their perspective.

### Educator Guidelines

- Empathy is a skill that is taught over time. In any situation, students should be encouraged to put themselves in another's position and imagine what they must be feeling.
- It is very important to set norms or guidelines prior to this activity. Students will be asked to share personal experiences, which can be difficult.

- This activity is done with no talking to allow students to feel more comfortable and to notice their own feelings. Give kind reminders if a student talks. However, if someone is being disruptive, calmly ask them to leave the room.
- The purpose of this activity is to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of classmates to promote empathy. Often, we get caught up in our own emotions and forget to consider those around us.
- Feel free to adapt the experience prompts to your context. Experience prompts start with easier topics and move to more personal experiences.

## Materials

- Masking tape (or any way to draw a long line in the middle of the room)
- Notebook and pencil for reflection

## Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
  - c. Discuss the word *empathy* and write the definition on the flip chart paper.  
Empathy is *the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else*.
2. Set norms/guidelines. Say:
  - a. *Today, we are going to do this activity in silence. That means there is no talking.*
  - b. *Some strong feelings might come up during this activity, like sadness or anger. Remember, all feelings are important and okay.*
  - c. *We will all be respectful and caring of one another's feelings so that everyone feels safe and comfortable during this activity.*
3. Draw a line in the middle of the floor with masking tape. Have students line up facing the tape, all on one side.
4. Say: *I'm going to call out an experience. If you have had that experience, please cross the line and turn around to face the students on the other side. If you do not feel comfortable crossing the line, even though you are part of that group, that's okay. You can stay where you are and notice any feelings you are having.*
5. For each experience you call out, students will cross the line (if no one crosses the line, wait about 10 seconds and then move on to a new experience). After each "cross the line" category:
  - a. Pause until the students who have crossed the line turn to face the other students.

- b. Say: *'Now notice how it feels to cross the line and notice how it feels to watch people cross the line. [Pause]. Notice who is with you. [Pause]. Notice who is not with you. [Pause].*
- c. Ask everyone to come back together behind the tape.

**Experience Prompts (*Please adapt prompts to your class.*)**

- I like to play sports.
- I help to cook or clean for my family.
- I speak a language other than English.
- I have been teased in school.
- Math is difficult for me.
- English is difficult for me.
- I have been displaced from my home or forced to move.
- I have felt alone or unwelcome.

6. Debrief/Reflect

- a. Facilitate a group discussion with the group. Encourage students to reflect on their own feelings, without using anyone else's name.
  - i. *What feelings did you have during this activity?*
  - ii. *What was the hardest part for you?*
  - iii. *What did you learn about yourself?*
  - iv. *Without names, what did you learn about others?*
  - v. *What do you want to remember about this experience?*

7. Optional: Writing or Drawing Reflection

- a. Students can take a short time to write or draw their reflection.

**Supporting Practices**

- Refer to the Empathy Tool when needed.
- Model empathy through a "Think Aloud." For example, if you, as the educator, are feeling frustrated with a student, model trying to imagine what that student is feeling.

**Ownership Tool**

I take responsibility for my own learning.

## Learning Activity: Classroom Constitution

### Time

30-45 minutes

### Learning Objective: Ownership Tool

I take responsibility for my own learning.

### Educator Guidelines

- Any class rules or guidelines should be *positive*. Students will often suggest rules that are negative (such as ‘no hitting’ or ‘no insulting classmates’). Encourage students to reframe these rules as positive statements (such as ‘respect personal space’ or ‘encourage others’). If a student suggests ‘no hitting,’ ask them what they *should* do instead.
- Be consistent enforcing rules.

