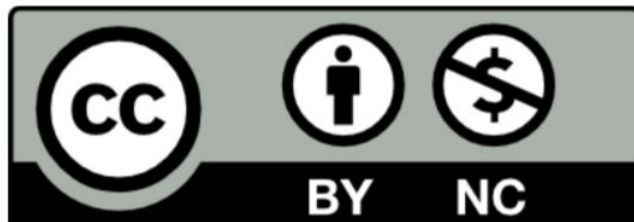# GIRLS LEADERSHIP

All kinds of powerful.

Social-Emotional Check-ins for Distance Learning

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Authors' Note

Why social-emotional learning?
"This unprecedented shift to a new type of learning experience may have a lasting and profound impact on young people's academic, social, emotional, and life outcomes." -CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

We know that in order for our young people to process this experience, feel supported by their learning environment, and build skills to cope, heal, and thrive, it will mean the focus must begin with connection and reflection on our shared community. We create the environment and opportunities in which growth is possible, and social-emotional learning provides the tools.

How can I use this resource?
This resource is highly adaptable and is intended as a foundation to ground students in a brave space. These activities can be used as check-ins at the beginning of class, check-outs at the end, breaks or transitions between other work, or standalone lessons. Create your own sequence, choose a few repeatable structures that you find are particularly impactful, or use these as a jumping-off point to create your own social-emotional check-ins. You know your students best. Listen for what's working for them and what's not.

What can I do to create a brave space for my students?
Start by assessing your students' perception of the space. Below, you'll find the Healing Centered Environments checklist. Take inventory of this yourself, and then turn the questions to your students. Giving students power to co-create the space in which they're learning encourages agency and leadership, and will increase investment and engagement.

Brave spaces are about trust, acceptance, and accountability. Facilitators will find strategies that work best for their style and needs of their class structure, but there are some best practices all facilitators can use. Modeling vulnerability, amplifying students' voices, and having clear and consistent expectations and routines will go far to building this sense of community in which learners both rely upon and push each other.

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GIRLS LEADERSHIP

All kinds of powerful.

Healing Centered Environment for Distance Learning

Online Space

❏ Teachers and students have space to connect in real-time and see/hear each other
❏ Student work is shared with the class and celebrated
❏ Teacher gives options for sitting, standing, and movement during live sessions
❏ Teacher allows for water breaks and bathroom breaks

Instruction/Relationships

❏ Students and teachers know each other's names and pronounce them correctly
❏ Students given opportunity for voice and choice
❏ Students and teachers are encouraged to share stories as a way to connect and learn
❏ Conversations and communication happen more often than getting in trouble

Structures/Routines

❏ There are class agreements that students helped create
❏ Agendas and agreements are shared for everyone to see
❏ There is time built in for mindfulness and reflection

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Countdown Shakedown Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness + Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: To give students a chance to re-energize, shake off tension, and get their bodies moving. Great as a warm-up, a break, an energizer, or a transition from a tough subject.

Time Required: About 3-5 minutes.

Materials: Ability to hear each other.

Disclaimers/Notes: See Differentiation opportunities at bottom.

Prompt: Frame this around what you feel is happening in the space, what you notice about the energy, or how this game sets you up for the work you're moving into or out of.

Have students stand up with enough space to spread their arms and legs wide. Ask them to count along with you.

Counting aloud, you'll shake each limb starting with 8 times, and reducing the number of shakes by 1 each round.

Start with your right arm. Count your shakes aloud: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Immediately switch to your left arm for 8 counts. Then right leg. Then left leg.

When you get back to your right arm, count aloud: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Left arm 7 counts. Right leg 7 counts. Left leg 7 counts.

Back to right arm. Count aloud to 6, etc.

Keep going until you get down to 1 count per limb.

This will start slow and get faster.

Once students are familiar with this game:
Call and Response
Facilitator: *Countdown Shakedown!*
Students (clap on count): *1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8!*
Facilitator: *Let's go*

Discussion/Follow-up:
"Compare how you felt before and now how you feel after Countdown Shakedown. What do you notice in your body?"

Differentiation:
+Process: For mobility, you can have students do this seated, using only arms or hands, or adjust as necessary.
+Content: You can count down and then back up for a longer exercise.

Level: All

Domain: Brave Space Groundwork

Objective/Rationale: To energize, get bodies moving, and laugh together. This works great as a warm-up, transition, or energizer.

Time Required: 3-5 minutes - one song!

Materials: Music - facilitator can play music with volume and sound on so students can hear via video chat.

Disclaimers/Notes: Adjust for mobility needs.

Prompt: Have students get out of their seats and make room to move for the duration of one song.

There are a few different ways to do this:
- Facilitator leads and switches up moves: can be dancing or work-out moves or just silly gestures.
- Facilitator begins and "popcorns" to different students to lead the next move for 10 seconds each. Students continue to popcorn.
- Facilitator frames: Our goal is to pump each other up as much as possible. We are a team and today this is our anthem. Let it go from there.

Take song suggestions from students, or, here are some initial suggestions:
Level Up by Ciara
Shake It Off by Taylor Swift
Let's Get It Started by the Black Eyed Peas
Jump Around by House of Pain
Let It Go from Frozen
Baby Shark (try this with high schoolers)

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** Change it up for mobility accommodations.

Affirmation Circle

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness + Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: To give students a space where they can state what they need to hear and have support from peers. Positive intention-setting for the day and community-building.

Time Required: Depends on group size. 3-minute intro, and about 10 seconds per person.

Materials: Ability to see each other is helpful.

Disclaimers/Notes: Encourage students to think of an empowering phrase that is appropriate and meaningful. For inappropriate responses, simply say "Try again!" If they do not come up with something appropriate on the next chance, say "Moving on!" and go to the next student.

Prompt:
Optional: Share video using "share screen" function. Make sure your sound and volume is on, and students are muted.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNtPVgblzWY

Ask: *"What is an affirmation?"*
Source answers from the group.

