LEARN KIND

TEACHER CURRICULUM

Learn Kind: 3rd–5th Grade

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Teacher Rx

The challenge of educating students after navigating a global pandemic can feel, in a word, *staggering*. But even in changing structures and formats, one thing remains the same: When it comes to building environments and experiences that allow students to thrive, the most important ingredient is *you*. Research has shown clear correlation between the emotional states of teachers and the emotional well-being and even academic outcomes of their students, demonstrating that meeting your students' needs begins with kindness and care for yourself. However, the truth is that even if student success wasn't dependent on you, you deserve the time and resources to care for your own physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This resource has been developed for you using research, resources, and best practices across a variety of fields (including education, neuroscience, and psychology), to help you care for yourself first, and then care for your students.

KINDNESS AND CARE: START WITH YOU

Use the following strategies and resources for ongoing and even daily self-care.

The **Big 7 Strategies** of Emotional Regulation in Uncertain Times

In this webinar, Dr. Marc Brackett of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence shares seven high-impact, research-based strategies to help you maintain mental and emotional well-being in the midst of uncertainty. The Big 7 strategies are:

1. **Practice mindful breathing:** Here's a simple exercise to follow from the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, or you can use the Mindful Moment exercise from Module 3 in your own practice. Headspace also provides free resources for educators.

2. **Maintain a strong immune system:** It's the simple things that go the furthest. Prioritize sleep, spend time in nature (even a half-hour in green space can make a difference!), and nourish your body with nutrient-rich foods - just to name a few!

3. **Cultivate healthy relationships:** Prioritize relationships in which you feel safe, heard, and connected.

4. **Manage your thoughts:** Make gratitude a daily practice, commit to positive self-talk and affirmations, and master the skill of reappraisal.

5. **Manage your life smartly:** Be selective about the scenarios you engage in to limit and prevent stress, and develop routines and daily practices to lessen your cognitive load.

6. **Do meaningful things you enjoy!** Make a habit of prioritizing joy and the things that provide it.

7. **Forgive:** Commit to having compassion for yourself, and give yourself permission to fail, forgive, and move forward.

Start by choosing one strategy to focus on for a week, as a commitment to show kindness toward yourself, and build as you need from there.

Here are a few more strategies to consider:

- **Commit to [reasonable work boundaries](#)**: This has always been difficult, but the changes we've experienced over the last year, including a [shift to virtual learning,](#) have created an even more challenging scenario. Set some time to think through what boundaries you need to protect your health and well-being. Write the, down, communicate them, and commit to them. More than ever, healthy work boundaries depend on the support of school leaders, which leads to the next recommendation…

- **Verbalize your needs**: More than ever, a connected, caring, and supportive team can make all of the difference. Communicate openly as much as possible, and together cultivate a professional culture of empathy.

- **Check your mindset**: Sometimes the smallest switches turn on the brightest lights. The way we frame our thinking is a powerful lever. Throughout this year, check in with yourself on the following mindsets:

  - **The Big Idea:** The upheaval of the 2020-2021 school year gives us a wonderful opportunity to reevaluate how we do things and what is essential. When you feel yourself overwhelmed, check in and ask yourself, "What is the most important thing for students to take away from this [lesson, unit, week, year]?" Let the essentials be your North Star.

  - **Be Possibility-Minded:** On the other side of limitation is possibility. Consider how the constraints you face this year can prompt creative innovation. Ask "What might be possible?"

  - **Growth Mindset:** We can be our harshest critics, especially in times of heightened stress. Show kindness to yourself this year by allowing yourself to learn and to grow. And when in doubt, remind yourself of the [power of yet](#).

2. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT LEARN KIND

We've designed the Learn Kind curriculum to be as flexible, helpful, and timely as possible. Use the following recommendations and options to plan how you'll implement Learn Kind with your students. See the Learn Kind Curriculum Outline for reference.

When? *Learn Kind is designed to fit flexibly into your schedule. Consider the following recommendations, or follow your own pace.*

- **Morning Meeting:** Incorporate Learn Kind into your morning meeting or scheduled class community time. Use it daily or weekly as appropriate for your students.

- **Social-Emotional Learning:** If you have designated time for SEL exploration, Learn Kind is a perfect fit.

- **Integrate into Core Curriculum:** Learn Kind connects to CASEL SEL Competencies, Next Generation Science Standards, and incorporates consistent opportunities for reading, writing, and ELA connections. You may benefit from the flexibility of using Learn Kind across multiple subject areas or skills.

How? *Learn Kind can be taught comprehensively, as individual modules, or as independent activities. Here are a few recommendations, but feel free to craft your own selection.*

- **Full Curriculum in Order** (Appx. 8-12 total instructional hours): If you choose, the entire curriculum (Modules 1-7) provides a scaffolded inquiry-based investigation into kindness, powered by social-emotional learning.

- **The Science of Kindness & Kindness Experiment** (Appx. 4-5 total instructional hours): If you'd like to focus on the scientific perspective of kindness, student research, and kindness experiment, you can bundle Modules 1, 2, and 6.

- **Building Self-Awareness, Empathy, & Relationship-Skills** (Appx. 3.5-4.5 total instructional hours): If you'd like to focus on distinct social-emotional skills, you can bundle Modules 3-5, or choose what is most needed for your students.

- **Use individual activities or modules** (Varies) Depending on your time, and student needs, you can choose to implement individual modules or even individual activities within modules. select and use what you need, when you need it!

Additional Facilitation Tips: Here are a few additional strategies to consider as you use the Learn Kind curriculum.

- **Synchronous vs. Asynchronous:** You may see the words *synchronous* and *asynchronous* throughout the Learn Kind curriculum in reference to facilitation recommendations for each activity. Synchronous refers to activities that are completed together, at one set time, while *asynchronous* refers to activities that are completed independently, or at different times.

- **Consider student accessibility:** Especially for activities that are facilitated virtually, consider strategies to increase accessibility for all students. Here are just a few suggestions:

    - Free Text to Speech (TTS) Extensions: Choose from a number of free tools that students can use to highlight text and have it read to them.
    - Use Closed Captioning in YouTube Videos: Consider adding CC to your own videos and turning them on for others.
    - Show students how to enlarge text on their screens.
    - Have students record their answers and assignments on video or audio if needed.

- **Reflection Options:** Throughout the curriculum you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or others. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have and facilitate reflections accordingly.

3. A FEW MORE HELPFUL STRATEGIES

Use the following strategies and resources to support your students and build safe and strong relationships no matter where learning takes place.

- **Think creatively about masks (if necessary):** Facemasks may still be a part of some learning environments this year, and can certainly present unique challenges to social-emotional learning and relationship building.

  - Check out this helpful article on helping students interpret emotions behind face masks.
  - Consider making a clear face mask to aid student accessibility.
  - Post photos of yourself with a variety of facial expressions around your classroom or post a warm and welcoming photo of yourself in a visible spot.

- **Letter writing** can be a great way to build relationships with your students

- Use this framework to **build and maintain relationships** with students regardless of learning environment

- Send warm or funny **messages to your students by video**. Nothing school-related, just relationship-building.

- Give students **tools to self-soothe or stay connected** even while they're distanced:

  - Air high fives, virtual or self-hugs, and customized handshakes can go a long way
  - Class pets can be interacted with virtually
  - Use "show and tell" or "shared" classroom objects to create connection and community

- **Normalize and Verbalize:** Talk with students about what they're feeling and encourage students to verbalize their feelings and experiences (additional resources in Module 3)

- **Utilize nature** in the learning process as much as possible

- **Get to the "Learning Brain"**: Use Dr. Bruce Perry's Regulate, Relate, and Reason model to activate students' readiness to learn. Here is a fantastic resource from WestEd following this model.

- Become familiar with a trauma-informed approach to teaching in the wake of a pandemic.

CURRICULUM
OUTLINE

Curriculum Outline

TEACHER Rx
START HERE

We know that when it comes to building environments and experiences that allow students to thrive, the most important factor, is a thriving teacher. But beyond the impact to students, you deserve the time and resources to care for your own physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This Teacher Rx resource has been developed to help you first show kindness and care to yourself, and to also give you the tools and strategies to make the most of this curriculum and this school year.

KIND & CONNECTED
CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

The need for connection and community has never been more urgent. The Kind & Connected Classroom Community resource provides activities and strategies to help you build a thriving classroom culture and community, whether teaching in-person or virtually. Use this resource as a standalone toolbox, or use it as a foundation to the Learn Kind curriculum.

MODULE 1
The Science of Kindness

30-40 est total minutes
Module 1 consists of two parts that can be completed in one session, or broken out over a few days.

Students are introduced to the concept of kindness from a scientific, evidence-based perspective. As they learn what research tells us about kindness, they'll identify their own associations, beliefs, and experiences with kindness, and consider how it compares to other's experiences. Module 1 concludes with a Big Question that students will help answer: "Does being kind make us happy?" Students take on the role of scientists who will investigate and answer this question in future modules. Since all students have unique experiences and associations with the concept of kindness, evidence-based, scientific inquiry provides an objective and safe environment to engage with and practice kind acts.

MODULE 2
Using Inquiry
to Guide Research

60-90 est total minutes
Module 2 consists of three parts that can be completed in one extended session, or broken out over two to three days.

Students discover that a variety of skills and attributes consistently contribute to kindness, and that of these, Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills are particularly powerful. Students are guided to discover this through an inquiry and research process and gain a growing understanding that building up these skills* naturally contributes to an increase in kindness.

Students have the opportunity to practice these skills through a variety of activities in Modules 3-5 and put them into action in their Kindness Experiment in Module 6.

MODULE 3
Building Self-Awareness

70-90 est total min

Module 3 consists of five parts (and an optional 6th) that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over 5 days, or combined as needed.

In this module, students discover that kindness to others begins with kindness to self, and that part of showing kindness to yourself is knowing who you are, understanding your thoughts and emotions, and observing the impact they have on your actions. By building self-awareness, students gain the tools they need to care for themselves and manage difficult emotions. Through a series of immersive activities, students develop a variety of self-awareness and self-management skills and reflect on the connection to kindness - both toward themselves and toward others.

MODULE 4
Building Empathy

60-80 est total min

Module 4 consists of 5 parts that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over 5 days, or combined as needed.

If self-awareness says, "I understand what's going on inside of me," then empathy says, "I understand what may be going on inside of you." In this module students learn that in the same way that they have unique thoughts, emotions, and perspectives, so does every other person around them. Through a series of immersive activities, students learn how to build empathy and consider others' perspectives through active listening and observing clues like facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. At the end of the module, students will brainstorm and plan how they can put empathy into action right now.

MODULE 5
Building Relationship Skills

80-100 est total min

Module 5 consists of five parts that can be facilitated individually or combined as desired.

One of the most urgent student needs is the ability to build and maintain healthy social connections. In Module 5, students learn how to put empathy into action and develop the skills to build strong relationships with others - no matter where they are! Starting with caring communication and social engagement, and building to skills like teamwork and problem-solving, students are both engaged in active relationship-building and given the tools they need to continue growing relationships on their own.

MODULE 6
The Kindness Experiment

150-180 est total min

Module 6 consists of 4 parts that are designed to be completed over several class sessions.

In Module 6, students put their kindness skills and knowledge into strategic action, as they design and conduct a scientific experiment to answer the Big Question (first introduced in Module 1): "Which kind acts create the most happiness?" To do this, students are provided with a scientific inquiry procedure that guides them through a three-part process of planning their experiment, conducting it, and making meaning of the results. This module is the core of the Learn Kind curriculum and gives students the opportunity to both perform kind acts and increase the kindness culture of their classroom community.

MODULE 7
The Kindness Challenge

Time Varies
As much as needed (30-45 minute minimum)

The purpose of scientific inquiry is to equip people to take their new knowledge and use it to improve conditions for humanity and the world we live in. In this module, students are challenged to put their knowledge to use for their classroom, school, homes, and community. This activity is designed to be open-ended, driven by students' unique discoveries or your classroom needs, and inspiring to those it is shared with.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

Since Learn Kind is designed to serve students and teachers nationwide, instructional content is developed to connect to several national bodies of standards and core competencies. For the pilot, mapping has been provided to The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Core Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The full release will include mapping to additional standards (Common Core State Standards ELA, National Health Education Standards).

The Learn Kind Curriculum connects to the following standards, core competencies, and sub-competencies:

CASEL Core SEL Competencies (K-8):
- Self-Awareness
    - Identifying emotions
    - Accurate self-perception
    - Recognizing Strengths
    - Self-efficacy

- Self-Management
    - Stress management
    - Organizational Skills

- Social Awareness
    - Empathy
    - Perspective-taking
    - Respect for others

- Relationship Skills
    - Communication
    - Social engagement
    - Relationship-building
    - Teamwork

- Responsible Decision-Making
    - Identifying problems
    - Analyzing situations
    - Solving problems
    - Evaluating

Next Generation Science Standards (3-5):
- Ask questions that can be investigated and predict reasonable outcomes based on patterns such as cause and effect relationships.
- Plan and conduct an investigation collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence, using fair tests in which variables are controlled and the number of trials considered.
- Make observations and/or measurements to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence for an explanation of a phenomenon or test a design solution.

- Analyze and interpret data to make sense of phenomena, using logical reasoning, mathematics, and/or computation.
- Compare and contrast data collected by different groups in order to discuss similarities and differences in their findings.
- Use evidence (e.g., measurements, observations, patterns) to construct or support an explanation or design a solution to a problem.
- Read and comprehend grade-appropriate complex texts and/or other reliable media to summarize and obtain scientific and technical ideas and describe how they are supported by evidence.
- Apply scientific ideas to solve design problems.
- Generate and compare multiple solutions to a problem based on how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the design solution.

KIND & CONNECTED CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

KIND & CONNECTED CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Creating Connection & Safety to Start the Year

Access to safe and healthy social connection and relationships has always been essential for students, but after the challenge of last year, it is perhaps more urgent than ever. The Kind & Connected Classroom Community bundle has been developed from timely research across the education and SEL landscape, informed by best practices from organizations like the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), and the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Use this resource as a starting point and foundation for the Learn Kind curriculum or as an independent toolbox to build a kind and connected classroom community.

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Creating a Class Commitment

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions; Social-Awareness: Respect for Others; Relationship Skills: Teamwork; Responsible Decision-Making: Analyzing Situations, Evaluating, Ethical Responsibility

Estimated Total Time
60–80 minutes

This activity can be distributed across several learning sessions, and total time can be extended or reduced depending on class needs.

Materials
- Whiteboard
- Smartboard
- Digital Presentation Tool
- Chart Paper/Posterboard

When: This activity is most effective if done very early in the school year, when classroom rules, routines, and rituals are established.