### Materials

- Flip chart paper (2 pages)
- Marker

### Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students. Remind students that your role as an educator is to support the students to learn. However, ultimately, students have to take responsibility for their own learning. It is up to them to be successful as a student.
2. Review the word ‘Constitution’
  - a. Say: *‘A constitution is a set of rules or guidelines. Today, we are going to create a constitution together for our learning space. Because learning is the students’ responsibility, you should be included in making guidelines that help you to learn. The rules in the constitution should help to create an environment where you feel safe and supported.’*
3. Brainstorm
  - a. Ask students what they need to be successful as a student. Encourage them to think about both physical things (notebooks, white board) and nonphysical things (encouragement, respect from teacher or classmates).



- b. Ask students what gets in the way of their learning (class disruptions, stolen materials).
  - c. Ask students to brainstorm a list of rules for the class. Students should reframe any negative rules as positive ones (instead of 'no hitting' you might put 'respect personal space').
  - d. Example rules/guidelines:
    - i. Always do your best.
    - ii. Respect class supplies.
    - iii. Respect the teacher and classmates.
    - iv. Listen when others are speaking.
    - v. Come to class prepared to learn.
    - vi. Follow directions the first time.
    - vii. Ask for what I need.
    - viii. Respect others' personal space.
4. Write Constitution
- a. Narrow down your rules to 3-7 rules. You can do this by combining similar rules from the brainstorm phase.
  - b. Write the Class Constitution in large, clear letters on the second piece of chart paper. If possible, have a student with neat handwriting write the final draft.
5. Sign the Constitution
- a. Have every student in class sign the Class Constitution, agreeing to its contents.

### Supporting Practices

- Have students reread the Class Constitution out loud at the beginning of each day or week, reminding themselves of their agreement.
- Refer to the Class Constitution when you see students struggling to follow the rules. Remind them that they signed and agreed to these guidelines.
- Have new students review and sign the Class Constitution. If possible, have another student help to explain what it is.

## Relationship Skills

*The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.*

*(CASEL, 2019)*

Relationship skills include the ability to communicate in a positive manner, listen well, and cooperate with others. Those with positive relationship skills are able to resist negative social pressures and resolve conflicts positively. Finally, relationship skills include the confidence to ask for help when it is needed and help others when they are in need.

### Relationship Skills

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship building
- Teamwork

### Listening Tool

I listen with my ears, heart, and mind.

### Learning Activity: Listening Circle

#### Time

minutes

#### Learning Objective: Listening Tool

I listen with my ears, heart, and mind.

#### Educator Guidelines

- Practicing active listening and thoughtful question through listening circles promotes positive communication and a sense of community. Topics discussed can vary. Educators are encouraged to discuss topics that are relevant to their students.
- Learning circles are a practice that should be used frequently (at least once per week) and in all learning contexts and content areas.

- Topics discussed in listening circles should start out with easier topics while students are learning norms. As they become comfortable with listening circles, topics can become more in depth, personal, or controversial.
- As discussions move toward more personal topics, remind students to use empathy with their peers.

## Materials

- None

## Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Have students sit in a circle, either on the ground or in chairs, but with everyone at the same level.
  - b. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - c. Read the objective out loud with the students.
2. What it looks like to listen
  - a. Facilitate a discussion about how you can tell when someone is really listening.
    - i. *What does an active listener look like?*
    - ii. *What does an active listener do with their body? Their face?*
    - iii. *What actions show that someone is listening?*
  - b. Try to engage students in discussion of body language and asking attentive, thoughtful questions.
  - c. If helpful, write a list on a flip chart or white board.
3. Set norms for the listening circle.
  - a. One student will talk at a time.
  - b. The rest of the students will actively listen.
  - c. Everyone is expected to participate in the conversation with thoughtful questions.
4. Set the prompt for the day (one prompt per lesson)
  - a. Ask a question or give a prompt to the learners.
  - b. Give learners about one minute of silent thinking time.
  - c. Ask for a volunteer to share (or call on a student, though students should not be forced to participate on personal topics).
  - d. Give the volunteer 3-5 minutes to share their response.
  - e. Take 5 minutes for questions from the rest of the learners.
  - f. Repeat with as many students as you have time for (generally no more than 20 minutes total).