Say: *"An affirmation is a phrase that empowers us, reminds us of who we are, and helps us with positive self-talk. Sometimes we get down on ourselves and find that our self-talk becomes critical or negative, and it can make us feel down. Today we're going to use affirmations together to empower each other. I'm going to ask each of you to come up with an appropriate affirmation for yourself: what do you need to hear today?"*

Give students think-time to come up with their own affirmations. Model this.

Say: *"In a moment we're going to go around. Each of you will say your affirmation in the first person: for example, I am a hard worker. After someone says their affirmation in first person, we're all going to chime in and confirm that affirmation for them. So we would say "You are a hard worker!"*

Facilitator set an order (this can be done in chat or out load). Ask students to un-mute themselves. Facilitator begin with their own example.

Discussion/Follow-up:
Once everyone has gone, give a round of snaps.

Optional Follow-up Question: *"What was it like to say your affirmation aloud and have it confirmed for you by the group?"*

Pictogram Check-in

Level: High School

Domain: Games

Objective/Rationale: This activity engages the right hemisphere of the brain, which primes students for thinking creatively, nonlinearly, and abstractly.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Materials: COVID-19 Pictogram

Disclaimers/Notes: Be responsive to the level of English proficiency among your students. Vet this activity for references that may be inappropriate for some settings.

Prompt: Whole group or in small groups, invite participants to solve the pictogram. Share your screen to solve together, or post on a platform.

Discussion/Follow-up: Share out!

ANSWER KEY:
1. Corona virus
2. Pandemic
3. Isolation
4. Quarantine
5. Antiseptic
6. Online classes
7. Empty places
8. Social distancing
9. Elbow bump
10. Flatten the curve
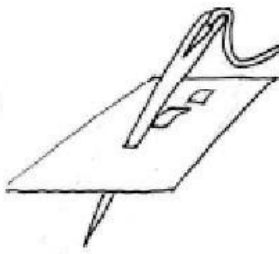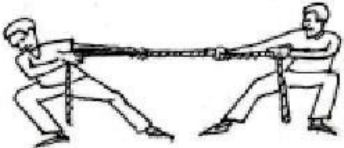
Differentiation:
+ **Process:** This could be a check-out activity, and discussion could take place during the following class.

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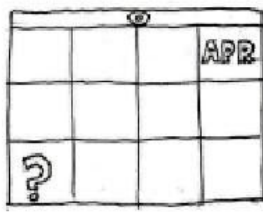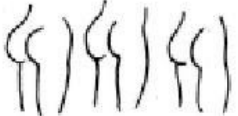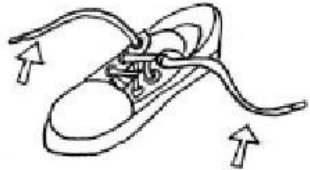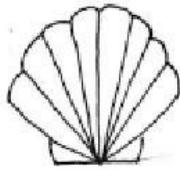
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Knowledge is Power Hour

Level: All, works best for Middle + High School.

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Objective/Rationale: To give students an opportunity to explore questions they're curious about. To re-engage students in the learning process who may be feeling disenchanted with distance learning.

Time Required: This can be a quick 10-minute check-in, or adapted to a longer ongoing project.

Materials: This can be done via video chat or discussion thread.

Disclaimers/Notes: Ask students to keep their questions appropriate -- rated PG.

Prompt: *"What is a question or topic you're curious about and would be interested in learning that we don't really get to focus on in school?"*

Expect answers from all over the board. Feel free to share about something you were interested in while you were in school that you learned about outside of school.

Some examples from past experiences:
"Who invented chocolate?"
"How do you become a sports announcer?"
"Are horses street legal?"
"If the universe is constantly expanding, what is it expanding into?"
"What is the rarest animal on Earth?"

Discussion/Follow-up: If there are questions or areas of interest that come up that align to a field of study or a trade, point it out! Let students know if there's a way for them to study that question in the future in their schooling.

Differentiation:
+ **Process/Product:** This can be done as a longer term project. Once students have come up with their questions they're curious about, you can give them a week or so to research it and come back with 3-5 slides that answer their question or address what they learned about their topic. Let students be "professor for a day" and present their findings. If other students have questions or additional information they can provide, allow a "talk-back session" following each presentation.
+ **Content:** A debrief question for this longer term exercise can be, "How did you learn new things about this topic? What skills and resources did you use? What motivated you?"

Box Breathing Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness +
Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: To give
students strategies to self-regulate.

Time Required: 5-10 mins

Materials: Ability to watch an
online video

Disclaimers/Notes: Focusing on
our bodies can be uncomfortable and
even scary; particularly for individuals
whose bodies store memories of
traumatic events. This is an opt in/opt
out exercise, meant to expose
students to different mindfulness
practices that work best for them.
Recognizing what works/does not
work for them is a mindfulness
practice in itself and ought to be
celebrated.

Prompt:

Say: *Mindfulness is the practice of being fully aware of each present moment
and getting in touch with how we feel physically and emotionally.*

*Studies show that mindfulness reduces stress hormones by calming the
sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for our responses to
danger.*

One way to practice mindfulness is through focused breathing.

*Feel free to turn off your cameras and microphones while we follow along
with this video:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOL3isokmY4

Discussion/Follow-up:

Discussion Questions:
1. How do you feel physically after box breathing?
2. How do you feel emotionally after box breathing?
3. What are some real-world benefits to practicing mindfulness?

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** Using the thumb-scale method, invite students to rate their experience -- thumb DOWN for bad, thumb to the SIDE for neutral, and thumb UP for good. Based on their response, arrange students into small groups to answer the debrief questions.

Guided Meditation Video Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness +
Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: To give
students an opportunity to step back
and practice mindfulness before or
after learning. This can be done as a
check-in or a check-out protocol.
Especially useful if student energy is
all over the place and they need a
chance to re-regulate.

Time Required: Anywhere from
10-20 minutes.

Materials: Ability to hear video.

Disclaimers/Notes: Best practice
is to have students mute their mics
and turn video off while the meditation
is happening. The videos do not
require screen sharing, only sound is
needed to engage.