Big Idea: This activity is adapted from the evidence-based RULER Approach Class Charter activity by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence for the unique needs of the 2021–2022 school year. In this activity, you'll build the foundation for a kind and connected classroom community with a collaborative brainstorm about how students want to feel while they are "in school", and how to get there. The effectiveness of this activity comes through the activation, validation, and collaboration of all student voices.

PROCEDURE

Grouping: The activity is most effective when done as a whole group either in the classroom or on a virtual call. It can also be done in smaller groups if that is most conducive to your class structure and schedule, and some parts can even be done individually.

PART 1
How do we want to feel?

- Gather students together as a whole group and lead a class discussion that begins with the question: "When you think about this school year and our classroom community, what would you like to feel most often?"
- Have students write down the top five feelings they want to feel most often during this school year on a sticky note, sheet of paper, or in a digital space.

Variations:
  - If virtual: Can be assigned to students as an individual assignment before collaborative discussion in the following steps

- Collect all student responses and (in a visible space, like a whiteboard) create a master list of the feelings shared, combining feelings that are very close in meaning, and marking repeated feelings with a checkmark or tally.

Variations:
  - If virtual: Can be completed by the teacher outside of class, bringing the results back to students for discussion at a later time, or can be completed digitally for virtual learning using interactive tools like Flipgrid.
  - Ask students what consistencies they see in the emotions shared and together identify the top 5 feelings that the class most wants to feel. Begin a new list with just these 5 words.

PART 2
What can we do to feel that way?

- Now that the class has identified their top 5 feelings, ask students to describe the specific behaviors that would lead to or support each feeling.
- Begin with the first feeling and discuss as a group two to three specific behaviors that lead to that feeling.
- It is important to highlight specific actions (like "asking someone how their day is going") rather than broad attributes (like "being considerate").
- If students need additional prompts, you can ask them what it "looks like" or "sounds like" when that feeling is experienced in school or what was happening around them when they experienced that feeling previously.

Variations:
  - Discussions can be held on alternate days, with student groups responding to the thoughts of other group(s), or the teacher synthesizing overall responses.
  - If virtual: Students can be individually assigned with the task of identifying two to three behaviors, collected by the teacher prior to discussion and used to lead collaborative discussion.

- Guide the class to a consensus on one to two specific behaviors that lead to each of the 5 target feelings and record these behaviors in a visible space.

PART 3
If we get off track, how can we get back on?

- As a group, brainstorm 3-5 ways that students can respond if someone's behavior conflicts with the class commitment.
- The focus here is on personal responsibility and may be things like pausing, taking deep breaths, or considering another person's point of view.

(OPTIONAL) PART 4
What if I need extra support?

- It's worth noting that students may find themselves needing extra support in keeping their class commitment or in experiencing their desired feelings.
- Have students brainstorm three to five ways they can proactively reach out for additional support in each of these areas when needed.
- Strategies may include things like sending an email to my teacher or asking a friend for help.

Bring it to life!

- Now that your students have identified how they want to feel, what behaviors will lead them there, and how they will deal with conflict, it's time to create a visible commitment that students can regularly see and be guided by.
- The Class Commitment can take the form of a poster, anchor chart, slideshow, or individual placards. Be creative and let your students lead the way!
- The most important thing is that the Class Commitment includes the 5 feelings and the behaviors that students are committing to.
- Once the Class Commitment is created, have students visibly commit by signing their name to it.

Variations:
  - If it is not possible to have students physically sign one class commitment, you can have students create their own Class Commitment placards or mini-posters and sign their names to it. Or you might collect student "signatures" digitally through any number of interactive platforms.

KEEP YOUR CLASS COMMITMENT MALLEABLE AND LIVING

It's possible (even likely!) that throughout the year, you'll want to revisit the Commitment to consider what's working and what needs to be adjusted. Give your students the freedom to identify necessary amendments when they notice them, and come back together as a group to collaborate once more.

Daily Openings & Closings

See individual strategies for SEL Skills addressed

Estimated Total Time
3-7 minutes

Materials
- None required
- (Optional) Individual white-erase boards

When: Establish the Daily Opening & Closing ritual at the beginning of the school year, and then do daily throughout the year (or whenever the class gathers collectively if virtual).

Grouping: Whole group, individual participation

Big Idea: Students may be entering learning environments (whether physical or virtual) with burdens, anxieties, or concerns. Before academic learning can take place, students must be regulated and feel emotionally safe and related to by teachers and peers. One powerful way to do this at the beginning of the day and to further build community at the end, is to establish the routine of the Daily Opening & Closing (or welcome and goodbye). This resource provides several ready-made ideas as well as the opportunity for student voice and choice.

DAILY OPENINGS

Openings can be used together as a sequence each day, or individually.

1. Get Moving: In the same way that emotions can affect physical behavior, physical behavior can help regulate emotions. Brainstorm with students to create a movement-based welcome ritual and practice it at the start of every day. This might look like:

- A (no-contact) handshake or greeting
- A physical action students perform while walking in the room or getting class started virtually (dusting off shoulders or taking a deep breath)
- A coordinated movement to signal the start of class (once everyone is present, stomp-clap, or two-snaps).

Physical rituals serve as a mental threshold, helping students transition into the safe and positive learning environments.

Note: *While individual movement is effective, studies have shown that synchronizing movements with others creates more confidence than moving individually and creates positive feelings toward those they are moving with.*

SEL Skills: Self-Management: Self-Motivation, Relationship Skills: Social Engagement

2. One-Word (or Emoji!) Check-in: Similar to providing a journal prompt for students to respond to each morning, the *One-Word Check-in* is a quick way for students to share what they are feeling or what is top of mind.

- Have students use the emotions chart in the Module 3 student journal for reference if needed.
- **Option 1:** Take one to two minutes to have students go around the (physical or virtual) room and share just one word that describes what they're feeling or what's on their mind in that moment. When students are not sharing, they should listen without reaction.
- **Option 2:** If students have access to white-erase boards, or if you are virtual, have students draw or type an emoji that represents how they are feeling or what they are thinking about.

- Depending on the feelings and topics students are sharing, it may be helpful to hold a brief discussion, to remind students that you are there to support them, or to do the breathing exercise in Step 3.

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Social-Awareness: Respect for Others

3. Beginning Breather: Using simple breathing exercises is a wonderfully accessible way to help students self-regulate and manage difficult emotions (and enhance positive emotions). While an endless variety of exercises are available, the following can provide a simple and positive start to each day.

- Wherever students are, ask them to close their eyes or choose a fixed spot near them and take three deep belly-breaths in. Students can place a hand on their stomach to help them achieve the belly-breaths.

- Now ask students to call to mind something that makes them feel happy, relaxed, or peaceful.

- Have them take three more deep belly-breaths while they have this in mind.

SEL Skills: Self-Management: Impulse Control, Stress Management

DAILY CLOSINGS

Choose one closing to use daily, use both closings on alternating days, or create your own as a class!

1. What's GROOD?: This is a quick closing activity that gives students the opportunity to reflect on the day and share something "good" that they are grateful for. Each of the options below strengthens different SEL skills while providing students with the many cognitive and emotional benefits of gratitude:

- **Option 1:** Give students one minute to reflect on their day. Then, as with Option 1 on the One-Word Check-in, have students share out one thing that was "*grood*" about their day.

- **Option 2:** Have students partner up. Explain that they will take turns sharing one thing that was "grood" about their day with their partner while their partner listens, and that when you give the signal, they will switch roles. Afterward, reflect as a group by asking students how it felt to have their partner listen attentively.

- **Option 3:** If you are in a virtual setting, you may opt to have students share their responses on an interactive digital platform or as an exit ticket.

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Social-Awareness: Respect for Others; Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement

2. Affirmation or Appreciation: Research has shown that praising others can actually have measurable effects on learning and performance, and feels similar to the brain as receiving money. In this brief but powerful activity, one student is selected to receive affirmations from their classmates. This closing should be done verbally, but can be modified to have the teacher collect student responses digitally and then shared with the recipient as a digital artifact (ex. Word cloud). Here are a few things to keep in mind as you facilitate this activity:

- Let students know that they can literally strengthen each other's brains by sharing a compliment with a classmate.

- Affirmations should begin "One thing I like/appreciate about [name] is…"

- Affirmations should target behaviors, non-physical attributes and attitudes, and things that the recipient does well (avoid physical attributes, including clothing).

- Consider letting students know ahead of time who will be the recipient that day. This will allow them to be thoughtful and prepared.

- Encourage students to be specific when sharing (example: "I really appreciated when you talked me through a math problem I was confused about yesterday").

- As a class, this may take some practice, and will certainly require a sense of safety and camaraderie.

- If needed, modify the activity to include several recipients and have only 5 students share for each recipient. After all students have been the recipient once, begin again and up the responses to 10 (or the entire class if possible).

- Model identifying the behaviors, attributes, attitudes, and talents that you would like your students to notice. The SEL skills are a great place to start!

**SEL Skills: Responsible Decision-Making: Reflecting,
Self-Awareness: Self-Confidence, Recognizing Strengths, Accurate Self-Perception;
Social-Awareness: Respect for Others, Appreciating Diversity;
Relationship Skills: Communication, Relationship-Building**

Establish Discussion "Guardrails"

**SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement;
Social Awareness: Perspective-Taking, Empathy, Respect for Others;
Self-Management: Self-Discipline, Impulse Control;
Responsible Decision-Making: Analyzing Situations**

Estimated Total Time
10-30 minutes

Materials
None required

When: Establish Discussion Guardrails at the beginning of the school year and review before future group discussions or student sharing.

Big Idea: Much of your students' experiential learning and social-emotional development will come through discussion and active reflection. It is important to establish clear and safe discussion norms and guidelines early, and refer back to them often. The following guidelines are recommended, but not exhaustive. Set specific guidelines and terminology based on the unique needs of your classroom and feelings and behaviors outlined in the *Class Commitment*.

DISCUSSION GUARDRAILS

- **Start and end with respect:** Tell students, "Respect has as much to do with body language and tone of voice as it does with your choice of words. Starting with respect also means allowing space for beliefs and opinions that are different from your own."
- **Be ok with some discomfort:** Tell students, "Sometimes real talk can touch on challenging topics, or require vulnerability. It's ok to feel some discomfort. Sticking with it usually means you're growing in some way."
- **Share only what's helpful:** Tell students, "The things you share should be genuinely useful for people to hear. Guide your words with the question, "Does this help them or hurt them?"
- **Keep it in the "room":** Tell students, "Community and empathy can only be built when people feel safe to be honest and vulnerable." As a class, refer back to your *Class Commitment*, or set a new agreement that the things shared with the class won't leave the class, and will only be used to help.

VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS

Meaningful discussion in virtual settings can present unique challenges, but by no means prohibit safe and stretching discussions. Consider the following as you set virtual discussion guardrails.

- **Establish Clear Cues:** If you're facilitating a live and open discussion through a virtual platform, the cues students rely on may need to be a bit more explicit than an open discussion in person. Some simple strategies may be a thumbs up, holding up a green card, or using a feature of the interactive/conferencing platform you're using (like "raise your hand" on Zoom) if students are ready to share or respond.

- **Make Discussion Boards Pop:** Discussion boards can be surprisingly effective for peer-led reflection and growth, but they must be used in the right context and with the right guardrails. Since text and face-to-face communication activate different parts of the brain, here are a few things to keep in mind:

  - In addition to sharing "only what's helpful" as listed above, you might give students the additional guideline of posting "only what will add to or enrich the discussion". Guide students to respond to peers by asking deepening or clarifying questions, by sharing something relevant from their own experience, or by providing genuine and explicit encouragement (depending on the context of the discussion).

  - Additionally, it is important to consider the goals of each discussion, especially as it relates to social-emotional learning. For some of these skills, a discussion board may be used as a supplemental activity only. For example, using a discussion board to teach and practice empathy - without anchoring students in the face-to-face nonverbal cues needed to observe emotion - will ultimately fall short.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Use Powerful Pauses to Refresh

**SEL Skills: Self-Management: Impulse Control, Stress Management;
Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy;
Relationship Skills: Social Engagement**

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

Materials
None required

When: Establish Powerful Pauses at the beginning of the school year, and use regularly.

Big Idea: Whether we call them mindful moments, powerful pauses, or brain breaks, research in neuroscience shows that for students to achieve active learning, new information has to travel a path from the back of the brain (amygdala) to the front (prefrontal cortex), and that emotional stressors and overload can actually block that highway. Giving students the tool of Powerful Pauses and the autonomy to use them when needed helps them build self-awareness, self-regulation, and enables them to take greater ownership of their learning. The list below outlines several simple, powerful pauses that can be facilitated by the teacher or used by individual students, both virtually and in-person.

A Note on Timing: It's important that students have the opportunity to pause and refresh before they become overloaded or depleted. As a standard, students need a three to five minute break for every 20-30 minutes of a focused learning activity if in middle school and every 10-15 minutes if in elementary school. Guide students to notice how long they've been focused on a particular learning task (or when they begin to feel slightly less focused or fidgety), and empower them to use the following strategies below to pause and refresh when needed.

POWERFUL PAUSES

1. Personal Pauses: The following can be used in a whole group setting, or independently as students need (either in the classroom, or independent work at home).

- Stand and stretch
- Walk to another area of the room/outside (if appropriate/accessible)
- Somatic breathing (10 or more deep belly breaths with hand on stomach), or other simple breathing exercises
- Simple observation or listening

    1. Choose a neutral or calming object either inside or through a window to focus on and observe and note its physical features

    2. Close eyes (optional) and listen closely to the environment, silently picking out and noting the different sounds you hear (hum of the AC, wind in the trees, squeak of shoes in the hallway, or footsteps in another part of the house)

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2. Partner Pauses: While most powerful pauses are done as whole groups or individually, Partner Pauses can serve to build social awareness and connection, while providing the same cognitive benefits of other pauses. It's helpful to have partners already selected for these breaks ahead of time. The following are recommendations that can be done virtually or in-person:

- When appropriate, as a whole group, prompt students by saying, "Find your partner and...":

  1. Give an air high five
  2. Make a silly face
  3. Tell them your favorite food (or many similar prompts)
  4. Create a (no-contact) handshake

More Ideas to Build a Kind and Caring Classroom Community

Estimated Total Time
Varies

Materials
None required

The ideas listed below are just a sampling of the many different ways you and your students can further cultivate a kind and caring classroom community this year.

Connected SEL Skills: See each idea for connected SEL Skills

WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?

- **SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Accurate Self-Perception, Recognizing Strengths**
- Give students one of the following prompts:
  - "If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?"
  - "What is your superpower?"
  - "What is one unique thing that you do surprisingly well?"
  - Or, use the "I Know my Strengths" Activity from Module 3

- Have students record their responses one of the following ways and share with a partner, small group, or the whole class
  - Record a video of their response and post on a digital class platform
  - Post a written response on a class discussion board
  - Write as a journal response
  - Share verbally in discussion

CREATE YOUR LEARNING SPACE

- **SEL Skills: Self-Management: Stress Management, Self-Motivation, Organizational Skills**
- Ask students what kinds of visual elements would make their learning space (physical or virtual classroom) inspiring, calming, and focused.
- Share with them some of the things you know about learning environments that may help them (connection to nature, more sunlit and uncluttered spaces can all lead to greater learning outcomes).
- Have students design their learning space (either home learning space or classroom) based on what will best support their learning, and create a plan to put the design into action.