## Learning circle Prompts

- Share a happy childhood memory.
- What would you NOT want to change about your life?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- Describe your ideal job.
- If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be?
- What gives you hope?
- What change would you like to see in your community? How could you support that change?
- Describe a time when you were outside of your comfort zone (a time that you did something that made you feel uncomfortable).
- Share about a time when you felt like you did not fit in?
- Describe a challenge you face at school or at home.

### 5. Reflect

- a. Take a few minutes at the end of the listening circle to discuss what you learned today.
- b. Prompt students to share something they learned about a classmate as well as something they learned about listening.

## Supporting Practices

- Hold a Listening Circle at least once per week. The topic could be focused on SEL (such as the prompts above) or academic (such as discussing a book or science experiment). In each discussion, follow the same norms and guidelines.
- During any lesson, educators can promote active listening by noticing learners who are listening in class. Reinforce positive listening behavior whenever possible.
  - Example: *'I can see that Grace is listening because her eyes are on me'*

## Supplementary Game: Story Telling Circle

### Materials

- None

### Procedures

1. Sit in a circle with the students.
2. Start by saying the first sentence in a story (you make it up). Examples:
  - a. Every morning, Grace woke up and did the same thing.
  - b. Walking home from school yesterday, I saw the craziest thing!

- c. As I walked past the stray dog, I heard it whisper, “Can you help me?”
  - d. When Daniel woke up this morning, his town was covered in snow.
  - e. Susan was so excited to see her best friend!
3. Go around the circle, with each student adding one sentence to the story. The key is to listen and build on what the previous person said. It is okay to be silly!

### **Additional Game Activities**

- Students can write or illustrate the story.
- This game can also be played with two students, telling the story back and forth to one another. They can write the story, each person adding one sentence at a time.

### **Teamwork Tool**

I ask for help when I need it. I help and encourage others when they need it.

### **Learning Activity: Role Play- Asking for Help**

#### **Time**

minutes

#### **Learning Objective: Teamwork Tool**

I ask for help when I need it. I help and encourage others when they need it.

#### **Educator Guidelines**

- Students are often shy about asking for help, especially when they are embarrassed to need that help. Celebrate when students ask for help.

#### **Materials**

- Flip chart paper
- Marker

#### **Procedure**

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
2. Brainstorm Activities that Need Help

- a. Say: *Today we are talking about asking for and providing help. Sometimes it can be hard to ask for help, even when we need it. Let's think about when we ask for help.*
- b. Facilitate short discussion on asking for help.
  - i. *How do you decide when you need help?*
  - ii. *Who do you ask for help?*
  - iii. *Do you ask different people for help for different things?*
- c. Create a chart with three columns. At the top, label the columns:

Things I can complete without help.	Things that are easier with help.	Things I need help with.
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- d. Facilitate a short discussion about activities that students can complete by themselves, that are easier with help, and those that require help. Record answers in the chart. Note: answers may be different for different students. What one student can complete alone another might require help.
3. Role Play
- a. Review how to ask for help. Record the four steps of asking for help on flip-chart paper.
 

**Asking for Help:**

    1. Look at the person.
    2. Ask if the person has time to help you.
    3. Clearly explain the kind of help that you need.
    4. Thank the person for helping.
  - b. Using the examples from your first chart, pair students up to practice asking for help. This can be done with one pair in front of the class, or with all pairs practicing at once.
4. Reflect
- a. Facilitate a short group discussion about asking for help. Students can also write a reflection in their notebooks.
    - i. *What was challenging about asking for help?*
    - ii. *Who can you ask for help in your own life?*
    - iii. *How can you let others know that you are willing to help them.*

## Supporting Practices

- Assign 'helping buddies' in class. Each student has a partner (or a small group) who they can ask for support before asking the teacher. This encourages students to work together and ask for the help they need.
- Create a Teacher's Assistant as a class job.