Prompt: Choose one of the videos from the Girls Leadership Mindfulness
playlist on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI615uhXqtJE4ux4D6WppZxg0T9L9
TvVl

If mindfulness and meditation is new for your students, choose a shorter
video first.

Ask: *"How many of you have done a guided meditation or have a
mindfulness strategy that you use? What's the purpose of mindfulness?"*

If you have a mindfulness practice that you use, share it out. Invite other
students to share.

Say: *"When we're facing times of stress or uncertainty, or things feel out of
our control, it can be hard to get present to the current moment and check
in with ourselves. But it's one of the best things we can do to feel more
connected to ourselves and give our brains time to settle and refocus. Let's
try it out and see how it goes."*

Prompt students to turn off mics/videos, and find a comfortable position.

Play video -- make sure your volume and sound are up (and ask students to make sure their sound is on even if they're muted!)

Discussion/Follow-up:
"What did you notice? How does your body feel after the guided meditation? What did you like? What was weird?"

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** Give students access to the playlist and allow them to choose which meditation they'd like to engage with at the beginning of class. Give a time limit if necessary.

Anxiety Grounding Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness +
Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: Paying
attention to our bodies helps clear the
mind and connect us to the present
moment.

Time Required: 5-10 mins

Materials: None

Disclaimers/Notes: Bringing
attention to our bodies can be
potentially triggering; students may
resist by giggling, tuning out, etc.
That is okay -- gently bring them back
to the exercise.

Prompt:
Invite students to write down:

5 things they can see…
(allow some time for them to write between each prompt)
4 things they can feel…
3 things they can hear…
2 things they can smell…
1 thing they can taste...

Discussion/Follow-up:
Discussion Questions
  ● What did you notice in this exercise?
  ● Were some prompts more challenging than others?
  ● Why do you think it's called a "grounding" exercise?

Differentiation:
  + **Environment:** Instead of individual reflection, this activity can be
    done in pairs.

Zen Counting Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Games

Objective/Rationale: To give students a chance to connect with the energy of the people in the space. This is a great activity to promote connection and focus.

Time Required: About 5-10 minutes.

Materials: Ability to hear each other.

Disclaimers/Notes: Sometimes students will get the giggles during this. If that happens, ask students to take a deep breath all together and start again.

Prompt:
Have students turn their microphones on.

"Our goal is going to be to count as high as we can as a group. We can't go in a pattern, and each person can't say the same number each round. If multiple people say the same number at the same time, it's not the end of the world, we just start back at 1. Let's see how high we can count."

If two students say a number at the same time:
"Back to 1."

If students are giggling or talking:
"Let's re-set. Laugh as hard as you can right now. OK. Together, let's take three deep breaths, and then let's start back at one. How high can we count?"

Discussion/Follow-up:
"What do you notice about the rounds where we were most successful?"

Differentiation:

+ **Process:** You can have students do this with cameras off so they can't see each other and then switch to cameras on. Ask which helped them be more successful and why they think that is.
+ **Product:** This can be a one-time game or you can ritualize it. Keep track of the highest number you've gotten to as a class and try to beat it next time.

One Word Story Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Games

Objective/Rationale: This activity encourages deep listening, creativity, and group-mind. It also challenges the idea that individual effort/recognition trumps group success.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Materials: Ability to hear each other.

Disclaimers/Notes: The story may go off the rails, that's okay. Initiate the end of the story and start again. Students get to explore their comfort level with individualism vs. collectivism and define how they want to work together.

Prompt: Say: *"We're going to tell a story, but each of us can only add one word at a time as we go from person to person, creating sentences. Try not to get too attached to the perfect word; just say a word that keeps the sentence going. If you need a name, use the ones already mentioned. Same with objects, actions, or emotions. The more you can reincorporate ideas in the story, the tighter it will become. To initiate the final sentence, I will say, "And in the end…" or "The moral of the story is…" Now, who has a title for this story?"*

Establish an order for participants.

Discussion/Follow-up:
Discussion Questions:
- What did you notice in yourself?
- What did you notice in the group?
- What was challenging/easy?
- What could we do next time to improve our storytelling?

Differentiation:
+ **Environment:** If the whole group is too large, invite smaller groups to try the activity while others watch. Then rotate.

Name Decoration

Level: All

Domain: Brave Space

Objective/Rationale: To give students a way to connect around identity and center the voices and experiences of students.

Time Required: 15-20 mins

Materials:

Disclaimers/Notes: Let students know it's important and valuable to correct people who pronounce their name incorrectly. The group should make an effort to learn each other's names and how to pronounce them correctly as early as possible. This affirms identities and that willingness to listen to those in the room.

Prompt: Have students write or draw on paper, or create virtually, a representation of their name. Around their name, they should decorate with drawings, symbols, or words that they feel represent parts of their identity.

Give every student space to share the name they want to be addressed by in this space, and anything else they feel is important about their identity to share with the group. This could be more about their name, but could also be about other aspects of their identity they feel are important and want to be respected in this space.

Facilitator can model this first.

Discussion/Follow-up:
"What was it like to share your name?"
"Did anyone learn anything new about someone through this activity?"

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** If you have a large group, it can be useful to give a quick format for sharing. Your name, what it means to you, and one aspect of your identity.

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Sun Shines On

Level: All

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Objective/Rationale: Sharing and connection. Giving students an opportunity to get to know each other on a deeper level even when they're not together.

Time Required: Depends on group size, but about 10-15 minutes.

Materials: Ability to see each other.

Disclaimers/Notes: Remind students that what they share should be true for them. Also make sure they're not calling each other out on things they think are or are not true for their peers. Keep students on mute unless they are the one speaking.