WEEKLY CHECK-IN BUDDIES

- **SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy; Relationship Skills: Communication, Relationship-Building, Social Engagement**
- Each week, create an opportunity for students to pair up and tell them that during the week, they'll be checking in with each other, just to say "Hi" and see how each other is doing.
  - Consider student accessibility and readiness before using this connection strategy as some students may not feel comfortable, may not be emotionally or socially "ready", or may require greater accessibility support.
  - Consider following a mentorship model or allow students to opt in or out as they feel comfortable.
- Check-ins can take place via text, phone call, designated digital platform, in person at school, or through a physical note or letter.
- Check-in messages can be as simple as "Just wanted to say hi and check in!" or can include personal messages and conversation.

CREATE A CLASS MASCOT

- **SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Social Engagement, Teamwork**
- Have students brainstorm and select a class mascot to represent them throughout the year.
- The mascot may be an illustrated character, a physical object (like an action figure), or even a pet.
- Use the mascot as a unifying character, and for levity and camaraderie throughout the year (example: as the subject of teaching examples, or as a model in discussions).

WRITE LETTERS TO EACH OTHER

- **SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship Building**
- Use physical letter writing to increase students' feeling of connection to each other, and the building of relationships throughout the year.
- This strategy can be used with a variety of prompts and formats and can be done weekly, monthly, or as a special activity.
- If virtual, consider what materials and conditions students will need to be able to complete this activity (if physical letters cannot be received by all, consider using platforms like Flipgrid or Google Docs for virtual letter writing).

Learn Kind Curriculum Research & Bibliography

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MODULE

1

THE SCIENCE
OF KINDNESS
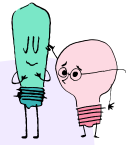
The Science of Kindness

Estimated Total Time
30-40 minutes

Module 1 consists of two parts
that can be completed in one session
or broken out over a few days.

Materials
- Student Journals (digital or print)
- The Science of Kindness Slideshow
- White Board/Smartboard or Digital Presentation Tool (for slideshow)

MODULE OVERVIEW

In addition to the student learning objectives listed below, the intended outcome of Module 1 is to activate students' curiosity about kindness by framing it in the context of scientific inquiry. Knowing that all students have unique experiences and associations with the concept of kindness, evidence-based, scientific inquiry provides an objective and safe environment for students to consider and test kind acts. Being able to separate a kind act from personal identity allows students to experience the benefits of kindness with lower risk and vulnerability.

In Module 1, students are introduced to the concept of kindness from a scientific, evidence-based perspective and have the opportunity to identify their own associations, beliefs, and experiences about kindness. Finally, they're empowered to add their own research when they're prompted with a real research question (the Big Question) to close the module.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand that there is a scientific basis for understanding kindness.
- Students will understand that certain skills and attitudes can increase or support kind acts.
- Students will understand that different individuals have unique associations and experiences with the word "kindness".
- Students will understand that scientific inquiry can lead to new discoveries.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions
- (NGSS) Ask questions that can be investigated and predict reasonable outcomes based on patterns such as cause and effect relationships.
- (NGSS) Read and comprehend grade-appropriate complex texts and/or other reliable media to summarize and obtain scientific and technical ideas and describe how they are supported by evidence.

FACILITATION TIPS

Most of Module 1 is designed to be facilitated with the whole group, with opportunities for small group discussion and individual reflection and response noted throughout.

If you are facilitating virtually, Parts 1 and 2 can be completed:

- *Synchronously*: Over two to three whole group virtual sessions.
- *Asynchronously*: Facilitated through video introduction and presentation, with discussions through platforms like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board or video platforms.
- See the "Natural Breaks" included throughout the module for additional implementation flexibility.

  Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Reflection Options: Throughout the module you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, and others. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

What Does Kindness Mean to You?

Estimated Total Time
5-10 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Introduce Learn Kind to students, and tell them that over the next several weeks or months your class will explore kindness from a scientific perspective, even researching the effects of kindness themselves (if you choose to do Module 6).

Tell students: "We're going to look at current research in a moment, but before we do, let's talk about this word *kindness*."

2. DISCUSSION

The word *kindness* means something different to each student. Some students will have very positive associations with the concept, while others may hear the word and shut down. This discussion is intended to help you uncover the existing associations, misconceptions, and potential barriers that will inform your students' initial and ongoing response to their learning experiences. It will also validate their voice and experience and continue to cultivate a safe classroom community.

First Response: Have each student answer the following two questions in their journal. Before you ask each question, tell your students to close their eyes so they can really concentrate on their actual responses (not the ones they think they should have). Let them know that no response is wrong. Then ask them:

1. What's the first thing you think of when you hear the word *kindness*?
2. How do you *feel* when you hear someone say "you should be kind"?

Student Pre-Assessment: *This portion of the student journal can serve as the "pre-assessment", helping you gain insight into students' understandings and perceptions of kindness before the Learn Kind curriculum begins. You have the option to* share this *with kindness.org.*

Natural Break: *If needed, the learning progression can naturally break here, and be continued starting with "Share Out" at another time. If time allows, continue the activity through "Wrap Up".*

3. SHARE OUT

In the whole group, small/breakout groups, or discussion boards, have students share their responses with each other. Some suggested follow-up questions are:

- Were you surprised by your responses?
- What do you think is behind that response? (beliefs or experiences)
- What do you think kindness means?

4. WRAP-UP

Close the discussion by validating students' experiences and opinions, and tell them that it's interesting how diverse life experiences (and even personality) can contribute to different associations with the same concept. Fortunately, we don't have to rely on just our experiences or beliefs. Kindness is something we can actually study! A large body of research tells us about the impact of kindness on our brains, bodies, and emotions.

The Science of Kindness and the Big Question

Estimated Total Time
20-25 minutes

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Now that students have had the opportunity to access their own perceptions of kindness, it's time to explore what scientific research has revealed.

2. REVIEW AND DISCUSS

Remind students of their discussion in Part 1 and ask several students to share how they would define kindness.

3. PRESENT SCIENCE OF KINDNESS

Remind students that kindness is something that can be/has been studied using scientific inquiry and research. Using the provided slideshow, walk students through an overview of the scientific perspective of kindness and what scientists have discovered about kindness from research.

Guide students to record the definition of kindness in their journals, along with facts and findings that stand out to them, and any questions that arise.

Natural Break: If needed, the learning progression can naturally break here and be continued starting with the "Student Discussion" at a later time. If time allows, continue the activity through "The Big Question".

4. STUDENT DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

Following the presentation, lead students through an individual reflection or group discussion using the following questions:

- Which of those facts stood out to you?
- What other kindness studies should be done?
- Do any questions come to mind now that you've seen these facts?

5. THE BIG QUESTION (Whole Group if possible)

Tell students that while research has shown us a lot about the impact of kindness from a scientific perspective, there's much we still don't know. For example, studies suggest that kind acts have a positive impact not only on the person receiving the act, but also on the person *doing* the act.

Say: "But we don't have many studies that show **if kindness affects the happiness of kids**."

Tell students that they are going to take on the role of scientists and conduct experiments that will help discover whether or not it does.

Say: Here's the Big Question we will answer together: **"Does being kind make us happy?"**

Have students record this question in their journal.

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 1.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

(1) **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)

(2) **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?

(3) **DO** your kind act!

(4) **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel

(5) **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

☐ Invite someone to something ☐ Help someone with schoolwork ☐ Pick up litter or trash ☐ Smile at someone ☐ Give someone a compliment

☐ Thank someone for something they did ☐ Help with a chore you don't normally do ☐ Draw a picture for someone ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

2

USING INQUIRY TO GUIDE RESEARCH

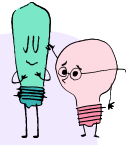# Using Inquiry to Guide Research

Estimated Total Time
60-90 minutes

Module 2 consists of three parts that can be completed in one extended session or broken out over two or three days.

Materials
- Student Journals (digital or print)
- Devices with Internet Access (tablet, laptop)
  - **(Optional)** If in-person, you may use **printed research materials** if students do not have access to devices with internet access
  - **(Optional)** *Horton Hears a Who*, by Dr. Seuss (printed copy or Read-aloud)
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper

MODULE OVERVIEW

In addition to the student learning objectives, the intended outcome of Module 2 is that students will discover (as authentically as possible) that several skills and attributes consistently contribute to kindness, and that of these, Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills are particularly powerful. Students are guided through an inquiry and research process toward discovery, and should complete Module 2 with a growing understanding that building up these skills will naturally contribute to an increase in kindness.

Students have the opportunity to practice these skills through a variety of activities in Modules 3-5, as well as put them into action in their Kindness Experiment (Module 6).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to use scientific inquiry and research to gain new knowledge and skills.
- Students will understand that specific skills and attributes can support and increase kind acts.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness
- (CASEL) Social-Awareness: Empathy
- (CASEL) Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement
- (NGSS) Ask questions that can be investigated and predict reasonable outcomes based on patterns such as cause and effect relationships.
- (NGSS) Read and comprehend grade-appropriate complex texts and/or other reliable media to summarize and obtain scientific and technical ideas and describe how they are supported by evidence.

FACILITATION TIPS

If you are facilitating in-person, Module 2 can be completed in one extended session, or over two to three days.

If you are facilitating virtually, Learn Kind recommends that you facilitate:
- Parts 1 and 3 be facilitated a synchronously with the whole group
- Part 2 facilitated asynchronously as an independent activity
- Discussion can be facilitated *synchronously* through whole group virtual sessions, or *asynchronously* through platforms like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board or video platforms.

    Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Reflection Options: Throughout the module you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

PREPARATION

If you opt for *Research Option 2* (*Horton Hears a Who*), obtain a copy of *Horton Hears a Who* from your classroom, school, or local library prior to Part 1. You may also opt to play this read-aloud video for your class.

Using Inquiry to Guide Research

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

If continuing from Module 1 - Tell students, "Now that you've asked the Big Question, 'Does being kind make us happy?' You're going to continue using scientific inquiry to answer that question."

2. DISCUSSION

Lead a whole group discussion on the purpose of research in scientific inquiry, and how inquiry (asking questions) can help guide the research process. First, review the "Big Question" with students: *Does being kind make us happy?*

Then tell students, "The same way that a big question can lead to a new discovery, thoughtful questions along the way show us which sources to look to for helpful information, research-based evidence, and stories that help us understand."

Ask students: "Before we can answer the big question, what are some smaller questions we can ask to guide our research?"

- **Use this Key Question to model and have students record for their question list:**
  "What attributes and characteristics are consistently linked to kindness?"

- **Model Additional Potential Questions (if needed):**
    - "What does kindness look like in action?"
    - "Which acts qualify as kind acts?"
    - "What specific skills can we build that will help us do kind acts?"

Guide students to record two to three additional questions that will help lead their research. *Ensure that all students have the Key Question recorded.*

Student Research

Estimated Total Time
30-60 min, as needed

1. OPTION 1: STUDENT RESEARCH (Individual, Partners, or Small Groups)

Using the *Research Collection* provided in the student materials (and shown on page 22), have students choose one resource they feel will be most helpful in answering their guiding questions. Allow students 30-60 minutes (as needed) to explore, record new learning, and include any new questions that come up as a result of their research.

FACILITATION TIPS

If in-person: If students do not have access to internet-ready devices, you can print several copies of each resource and allow students to choose from what is available. Audio/Video (if added) resources can be played for the whole group, while students take notes.

If virtual: Assign students this research task individually, in partners, or in small groups to be completed over one or more days.

If virtual: Note: See Student Accessibility Tips for additional support.

For all: Use the following questions to help guide student thinking and reflection during the research process. *If in-person*, ask while circulating during research. *If virtual*, ask students to consider these (any or all) questions while they research:

- Why did you choose this article over another article?
- What key information does this source provide regarding kindness or kind behaviors?
- What evidence does this source use to make their claim(s)?
- As you research, are new questions coming to mind?
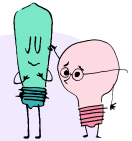
2. RESEARCH COLLECTION

TYPE OF RESOURCE	TITLE	LINK
Article	What is Kindness, Anyway?	https://learnkind.kindness.org/what-is-kindness
Article	Five Reasons Why Being Kind Makes You Feel Good According to Science	https://learnkind.kindness.org/5-reasons

2. OPTION 2: STUDENT RESEARCH THROUGH LITERATURE

(Individual, Partners, or Small Groups)

Students will investigate and observe kindness while actively listening to the children's book, *Horton Hears a Who*. Using what they have already discussed about kindness, students will make observations about the character Horton, and how he interacts with different characters in the book. Students should also observe how the other characters treat Horton.
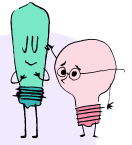
FACILITATION TIP

If virtual: You may share the story,

- *Synchronously* with your class by reading to them, or sharing the YouTube read-aloud during a virtual meeting.
- A*synchronously* by providing a video of yourself reading the story or by sharing the link to the YouTube read-aloud through your class's digital platform. If you share the story *asynchronously*, provide the prompts in the next facilitation tip for students.

  Note: See Student Accessibility Tips for additional support.

If in-person: Students will need their journals and a pencil while you read the book aloud. Pause at various points during the story to have students make observations about Horton that help answer the Big Question. Use the following prompts:

- How does Horton act?
- What does Horton do?
- How does Horton respond to other characters?

Share Research Results and Reflect

Estimated Total Time
15-20 min

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness; Social-Awareness: Empathy; Relationship Skills

1. GROUP REFLECTION (Whole Group if possible)

After students have completed their research, bring the group back together to share their major takeaways. Begin the discussion as open-ended as possible, recording student observations in an open and visible space (whiteboard, chart pape, or digital presentation tool) and encouraging their individual discoveries and learning.

Have students record in their journals some of their classmates' takeaways that stand out to them in their journal.

As discussion continues, prompt students to share discoveries regarding the skills and attributes that empower or are connected to kindness. **Continue to narrow the focus of the discussion to these three key skills:**

- Self-Awareness
- Empathy
- Relationship Skills
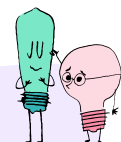
FACILITATION TIP

Students may reference any or all of these skills with slightly different terminology depending on their researched sources and individual understanding. They may say things like *mindfulness, connection, listening or compassion* (or others). To establish a common foundation, reframe these terms under *Self-Awareness, Empathy,* and *Relationship Skills* if they're introduced, in order to establish a common foundation.