## Supplementary Game: Puzzle Exchange

This activity requires each student (or pair of students) to have a homemade puzzle. Homemade puzzles can be created by having each student draw and color a picture, then cutting into 12 squares. Puzzle creation should be finished before starting this activity. This works best if each puzzle is distinct in color and/or pattern.

### Materials

- Homemade puzzles with 12 pieces (one puzzle per pair of students)

### Procedures

1. Before class, mix up the puzzle pieces.
2. Give each pair of students 12 puzzle pieces (they will not match). There should be 0 left over pieces.
3. Review the steps for asking for help.
4. Say: *You each have 12 puzzle pieces, but they do not all match! Your challenge is to ask for help from your classmates to find the correct pieces and put the puzzle together by trading puzzle pieces. Every time you ask a classmate for help, you must also help them!*
5. Activity Notes:
  - a. This works best in pairs, as students can support one another.
  - b. Two pairs might try to put together the same puzzle. This is an opportunity for the pairs to communicate and work out the problem together by asking and giving help.

# Responsible Decision Making

*The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.*

*(CASEL, 2019)*

Responsible decision making is a skill that everyone must develop in their lives. By the time learners become adults, they need to be able to make important financial, family, and personal decisions through a rational process. Often, these decisions are not easy to make. One important component is the ability to make difficult decisions in the face of ethical dilemmas. Students need to be able to think through what is right and wrong.

## Responsible Decision Making

- Identifying problems
- Analysing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility

### Courage Tool

I do the right thing, even when it is difficult.

## Learning Activity: What Would You Do?

### Time

30-45 minutes

### Learning Objective: Courage Tool

I do the right think, even when it is difficult.

### Educator Guidelines



- This lesson is especially helpful if done after learning about empathy. Students benefit from being able to imagine what someone else may feel. If it has already been covered, review the empathy tool prior to this lesson.
- This activity should be done in a learning circle (following the Listening Tool lesson).
- There is not one right answer to the discussion prompts. Instead of identifying what response is best, encourage students to think about and discuss the pros and cons of each action. Think about who the response benefits and who it hurts.

## Materials

- Notebook or paper for reflection

## Procedure

1. Learning Objective
  - a. Write the learning objective on the white board or flip chart paper prior to class.
  - b. Read the objective out loud with the students.
  - c. Review the Empathy Tool.
2. Introduce Ethics
  - a. Ask if students have heard of ‘ethics’ before. If so, allow students to share what they know about ethics.
  - b. Facilitate a discussion of what it means to be ethical (live by a moral standard).
3. Discussion Circle
  - a. Have students sit in a circle. Say: *‘I am going to give you some hypothetical scenarios (that means situations that are pretend). I want you to imagine what you could do if one of these situations happened to you.’*
  - b. For each situation, give students about 30 seconds of silent think time before calling on any student.
  - c. When a student shares their response, facilitate a short discussion.
    - i. *Who would do the same thing? Why would you do that?*
    - ii. *What might be difficult about your response?*
    - iii. *What would the consequences be?*
    - iv. *Who would act differently? Why?*

## Discussion prompts:

What would you do if..

- you accidentally broke your brother’s favorite toy?
- you saw a girl play by herself at school?
- someone asked to copy your school work?
- you saw a classmate being teased?

- you saw your friend lie to their teacher about finishing their work?

#### 4. Reflection

- a. Take a few minutes at the end of the discussion to reflect about what the students learned about ethics and ‘doing the right thing.’ This can be done in a discussion or students can write their reflections.

### Supporting Practices

- Refer to the Courage Tool as needed in class, especially when you see children struggling with a difficult decision.
- Bring real-life events and news into the conversation. When you witness something in the real world or read a news article, ask students their perspectives. What would they do in that circumstance (example: you see someone begging for money on your walk to school or share an action of a local politician)?