Prompt: *"This game is called "The Sun Shines On." We're going to get to know each other a little bit better in three rounds. In each round, each person will share something that is true for themselves. Everyone else will use a gesture to show if that is also totally true for them, kind of true for them, or not true for them. If a statement is totally true for you, you'll put both hands in the air and wiggle your fingers. If a statement is a little true for you, you'll raise one hand. If a statement is not true for you, you'll sit still. Keep in mind we're not yucking anyone's yum. If it's not true for you, even if you totally disagree, you can stay neutral."*

Prompt Round #1: I like/I am good at.
    Examples: I like riding my bike. I am good at drawing.
Prompt Round #2: I have (experienced).
    Examples: I have broken a bone. I have gone swimming in the ocean.
Prompt Round #3: I am.
    Examples: I am the oldest child. I am someone who struggles with depression.

To give an example of how the gestures work:

Let's say someone says "I am a sister." If I have siblings, I would do silent applause. If I maybe don't have biological siblings but I consider my cousin like my sibling, I might put one hand in the air. If I don't consider myself a sister, I would keep my hands down and sit still.

Discussion/Follow-up:
"Did anyone notice something they had in common with someone else that surprised them?"

Roses & Thorns

Level: All

Domain: Brave Space

Objective/Rationale: To give students space to connect and share what's going well and what's hard for them in a choose-your-own-risk format.

Time Required: Depends on group size. About 10-30 seconds per person.

Materials: Ability to see each other is helpful, not required.

Disclaimers/Notes: Some students may "pass" or opt out. Give them another opportunity once everyone else has shared. Some students may say they have a "thorn" but no roses, or vice versa. If any student's answer stands out to you as particularly concerning, check in with them individually at a later time. Don't make this request in front of other students.

Prompt: *"If life were a flower, it would be a rose: a combination of beautiful experiences and prickly thorns to navigate. When thinking about life over the past week or so, what is your rose? What's a nice, lovely, positive experience you've had, something that's made you happy? What's a thorn you've been navigating, something that has been challenging or difficult for you? We're going to go around and each get an opportunity to share one rose and one thorn. This is choose-your-own-risk; you don't have to share anything you're not comfortable sharing."*

Facilitator share personal example to model the exercise.

Example: My rose this week was getting to read to my little sister before bed, and my thorn is that my mom and I have been arguing a lot.

Discussion/Follow-up: In a group where there is already trust built, it's possible to invite cross-talk once everyone has shared. Cross-talk can sound like support or solidarity, or a respectful question.

Students can opt into or out of cross-talk. A way to ask students to show they're open to cross talk is to have them hold their right ear (if everyone can see each other) or use the chat function to just type "Open" if they're comfortable sharing more or hearing from others.

Example of cross-talk: "I read to my little brother before bed, too. What book did you read to your sister?" Or "I've been having arguments with my mom, too. It's really hard, I get it."

Differentiation:
  + **Process:** Students can type in the chat instead of sharing out loud.

Mirror & Window Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Diversity + Social Awareness

Objective/Rationale: To allow students to reflect on what they see in themselves and others. Great for perspective-taking and reflection.

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Ability to hear and see each other.
Optional: blank paper and writing utensil

Disclaimers/Notes: Prompts are adaptable! If you're trying to get students to explore different perspectives, try it in this format.

Prompt: *"What does this look like in a mirror? What does it look like through a window?"*

Explain: Our perceptions and experiences feel unique to us, but often others are dealing with or processing the same things, maybe just in different ways. In this exercise, we'll get a chance to examine how we're impacted by our experiences and how others may be impacted by theirs.

Possible Prompts:
- How does stress show up for you in your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors? How can it show up for others?
- How do stereotypes impact you? How do you see stereotypes impacting others?
- How has distance learning had an impact on you? How do you feel distance learning has had an impact on your teachers or parents?
- What is the kindest thing someone's done for you? What's the kindest thing you've done for someone else?

Discussion/Follow-up:
"When might it be helpful to look in the mirror for perspective? When might it be helpful to look through a window?"

Differentiation:

+ **Product:** You can have students reflect on the prompt and draw a mirror and a window side-by-side with their thoughts, then share it out with the group.

If You Really Knew Me Check-in

Level: Middle and High School

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Objective/Rationale: To give students insight into understanding each other better and allow open space to share identities.

Time Required: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Ability to hear and see each other.

Disclaimers/Notes: This is an activity best done in a group that has already established a trusting environment. Prep students ahead of time to hold space for each other and be willing to be surprised by what they learn.

Prompt: *"We can each probably come up with some things that we really wish everyone knew or understood about us. It might be the way we pronounce our name, something that we love to do, a part of ourselves we're still getting comfortable with, or something that we hope others will give us support around. In order for others to understand us, it requires us to take the risk of sharing. So today, you're going to choose something you're comfortable sharing with the group that you think is important to know about you. Our prompt is "if you really knew me, you would know…"*

Students can also begin this prompt with "Some people might think I'm...but if you really knew me, you would know…"

Give students about 30 seconds of think time. Have everyone mute their microphones except for the speaker.

Facilitator should begin with an exemplar and to model setting the tone for the space. You can decide on an order beforehand, or popcorn around.

Give snaps or silent applause after each person shares.

Discussion/Follow-up:
"Raise your hand if you were surprised by anything someone said. Raise your hand if you had something in common with something someone said. Raise your hand if you feel closer to anyone after hearing what they said."

"What is the risk of sharing something new about ourselves? What is the benefit?"

Differentiation:
+ **Product:** To make this into a longer exercise, you can have students think of three things to respond to the prompt and have each student do their own presentation on what's important to know about them.

Healing Centered Environment for Home

Level: All

Domain: Mindfulness +
Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: Students
have voice and choice in the creation
of their home environments within
their locus of control.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Materials: Healing Centered
Environment for Home checklist

Disclaimers/Notes: The checklist
questions are not comprehensive; feel
free to add/delete/adjust as needed.
Keep in mind some students' home
environments may not be conducive
to healing in ways they can't control -
check in with students about what
they can control and how you can
support.

Prompt: Invite students to use this checklist to take stock of their own
surroundings right now. If there are any immediate shifts they can make to
align with the checklist, they can go ahead and make them.

Discussion/Follow-up: What adjustments did students make? Invite them
to share out.

Differentiation: This can be a close-out prompt, followed by a check-in the
next day.