If you are facilitating virtually, discussion can be facilitated *synchronously* through whole group virtual meetings or *asynchronously* through platforms like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board platforms.

2. STUDENT REFLECTION (Individual)

Conclude the discussion and research activity by having students list the skills and attributes that empower kindness. Though they may list more depending on their research and discussion, all students should list **Self-Awareness**, **Empathy**, and **Relationship Skills**.

Conclude the activity by having students reflect on and answer the following question in their journal: "How have I used one of these skills to show kindness lately?"
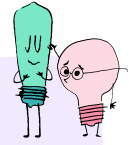
FACILITATION TIP

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 2.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

1 **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)

2 **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?

3 **DO** your kind act!

4 **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel

5 **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

- ☐ Invite someone to something
- ☐ Help someone with schoolwork
- ☐ Pick up litter or trash
- ☐ Smile at someone
- ☐ Give someone a compliment
- ☐ Thank someone for something they did
- ☐ Help with a chore you don't normally do
- ☐ Draw a picture for someone
- ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature
- ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

3

BUILDING SELF-AWARENESS

Building Self-Awareness

If students completed Modules 1-2, they uncovered three key attributes and skills that contribute to kindness: Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills. While there are many skills and attributes that support kind behaviors, these three are particularly powerful. Exploration of these skills allows students to scaffold up to potentially challenging or vulnerable acts by following a natural learning progression:

- **Self-Awareness:** I understand what's going on inside of me
- **Empathy:** I understand what may be going on inside of you
- **Relationship Skills:** I can use empathy and caring communication to build relationships with others.

The majority of Modules 3–5 focuses on the immersive experience of each skill, rather than learning about each skill. Each module can be implemented individually, or in part, or can be taught as a scaffolded learning progression.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify, explain, and exercise Self-Awareness skills.
- Students will be able to exercise the Self-Management skill of Stress Management.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy, Recognizing Strengths, Accurate Self-Perception
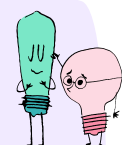- (CASEL) Self-Management: Stress Management

Estimated Total Time
70-90 minutes

Module 3 consists of five parts (and an optional sixth) that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over five days, or combined as needed.

Materials
- Student Journals (digital or print)
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper
- Name the Emotion Deck
- The "How Am I Feeling?" Journal
- (Optional) Geometric Shapes Quiz Deck

FACILITATION TIPS

Module 3 can be completed in one extended session, each part taught individually on separate days, or combined as desired.

If you are facilitating virtually, introduction to Self-Awareness skills and modeling can be facilitated synchronously in whole group virtual sessions if possible, given the nuanced aspects of nonverbal cues and felt emotions.

- If needed, however, some introductions and modeling can be done *asynchronously* via recorded video, and some discussion can be facilitated through tools like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board or video platforms.

  Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Getting Started with Self-Awareness

Estimated Total Time
20-25 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Tell students, "To show kindness to others, we've got to first be able to show kindness to ourselves. Being kind to ourselves is an important first step and more powerful than you might realize. Studies have linked it to personal traits like wisdom, happiness, and optimism, and a predictor of well-being. It can also reduce the negative emotions you feel when you work through difficult experiences."

Tell students, "Part of showing kindness to yourself is knowing who you are, understanding the thoughts and emotions going on inside of you, and connecting that to the behaviors and actions you take. Building up your *self-awareness* gives you the space and understanding to care for yourself, first and foremost. Once you do, it becomes much easier to find opportunities to show kindness to others."

Share a personal illustration with students that demonstrates your self-awareness and the connection between emotions→ behaviors and action→ kindness to self.

> **Example**. "I am not a morning person. It takes me several hours to feel fully alive and myself in the mornings. I know that I can become anxious and irritable if I have to interact too much, too early. To show kindness to myself, I start my morning with a warm cup of tea and read quietly for several minutes to help me level-set before I face the world."

Tell students they will practice self-awareness through several activities to get a better idea of who they are and what makes them tick, and to begin practicing kindness and care toward themselves.

2. NAME THE EMOTION

For students to develop the self-awareness skill of identifying emotions, they must first develop and practice *emotional literacy*. Exposing students to a range of emotions and teaching them to recognize and accurately identify those emotions is an essential starting point. In this activity, students will view a series of faces displaying a variety of emotions and attempt to match the provided vocabulary word with each face.

FACILITATION TIP

You may opt to facilitate this activity by projecting each face for the whole group one at a time, concluding with the Student Reflection.

- **If you are facilitating virtually**, you may opt to assign students Step 1 (on the next page) as an independent activity (*asynchronous*), and then facilitate Step 2 *synchronously* as a whole group.
- You may opt to convert this to a drag-and-drop whiteboard activity for students.
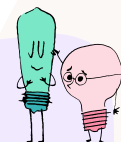
Step 1: Guide students to the ***Name the Emotion*** activity in their journal. Students will have a vocabulary and definitions bank to select from. Tell students to do their best to identify and record the appropriate emotion for each face.

Faces and Emotions Key + Vocabulary List

Ambivalent: Having mixed feelings about someone or something; unable to choose between two opposing feelings
Synonyms: Uncertain, Conflicted, Vacillating

Aggravated: Angry or displeased, especially because of small problems or annoyances
Synonyms: Annoyed, Irritated, Exasperated, Irked

Ecstatic: Experiencing overwhelmingly positive emotion; Full of joy
Synonyms: Jubilant, Joyful, Elated, Euphoric

Dejected: Low in spirits; Unhappy; Depressed
Synonyms: Sad, Depressed, Discouraged, Melancholy

Confident: Having or showing great faith in one's self or one's abilities
Synonyms: Secure, Upbeat, Poised, Unflappable

Tranquil: Free from agitation of mind or spirit; Peaceful
Synonyms: Calm, Relaxed, Serene, Comfortable

Isolated: Feeling separated or disconnected from other people; Lonesome
Synonyms: Lonely, Secluded, Abandoned

Contemplative: Given to long quiet thinking or consideration of an idea or subject
Synonyms: Thoughtful, Reflective, Meditative

Fatigued: Drained of strength and energy; Very tired; Wearied
Synonyms: Tired, Exhausted, Weary

Anxious: Full of extreme uneasiness or worry; fearful of something that may happen in the future
Synonyms: Nervous, Troubled, Worried, Fearful

Step 2: After students have attempted to match the emotions to the facial expressions, go through each face together as a class and discuss each expression and underlying emotion, modeling how you came to your conclusion and asking students what clues led them to interpret each face as they did.

Students will record a concrete example of each emotion in their journal (or have them choose two or three).

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students reflect on the following questions:
- Why do you think it's important to be able to identify many different types of emotions?
- How is this aspect of self-awareness connected to kindness?
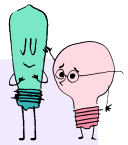
FACILITATION TIP
You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

Practicing Mindfulness

Estimated Total Time
15-20 minutes

**SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions;
Self-Management: Stress Management, Impulse Control**

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Mindfulness is a simple, yet powerful practice that provides numerous cognitive and emotional benefits, including the reduction of stress and anxiety, the ability to better identify experienced thoughts and feelings, and growth in resilience.

Tell students: "*Mindfulness* is exactly what it sounds like: the practice of focusing on what you are thinking, observing, and feeling in the present moment. It's being mindful."

Explain that mindfulness doesn't have to be complicated. The Child Mind Institute recommends several activities that are simple, yet effective, like:

- **Squeezing Muscles:** Starting with your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tightly, counting to five. When you release, notice how your body changes. Repeat the exercise with one new muscle at a time.

- **Belly Breathing:** Put one hand on your stomach (optional: put the other hand on your chest). Breathe into your stomach, feeling it expand. And then slowly breathe out, feeling it deflate.

- **Coloring/Drawing:** This is as simple as it sounds. Color or draw on any materials and with any tools. As you do, focus on the shapes, colors, textures that you see, and the feeling of using your hand(s) to create.

- **Listening to Music:** When listening to music, choose something specific to focus on; listen for specific instruments or sounds, listen closely to the lyrics, or experience the entire song.
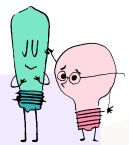
FACILITATION TIP

Learn Kind recommends that this activity be facilitated *synchronously* (whether in-person or virtually), but it is possible to facilitate *asynchronously* by recorded video if necessary, guiding students to follow along in their journals.
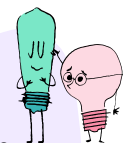
OPTIONAL FACILITATION TIP

Depending on you and your students' level of comfort, it may be helpful to build up to the mindfulness exercise with some practice. You can do this several ways:

- **Real-Talk:** Let's get real for a moment! Tell students that practicing mindfulness might feel a little strange at first, especially if they've never done it before.

- **Share the Benefits:** Talk with students about the scientifically proven benefits of mindfulness.

- **Practice Posture:** Have students practice the mindfulness posture described in "Practicing a Mindful Moment", and have them practice closing their eyes while sitting silently for a few seconds. (You can add to this by having students count their breath to 10).

- **Start Small:** Start with any of the simple exercises listed above, or create your own.

- **Mini-Mindfulness:** (30-45 second mindfulness exercise) Have students sit comfortably, and guide them through the Belly Breathing exercise described above. As they breathe, tell students to feel their breath expanding and contracting underneath their hands. Then ask them to reflect: "How are you feeling right now? Is your body tight, open? What emotions are present?"

2. PRACTICING A MINDFUL MOMENT

Use the following process to lead students through a one or two-minute mindfulness exercise.

1. **Posture:** Before the exercise, guide students to sit comfortably, keeping their backs as straight as possible, and placing their hands comfortably on their stomachs (this will help them feel their breath). Instruct them to be still, yet relaxed during the exercise.

2. **Ground:** Once students are settled, ease them into the exercise by instructing them to notice how their body feels, where the weight of gravity is located, how their hands feel resting where they are, and how their feet feel on the ground.

3. **Sound:** Then ask them to notice any sounds they hear in the atmosphere. Maybe they hear footsteps in the hallway. Maybe the hum of the air conditioner. Or dishes being washed in the kitchen.

4. **Breathe:** Now, after this, tell students to slowly close their eyes and take a deep breath in through their nose, hold it for a moment, and then slowly exhale out through their mouth. Have them repeat this two or three more times, gently instructing them to only think about their breathing.

5. **Notice:** Now, gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s)/emotion(s) bubbling up to the surface. What emotion(s) are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is there is allowed to be there. Allow 20-40 seconds for this part, depending on how long you'd like the exercise to be.

6. **Breathe:** For the last 20 seconds, direct them back to notice their breathing, taking deep breaths in through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.

7. **Transition:** When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes, and notice how they feel.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students reflect on their Mindful Moment and record what they noticed during the exercise using the following questions:

- What did you notice during your mindful moment? Think about what you heard, what you thought, what you felt in your body, and the emotions you felt.
- How does mindfulness connect to self-kindness?
- How can you use mindfulness on your own?
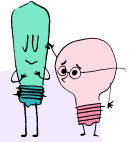
FACILITATION TIPS

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

What Emotion Did I Bring to Class?

Estimated Total Time
10–15 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy, Accurate Self-Perception; Self-Management: Stress Management, Impulse Control

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

This activity takes students a little deeper by using mindfulness to create the space and stillness to get in touch with their primary emotion(s). When students are able to discern the primary emotion they are feeling, they'll reflect on how it's influencing their actions. All of this helps them feel what it's like to identify their internal processes and understand how they might care for themselves (and eventually others). You'll facilitate the exercise for the whole class if possible, while students follow independently.

Tell students that this activity is designed to give them tools that they can use whenever they need to take a pause or begin to work through challenging emotions.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Although Learn Kind recommends that you lead this activity *synchronously*, you may opt to facilitate "The Mindful Moment in Step 1" *asynchronously* through video if needed, while students follow in their journals independently.
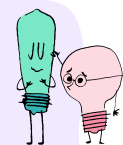
2. PROCEDURE

Guide students through the following procedure.

Step 1. **Practice a Mindful Moment:** Use the following process to lead students through a one-minute mindfulness exercise, similar to the one in Part 2.

Posture: Before the exercise, guide students to sit comfortably, keeping their backs as straight as possible, and placing their hands comfortably on their stomachs (this will help them feel their breath). Instruct them to be still, yet relaxed during the exercise.

Ground: When students are settled, ease them into the exercise by instructing them to notice how their body feels, where the weight of gravity is located, how their hands feel resting where they are, and how their feet feel on the ground.

Sound: Then ask them to notice any sounds they hear in the atmosphere. Maybe they hear footsteps in the hallway. Maybe the hum of the air conditioner. Or dishes being washed in the kitchen.

Breathe: (Time starts here) Tell students to slowly close their eyes and take a deep breath in through their nose, hold it for a moment, and then slowly exhale out through their mouth. Have them repeat this two to three more times, gently instructing them to think only about their breathing.

Notice: Now, gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s)/emotion(s) bubbling up to the surface. What emotion(s) are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is there is allowed to be there. Allow 20-40 seconds for this part, depending on how long you'd like the exercise to be.

Breathe: For the last 20 seconds, direct them back to notice their breathing, taking deep breaths in through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.

Transition: When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes, and turn in their journals to the activity: *What Emotion Did I Bring to Class?*

Step 2. **Identify Emotions**: Now that they've practiced mindfulness, have students identify one or two primary emotions they are feeling, using the chart provided in their journal.

Angry	Anxious	Ashamed	Bashful	Bored	Cautious	Confident
Confused	Curious	Determined	Disappointed	Disbelieving	Disgusted	Ecstatic
Embarrassed	Enraged	Envious	Exhausted	Frustrated	Grieved	Guilty
Happy	Hopeful	Hurt	Interested	Joyful	Lonely	Loving
Optimistic	Overwhelmed	Pained	Peaceful	Puzzled	Regretful	Relieved

| Sad | Satisfied | Scared | Shocked | Shy | Smug | Sorry |

| Stubborn | Surprised | Suspicious | Thoughtful | Uncertain |

Step 3. **Reflect:** Have students answer the question, "How is your primary emotion influencing your behavior today? Consider the connection to your…": (Students may write or sketch in their journals)

- Body language
- Tone of voice
- Facial expression
- Attitude
- How you are treating others

FACILITATION TIP

Tell students that they can use these tools on their own, whenever they need them.
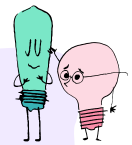
(Optional) Step 4. **Share Out:** Have each student call out (type in chat box or share emoji) the primary emotion they're experiencing and give the class the opportunity to quietly reflect on what they hear. Hearing their peers name their emotions creates a greater understanding of how emotions are expressed, lays the foundation for empathy, and creates a greater sense of community and connection.