Healing Centered Environment for Home

Notice your body:

- ❏ Are you hungry or thirsty? If so, grab a light snack or something to sip on during class.
- ❏ Do you have to go to the bathroom? If so, take a quick break.
- ❏ Are your muscles tense? Bring your attention to your breath and imagine the tension leaving your body with every exhale.

Notice your environment:

- ❏ Is the lighting harsh or soothing?
- ❏ Is the temperature comfortable?
- ❏ Is your workspace organized?
- ❏ Is your workspace decorated?
- ❏ What would you need to feel at peace in your workspace?

  _____

Additional notes:

Comfort Zones (Part One) Check-in

Level: All

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Materials: Ability for students to hear facilitator.

Objective/Rationale: Identifying the physical and emotional feelings associated with comfort allows students to recognize when they are outside their comfort zones.

Disclaimers/Notes: This lesson is meant to precede the lesson Comfort Zones (Part Two).

Prompt: If visualization is a new process for your participants, model what your visualization would sound and look like by thinking out loud and demonstrating with your breath and body. Invite students to relax and take several deep breaths. Provide the option of closing their eyes or shutting off their video if they like.

Say: *Take 3 deep breaths and try and relax your body. If you feel tension or stress somewhere try and relax and release that tension. Picture a place where you know you usually feel really comfortable. Imagine yourself there. What does it look like? How does this place make you feel physically? Are you wearing specific clothes, or holding an object, try and think about all of your senses. Take a few more deep breaths and imagine yourself in your place of comfort. Now, think about the emotions you feel when you are in this comfortable place. What are some words that describe your emotions? Take a few moments of silence to enjoy this comfortable place.*

After a few moments, recall the group back.

Discussion/Follow-up: With a partner, whole group, or through journaling, invite students to describe their comfortable place; listing at least one physical feeling and one emotion they identified feeling when in this place.

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Debrief Question: How do you know when you are comfortable vs. uncomfortable?

Chart or make note of the descriptions participants provide. Prompt students to provide both physical and emotional descriptions.

Ask: Is discomfort always a bad thing? What's an example of a time where discomfort might be important?

Level: All

Domain: Identity +
Self-Awareness

Objective/Rationale: Identifying
the physical and emotional feelings
associated with comfort allows
students to recognize when they are
outside their comfort zones.

Time Required: 15-20 mins

Materials: Ability to share screen
or post Relax, Risk, Reckless Zone
visual.

Disclaimers/Notes: This lesson is
meant to follow the lesson Comfort
Zones (Part One)

Prompt: Remind students of the different physical feelings and emotions
associated with being comfortable and uncomfortable.

Say: *Are there times when being uncomfortable is ok or beneficial? How
might we know when being uncomfortable is beneficial vs. hurtful/harmful to
us?*

Introduce the concept of the "three zones": Relax, Risk and Reckless.

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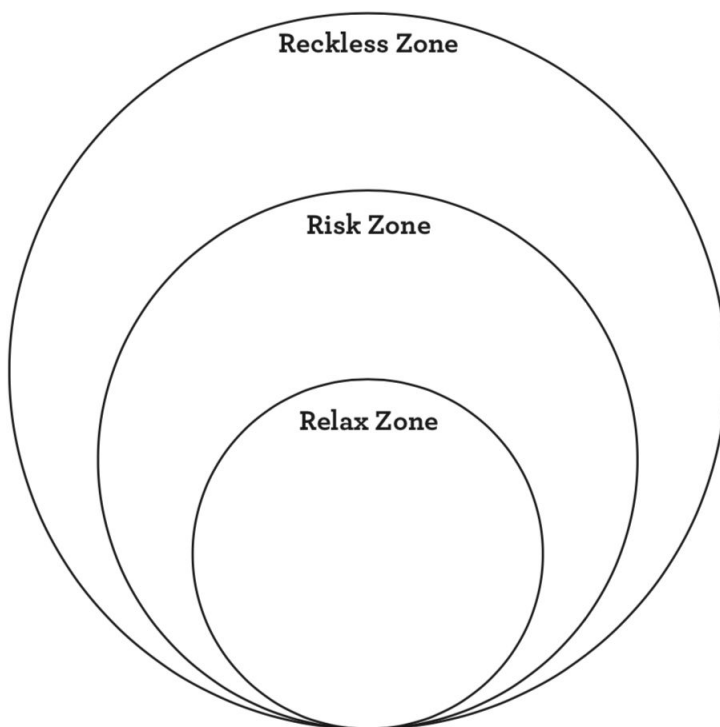
Relax Zone: This is sometimes called the comfort zone and is a great zone - most of what we already know is in this zone. We usually feel pretty confident about the things in this zone. The perks are that we can relax and feel comfortable and sometimes we use this zone to de-stress. The downside is that in this zone, we are rarely being challenged and are rarely learning. The Relax Zone is great, but we can't stay here forever.

Risk Zone**:** A lot of times we think that taking a risk is a negative thing. A positive risk is something that challenges us, but doesn't put us in danger or make us feel panicked. Being in this zone, we can be uncomfortable or even feel annoyed, angry, anxious, surprised, confused, nervous, or in some other way uncomfortable. These reactions are natural and are a part of the learning process. The challenge is sitting with the discomfort we are experiencing, to see what we can learn but also knowing our boundaries so that we do not experience harm.

Reckless Zone: This zone is too far outside our comfort zone and we begin to resist new information and withdraw. This zone can make us feel emotionally unsafe and even physically unsafe. We can shut down or have other strong reactions that make it hard or impossible to comprehend new information. Explain that we all react to this zone differently. Share a few examples of things in this zone generally or for you personally, note that participants are not prompted to share personal examples for this zone.

If time: Introduce the different biological responses humans and animals have to feeling in danger.
Fight, Flight and Freeze (possibly Fawn?)
Fight: feeling like you might explode
Flight: feeling tense, wanting to runaway
Freeze: feeling stuck
Fawn: going along with it because you can't get out of it

If time: share this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG_-Q

Discussion/Follow-up:
Discussion Question: What might be some things in your Risk Zone?