The "How Am I Feeling?" Journal

Estimated Total Time
5-10 minutes

**SEL Skills: Self-Awareness:
Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy;
Self-Management: Stress Management, Self-Motivation**

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Video Presentation)

Tell students that when they are able to identify their emotions, they have the power to make constructive and proactive choices about those emotions. Choosing to make positive choices in response to emotions, rather than reacting, is the beginning of the social-emotional skill of Self-Management. And when it comes to Self-Management, even small, intentional choices can have a big impact on how we feel and how we relate to others.

2. JOURNAL OVERVIEW

Tell students that you are going to give them a tool called the "How Am I Feeling?" Journal that will help them develop the skill of Self-Management. Have students access the journal or present it to them as a whole group. Provide an overview of the following steps:

1. Practice a mindful moment (or even a few seconds!) to observe the primary emotion(s) you are feeling.

2. Circle the one to two primary feelings you are experiencing in this moment or illustrate the blank circle if you are feeling an emotion not represented in the chart.

3. Think about something positive you can do from the list of suggested actions and choose one to try.

4. Do the action and record which action you tried.

5. Reflect on how you feel now that you've done the positive action.

6. Repeat if desired, or try a new action and see how you feel.

3. WRAP IT UP

Tell students that this tool is available to them anytime they need and can become a part of their daily routine if desired. The journal can be completed digitally or printed.

I Know My Strengths

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

**SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Recognizing Strengths, Self-Confidence**

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Video Facilitation)

Now that students have practiced identifying and managing emotions, conclude the self-awareness exploration by building confidence through recognizing strengths. Students will practice self-awareness by reflecting on 3 strengths they have and why they are grateful for each strength. Have students reflect on these strengths in their journal. Tell them that they will not have to share these reflections if they don't want to.

FACILITATION TIP

If students have trouble identifying their strengths, you can provide them a list, or help them identify unique strengths that you have seen in them. Some sentence stems to help students are:
- "I'm good at…."
- "I find it easy to…."
- "People usually ask me for help on…."
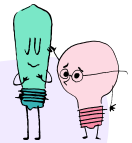
2. (OPTIONAL) MINDFULNESS FINGER FOCUS EXERCISE (Whole Group or Video Facilitation)

After students have reflected on their strengths, have them choose a one syllable word to describe them (strong, brave, star, or boss) and write it in their journal. Guide students through the mindfulness exercise.

FACILITATION TIP

If needed, brainstorm some inspiring one-syllable describing words and post them in the classroom for students to choose..

Virtual Tip: If sharing out is difficult for your students in a whole group virtual setting, provide a prompt through your digital platform asking students to share one-syllable describing words. Then compile and share them before the exercise. Tell students to choose one of the words that they think best describes them and write it down (if possible).
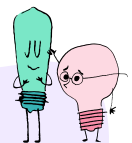
1. Have students bring their thumb to their pointer finger, then middle finger, then ring, then pinky.

2. Have students do the motion again, having all students count aloud "1, 2, 3, 4" together.

3. Have students do it silently, focusing on the count and noticing when their mind wanders.

4. Have students do the hand motion again, but instead of counting 1, 2, 3, 4, have them say "I am so [word they chose]" or "I am a [word they chose]". Have them say it aloud, but quietly.

5. Have them repeat the hand motion, and say their phrase silently.

6. Have students repeat this on their own for several seconds.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Wrap up this section with a reminder to students that part of showing kindness to yourself is knowing who you are, understanding the thoughts and emotions going on inside of you, and connecting that to the behaviors and actions you take. Building up your *self-awareness* gives you the space and understanding to care for yourself, first and foremost. Once you do, it becomes much easier to find opportunities to show kindness to others.

In their journals, have students reflect on how their exploration of self-awareness connects to self-kindness (or their previous research and the Big Question).
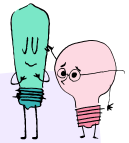
FACILITATION TIPS

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

# Geometric Shapes Quiz

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Accurate Self-Perception

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group Intro, Individual Exercise)

Students will explore the self-awareness skill of accurate self-perception with a simple and fun personality quiz*. Tell students, "Our identities and personalities are wonderfully complex, and we're constantly learning new things about ourselves. No tool can tell us everything about our personalities, but they can help us test certain theories and start to identify specific things about ourselves. This quiz is based on the idea that people may be attracted to certain shapes and forms based on our personalities, attitudes, and experiences. Let's test it out and see!"

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

If needed, you may choose to facilitate this activity (through step 4) *asynchronously* through video and have students work independently before sharing and reflecting together in step 5.
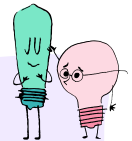
2. PREP

On the whiteboard, smartboard, digital presentation tool, or chart paper, draw a square, a triangle, a circle, and a squiggly line.
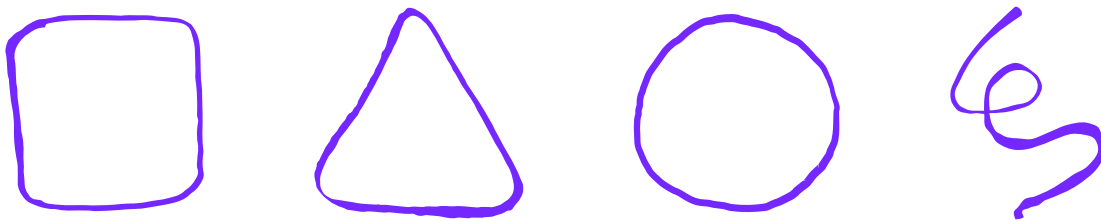
*FACILITATION TIP

This is a fun activity and not intended to be prescriptive in any way. Rather than saying, "If you drew the square, you *are*…", say, "This is the description of the square. Does this sound like you, or is it way off?" **The important outcome of this activity is that students begin to gain awareness of what they actually think, feel, and prefer, even if that means saying "I disagree! I'm more like _____ ."**
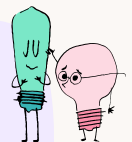
3. PROCEDURE

Have students open their journals to the Geometric Shapes Quiz and guide them through the following procedure:

Step 1: Students draw each shape in their journal one time.

Step 2: Students choose one shape to draw a second time. Tell students to choose whichever shape they are most drawn to or like the most - there's no wrong answer!

Step 3: Tell students that in this quiz, each shape represents certain personality traits and characteristics. As you read the descriptions of each shape, have students listen closely to identify which traits sound true for them and which ones don't.

| SHAPE	DESCRIPTION
Square	If you are drawn to the square, you may be known as a hard worker. You might persevere and always strive to get the job done. You may be very organized and detail-oriented and prefer to have a plan rather than be spontaneous. You might like to think about things logically and analytically, rather than going with your gut instinct.
Triangle	If you are drawn to the triangle, you might be known as a leader. You may be good at focusing on goals and making quick and decisive choices. It may be easy for you to find confidence in your abilities, and you might prefer to take action right away, rather than spend time planning. You may be very focused on your goals and have no problem motivating yourself to accomplish them.
Circle	If you are drawn to the circle, you may be very interested in building good relationships and caring for the people around you. It might be easy for you to empathize and sympathize with others, feeling their happiness or pain like it's your own. If there's a disagreement, you might often be the peacemaker and do your best to keep everybody happy.
Squiggly Line	If you are drawn to the squiggle, you may be highly creative and love to generate new ideas. You might find yourself thinking "what if?" a lot of the time. Instead of following the norm, you may find yourself thinking outside of the box, and doing things differently than most. It may be natural for you to think about the possibilities and think about the future.

Step 4: Have students reflect on the following questions in their journals (allow them to choose one to two):

- Does your chosen shape describe you?
- Do any of the characteristics match your personality?
- Do any of the characteristics not match your personality?
- Which shape description did you actually relate to the most?
- If you could describe yourself with any shape in the world, which would you choose?

Step 5: Invite students to share their reflections with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Give students the option of whether or not they share, based on what they feel comfortable with. Tell students that a part of self-awareness is recognizing when they feel comfortable sharing something about themselves publicly or keeping it private.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Choose a creative alternative format for students to share their results!
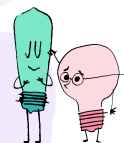
Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 3.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

1. **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)
2. **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

   WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
   WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
   WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?
3. **DO** your kind act!
4. **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel
5. **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

- ☐ Invite someone to something
- ☐ Help someone with schoolwork
- ☐ Pick up litter or trash
- ☐ Smile at someone
- ☐ Give someone a compliment
- ☐ Thank someone for something they did
- ☐ Help with a chore you don't normally do
- ☐ Draw a picture for someone
- ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature
- ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

4

BUILDING
EMPATHY

Building Empathy

MODULE OVERVIEW

If students completed Modules 1 to 2, they uncovered three key attributes and skills that contribute to kindness: Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills. While there are many skills and attributes that support kind behaviors, these three are particularly powerful. Exploration of these skills allow students to scaffold up to potentially challenging or vulnerable acts by following a natural learning progression:

- **Self-Awareness:** I understand what's going on *inside of me*
- **Empathy:** I understand what may be going on *inside of you*
- **Relationship Skills:** I can use empathy and caring communication to *build relationships* with others.

The majority of Modules 3-5 focus on the immersive experience of each skill, rather than learning about each skill. Each module can be implemented individually, or in part, or can be taught as a scaffolded learning progression.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to exercise the Self-Awareness skills of Identifying Emotions and Accurate Self-Perception.
- Students will be able to identify, explain, and exercise the Social Awareness skills of Empathy and Perspective-Taking.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness - Identifying Emotions, Accurate Self-Perception
- (CASEL) Social Awareness - Empathy, Perspective-taking, Respect for Others
- (CASEL) Relationship Skills - Communication

Estimated Total Time
60-80 minutes

Module 4 consists of 5 parts that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over 5 days, or combined as needed.
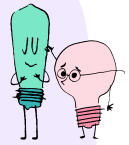
Materials
- Student Journals (digital or print)
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper
- Name the Emotion Deck
- (Optional) Miro Brainstorming Tool

FACILITATION TIPS

Module 4 consists of 5 parts that can be completed in one extended session, taught individually over 5 days, or combined as needed.

If you are facilitating virtually, Learn Kind recommends that:
- Parts 1-4 be facilitated *synchronously* in whole group virtual sessions if possible, given the nuanced aspects of nonverbal cues and perceived emotions.
- *If needed*, however, some introductions and modeling can be done *asynchronously* via recorded video, and some discussion can be facilitated through tools like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board platforms.

Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Prior to facilitating this module, it will be important to revisit the Classroom Commitment and Discussion Guardrails you established through the Kind & Connected Classroom Community resource, or other community guidelines you've put in place.

Reflection Options: Throughout the module you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, and others. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

Introduction to Empathy

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy, Perspective-Taking

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

Self-awareness is a powerful piece of the kindness puzzle, but for students, it's just the beginning. The next step is to build on the understanding of our own internal processes, and realize that everyone has their own inner orchestra playing as well.

Tell students, "We each have internal thoughts, emotions, and processes taking place at every given moment. And even though there are many similarities between us, it's important to understand that each person is wholly unique and may think, respond, and feel differently about a given circumstance than you do. We have to be able to put ourselves in other peoples' shoes, and imagine what they may be thinking, feeling, or needing to truly show kindness."

"The ability to share someone else's perspective and feelings is called **empathy**."

2. WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

Choose one or both of the following questions.

- "Think of a moment when you were feeling a certain way, and you felt totally understood by another person."
- "Think of a moment when you were going through something big and feeling strong emotions, and someone responded exactly in the way you needed."

Allow students the opportunity to share verbally, through a group chat or discussion board, or any other appropriate way. Explain that when they felt understood or cared for, they were on the receiving end of empathy. How did it feel?

3. TEACHER MODELING

Explain that we are able to develop appropriate empathy by observing someone's words, facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and actions. As we do, we begin to understand what their perspective or feelings may be. Take a few moments to demonstrate this to students, modeling your own thoughts, feelings, and actions as you empathize with someone.

- **Story:** You might share a story and explain what you noticed going on with the other person, what you imagined they may be feeling, and what sorts of behaviors/actions it led to. Prepare your story in advance.

- **Role-Play:** You might ask a student to act out a scenario with you, giving them an emotion or situation (excitement, sadness, loneliness) to demonstrate. As they act out the given scenario/feeling, role-play your response, describing your observations, thoughts, and feelings.

  Role Play ideas:
  - You scored the game-winning goal for your team.
  - You lost your favorite toy.
  - You got sick and will have to miss a party you've been looking forward to.
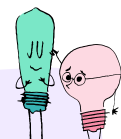
FACILITATION NOTE

You may be working through unique challenges while facilitating this activity. If you are virtual, you won't have the benefit of seeing all of the body language and nonverbal cues of your students. If you are in-person, you may miss out on the benefit of full facial expressions if you are still using facemasks. But it is still possible to gain enough understanding to develop empathy! No matter what situation you are in, speak to these dynamics explicitly so students can begin to navigate these skills even in challenging circumstances.

4. DISCUSSION

Facilitate a discussion using the following questions:

- What are some ways we can try to understand what another person may be thinking or feeling, even when...

  - people are wearing masks and we can't see their facial expressions?
  - you're communicating virtually, either on a computer, tablet, or a phone?
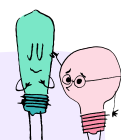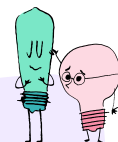
FACILITATION TIP

It's important to note that while empathy is usually discussed in the context of negative emotions (sadness, loneliness, fear), it's also important to be able to empathize with positive emotions and situations (excitement, joy, optimism). In fact, the ability to empathize with positive emotions can create greater connection than empathizing with negative emotions.

Wrap-up: Tell students, "Perhaps the most important attribute or skill under the umbrella of kindness, is this ability to *empathize* with other human beings, and step into their shoes for a time. There's always more going on under the surface than we realize - just like you may be feeling a certain way or dealing with something that no one in this class knows about. But if we pause and observe closely, we can find a lot of opportunities for empathy."

5. STUDENT REFLECTION

Have students reflect on the following question in their journal:

- Describe a moment where you recently felt empathy for another person, or have been able to "put yourself in their shoes".

FACILITATION TIP

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

6. (OPTIONAL) VIDEOS

You can show students the following videos to further explain and model empathy.

- What is Empathy?: From Ashoka, a video of middle school students describing what empathy means and how they express it.

- Brene Brown Empathy vs Sympathy: The big idea here is that students don't need to have the "right words" when empathizing. Connection, not a response, is what helps.

- Inside Out Listening with Empathy: This is a great demonstration of what empathy versus non-empathy looks like in action.

Empathy "Face-to-Face"

Estimated Total Time
15-25 minutes

**SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy, Perspective-Taking;
Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions**

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Partners)

For this experience, students practice demonstrating and interpreting a variety of emotions. The practice of embodying each emotion themselves, while interpreting the emotions of others, provides a safe opportunity to deepen empathy and build emotional literacy.

2. RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE (Virtual or In-person)

1. **Tell students:** "One way to understand what somebody may be thinking is to observe their facial expressions, their body language, or their tone of voice. In this activity you will act out different emotions while the rest of the class tries to determine what emotion you're embodying."

2. Have students volunteer to role-play and select one student at a time.

3. Using the emotional vocabulary list from the Name the Emotion activity in Module 3, select an emotion and silently indicate the emotion to the role-player (if in person), or have the student select (if virtual).

4. You might prompt the role-player to respond to the question "How are you doing?" without using the term that they are demonstrating.

5. Have students write down the emotion they think is being demonstrated and after 5-10 seconds have students share verbally, in a group chat, or however else is appropriate.

6. Discuss why students guessed the emotion that they did, citing specific facial expression, body language, or tone of voice.

7. Repeat with a new student for as many rounds (and as many emotions) as you like.

## 3. ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE (In-person)

If possible, facilitate this activity using partner pairs.

1. Pair students into two lines, A and B, and have them begin by facing away from each other.

2. Using the emotional vocabulary list from the *Name the Emotion* activity in Module 3, select an emotion and silently show group A.

3. Instruct both lines to turn and face each other, with partners directly across from each other.

4. Allow group B to take 5-10 seconds to interpret the emotion portrayed by their partner in group A (tip: Allow students to ask their partners "how are you doing?" and have partners respond appropriately, without using the term they are demonstrating).

5. When time is up, have group B indicate which emotion they believe their partner was demonstrating (this can be done in a variety of ways).

6. Now have the group switch roles, face away from each other again, and give group B a different emotion to demonstrate, with group A interpreting.

7. Repeat for 3 rounds.

4. GROUP DISCUSSION

- Did your classmates or partner express emotions differently than you do?
- What was difficult about this activity?
- Why is it important to be able to interpret facial expressions and body language?
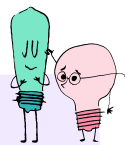
VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

If needed, some of the reflection prompts can be added to your digital discussion board for written or recorded responses after the completion of the activity.

5. STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students answer one of the following questions:

- Why is it important to be able to interpret facial expressions and body language?
- How does this connect to kindness?
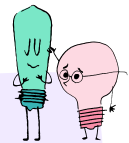
FACILITATION TIPS

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

Empathy Mapping

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

**SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy;
Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Accurate Self-Perception**

1. INTRODUCTION (Small Group)

In this activity, students will answer several prompts that map emotions and thoughts to attitudes, behaviors, and actions. Then they'll reflect and share within small groups, in discussion boards, or with the whole class (whichever is most appropriate for you). As students find both similarities and differences, they will experience a deepening sense of community and safety, and build their muscles for empathy.

Tell students, "To understand what kinds of thought processes and emotions other people are experiencing, it's helpful to work with others who are willing to "pop the hood" and give you a glimpse of what's going on under the surface."

2. PROCEDURE

- Create student groups of 4 or 5 (if possible) or facilitate with the whole class.
- In their journals, have students complete the following prompts, considering their thoughts, facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and specific actions.
  - When I'm feeling angry I _____
  - When I'm feeling nervous I _____
  - When I'm feeling excited I _____

    Students can either write or draw their responses.

- Facilitate each question one at a time, with students reflecting and responding, and then sharing their responses with their small group or with the whole class (as appropriate).
- After they share within their groups, allow one to two minutes for each group to share 1 major similarity or 1 major difference they discovered. (If facilitating for the whole group, ask students to identify 1 major similarity and 1 major difference they noticed as others shared.)

3. (OPTIONAL) STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students answer the following question:
- What was one major similarity and one major difference you discovered between yourself and one of your classmates?

Empathy in Action

Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy, Perspective-Taking;
Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement;
Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions

1. INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION (Whole Group)

In this activity, students begin to put empathy into action, starting with a group brainstorm of opportunities for empathy, and ending with an individual empathy plan. To start, facilitate a discussion with students, beginning with a review of what empathy is.

Say to students: "Let's review. Does anyone remember what empathy is?" (Reminder: "The ability to share someone else's perspective and feelings is called *empathy*.") Ask students to share a few real-life examples of empathy. Remind students that empathy is just as important when it comes to positive emotions (like joy and triumph) as negative emotions (like loneliness and grief).

Now say: "Sometimes we say 'Put yourself in someone else's shoes.' This doesn't mean we actually put on their shoes, but it means to imagine what it would feel like to be that person. This is an example of empathy. What does empathy look like when it's put into action?" Have students share some ideas and guide them to consider things like facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and other empathetic behaviors.

2. BRAINSTORM EMPATHY IN ACTION IDEAS

Tell students that it's time to start thinking about how to put empathy into action. Select a series of emotions (or ask students to share appropriate emotions) that could readily benefit from empathy and have students brainstorm ways they could demonstrate empathy for someone they know who is feeling that way. Some emotions you might select are:

- Loneliness
- Anxiousness
- Joy
- Confusion
- Sadness
- Enthusiasm
- Triumph or Pride (for having met a goal or achieved something)

  Use a whiteboard tool or brainstorming tool like Miro to capture students' ideas for each emotion.

3. STUDENT PLANS

In their journals, have students think about someone they know that may be experiencing one of the emotions discussed. Have them make a plan to put their empathy into action and show kindness toward that person in a specific way that is appropriate for that emotion. Plan to come together as a group (or use discussion boards) to discuss and reflect on the results after students put their empathy plans into action.

PART 5

Reflecting on Empathy

Estimated Total Time
10 minutes

SEL Skills: Social Awareness: Empathy, Perspective-Taking; Responsible Decision-Making: Reflecting

1. INTRODUCTION (Individual)

This activity can be introduced in a whole group setting as a class discussion or assigned as an independent activity. Guide students to reflect on each of their experiences in the empathy module and consider one or two of the
following questions:

- What can you do to feel empathy more consistently?
- How is empathy connected to kindness?
- What are some ways you could put empathy into practice right away?
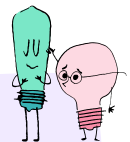
FACILITATION TIPS

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

2. (OPTIONAL) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Get ideas for additional empathy activities.

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 4.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

① **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)

② **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?

③ **DO** your kind act!

④ **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel

⑤ **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

☐ Invite someone to something   ☐ Help someone with schoolwork   ☐ Pick up litter or trash   ☐ Smile at someone   ☐ Give someone a compliment

☐ Thank someone for something they did   ☐ Help with a chore you don't normally do   ☐ Draw a picture for someone   ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature   ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself

5

RELATIONSHIP
SKILLS

MODULE 5

Relationship Skills

Estimated Total Time
80-100 minutes

Module 5 consists of five parts that can be facilitated individually or combined as desired.

### Materials
- Student Journals (digital or print)
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper
- Caring Communication: Scenario Cards

MODULE OVERVIEW

If students completed Modules 1 to 2, they uncovered three key attributes and skills that contribute to kindness: Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills. While there are many skills and attributes that support kind behaviors, these three are particularly powerful. Exploration of these skills allows students to scaffold up to potentially challenging or vulnerable acts by following a natural learning progression:

- **Self-Awareness:** I understand what's going on *inside of me.*
- **Empathy:** I understand what may be going on *inside of you.*
- **Relationship Skills:** I can use empathy and caring communication to *build relationships* with others.

The majority of Modules 3-5 focus on the immersive experience of each skill, rather than learning *about* each skill. Each module can be implemented individually, or in part, or can be taught as a scaffolded learning progression.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to exercise the Social-Awareness skills of Empathy, Perspective-Taking, and Respect for Others.
- Students will be able to exercise the Relationship Skills of Caring Communication, Social Engagement, and Relationship-building.
- Students will practice the Responsible Decision-Making Skills of Identifying problems, Analyzing situations, Solving problems, and Evaluating.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Social-Awareness - Empathy, Perspective-taking, Respect for Others
- (CASEL) Relationship Skills - Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship-building
- (CASEL) Responsible Decision-Making - Identifying problems, Analyzing situations, Solving problems, Evaluating

FACILITATION TIPS

Module 5 consists of five parts that can be facilitated individually or combined as desired.
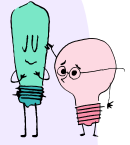
If you are facilitating virtually, Learn Kind recommends that:

- Parts 1 and 3 be facilitated *synchronously* in whole group virtual sessions if possible. Parts 2, 4, and 5 can be assigned as *asynchronous* independent partner activities if desired.

   Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Prior to facilitating this module, it will be important to revisit the Classroom Commitment and Discussion Guardrails you established through the Kind & Connected Classroom Community resource, or other community guidelines you've put in place.

Reflection Options: Throughout the module you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small groups discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, and others. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

It Starts with Communication

Estimated Total Time
25-30 minutes

SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication;
Social Awareness: Empathy, Respect for Others;
Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

Tell students, "Internal skills like empathy and perspective-taking are not fully realized until they lead to action. In this module we'll explore the skills that help us to interact well with others and build kind and connected relationships."

Strong relationship skills start with caring communication.

Tell students: "Communication goes beyond what we say - in fact, research has shown that the majority of communication actually takes place through nonverbal cues (like tone of voice or body language). This means that there are a lot of ways that we can communicate empathy and understanding, even beyond the words we use. Now, you'll spend some time building up your communication muscles."

2. BEGIN BY MODELING INDIVIDUALLY

With the entire class, take a few moments to explain and demonstrate the nonverbal aspects of caring communication:

- Even tone of voice
- Eye contact
- Appropriate volume
- Respecting personal space
- Active listening (nodding or leaning forward)
- Body language (facing the person you're speaking with)
  - **If you are virtual**, body language is more challenging to read because the camera captures less of our bodies, and is less intuitive than in-person interaction. Discuss some ways that students can utilize their body language even on video.
- Respectful facial expressions
  - **If in person, masks may make this tricky**. Discuss some ways that students can overcome the challenge of less visible facial expressions. (Can rely on body language, active listening cues, follow-up questions).

3. TEACHER MODELS WITH STUDENT

Ask a student volunteer to "have a conversation with you" (this can be anything from what you did over the weekend to sharing a story). Take turns modeling different nonverbal cues, contrasting what a respectful, caring response looks like with one that doesn't. Some examples are:

- Sighing loudly and looking at the ceiling versus looking your partner in the eyes
- Laughing out loud at your partner's expense versus responding with empathy and compassion
- Answering a question with a condescending tone versus answering evenly and respectfully
- *If virtual:* Looking down at another device or object in the room versus attentively looking at the person on screen
- *If in-person:* Allowing the distance between you to become a distraction versus focusing on what the other person is saying

4. STUDENTS ROLE-PLAY IN PAIRS

Have students partner up and role-play caring versus uncaring communication through the provided scenarios. One partner will share their "story" in the role of the character in the scenario, while their partner listens. Partners will switch roles with each new scenario.

5. PROCEDURE

1. Partner students in whatever way is most appropriate. Determine who will share and who will listen (students will switch roles each round).

2. Give students a scenario to act out. You can use these Scenario Cards from or create your own scenarios based on your students' needs or experiences.

3. Tell the sharing student to read the scenario and imagine how they would feel if they were that student.

4. Role-Play: The listening student says, "Hey, how's it going?", and the sharing student responds as if they were the student in the scenario.

5. (Option 1) The listening student acts out what a caring and empathetic response would be.

6. (Option 2) Students act out the scenario twice. The listening student first acts out what an uncaring response would be, and then acts out what a caring response would be.

7. Provide students a new scenario and have them switch roles. Repeat for as many rounds as desired.

8. Reflect as a Class. Gather students together and debrief with the following questions.

   - How did it feel when your partner listened attentively and showed empathy?
   - How did it feel when they didn't?
   - What specific actions did you observe that let you know your partner was listening with interest and/or had empathy?

FACILITATION TIPS

- It's important for students to understand that both caring communication and empathy should be used when students are experiencing positive circumstances as well as negative circumstances.

- **If Virtual:** Students can pair up and model for the whole group, or work together in virtual breakout rooms.
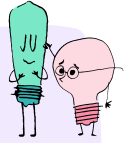
5. STUDENT REFLECTION

Have students complete the activity by reflecting on the following question in their journal.

- What does it look like when someone shows caring communication? What about when they don't? Sketch an example of both in your journal.

FACILITATION TIP

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.
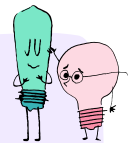
Have a Conversation with Someone New

Estimated Total Time
15-20 minutes

SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship-Building; Social Awareness: Respect for Others

1. INTRODUCTION (Partners)

In this activity, students will pair up with someone they don't know or don't know well, and get to know them by asking 5 questions that you'll provide. Introduce the activity by letting students know that it's easy to fall into a rhythm with the friends they already have, or the people they've known for a while. There are a lot of opportunities for great connection if we're willing to look beyond our norm, and connect with someone new.

2. PROCEDURE

1. Have students select a partner whom they do not know, or do not know well (however is most appropriate).

2. Decide how you will determine which student answers first.

3. Provide students the following questions (or create your own):
   - If you could eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
   - If you could go anywhere in the world tomorrow, where would you go?
   - What's a phrase you say *all the time*?
   - If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
   - If you could have any pet, what would it be and why?

4. Prompt students to consider the ways they'll communicate interest, empathy, and understanding as they ask their partner each question.

5. Students will record their partner's answers in their journals.

6. At the end of the exercise, have each student introduce their partner and share one thing they learned about them.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

This activity can be done in virtual breakout rooms at the same time or assigned for independent completion over a designated period of time.
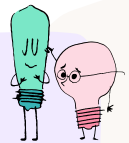
3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Have students complete the activity by reflecting on the following questions:

- How did you show your partner you were interested in what they were saying?
- How did it feel to get to know someone better?

Affirmation Circles

Estimated Total Time
15-20 minutes

**SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement;
Social Awareness: Respect for Others**

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

When it comes to verbal communication and relationship-building, several simple messages have a surprisingly positive impact. Sharing something that you like or appreciate about another person (affirmation) can uplift those around you in a powerful way. In this activity, students will each share an affirmation about another student in the group.

2. PROCEDURE

1. **"Circle" Up:** If in person, have students create a large circle so everyone is able to see each other, or 2-4 smaller circles if one large circle is not possible. If virtual, you can facilitate this activity as a whole group or (if appropriate) create breakout rooms for smaller groups of students.

2. **Set Expectations:** Before students begin, set guidelines for the discussion. See additional thoughts on conversations in virtual spaces in the Kind & Connected Classroom Community resource.

   ◦ **Start and end with respect:** Tell students, "Respect has as much to do with body language and tone of voice as it does with your choice of words. Starting with respect also means allowing space for beliefs and opinions that are different from your own."

   ◦ **Be ok with some discomfort:** Tell students, "Sometimes real talk can touch on challenging topics or require vulnerability. It's ok to feel some discomfort. Sticking with it usually means you're growing in some way."

   ◦ **Share only what's helpful:** Tell students, "The things you share should be genuinely useful for people to hear. Guide your words with the question, 'Does this help them or hurt them?'"

   ◦ **Keep it in the "room":** Tell students, "Community and empathy can only be built when people feel safe to be honest and vulnerable." As a class refer to your *Class Commitment*, or set a new agreement that the things shared with the class won't leave the class, and will only be used to help.

3. **Students Share:** Encourage students to start their affirmation with a sentence stem like "I appreciate that you _____ ," or "You are good at _____ ". Have a student volunteer to start, and work your way around the "circle" (or each group) in the sequence most appropriate for your students. Each student will take a turn to share.
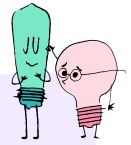
FACILITATION TIPS

If in-person, have all students start with legs/ankles uncrossed. Once they've shared, have them cross their legs/ankles to indicate they have shared. If virtual, have students use a prop or digital tool (like changing their background) to indicate they have/have not shared.

Cultivate Active Listening: To help cultivate active listening, empathy, and a sense of community, have students respond physically to things that resonate with them, or as a show of support. This allows sharing students to know they've been heard and understood, without additional discourse. Students can nod, snap, clap, or another gesture of your choosing. Choose the action(s) that will resonate most with your student community and set clear guidelines for active response.

- If students are receiving an affirmation, guide them to make eye contact with the person affirming them (if virtual, to be attentive), and say "thank you" when the speaker is done sharing.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Have students complete this activity by reflecting on the following question in their journal:

- How does sharing affirmations help build good relationships?
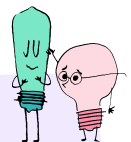
FACILITATION TIP

You may choose to facilitate this reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, or other strategies. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have, and facilitate reflections accordingly.

The Teach Somebody Challenge
(Independent Activity)

SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Relationship-Building; Self-Awareness: Recognizing Strengths, Self-Efficacy

1. OVERVIEW

The activity of teaching requires a variety of communication, social, and self-awareness skills. For students it provides a unique opportunity to combine and exercise these skills while also building meaningful social connections, as well as self-efficacy. In this activity, students will identify a skill, activity, or area of knowledge that they excel at or simply enjoy, and teach someone else about it.

Assign students this task as an independent activity and complete the activity at a later date with a whole group discussion.

2. PROCEDURE

Introduction: Using the outline provided in their journal, tell students they are going to stretch their communication and self-awareness muscles by teaching someone about something they know very well, love to learn about, or are good at. Students may choose topics like:

- How to bake their favorite treat
- How to illustrate a story (physically or digitally)
- The basics of their favorite sport
- All about their favorite historical event or scientific topic
- Secrets to beating their favorite video game
- Or something entirely different!

3. PLANNING

Students will plan their lesson using the provided outline and deliver it to the person(s) of their choice before reflecting on their experience together as a group. Tell students to choose who they will teach, using the following guiding questions:

- What friend or family member would I like to (re)connect with?
- Who could benefit from the topic I am teaching about?
- Who do I know that might be feeling lonely and feel happy to reconnect with me?

Brainstorming Booths

Estimated Total Time
20-30 minutes

SEL Skills: Relationship Skills: Communication, Teamwork;
Social Awareness: Empathy, Perspective-Taking;
Responsible Decision-Making: Identifying Problems, Analyzing Situations,
Solving Problems, Evaluating

1. OVERVIEW (Whole Group if possible)

A powerful way to help students develop Social-Awareness and Relationship Skills, while exercising Responsible Decision-Making skills is by providing them with opportunities to help each other find solutions to real challenges. In this activity inspired by Thrive LDN, students will follow a design process similar to the *Kind & Connected Classroom Community* Relationship Design Challenge to help a classmate brainstorm potential solutions to a challenge or problem they're facing.
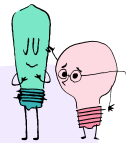
FACILITATION TIPS

- This activity can be completed multiple times throughout the year, or integrated as a classroom routine.
- This activity can be facilitated in the classroom with partners or small groups, with students switching roles, in virtual breakout rooms, or as an independent assignment before reflecting together as a whole group.
- It's possible that during this activity students may share a challenge that is concerning. If so, continue with the activity as planned, but follow up with the student when appropriate, following your school's guidelines and procedure for student health and safety.

2. PROCEDURE

1. Divide students into small groups or partners and set the stage for the activity, explaining that they will be helping each other find solutions for real challenges or problems classmates are facing.

2. Indicate who will be the "Helper" and who will be the "Helpee" (students will switch roles in the next round).

3. Explain that before they can begin to brainstorm solution ideas, they will have to fully understand the problem. This means they will need to empathize with their partner and understand their perspective.

4. Explain that it's not the responsibility of the "Helpers" to solve the problem or challenge that the "Helpee" is presenting, but rather to support their partner and help them consider a variety of potential solutions.

5. Have students open their journals to the **Brainstorming Booth** activity and provide an overview of the following problem-solving process:

   a. Identify the Problem/Challenge: Ask your partner what problem or challenge they're facing.
   b. Check your Perspective: Check in with your partner and ensure that you understand their perspective on the problem.
   c. Brainstorm Solutions: Discuss and write down three to five potential solutions that they could try. Think creatively!
   d. Evaluate and Choose: Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each possible solution and determine which one seems most effective.
   e. Make a Plan: Spend a few minutes designing how to best try out the solution and have the Helpee write it down.
   f. Reflect: Have students reflect on the difference they feel now that they have helped another student or received help. What is one takeaway?

7. Have students switch roles and/or change groups and repeat for one more round (or more!).

8. Reflect as a class: Ask students to share how they felt prior to the activity and how they felt after. Ask them which skills were most important to be able to help their classmates. What was the most challenging part of this activity?

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 5.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

1. **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)
2. **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

   WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
   WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
   WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?
3. **DO** your kind act!
4. **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel
5. **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

- [ ] Invite someone to something
- [ ] Help someone with schoolwork
- [ ] Pick up litter or trash
- [ ] Smile at someone
- [ ] Give someone a compliment
- [ ] Thank someone for something they did
- [ ] Help with a chore you don't normally do
- [ ] Draw a picture for someone
- [ ] Go outside and enjoy nature
- [ ] Take a mindful moment for yourself

6

THE KINDNESS EXPERIMENT

The Kindness Experiment

MODULE OVERVIEW

In Module 6, students put their kindness skills and knowledge into strategic action, as they design and conduct a scientific experiment to answer the Big Question (first introduced in Module 1): "*Does being kind make us happy?*" To do this, students will be provided with a scientific inquiry procedure that will guide them through a three-part process of planning their experiment, conducting it, and making meaning of the results.

This module is the core of the Learn Kind curriculum and will give students the opportunity to both perform kind acts and increase the kindness culture of your classroom community. It also allows them to use scientific inquiry to understand the impact of kindness in action. As a facilitator of inquiry-based learning, it is important to guide students but leave student analysis and conclusions as open-ended as possible.

Module 6 consists of four parts
- Part 1: Plan Your Experiment
- Part 2: Act and Observe
- Part 3: Analyze and Reflect
- Part 4: Answer the Big Question

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to design and carry out investigations to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence to answer a real-world question.
- Students will be able to use self-awareness, empathy, and relationship skills to plan and execute kind acts.
- Students will be able to analyze and interpret data resulting from scientific investigation, to draw conclusions.
- Students will be able to construct a scientific explanation based on reliable evidence obtained from their own experiments.
- Students will be motivated to perform kind acts in connection to their investigation.

Estimated Total Time
150-180 minutes

Module 6 consists of four parts that are designed to be completed over several class sessions.

Parts 1-3 may be completed independently if detailed overview and instructions are provided.

Materials
- Student Journals
- Kind Acts Bank
- (Optional) Sticky Notes
- (Optional) Chart Paper
- Graph

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Self-Awareness - Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy, Confidence
- (CASEL) Self-Management - Organizational Skills
- (CASEL) Social Awareness - Empathy, Perspective-taking, Respect for Others
- (CASEL) Relationship Skills - Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship-building, Teamwork
- (NGSS) Plan and conduct an investigation collaboratively to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence, using fair tests in which variables are controlled and the number of trials considered.
- (NGSS) Conduct an investigation and/or evaluate and/or revise the experimental design to produce data to serve as the basis for evidence that meet the goals of the investigation.
- (NGSS) Analyze and interpret data to make sense of phenomena, using logical reasoning, mathematics, and/or computation.
- (NGSS) Use evidence (example: measurements, observations, patterns) to construct or support an explanation or design a solution to a problem.
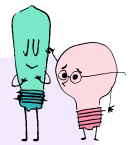
FACILITATION TIPS

Learn Kind recommends that Module 6 be conducted in-person and as a whole group if possible. However, all four parts can be facilitated individually, in small groups, or as combined as desired.

If you are facilitating virtually

- Parts 1-3 can be introduced *asynchronously* via recorded video and assigned for independent completion.
- Some discussion can be facilitated asynchronously through tools like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board platforms (rather than live or whole group instruction).
- Learn Kind recommends that Part 4 be facilitated *synchronously* through a virtual whole group session.

  Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

Reflection Options: Throughout the module you will see a number of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. These opportunities are included in the Student Journals, but you may choose to facilitate reflection in a variety of ways. Consider small group discussions, exit tickets, recorded responses, discussion boards, and others. Consider the major takeaways you want your students to have and facilitate reflections accordingly.

PART 1

Plan Your Experiment

Estimated Total Time
15-25 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Management: Organizational Skills

Overview: *In Part 1, guide students to choose the kind act they want to test, craft their hypothesis statement, and plan their experiment. Students will complete their scientific experiments individually, unless you determine that partners or small groups will be more effective given classroom dynamics. Students may complete their experiments within the context of the physical classroom (recommended), virtual learning environments, or independently as circumstances allow.*

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

Tell students: It's time to put everything into practice and answer the Big Question: Does being kind make us happy? In this module, you'll conduct a scientific experiment to find out what effect kindness has on our happiness. The data you collect will contribute to our class' answer to the Big Question.
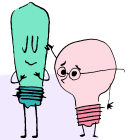
FACILITATION TIP

- In any scientific experiment, it is important to begin with *uncertainty* – even if previous research has demonstrated a particular outcome. **Tell students:** "Even though prior research has shown that kind acts made people happy, each experiment is different. We don't know what the outcome of this experiment will be, so it's important to pay close attention to what happens."
- You may want to begin this activity by using an anchor chart to review and discuss the scientific inquiry process with students.

2. WRITING THE HYPOTHESIS

Direct students to **Part 1: Plan Your Experiment** in their journals. Tell them that in their experiment they'll compare how they feel before and after doing a kind act. Using these kind acts, students will generate the hypothesis that they will test.

Step 1: Tell students to review the Kind Acts Bank (below and in student journals) and select one act by placing an "x" or checkmark in the box beside it.

Kind Acts Bank

- ☐ Invite someone to sit with you at lunch.
- ☐ Help someone with schoolwork.
- ☐ Draw a picture for someone.
- ☐ Thank someone for something they did.
- ☐ Give someone a compliment.
- ☐ Give a gift to someone.
- ☐ Include someone at recess or during free time.
- ☐ Leave a kind note for someone.

Step 2: Tell students to record their selected act and select their hypothesis:

Have students select their **hypothesis** *from the following list:*

- ◦ Being kind to others will make me **more** happy.
- ◦ Being kind to others will make me **less** happy.
- ◦ Being kind to others will make **no difference** to my happiness.

FACILITATION TIP

Ensure that students are only selecting one kind act.
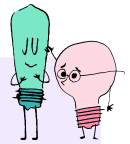
3. PLAN THE EXPERIMENT

Guide students to the **Planning Questions Table** in their journal. Provide an overview and guide students to complete the planning process to plan their experiment, which includes each of the following questions:

| STUDENT PLANNING QUESTIONS	TEACHER DETAILS
When will you do this kind act?	• When will this act be completed? • Provide students an acceptable window based on your instructional plan
Where will you do this kind act?	• Where will this act be completed? • It is ok for this detail to be general (classroom, playground) or specific (a student's locker, Art Class)
Who will you do this kind act for?	• Students may plan to complete the act for a specific person ahead of time, or they may plan to complete the act for "someone new" or "a friend"
What tools or materials are needed for this experiment?	• Some of the kind acts will require preparation or specific materials.
(Optional) **What is the Independent Variable?**	• **Independent Variables** are the variables that are changed or controlled in the experiment to test the effects on the dependent variable. • For the purposes of this module, the independent variable is the **specific kind act** being performed.
(Optional) **What is the Dependent Variable?**	• **Dependent Variables** are the variables being tested and measured in the experiment. • For the purposes of this module, the dependent variable is **happiness** (or, the level of happiness felt in the individual completing the kind act).
(Optional) What skills are needed for this experiment?	• If you completed Modules 3-5, which of the explored skills will be most helpful in this experiment? • Students may revisit journal notes if desired.

FACILITATION TIP

- Depending on your schedule, you may choose to introduce Part 2 at this time (see page 95), or you may let students know that the next time you meet, you'll outline Part 2 of their Kindness Experiment.
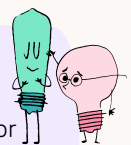
Act and Observe

Estimated Total Time
30-60 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions, Self-Efficacy,
Social Awareness: Empathy, Respect for Others;
Relationship Skills: Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship-Building;
**Self-Management: Organizational Skills**

Overview: In Part 2, students will conduct their experiments and record their observations using the *Observation Table* in their journal. In addition to the learning objectives, the goal of Part 2 is for students to be able to adequately identify the effect kindness has on their happiness, as well as other effects they may have observed. *(This data will be combined with classroom data in Part 4)*

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

Tell students that in Part 2, they will conduct their experiments planned in Part 1 and record their observations. Walk students through the following procedure in their journal.

2. STUDENT PROCEDURE

1. Answer the first question ("How happy are you right now?") before completing the act.
2. Complete the selected Kind Act.
3. Immediately answer the second question and add any additional observations.
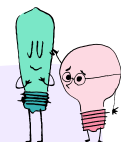
FACILITATION TIPS

- It is recommended that students complete their experiments within the context of the physical classroom or school if possible.
- Tell students that no reaction or feeling is "better" than another and to do their best to record each observation as honestly as possible.
- If students completed Modules 3–5, guide them to consider the skills and knowledge they gained as they complete these kind acts. You might ask them, "Which of the skills you explored in Modules 3–5 will be most helpful for each of your kind act experiments?"

Student "Observation Table"

Observations	Before the Act					After the Act				
How happy do you feel?	😢 1	🙁 2	😐 3	🙂 4	😁 5	😢 1	🙁 2	😐 3	🙂 4	😁 5
What else did you notice during or after completing this act?										