Differentiation: Discussion can be with a partner, whole group, or through journaling.

Future Focused Prompts

Level: All

Domain: Identity + Self Awareness

Objective/Rationale: One aspect of Healing Centered Engagement is that it's future-focused. These prompts allow students to begin crafting a world in which they have power, agency and freedom.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Materials: Something to write with (computer, pen, paper, etc.)

Disclaimers/Notes: These prompts are relatively vulnerable. Do not require that everyone share. Adapted from *No Mistakes: A Perfect Workbook for Imperfect Artists* by Keiko Agena.

Prompt: Invite students to choose a future focused prompt to journal.

1. If it weren't too greedy to ask of the universe, I would ask for _____.

2. If I am ever strong enough to handle it, I would ask to be _____.

3. If I could somehow let go of my nerves long enough, I would definitely _____.

4. If it wasn't such a risk, I would want to _____.

5. If I could have enough support, I would probably try _____.

6. It's way too scary, but if it weren't I might find _____ exciting.

7. If I didn't worry about disappointing people, I would probably quit _____.

Discussion/Follow-up: Invite students to share (small group or whole group).

Stressors Check-in

Level: Middle and High School

Domain: Mindfulness +
Self-Compassion

Objective/Rationale: To give students language to identify what is causing them to feel stress and notice what their reaction to stress is. This helps facilitators understand where students are in processing their emotions and what support they may need.

Time Required: About 15-20 minutes.

Materials:
Optional: Share your screen and scribe stressors as students share. Put a * next to any that have been shared multiple times.

Disclaimers/Notes: Naming individual stressors can be challenging or too revealing for students who are experiencing chronic or complex trauma. Give space for students who pass or say something like "My stressors are everything." Check in with students individually after.

Prompt: *"Everyone has stress in their lives sometimes, but recently we've been dealing with this universal stressor of the pandemic. This has led to a lot of individual stressors: health, finances, social life...any time we experience a huge change that we can't control, it's likely to cause stress. It can be helpful to identify what your stressors are and hear from others so that we can be support for each other."*

Have students think about what their top stressors are right now. Examples: trying to stay on top of schoolwork, my parents still have to go to work, taking care of my little siblings, my grandma is really sick.

Allow students to popcorn their responses, or go around to each student. Students can do silent applause or snaps when someone says something they agree with or are also feeling. Facilitator can scribe these answers for students to have a visual.

*If there are stressors that the facilitator is in control of and could be changed or adjusted, take a pause and ask students for input. If there is a stressor that is out of facilitator control but has a reason behind it, facilitator can acknowledge the stress it is causing and provide rationale.

Discussion/Follow-up:
Once students have shared their stressors, say:

"Common reactions to stress are feeling down or depressed, feeling strung out or anxious, and feeling frustrated or angry. How do you know when you're feeling stress? How do you react? What do you notice? Do you fall into any of these categories?"

Allow students to share.

"Who has found positive coping strategies for dealing with stress? What advice would you give to a friend who's dealing with the same stressors or the same reaction to stress that you have?"

Optional: Facilitator scribe responses.

Thank students for sharing.

Differentiation:
+Content: Share the attached Positive Coping Skills sheet and ask students to choose one to engage with today.

Positive Coping Skills

Here's a list of coping skills that will help you when you are feeling strong emotions such as anger, anxiety, or depression. These activities are not likely to create more stress or problems, so these help you be more resilient and stress tolerant.

Diversions
1. Write, draw, paint, take photos
2. Play an instrument, sing, dance, act
3. Take a shower or a bath
4. Take a walk
5. Watch television or a movie
6. Watch cute kitten videos on YouTube
7. Play a game
8. Clean or organize your environment
9. Read
10. Take a break

Social/Interpersonal (with others)
1. Talk to someone you trust
2. Set boundaries and say "no"
3. Write a note to someone you care about
4. Use humor
5. Spend time with friends and/or family
6. Serve someone in need
7. Care for or play with a pet
8. Role-play challenging situations with others
9. Encourage others

Cognitive (of the mind)
1. Make a gratitude list
2. Brainstorm solutions
3. Lower your expectations of the situation
4. Keep an inspirational quote with you
5. Be flexible
6. Write a list of goals
7. Act opposite of negative feelings
8. Write a list of pros and cons for decisions
9. Reward yourself when successful
10. Write a list of strengths
11. Accept a challenge with a positive attitude

Tension Releasers
1. Exercise or play sports
2. Catharsis (yelling into a pillow, punching a punching bag)
3. Cry
4. Laugh

Physical
1. Get enough sleep
2. Eat foods that nourish you
3. Get into a good routine
4. Eat a little chocolate
5. Limit caffeine
6. Deep/slow breathing

Spiritual
1. Pray or meditate
2. Enjoy nature
3. Get involved in a cause you care about

Limit Setting
1. Drop some involvement
2. Prioritize important tasks
3. Use assertive communication
4. Schedule time for yourself

Adapted from Blake Flannery, 2016
https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/coping-skills-worksheets/

Individualism/Collectivism Check-in

Level: Middle School and High School

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Objective/Rationale: Exploring the major archetypes that show up in different cultures allows students to assess their own values and the values represented in their environments.

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Materials: Individualism/Collectivism slide ([link](#))

Disclaimers/Notes: One cultural archetype is not better than the other. Allow students to determine where their values lie.

Prompt: Read the prompts below and ask students to put up 1 finger or 2 fingers, depending on which prompt resonates with them more.

1. I value independence and individual achievement OR I value interdependence and group success.
2. I value self-reliance and the belief that one is supposed to take care of themselves OR I value reliance on the collective wisdom of the group and the belief that group members take care of each other.
3. I believe learning happens through individual study and reading OR I believe learning happens through group interaction and dialogue.
4. I believe individual contributions and status are important OR I believe group dynamics and harmony are important.
5. I am competitive OR I am collaborative.
6. I am technical/analytical OR I am relational.

Discussion/Follow-up: Share the Individualism/Collectivism slide or handout. Invite students to share out.

Discussion Questions:
- What did you notice?
- Where do you think Individualism is more valued in your environment?
- Where do you think Collectivism is more valued in your environment?
- Are you ever torn between individualistic/collectivistic values?
- How do you think Individualism and Collectivism are playing out during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Differentiation:
+ **Environment:** Discussion can be small groups.

Good Vibes Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Community + Relationship Skills

Objective/Rationale: To give students an opportunity to speak up for themselves or others who they are worried about or are in need of additional support. This gives students voice to acknowledge the challenges facing their communities.

Time Required: About 5 minutes.

Materials: Ability to see each other or use chat function.

Disclaimers/Notes: Not all students will want to participate/share. This is OK. Do communicate that you expect students to be supportive of anyone who does share.

Prompt: *"Who do you want to send good vibes to today?"*

Ask students to think about if there is anyone in their life who they're feeling is in need of some good, positive energy sent their way (including themselves!). This could be a single person, or an entire community they're thinking of. Students are welcome to share why if they feel it's important, but they can also just share the person's name or their relationship to them. Let students popcorn responses. Not everyone needs to share.

Use a gesture, like spirit fingers or snaps, that the whole class will do while students share out who they're sending good vibes to. After each person shares, the class says aloud, "Good vibes, good vibes, good vibes."

To close, you'll "send the energy" by clapping once in unison.

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** You can use gestures, sound, movement, and adapt this in a way that feels authentic to you. The purpose is solely to give students an opportunity to acknowledge and send positive energy to those who

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may be struggling, and to feel supported by their class community in doing so. Be creative!

+ **Process:** If students are using the chat function, the facilitator can read out the names of folks the class is sending good vibes to.

Student Soap Box

Level: Middle and High School

Domain: Advocacy + Action

Objective/Rationale: To give students opportunity to use their voice and share opinions and insights on decisions that need to be made.

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Ability to hear each other

Disclaimers/Notes: Don't ask for student opinions or suggestions if they won't be considered in the decision-making process.

Prompt: *"The people closest to the problem are closest to the solution."*

Share a decision that needs to be made and set parameters for what is and isn't possible. Open the floor for discussion.

Guidelines:
One mic - only one student speaking at once.
Gestures for agreement (snaps, silent applause).
Raise hand to share another opinion.
Sentence starters:
"I agree with ____ because…"
"I respectfully disagree because…"
"I have another idea about how to solve _____."

Important: Only ask for students' opinions if they are going to be considered. Asking for their opinions on a decision you and they have no control over will be frustrating. It's OK to communicate that you will advocate for their stance in the process, but can't guarantee the outcome. But try to pose questions you have some control over. Asking students something like "Do you think we should switch to virtual learning for the fall?" when they won't have any influence over the decision will be frustrating.

Examples:

"I noticed a lot of students are struggling to turn in work by the 3PM deadline. I still need to be able to collect work, so getting rid of assignments isn't an option, but I'd like to hear your suggestions for what would make it more likely for you to get work turned in. What could change or shift?"

"We are trying to decide how to handle prom and graduation this year. I'd like to hear from you all about what would make you feel appropriately honored and celebrated. Our parameters are that we have to follow current distancing guidelines."

Discussion/Follow-up:
Clarify what you heard, major themes that came up, and majority opinion/dissent. Ask if there's anything else they'd like you to consider that hasn't been stated. Let them know next steps.

Example:
"I'm hearing from most of you that moving the assignment deadlines to 9PM will help with the turn-in rate. Thanks to those of you who pointed out how many of you are taking care of younger siblings until your parents get home, I didn't realize that was part of the challenge with getting assignments done. I know some of you said that turning in assignments by 3PM helps you turn your brain off at the end of the school day, so I'll continue to accept assignments between 2-9PM. My next step is to talk to the other 10th grade teachers about the policy shift I'm making. Is there anything I'm missing?"

Differentiation:
+ **Environment:** This can be posted as a discussion question on Google Classroom (or another platform) beforehand so that the discussion can focus on the answers that came up and what next steps should be moving forward.

If I Ran The World Check-in

Level: Middle and High School

Domain: Advocacy + Action

Objective/Rationale: To give students voice and agency in processing decisions made by those in power. This is an ideal check-in for when a major policy shift is set to take place -- take time to dispel misconceptions and task students with coming up with their own plan.

Time Required: 20 minutes

Materials: If you're basing this prompt on current events, facilitator may need to do some prep work to clarify and dispel misunderstandings.

Disclaimers/Notes: Not every student may have a solution. Allow students to provide an answer like, "I agree with what so-and-so said because…"

Prompt: *"If you were in charge of making decisions right now, what would you do?'*

This can be specific to the school, city, state, country, or world as a whole. You can center this prompt on a particular policy or debate, or leave it open-ended. Feel free to front-end this prompt with information or two sides of a debate that's occurring, or provide a pre-reading.

Example:
"Right now, people around the world are trying to decide if we should open schools as normal in the fall, switch to a modified schedule with fewer students in the building at once, or continue virtual learning. If you were in charge of making this decision, what would you do?"

Discussion/Follow-up:
Optional: Provide students with contact information for their local representatives to follow up on their ideas.

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#Goals Check-in

Level: All

Domain: Advocacy + Action

Objective/Rationale: Students are able to imagine a future that empowers them, which is critical to having a healing centered environment.

Time Required: 15-20 mins

Materials: #Goals worksheet. The worksheet can be printed or students can make copies of a shared Google doc and fill out their own.

Disclaimers/Notes: Be mindful of unhealthy aspirations surfacing in response to identifying goals.

Prompt: Ask students to fill out the "wings" on the #Goals worksheet by writing or drawing a few goals they have identified for themselves (Attached resource: Possible Goals). Provide a timeline for their goals (e.g., by the end of the year or by the end of the summer) Share out.

Discussion/Follow-up: Provide students with an example of a "quality of being" someone might have to take on to achieve a goal (e.g., "If my goal is to have a family pet, I might have to take on the quality of being responsible"). In the "body" of the butterfly, ask students to fill in a "quality of being" for each goal (Attached resource: Possible Qualities of Being). Share with the whole group or in small groups.