Analyze and Reflect

Estimated Total Time
30-40 minutes

SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions; Self-Management: Organizational Skills

Overview: *For students, the rubber really meets the road in Part 3, as they analyze the data they collected during their experiments and reflect on the meaning of it. Their data will be aggregated with classroom data in Part 4, but students will first draw conclusions about their personal experience during the experiment.*

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE (Whole Group)

Tell students that in Part 3, they are going to analyze and interpret their experiment results ("What do you notice and what does it mean?"). Then they will construct explanations based on their data. Guide students to follow the procedure below in their journals, using the data they collected in Part 2.
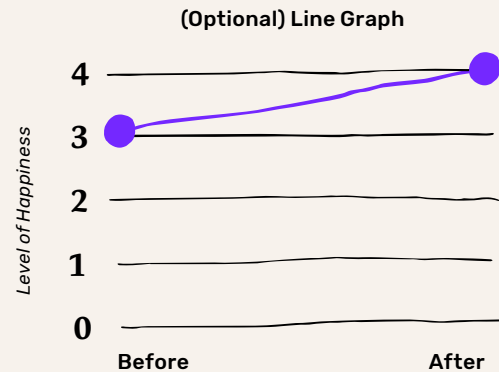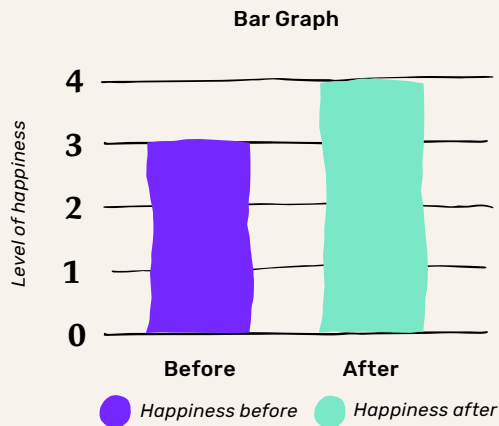
2. STUDENTS ORGANIZE AND GRAPH DATA

Give students time to complete their graphs independently in their journals (see below). Ensure that students are recording their data points from their recorded observations in Part 2, and ask open-ended questions about what the data is revealing.

Step 1: Have students record their results in the first data table, following the example below:

HAPPINESS	BEFORE	AFTER	DIFFERENCE (AFTER-BEFORE)
Kind Act	3	4	+1

Step 2: Have students plot this data on both a line graph, and bar graph, following these examples:

Bar Graph

Level of happiness

4
3
2
1
0

Before   After

● Happiness before   ● Happiness after

(Optional) Line Graph


Level of Happiness

4
3
2
1
0

Before   After

3. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION (Individually, Small Groups, or Whole Group)

Have students thoughtfully summarize their findings, analyzing whether the results matched their hypotheses, and making meaning of the results. Depending on students' familiarity and skill level, you may choose to have students work independently or in small groups, or you may guide them through each question set one at a time.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP
Students can create a virtual presentation, recording or response based on their experiment results. Use the following prompts to guide students in their analysis and reflection through your digital platform.
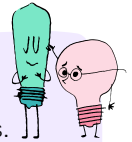
Guide students to think through the following questions:

1 **Summarize your findings:**
- Based on my experience, doing kind acts did / did not make me happier.

2 **Did this match what you thought would happen (your hypothesis)?**
- These findings did / did not support my hypotheses.
- The experiment did / did not work as I expected.

3 **Reflect on what this means:**
- Why do you think you got the results that you did?
- If you could do this experiment again, what would you change?

4. REFLECTION (Individual)

This final reflection is key for students to synthesize and deepen what they've learned throughout this experiment. Students can work through one question at a time, or you can overview all at once and have students respond to the set in their journals.

1. How are you feeling now that you've completed these kind acts?
2. Do you think you will perform more kind acts on your own in the future?

5. WRAPPING UP (Whole Group)

Facilitate a brief whole group discussion with students, and guide them to share their experience and major takeaways. Have them focus on the impact of the kind acts.

Answering the Big Question

**SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions;
Social Awareness: Empathy, Respect for Others;
Relationship Skills: Teamwork**

Overview: *Students will now combine and analyze the class-wide results of the kindness experiments. Guide students to add their results to the class data set, analyze the data through graphs, and create explanations based on their evidence. Through the process, students will compare their experience with others, and collectively answer the question, "Does being kind make us happy?" based on their data. Part 4 wraps up the Kindness Experiment with a class reflection and ideation of how to use their new knowledge moving forward.*

Preparation: Student data from Part 3 will be used to answer various questions. Prepare a space to create a graph in your classroom. Your class will use their data to answer the following questions and create a graph:

- Did Performing Kind Acts Make Us Happy?
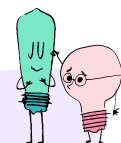
FACILITATION TIP

Graphs can be created using chart paper, interactive whiteboard, or whiteboard/chalkboard. If you are using sticky notes, students can help "build" the bar graph (each sticky note represents student data and can be placed one above the other to visually construct the bar graph), or as a tool to physically collect the data.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Graphs can be created digitally using the provided materials or with your preferred digital tool. You can collect class data prior to meeting virtually or build graphs during whole class virtual meetings.

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

Tell students: "Now that you've conducted your experiment and reflected on your own data, let's bring it all together to answer the Big Question. Since scientific research needs many data points to help us gain understanding, we're going to combine all of our data into one class set. Then we can analyze and explain the results and finally answer the Big Question."

(Optional) *"When we're finished analyzing our data, we'll* share our results *with kindness.org as a part of a larger study on kindness in classrooms."*

2. AGGREGATE CLASS DATA AND CREATE THE **GRAPH**

Use the provided graph to visually represent student experiment results.

Step 1: Organize The Data

Using the data tables in their journals, have students report the effect that kindness had on their happiness. Ask students "Did being kind make us happy?" Students will report one of the following responses:

- YES (positive difference)
- NO (negative difference)
- NO CHANGE (zero difference).

Students can use sticky notes to record their results and "build" the graph as a class. Or you may opt to collect and total student data on your own and present a completed graph to students in Step 2.

Step 2: Graph the Data

Use the provided graph to visually represent student data, then follow the procedure in *Step 3* to guide a discussion. You can print or project this graph, or recreate it on chart paper, white board, or chalkboard.

Module 6

Did Kind Acts Make Us Happier?
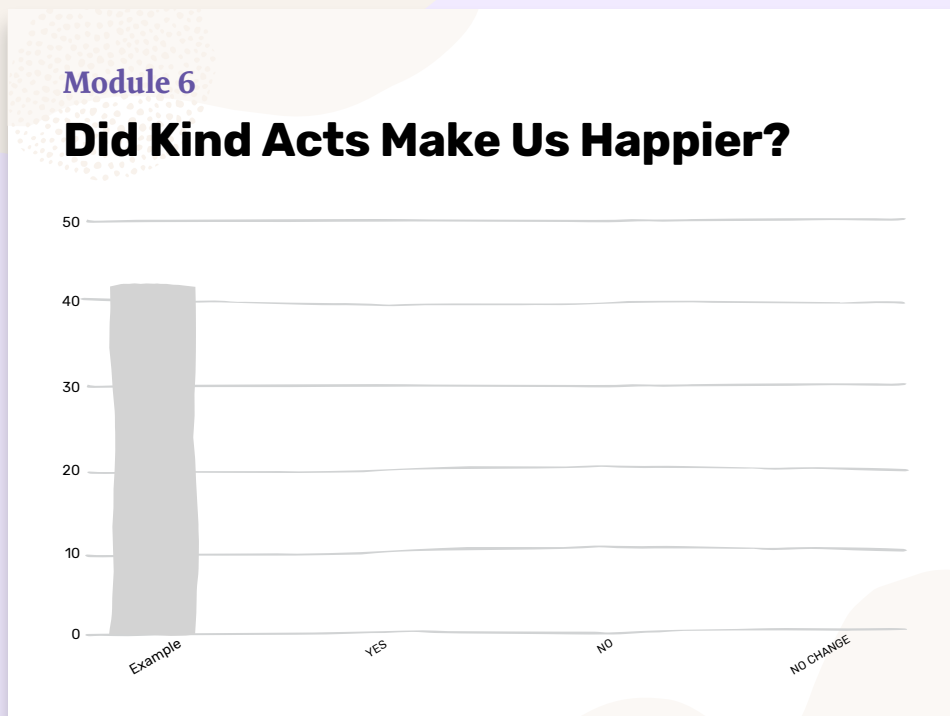
3. ANALYZE AND EXPLAIN (Small/Breakout Groups or Whole Group)

For this portion of the activity, you can lead students through individual responses as a whole group, or have them work in small groups to discuss their findings. Display the graph on the board:

- Lead students through the following questions, and have them respond in their journals, before sharing their conclusions in a discussion:
    a. Did performing kind acts make us happy? How do you know? Use evidence to support your claim.
    b. Did you make any other observations during your experiment?
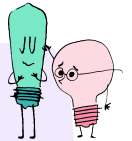
VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Lead this discussion in a whole group meeting or through a variety of guided posts. Ensure that you're able to share your screen and the graph that were created with student data. Some questions can be posted to your digital platform for reflection along with posted graph. For younger students with limited reading ability, a recording of you sharing the graph might be more appropriate.

4. STUDENTS REFLECT

Have students reflect independently on the following questions in their journal:

- How has your understanding of kindness changed from the beginning of Learn Kind, until now?
- Which skills were most important to use in doing kind acts?

(Optional) Student Assessment: *This portion of the student journal will serve as the "post-assessment", helping you understand students' progress and current understanding and perception of kindness now that they've gone through the Learn Kind module. You will have the option to share this data with the kindness.org team at the conclusion of the module.*
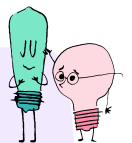
FEEDBACK REPORTING*

Kindness.org would love to learn about student's experiences and perceptions of kindness through their kindness experiments. Take a picture of your completed class graph and **upload it here**.

This step is optional and no identifying student data will be collected.

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 6.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

(1) CHOOSE your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)

(2) PLAN the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

WHO - Do it for a friend, family member, teacher, or yourself
WHEN - Choose when you will do the act (maybe it's right now!)
WHERE - Where will you do it? School, home, or somewhere else?

(3) DO your kind act!

(4) OBSERVE what happened and how you feel

(5) (Optional) SHARE with the class next time you meet

☐ Invite someone to something   ☐ Help someone with schoolwork   ☐ Pick up litter or trash   ☐ Smile at someone   ☐ Give someone a compliment

☐ Thank someone for something they did   ☐ Help with a chore you don't normally do   ☐ Draw a picture for someone   ☐ Go outside and enjoy nature   ☐ Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

7

THE KINDNESS CHALLENGE

MODULE 7

The Kindness Challenge

Estimated Total Time
As much time as needed
(minimum 30-45 min)

MODULE OVERVIEW

The purpose of scientific inquiry is so that people can take their new knowledge and use it to improve conditions for humanity and the world we live in. Now that students have investigated kindness, it's time to put that knowledge to use for your classroom, school, homes, and community. This activity is designed to be very open-ended, driven by your students' unique discoveries or your classroom needs, and inspiring to those it is shared with!

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- CASEL: Social Awareness - Empathy, Perspective-taking, Respect for Others
- CASEL: Relationship Skills - Communication, Social Engagement, Teamwork
- CASEL: Responsible Decision-Making - Identifying problems, Analyzing situations, Solving problems, Evaluating
- (NGSS) Apply scientific ideas to solve design problems.
- (NGSS) Generate and compare multiple solutions to a problem based on how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the design solution.

FACILITATION TIPS

The design challenge can be completed in one extended session (with the exception of Steps 5 and 6), over several class sessions, or assigned to student groups for independent work.

If facilitating virtually
- It may be beneficial to complete Steps 1-3 synchronously so students can hear ideas from as many peers as possible.
- Some discussion can be facilitated *asynchronously* through tools like Flipgrid, Google Docs, or other discussion board or video platforms *asynchronously* if desired.

  Note: See *Teacher Rx, Section 2* for student accessibility tips.

In any design challenge, clear diagnosis of the problem to be solved is critical. Challenge students to be specific about the problem they want to solve.

Encourage students to be as creative as possible through this module! If you've completed previous modules, this is a great opportunity for students to put their new knowledge and skills into practice in a powerful way.
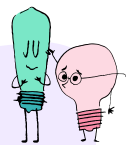
Use the following **design thinking process** from IDEO to help your class create a kindness action plan.

Step 1: Frame the Question

For this activity have students ask one of the following questions:

- How can we use the evidence from our experiments to create kinder classrooms and communities?
- What is a problem or challenge we are facing right now that kindness could help solve?

Step 2: Gather Inspiration

Start with empathy. Ask students to imagine what other people in their classroom, school, home, or community might be feeling or needing right now. They can point to scientific evidence, research, or their own experience. Use the true needs of others to generate inspiration.

Step 3: Brainstorm Ideas

Here's a helpful brainstorming resource from Stanford d.school. Gather the whole group together for a brainstorming session of as many ideas as students can generate in 5-10 minutes. Record ideas on a whiteboard, chart paper, digital presentation tool in a visible location. Build off the inspiration gathered in Step 2 by asking students, "How might we create a kinder classroom, school, or community?"

As you brainstorm, keep these things in mind:
- No judgement!
- The more ideas the better
- No idea is too crazy

Step 4: Bring Ideas to Life

First, select the two to three ideas you want to test. Project all ideas in a visible space. Give students 3 physical or virtual sticky notes (depending on where/how you're facilitating) and tell them to vote on 3 ideas, based on specific **criteria and constraints** that you provide.

Select the two to three ideas that receive the most votes. Once the ideas are selected, have students work individually, in groups, or as a whole group to create a plan for each idea that can be tested and iterated on.

- Identify the hypothesis you will test (what is the outcome this idea should lead to?).

FACILITATION TIP

If working individually or in small groups, have students choose ONE idea to bring to life.
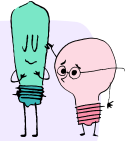
Step 5: Test to Learn

As a class, put your kindness plan(s) into motion by testing them first on a small scale and observing the outcomes. Did the plan lead to the outcomes you intended? Did the plan generate more kindness? How can you improve on it?

Step 6: Share your Kindness Story

Individually, in small groups, or as a class create a shareable story of your class's kindness journey that will inspire others to choose kindness. The kindness.org team would love to share your story too!

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Module 7.

Choose Kindness Now

When it comes down to it, kindness is a choice - and a choice we can make over and over again. Use this simple step-by-step tool at the end of every module, or as often as needed to help students strengthen their internal kindness muscles. Since science tells us kindness is contagious, every choice can create ripples of positive impact.

① **CHOOSE** your kind act from the list below (or choose your own!)

② **PLAN** the WHO, WHEN, and WHERE for your act

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③ **DO** your kind act!

④ **OBSERVE** what happened and how you feel

⑤ **(Optional) SHARE** with the class next time you meet

☐ Invite someone to something
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