What is written in the "body" of the butterfly are our values. Ask participants how they feel after the exercise and why it is important to identify one's values.

Differentiation: This could be a check-out activity, where students share their worksheet at the beginning of the next class.

#goals

RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF

HOBBIES / INTERESTS

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

SCHOOL / WORK
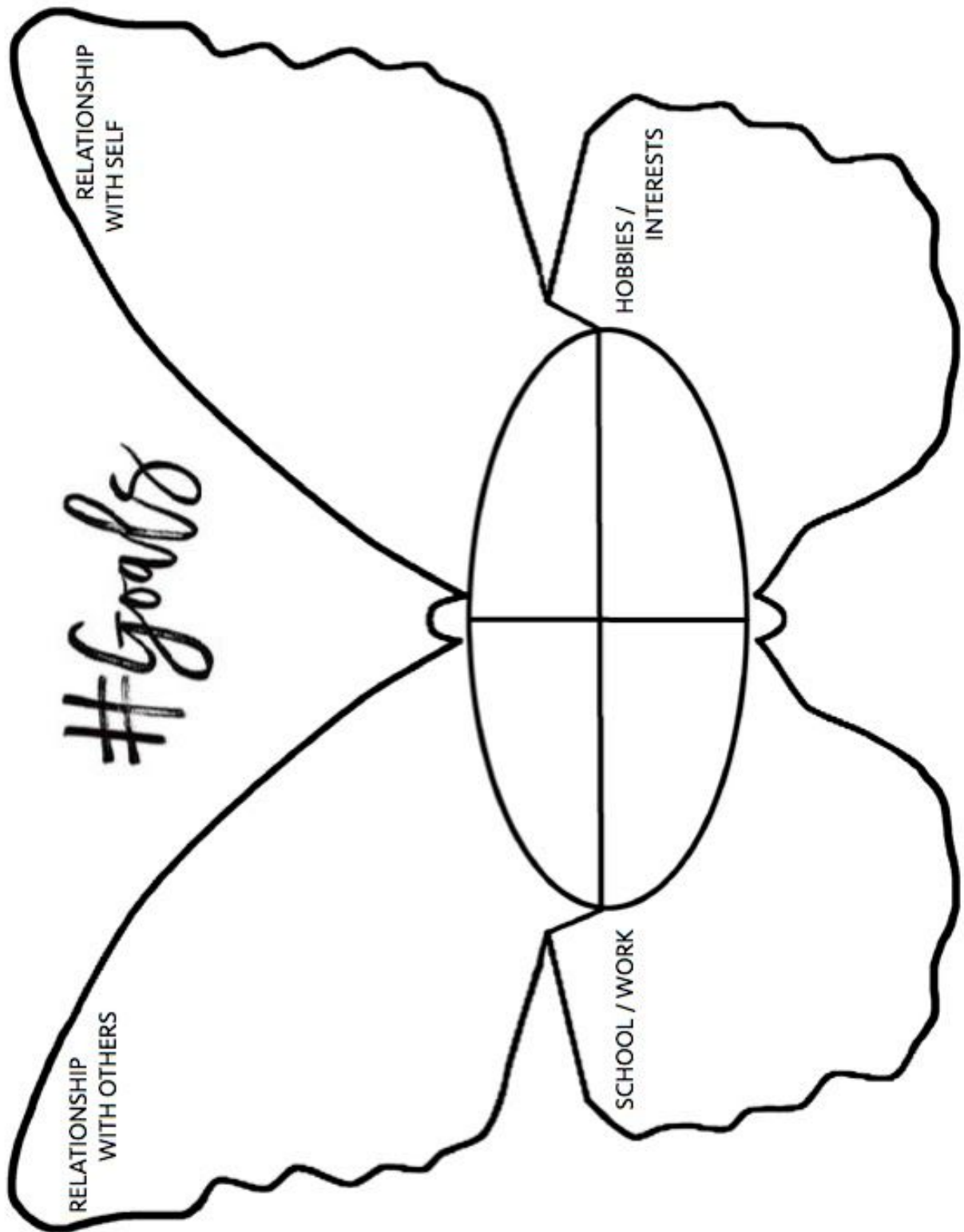
Possible Goals

- Throw a birthday party for my friend
- Write a letter to someone I care about
- Answer all of my texts within 1 hour
- Journal everyday
- Stop negative self-talk
- Stop biting my nails
- Get a summer job
- Increase my grade in Math by one letter
- Create a study guide for Social Studies
- Finish knitting a scarf
- Volunteer at the animal shelter
- Post a video on TikTok
- Learn to drive
- Practice Basketball twice a week
- Read 5 books
- Meditate everyday
- Cook a meal for my family every week

Possible Qualities of Being

- Grateful
- Frugal
- Accepting
- Communicative
- Organized
- Willing to ask for help
- Humorous
- Disciplined
- Relaxed
- Brave
- Determined
- Imaginative
- Creative
- Responsible
- Willing to prioritize myself
- Independent
- Strong
- Compassionate
- Bold
- Trusting
- Detached
- Powerful
- Authoritative
- Patient

Cultural Appreciation Check-in

Level: All

Time Required: 10-15 mins

Domain: Identity + Self-Awareness

Materials: Ability to watch a video together.

Objective/Rationale: Exposure to different cultures and exploring aspects of their own culture, allows students to form their own opinions beyond the biases and stereotypes they're fed by society.

Disclaimers/Notes: Model what culture means to you and what you love about your culture.

Prompt: Watch Teen Vogue's Cultural Appreciation video. https://www.teenvogue.com/video/watch/cultural-appreciation-women-embrace-heritage-natural-beauty

Discussion/Follow-up:
1. "What is culture?"
2. "What do you love about your culture?"
3. "What is a way you celebrate or honor your culture?"
4. "What is a misconception others might hold about your culture that you'd like to correct?"

Differentiation:
+ **Process:** Questions can be asked of students to answer individually, or open it up to the whole group.

Facilitator Notes: