

LEARN
KIND

TEACHER CURRICULUM



Learn Kind: K-2nd Grade



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TEACHER Rx START HERE



START HERE

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 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 them 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 a few activities. Here are a few recommendations, but feel free to craft your own selection.*

- **Full Curriculum in Order** (Appx. 8-10 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 others' 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

60-90 est total min

Module 5 consists of four 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, 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 (K-2):

- (NGSS) Ask and/or identify questions that can be answered by an investigation.
- (NGSS) Read grade-appropriate texts and/or use media to obtain scientific and/or technical information to determine patterns in and/or evidence about the natural and designed world(s).
- (NGSS) With guidance, plan and conduct an investigation in collaboration with peers (for Kindergarten).
- (NGSS) Make observations (firsthand or from media) and/or measurements to collect data that can be used to make comparisons.
- (NGSS) Record information (observations, thoughts, and ideas).
- (NGSS) Use and share pictures, drawings, and/or writings of observations.
- (NGSS) Compare predictions (based on prior experiences) to what occurred (observable events).
- NGSS: Use tools and/or materials to design and/or build a device that solves a specific problem or a solution to a specific problem.
- NGSS: Generate and/or compare multiple solutions to a problem.



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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COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

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

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 2-3 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



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

- 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 two or three 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.

PART 5

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 include 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 as you go through this 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.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Daily Openings & Closings

See individual strategies for SEL Skills addressed

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



Estimated Total Time

3-7 minutes



Materials

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

2. One-word 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 1-2 minutes and have students go around the (physical or virtual) room and share just one word that describes what they are feeling or what is on their mind in that moment. When students are not sharing, they should listen to what is being shared without reaction.
- **Option 2:** If students have access to white-erase boards, or if you are virtual, have students draw or write about 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 as a recorded or written response.

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 said good morning to me 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**

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

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, “Respecting others means using kind facial expressions and tones of voice, as well as using kind words. Starting with respect also means allowing people to share thoughts that are different from your own.”
- **Share only what’s helpful:** Tell students, “The things you share should be truly helpful for people to hear. Guide your words with the question, ‘Does this help them or hurt them?’”
- **Keep it in the “room”:** Tell students, “We can only build a strong community when people feel safe to share their honest thoughts and know others will be kind to them.” 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 or tools like Flipgrid 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, give students the additional guideline of posting "only what will help the discussion". Guide students to respond to peers by asking questions, by sharing their own experience, or by giving 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 virtual tool 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)

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

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



Estimated Total Time

Varies



Materials

None required

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 or post a written response on a digital class platform
 - 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 remote 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.

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)

DRAW PICTURES OR WRITE LETTERS TO EACH OTHER

- **SEL Skill: 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.
 - If letter writing isn't appropriate, students can draw a picture instead.
- 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 or as a way to share images).

Learn Kind Curriculum Research & Bibliography

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MODULE

1

**THE SCIENCE
OF KINDNESS**



MODULE 1

The Science of Kindness

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 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 and/or identify questions that can be answered by an investigation.
- (NGSS) Read grade-appropriate texts and/or use media to obtain scientific and/or technical information to determine patterns in and/or evidence about the natural and designed world(s).



Estimated Total Time

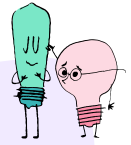
30-40 minutes

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)
- Chart Paper and Markers for Anchor Chart (if in person)



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.

PART 1

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 be exploring kindness in classrooms from a scientific perspective, even researching the effects of kindness themselves (if you choose to do Module 6), just like a real scientist!

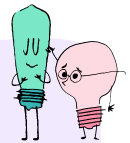
Discuss: Begin with a class discussion about who scientists are, what they do, and what it means to research something.

FACILITATION TIP

As students share, create an anchor chart about scientists and research based on their responses.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Post these prompts ahead of time so students can share their responses before you start the lesson (written or recorded responses). Display their responses before the class discussion on *kindness*.



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. Students may write or sketch their responses in their journals. 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”?

(Optional) Wrap-up: *This portion of the student journal can serve as the “Wrap-up”, helping you gain insight into students’ understandings and perceptions of kindness before to the Learn Kind curriculum. You will have the option to [share this data](#) 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 from a scientific perspective. Research tells us how kindness affects our brains, bodies, and feelings, which we also call “emotions”.

PART 2

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

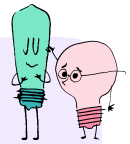
Remind students of their discussion in Part 1 and ask several students to share how they would define kindness.

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.

FACILITATION TIP

The Science of Kindness Slideshow is designed for grades K-8, but will not be covered in its entirety with younger grades. Use the provided Slideshow Notes to introduce the main ideas to your class.



Slideshow Notes

- **What is kindness?** *Slide 2*
 - Kindness can involve giving, helping, listening, and more.
- **Kindness is ancient** *Slide 3*
 - Lots of animals are kind to others (usually their family members).
 - Kindness kickstarts cooperative relationships, the supportive social networks that were crucial to our survival.
- **Kindness is part of human nature** *Slide 4*
 - Acts of kindness and generosity trigger activity in happiness-related areas of the brain (such as the ventral striatum) (Park et al. 2017).
 - Kindness is exhibited and celebrated all around the world, irrespective of culture. In a survey of 1,063,921 people in 75 countries, honesty, fairness, and kindness were among the most highly endorsed character traits (McGrath, 2015).

- **Kindness is cool** *Slide 5*
 - “Nice guys finish first.” In a series of social experiments, people who were kind were more likely to gain the respect of their peers, and more likely to be chosen as leaders, than selfish individuals were (Hardy and Van Vugt, 2006).
- **Kindness is contagious** *Slide 6*
 - Witnessing another person perform a good deed increases the desire to help others (Schnall et al. 2010).
- **Kindness makes you happy** *Slide 7*
 - A review of 27 experiments found that people who helped others were happier than people who helped themselves or did nothing (Curry et al. 2018).
- **Kindness is good for your (mental) health** *Slide 8*
 - Kindness can reduce stress. A 14 day study found that people engaging in helpful behaviors had less stress than when the study began (Raposa et al. 2016).

4. STUDENT DISCUSSION/REFLECTION

(Written Response is Optional depending on the grade-level): Lead students through an individual reflection or group discussion using the following questions. If appropriate, students will record responses in their journal.

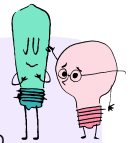
- Which of these facts surprised you the most?
- What else could we research about kindness?
- Do any questions come to mind now that you’ve seen these facts?

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*”.

5. THE BIG QUESTION (Whole Group if possible)

FACILITATION TIP

Students will be introduced to the phrase “kind acts” during this discussion. If your students need to discuss the meaning of the word “act” in this context to avoid misconceptions, take a few minutes to establish its meaning through discussion and examples.



Discussion: Tell students that while there’s a lot we’ve discovered about the impact of kindness from a scientific perspective, there’s still more to explore. For example, studies have shown that kind acts not only have a positive impact on the person receiving the act, but that it also creates happiness in the person *doing* the act.

Say: “But we don’t have many studies that show **if kindness effects 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

Ask someone to play

Help someone in school

Pick up litter or trash

Smile at someone

Give someone a compliment

Thank someone for something

Draw a picture for someone

Help with a chore at home

Go outside and enjoy nature

Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

2

**USING INQUIRY
TO GUIDE RESEARCH**



MODULE 2

Using Inquiry to Guide Research

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 and/or identify questions that can be answered by an investigation.
- (NGSS) Read grade-appropriate texts and/or use media to obtain scientific and/or technical information to determine patterns in and/or evidence about the natural and designed world(s).



Estimated Total Time

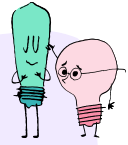
60-90 minutes

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)
- *Horton Hears a Who*, by Dr. Seuss (printed copy or [Read-aloud](#))
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper



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 in 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](#).

PART 1

Using Inquiry to Guide Research



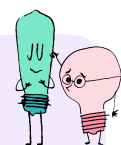
Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

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." Remind students they will act as scientists throughout the module.

FACILITATION TIP

If necessary, review the anchor chart or other document you created in Module 1 with student responses related to scientists and research.



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."

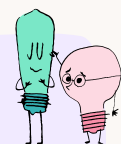
Ask students: "Before we can answer the big question, what are some smaller questions we can ask to guide our research?"

- **Use this Key Question to model and have students record for their question list:**
"Are there certain things we see or do that seem to always be considered 'kind'?" (Display for students to copy into journal)
- **Model Additional Potential Questions (if needed):**
 - "What is kindness?"
 - "Which acts qualify as kind acts?"
 - "What specific skills can we build that will help us do kind acts?"

As a class, record one or two additional questions that will help lead your research. Ensure that all students have the Key Question recorded.

FACILITATION TIPS

- You may opt to do this part as an anchor chart activity, in lieu of using student journals.
- Display questions for students to copy into their journals or post them to your digital platform and have students record them in their journals after Part 1.



PART 2

Student Research



Estimated Total Time
30-60 min, as needed

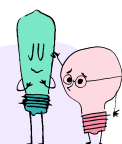
1. KINDNESS RESEARCH THROUGH LITERATURE

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.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIPS

You may share the story,

- *Synchronously* with your class by reading to them, or sharing the YouTube read-aloud during a virtual meeting.
- *Asynchronously* 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.
- Consider accessibility support as needed



FACILITATION TIP

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?

FACILITATION TIP

Keep your class' needs in mind and approach this activity as you see appropriate. If students can take notes independently, allow them to do so, or record observations as a class and allow students to copy or sketch them in their journals.

PART 3

Share Research Results and Reflect

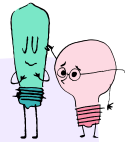


Estimated Total Time
20-30 min

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

1. GROUP REFLECTION (Whole Group)

After reading, have students share their major takeaways about Horton as a class. Begin the discussion as open-ended as possible, recording student observations in an open and visible space and encouraging their individual discoveries and learning (unless you did so while reading). If you created a list of observations while reading, review students' observations as a class and encourage them to cite their evidence. *Example: "I think Horton was caring because I noticed he tried his best to protect the Whos."*



FACILITATION TIP

Prompts like "What made you think that?" can help students point to evidence for their observations.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Discussion can be facilitated through whole group virtual meetings, or through platforms like Flipgrid, Google Docs, Seesaw, or other discussion board platforms.

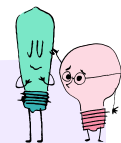
As discussion continues, prompt students to share discoveries regarding Horton's skills and attributes that are connected to kindness. **Continue to narrow the focus of the discussion to the three key skills:**

- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Relationship Skills

Students may reference any or all of these skills with different terminology depending on their observations or individual understanding. They may say that Horton:

- is helpful
- is a good listener
- is respectful
- shows love or compassion

Tie student observations to the target skills of Self-awareness, Empathy, and Relationship Skills in order to establish a common foundation. Connect each observation to a skill as it's introduced.



FACILITATION TIP

Be sure to use the correct terminology for each key skill.

2. OPTIONAL RESEARCH CONNECTION

If you'd like to provide students with additional research connections, share key facts from the article [5 Reasons Why Being Kind Makes You Feel Good According to Science](#). Before sharing the article, ask students, "How do you think Horton felt after helping the Whos?". Share what you think is appropriate for the age of your students.

3. 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?"

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

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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

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Help someone in school

Pick up litter or trash

Smile at someone

Give someone a compliment

Thank someone for something

Draw a picture for someone

Help with a chore at home

Go outside and enjoy nature

Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

3

**BUILDING
SELF-AWARENESS**



MODULE 3

Building Self-Awareness

If students completed Modules one to two, 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

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.



Estimated Total Time

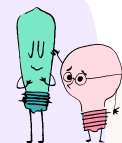
70-90 minutes

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](#)



PART 1

Getting Started with Self-Awareness



Estimated Total Time
10-15 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 thinking positively (also known as optimism). It can even make you healthier! Being kind helps you stay strong and work through hard things like feeling angry or sad.”

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.”

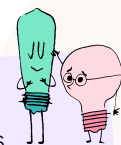
Tell students they will practice self-awareness through several activities to get a better idea of who they are and what makes them tick, and to begin practicing kindness and care toward themselves.

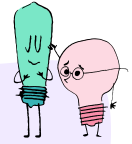
2. NAME THE EMOTION

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 TIPS

- Take time to introduce each emotion to ensure students have an understanding of the terms in context. Encourage students to create sentences or share examples using the terms correctly before displaying the faces and recording responses in their journals.
- You may opt to facilitate this activity by [projecting each face](#) for the whole group one at a time, concluding with the Student Reflection. This is especially helpful for younger students.
- Or, print the The Name the Emotions deck (linked above) and use it to create an anchor chart that can be referenced throughout the module.





VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

- You may opt to assign students step one (below) as an independent activity (asynchronous), and then facilitate step two 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/Emotions Key + Vocabulary List



Conflicted: Uncertain or unsure about something
Synonyms: Ambivalent



Aggravated: Angry or displeased
Synonyms: Annoyed, Irritated, Exasperated, Irked



Ecstatic: Full of joy
Synonyms: Jubilant, Joyful, Elated



Discouraged: Feeling sad or unhappy
Synonyms: Sad, Dejected, Depressed, Melancholy



Confident: Feeling certain of yourself
Synonyms: Secure, Upbeat, Poised



Relaxed: Feeling of calm or peace
Synonyms: Tranquil, Serene, Comfortable



Lonely: alone or without company
Synonyms: Isolated, Secluded, Abandoned



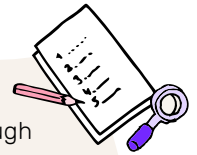
Thoughtful: Deep in thought.
Synonyms: Contemplative, Reflective, Meditative



Weary: Tired or worn out
Synonyms: Fatigued, Exhausted



Anxious: Full of worry
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.

Have students write or sketch a concrete example of one or two emotions in their journal.

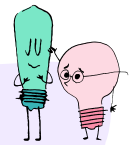
3. STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you think it's important to be able to identify many different emotions?
- How does understanding how people feel connect to kindness?

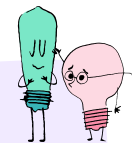
VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Post these prompts to your digital platform for reflection following Step Two.



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.



PART 2

Practicing Mindfulness



Estimated Total Time

15-20 minutes

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

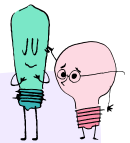
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

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.”

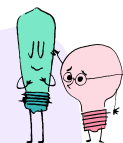
Explain that mindfulness doesn’t have to be complicated. The [Child Mind Institute](#) recommends several activities that are simple, yet effective, like:

- **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, as well as 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 your 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.
- **Practice Posture:** Have students practice the mindfulness posture described in *Practicing a Mindful Moment*, and close 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:** (20-30 second mindfulness exercise) Have students sit comfortably, and guide them to do 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

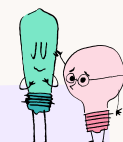
Use the following process to lead students through a one or two-minute mindfulness exercise.

- 1 **Get comfortable:** Have students sit comfortably in a circle or at their seats. Try to limit distractions.
- 2 **Breathe:** Tell students to imagine they have a balloon in their bellies that they will inflate and deflate by breathing in and out. Have students place one hand on their stomach.
 - a. Inhale: Students breathe in through their nose as you count to three.
 - b. Exhale: Students breathe out through their mouth as you count to three.
 - c. Ensure students have this rhythm down before starting the next step.
 - d. When you feel confident students are ready, tell them to close their eyes and repeat two or three more times, gently instructing them to only think about their breathing.
- 3 **Notice:** Gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s) that are bubbling up to the surface. What emotion are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is present is allowed to be there. Allow 20-30 seconds for this part.
- 4 **Breathe:** For the last 15-20 seconds, direct students' attention back to their breathing, inhaling deeply through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.
- 5 **Transition:** When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes and journal.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Student Reflection: In their journals have students reflect on their Mindful Moment and record what they noticed during the exercise using the following questions. Students can write or draw their responses:

- 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 can you use mindfulness on your own?



FACILITATION TIP

Instead of reflecting in their journals, you may consider partner pairs for student sharing and reflecting.

PART 3

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

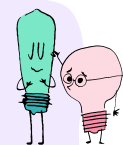
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group if possible)

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 to 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.

- **Get comfortable:** Have students sit comfortably in a circle or at their seats. Try to limit distractions.





- **Breathe:** Tell students to imagine they have a balloon in their bellies that they will inflate and deflate by breathing in and out. Have students place one hand on their stomach.
 - **Inhale:** Students breathe in through their nose as you count to three.
 - **Exhale:** Students breathe out through their mouth as you count to three.
 - Ensure students have this rhythm down before starting the next step.
 - When you feel confident students are ready, tell them to close their eyes and repeat two or three more times, gently instructing them to only think about their breathing.
- **Notice:** Gently tell students to begin to notice the feeling(s) that are bubbling up to the surface. What emotion(s) are they experiencing? Tell them there are no right or wrong emotions. Whatever is present is allowed to be there. Allow 20-30 seconds for this part.
- **Breathe:** For the last 15-20 seconds, direct students' attention back to their breathing, inhaling deeply through the nose, and slowly exhaling through the mouth.
- **Transition:** When time has ended, gently direct students to open their eyes and journal.

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 (see sample below).



Aggravated



Anxious



Bored



Confident



Conflicted



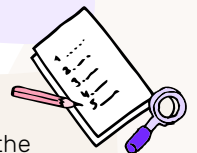
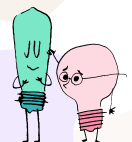
Weary

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 peers name their emotions creates a greater understanding of how emotions are expressed, lays the foundation for empathy, and creates a greater sense of connected community.

- Or, instead of verbally sharing one at a time, have students share the facial expression of the emotion they chose one at a time, or altogether.

PART 4

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 Do something that you enjoy for a little while and then write or draw what you did. Choose from the list of suggestions.
- 4 Reflect on how you feel now that you’ve done the positive action. Reflect on how you feel now that you’ve done the positive action.
- 5 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.

PART 5

I Know My Strengths



Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

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

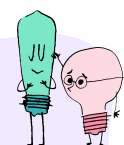
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Video Facilitation)

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 drawing a picture or writing about one or two strengths they have in their journals. 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)

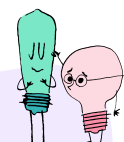
After students have reflected on their strengths, have them choose a one syllable word to describe them (strong, brave, star, or boss) and write it in their journal. Guide students through the mindfulness exercise.

FACILITATION TIP

For younger students, 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).



Guide students through the following mindfulness affirmation.

- 1 Model bringing your thumb to your pointer finger, then middle finger, then ring, then pinky. Have students join in and repeat two or three times until they get the hang of it.
- 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.

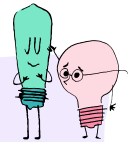
3. STUDENT REFLECTION

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 TIP

Discuss and record responses as a whole group. Encourage students to record one response in their journals that they connected with, or have them complete this step independently.



(OPTIONAL) PART 6

Geometric Shapes Quiz



Estimated Total Time
10-15 minutes

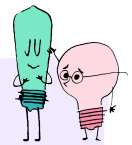
SEL Skills: Self-Awareness: Accurate Self-Perception

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group Intro, Individual Exercise)

Students will begin to explore self-awareness with a simple and fun personality quiz*. Tell students that our identities and personalities are wonderfully complex, and can even look a little different over time as we grow. No tool can tell us everything about our personalities, but they can help us test out certain ideas and identify some things about ourselves. This quiz is based on the idea that people may be drawn to certain shapes and forms based on our personalities, attitudes and experiences. Let's test it out and see!

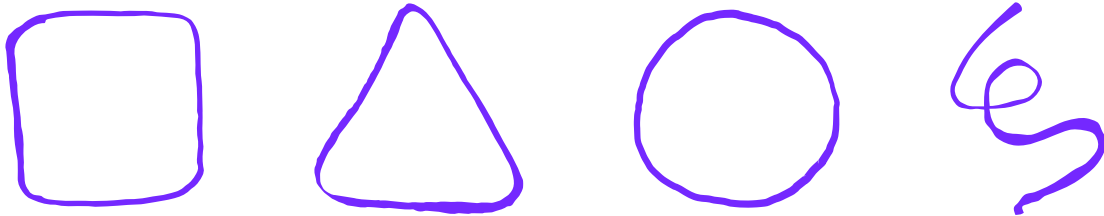
VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

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.



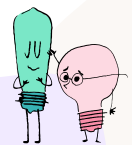
2. PREP

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 stay focused so that you are able to finish what you start. You may be very organized and plan things out. 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 might be very motivated to meet your goals. You might take care of stuff right away, instead of taking time to come up with a plan.
Circle	If you are drawn to the circle, you may be very friendly and caring. It might be easy for you to empathize and sympathize with others, feeling their happiness or pain like it's your own. If people you know argue, you might be the one who helps them solve their problem and you might like 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. You might find yourself doing things differently than most. You might really enjoy inventing new things.



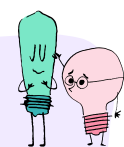
Step 4: As students listen, guide them to reflect on one or two questions in their journals (or facilitate as a class discussion):

- 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 do you think best describes you?

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 publically 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

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone to play | <input type="checkbox"/> Help someone in school | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up litter or trash | <input type="checkbox"/> Smile at someone | <input type="checkbox"/> Give someone a compliment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thank someone for something | <input type="checkbox"/> Draw a picture for someone | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with a chore at home | <input type="checkbox"/> Go outside and enjoy nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a mindful moment for yourself |

MODULE

4

**BUILDING
EMPATHY**



MODULE 4

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.

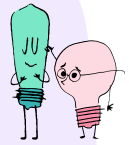


Materials

- [Student Journals](#) (digital or print)
- Whiteboard, Smartboard, Digital Presentation Tool, or Chart Paper
- [Name the Emotion Deck](#)
- (Optional) [I Am Human, by Susan Verde \(printed copy or Read-aloud\)](#)
- (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 may 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.

PART 1

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 thoughts and emotions inside of us all the time. Even though there are many similarities between us, it's important to know that each person is unique and may think, respond, and feel differently about something than you do. We need to be able to 'put ourselves in other peoples' shoes', and imagine what they may be thinking, feeling, or needing in order to truly show kindness."

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

- **(Optional) Read-Aloud:** For additional context, read the book *I Am Human*, by Susan Verde or use this [read-aloud](#).

2. WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

Choose one of the following prompts:

- "Think of a moment when you were feeling a certain way (sad, excited, frustrated), and you felt totally understood by another person."
- "Think of a moment when you were feeling very strongly, and someone helped in the exact way you needed."

Allow students to share. Explain that when they felt understood or cared for, the other person was demonstrating empathy. How did it feel?

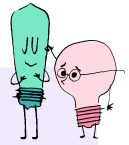
3. TEACHER MODELING

Explain that we are able to develop empathy by observing (noticing) 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 have to miss a party you've been looking forward to.

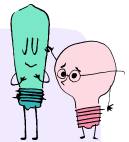
**FACILITATION NOTE**

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**

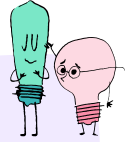
It's important to note that while empathy is usually discussed in the context of negative emotions (sadness, loneliness, fear), it's also important to be able to empathize with positive emotions and situations (excitement, joy, optimism). In fact, the ability to empathize with positive emotions can create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

- [Inside Out Listening with Empathy](#): This is a great demonstration of what empathy and non-empathy look like in action. Have students discuss who is showing empathy (Sadness) and who isn't (Joy).

PART 2

Empathy Charades



Estimated Total Time

15-25 minutes

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

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group or Partners)

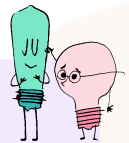
For this experience, students practice demonstrating and interpreting a variety of emotions. The practice of embodying each emotion themselves, while interpreting the emotions of others, provides a safe opportunity to deepen empathy and build emotional literacy.

2. PROCEDURE

- 1 As a class, create a list of different feelings we can experience.
- 2 Write student responses on the board or another visible space.
 - **Note:** You can use the Emotions Vocabulary List from Module 3 as a reference or help.
- 3 Explain that when playing charades you cannot talk, and must use facial expressions and body language to communicate (model and explain if necessary).
- 4 Model the activity by choosing an emotion and having the class guess what emotion you are trying to express.
- 5 Students will raise their hand when they think they know which emotion you are expressing. Call on students one at a time to share their guess and have them explain why they chose that emotion. The student with the correct guess gets to choose a new emotion and act it out for the class. If playing as a class, continue through five or six more emotions (or as many as time allows).
- 6 **Optional:** Partner students in socially distanced pairs. Allow enough time for them to practice a several different emotions.

FACILITATION TIP

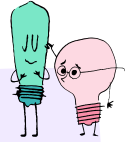
If you created an emotions anchor chart in Module 3: Building Self-Awareness, it may be helpful to display and review it as a class prior to beginning this activity.



3. GROUP DISCUSSION

When finished, reflect with students on the following questions.

- 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?

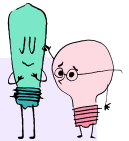


VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

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.

4. STUDENT REFLECTION

In their journals, have students respond to the following question (write or draw): “What are some ways I can show empathy, and why is this important?”



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.

PART 3

Empathy Mapping



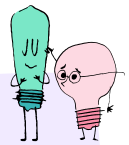
Estimated Total Time

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, and then reflect and share. Whether virtual or in person, be sure to have students share responses because, as they find both similarities and differences, students will experience a deepening sense of community, and strengthen their empathy muscles.



VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Share a recording of the introduction and prompts through your digital platform or facilitate them during a whole group virtual meeting. Students can work through the prompts on their own or during your whole group virtual meeting.

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

- In their journal, have students complete the following prompts, considering facial expression, posture, body language, tone of voice, and specific actions or behaviors.
 - 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 writing or drawing, and then have them share their responses with the group. Be sure to note similarities and differences as students share their responses.

PART 4

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](https://miro.com) 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 more of the following questions:

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

2. (OPTIONAL) ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Get ideas for additional [empathy activities](#).

3. OPTIONAL LITERATURE:

There are wonderful books that provide further exploration and discussion of empathy. If you have access to these books, they can serve as a great extension of this module.

- Those Shoes, by Maribeth Boelts
- We're All Wonders, by R.J. Palacio

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

- Ask someone to play
- Help someone in school
- Pick up litter or trash
- Smile at someone
- Give someone a compliment
- Thank someone for something
- Draw a picture for someone
- Help with a chore at home
- Go outside and enjoy nature
- Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

5

**RELATIONSHIP
SKILLS**



MODULE 5

Relationship Skills

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.

STANDARDS AND CORE COMPETENCY MAPPING

- (CASEL) Social Awareness - Empathy, Perspective-taking, Respect for Others
- (CASEL) Relationship Skills - Communication, Social Engagement, Relationship-building



Estimated Total Time

60-90 minutes

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

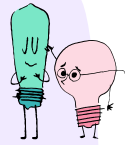


Materials

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

FACILITATION TIPS

Module 5 consists of four 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 and 4 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.

PART 1

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 most 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).

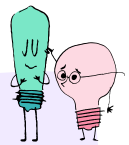
3. TEACHER MODELS WITH STUDENT

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 an unkind 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.



FACILITATION TIPS

- Students may need extra support to determine what a caring and uncaring response may be in these specific scenarios. If so, create response cards or options for the listening student to select from, or model a few scenario responses first.
- For younger students, this may be done as a whole group activity, in which each student is modeling with the teacher for the whole class instead of in partner pairs.

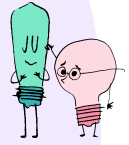
5. PROCEDURE

- 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](#) or create your own scenarios based on your students’ needs or experiences.
- 3 Tell the sharing student to think about 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.



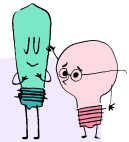
5. STUDENT REFLECTION

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.



PART 2

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)

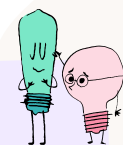
In this activity, students will pair up with someone (preferably someone they don't know very well), and get to know them by asking five questions that you'll provide them. Introduce the activity by letting students know that it's easy to fall into a rhythm with the friends they already have, or the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

2. PROCEDURE

- 1 If in person, have students select a partner that they do not know well. Partners will sit across from each other to face each other as they share their answers.
- 2 Determine which student will answer first so it is clear who will start as the speaker and who will start as the listener.
- 3 Ask the pairs to take turns answering, and prompt them with the following questions (or create your own):
 - If you could eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
 - What's your favorite thing to do after school?
 - If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
- 4 Tell students to consider how 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 by writing or drawing.
- 6 At the end of the exercise, have each student introduce their partner, and share one thing they learned about them.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

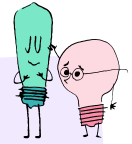
This activity can be done in virtual breakout rooms at the same time, or assigned for independent completion over a designated period of time. Assign partners ahead of time.



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?



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.

PART 3

Affirmation Circles



Estimated Total Time
15-20 minutes

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

1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

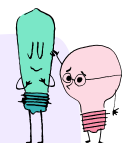
When it comes to verbal communication, there are several simple messages that have a surprisingly positive impact. Sharing something that you like or appreciate about another person (an affirmation) can uplift those around you in a powerful way. In this activity, students will each share an affirmation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

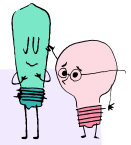
2. PROCEDURE

- 1 "Circle" Up:** If in person, have students create a large circle so everyone is able to see each other, or two to four smaller circles if distancing requires it. If virtual, you can facilitate this activity as a whole group or (if appropriate) create breakout rooms for smaller groups of students. Have students begin with their legs stretched out, crossing them once they've received an affirmation.
- 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.
- 3 Use the following procedure to facilitate the activity:**
 - Discuss the meaning of an affirmation. Encourage students to start their affirmation with a sentence stem like "I appreciate that you _____" or "You are good at _____".

FACILITATION TIP

- Consider creating an anchor chart of affirmations that students may refer to throughout the activity. You may even add to it through the year!
 - Some students may need extra support. Posting these stems where students can refer to them or even saying to students "repeat after me" may be helpful in the beginning.
-
- **Have a student volunteer to start.** Tell them to call the name of the student they want to affirm. Have both students (giving and receiving) make eye contact while the affirmation is given.
 - **Cultivate active listening:** Have the receiving student say "Thank you," while maintaining eye contact, then cross their legs (indicating they have already received an affirmation).
 - **Pass it on:** The receiving student shares a new affirmation with a student who has not received one yet. This continues until all students have received and given an affirmation and are sitting cross-legged.





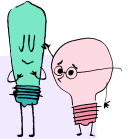
FACILITATION TIP

Have students use a prop or digital tool (like holding a pencil or changing their background) to indicate they have or have not shared.

3. STUDENT REFLECTION

Give students several minutes to reflect on this experience in their journal with the following question:

- 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.

PART 4

The Reach Out Challenge (Independent Activity)

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

1. OVERVIEW

This activity helps students reconnect with both the people and activities they enjoy, while encouraging them to grow in several key skills, including communication, self-efficacy, social awareness, and empathy.

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 reaching out to someone to share about a specific topic. Students may choose topics like:

- Their favorite movie or show
- A favorite art project and how they created it
- The basics of their favorite sport or game
- All about their favorite hobby
- Secrets to beating their favorite video game
- Something entirely different!

3. PLANNING

Students will plan their “reach out” 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 reach out to, 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 sharing about?
- Who do I know that might be feeling lonely and feel happy to reconnect with me?

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

Ask someone to play

Help someone in school

Pick up litter or trash

Smile at someone

Give someone a compliment

Thank someone for something

Draw a picture for someone

Help with a chore at home

Go outside and enjoy nature

Take a mindful moment for yourself

MODULE

6

**THE KINDNESS
EXPERIMENT**



MODULE 6

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.

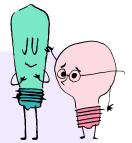


Materials

- [Student Journal](#)
- Kind Acts Bank (Part 1)
- (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) With guidance, plan and conduct an investigation in collaboration with peers (for Kindergarten).
- (NGSS) Make observations (firsthand or from media) and/or measurements to collect data that can be used to make comparisons.
- (NGSS) Record information (observations, thoughts, and ideas).
- (NGSS) Use and share pictures, drawings, and/or writings of observations.
- (NGSS) Compare predictions (based on prior experiences) to what occurred (observable events).



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

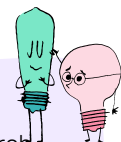
Overview: *In Part 1, guide students to choose the kind act they want to test, craft their hypothesis, and plan their experiment. Students will complete their experiments individually, unless you determine that partners or small groups will be more effective given classroom dynamics. Students may complete their experiments within the context of the physical classroom or school (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 model and discuss the scientific inquiry process with students.



2. CHOOSE YOUR KIND ACT

With support, 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: Provide an overview of each kind act with the class, giving a description and answering questions. Instruct students to select the kind act they'd like to try.

- See the Kind Acts Bank (an identical copy is in the Student Journal)
- **If Virtual**, guide students to consider who they will perform the kind act for. It may be people in their household, but it does not have to be.

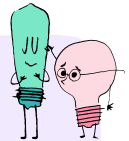
Kind Acts Bank

- Ask a new friend to play.
- Help someone with schoolwork.
- Draw a picture for someone.
- Thank someone for something they did.
- Give a gift to someone.
- Give someone a compliment

Step 2: Walk students through the process below to form their hypothesis. Tell students to write down their chosen 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.

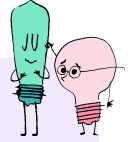


FACILITATION TIPS

- Ensure that students only select one kind act.
- You may opt to select one act that the entire class will try, though providing students choice is recommended

3. PLAN THE EXPERIMENT (Whole Group, or Individually with support)

Guide students to the **Planning Questions Table** in their journal. Overview and guide students to complete the planning process, which includes each of the following questions. If not completing as a whole group, designate a date for each kind act to be performed.



FACILITATION TIP

Some students will need support filling out their Planning Table. Note that students cannot change their choices after they have established their hypotheses.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Visually guide students through their journal entries with a tutorial video or during a whole class meeting.

STUDENT PLANNING QUESTIONS

TEACHER DETAILS

Who will you do this kind act for?

- Students may plan to complete the act for a specific student known ahead of time, or they may plan to complete the act for “someone new” or “a friend” when they see the best opportunity.

When will you do this kind act?

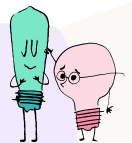
- When will this act be completed by?
- Guide students based on class schedule, instructional plan, and student needs.

Where will you do this kind act?

- Where will this act be completed?
- It is ok for this detail to be general (classroom, lunchroom, school) or specific (Art Class, recess, etc.)

FACILITATION TIP

- Depending on your schedule, you may choose to introduce Part 2 at this time (see page 93), or you may let students know that the next time you meet, you’ll outline Part 2 of their Kindness Experiment.



PART 2

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

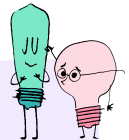
Overview: In Part 2, students will conduct their experiments and record their observations using the **Observation Table** in their journal. In addition to the learning objectives, the goal of Part 2 is for students to be able to adequately identify the effect kindness has on their happiness, as well 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.

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?										

PART 3

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)

Have a discussion with students about what it means to *analyze* data (“What do you notice and what does it mean?”). Tell students that in Part 3, they will analyze and interpret their experiment results and explain it based on their data.

Note: Depending on your grade level, the graphing activity may vary. Several options have been provided based on your class’ needs and abilities.

2. STUDENTS ORGANIZE AND GRAPH DATA

Give students time to complete their graphs independently in their journals with support as needed (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.

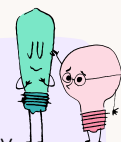
Step 1: Have students record their results in the first data table, following the example below:

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



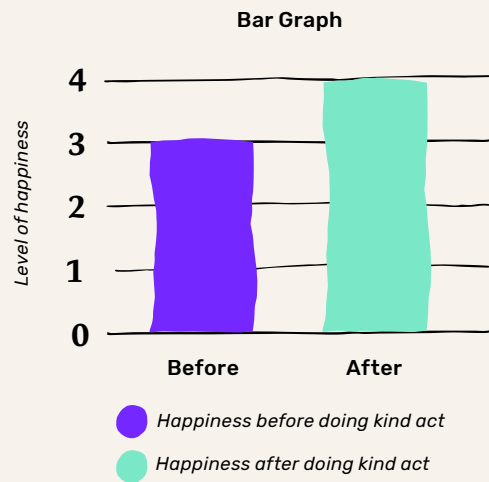
FACILITATION TIPS

- Students may need extra support during this step. Model the provided example and as many additional examples as needed. Provide counting support (manipulatives, number lines) as necessary to help students find the *difference*. Consider partnering students to review and check each others’ data tables.



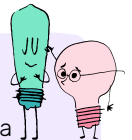
- There is a chance that students will come up with a negative difference. Be prepared to address this when they analyze results, and take the time to discuss what it means if needed.
- **If virtual**, consider having students submit their data through your digital platform so you can ensure it is correct. Younger students might need help from a parent or guardian.

(Optional) Step 2: (Student Bar Graph) Have students plot this data on the bar graph in their journals.



FACILITATION TIP

Students may have varying experience creating bar graphs. You may need to approach this step as a separate activity or you can choose to omit altogether. Student journals have an empty bar graph to capture their data. Provide the level of support most appropriate for your students during this step.

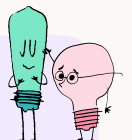


3. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION (Individually, Small Groups, or Whole Group)

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.



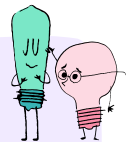
Guide students to think through the following questions:

Responses to the questions one and two will be circled in the Student Journal.

- 1 **Summarize your findings:**
 - Based on my experience, doing kind acts did / did not make me happy.
- 2 **Did this match what you thought would happen (hypothesis)?**
 - These findings did / did not support my hypotheses.
 - The experiment did / did not work as I expected.
- 3 **Reflect on what this means:** A written response is optional for this reflection, but ensure that students take time to reflect. This can be done with a partner in lieu of a written response if in person, or in breakout groups if virtual:
 - Why do you think you got the results that you did?

FACILITATION TIP

Be sure to let students know that the goal of scientific inquiry is not to have a “correct hypothesis” – in fact, scientists often learn the most from an incorrect hypothesis! Tell students that a hypothesis is similar to a compass or map; it helps us know which direction to go next.

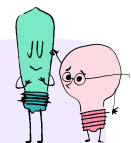


4. REFLECTION (Individual)

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

FACILITATION TIP

You may opt to approach the reflection as a class discussion first, but students should reflect independently or with partners as well. Use these prompts to help guide student reflection.



- 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)

If you didn’t already reflect as a whole class, facilitate a brief whole group discussion with students, allowing them to share their experiences throughout the investigation, and their major takeaways.

PART 4

Answering the Big Question



Estimated Total Time

40-50 minutes

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

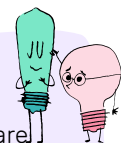
Overview: Students will now combine and analyze the class-wide results of the kindness experiments. Guide students to add their results to the class data set, analyze the data through a graph, and create explanations based on their evidence. Through the process, students will compare their experience 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.

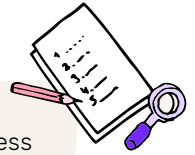
1. INTRODUCTION (Whole Group)

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 provide real understanding, we’re going to combine all of our data into a class set. Then we can analyze and explain the results, and ultimately, 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. GRAPH: DID KIND ACTS MAKE US HAPPIER? (Whole Group)

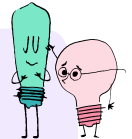
Start with the question, “Did Kind Acts Make Us Happy?” Students will respond in one of three ways: yes (positive difference), no (negative difference), or no change (zero difference). Each student will provide one response. If using sticky notes, every student will need one.



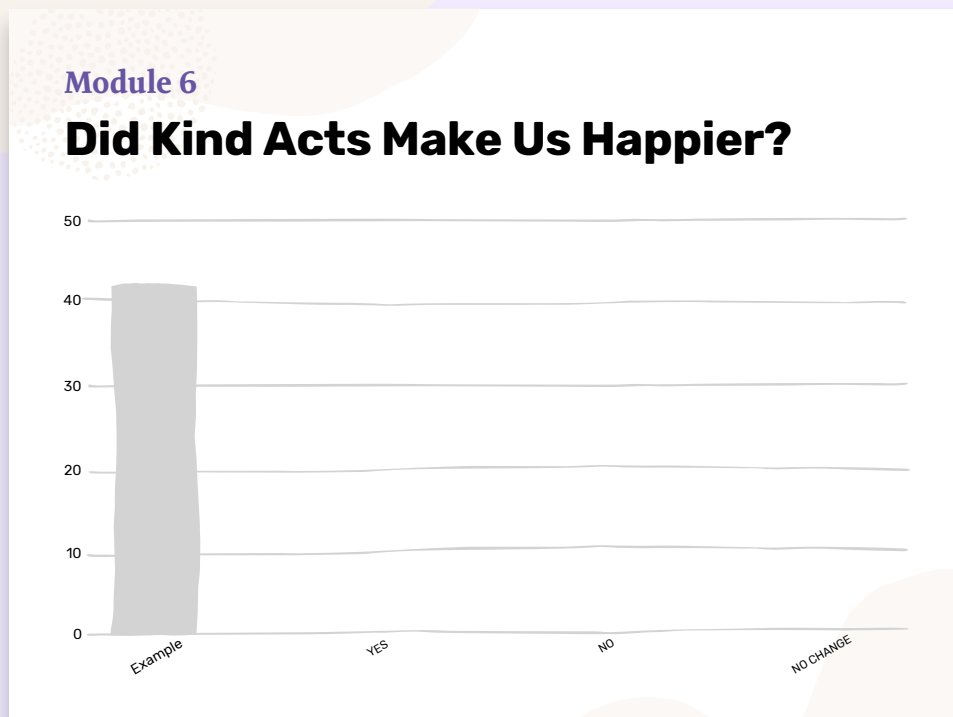
Step 1: Students will review their observations and write on their sticky notes **yes** if their happiness increased, **no** if their happiness decreased, or **no change** if their happiness stayed the same.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Model giving a thumbs up for yes, thumbs down for no, and thumbs sideways for no change. Have students share their results in your whole class meeting (with their camera on) while you collect their data. Or, have them share an emoji!



Step 2: Build the bar graph based on student responses. This graph demonstrates whether or not doing kind acts made students feel happier overall. See below for an example.



4. ANALYZE AND EXPLAIN (Small Groups or Whole Group)

Lead students through individual responses as a whole group, or have them work in small groups to discuss their findings.

Step 1: Display the graph.

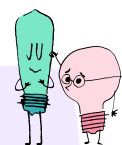
Step 2: Guide students to analyze the data using the following questions. Prompt them to provide evidence for their answers.

- Did performing Kind Acts make us happy?
- How do you know?



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.



5. STUDENTS REFLECT

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

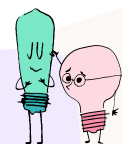
- How has your understanding of kindness changed from the beginning of Learn Kind, until now?
- Which skills were most important to use in doing kind acts?

(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.



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

Ask someone to play

Help someone in school

Pick up litter or trash

Smile at someone

Give someone a compliment

Thank someone for something

Draw a picture for someone

Help with a chore at home

Go outside and enjoy nature

Take a mindful moment for yourself

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

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) Use tools and/or materials to design and/or build a device that solves a specific problem or a solution to a specific problem.
- (NGSS) Generate and/or compare multiple solutions to a problem.

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.

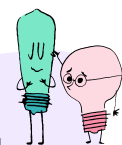
If facilitating virtually

- 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

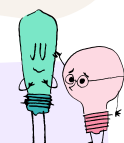
Here's a helpful brainstorming resource from [Stanford d.school](#). Gather the whole group together for a brainstorming session of as many ideas as students can generate in 5-10 minutes. Record ideas on a whiteboard, chart paper, digital presentation tool in a visible location. Build off the inspiration 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

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Present the first two steps *synchronously* during a whole class virtual meeting or have students post ideas *asynchronously* after viewing a prompt or recorded introduction. Ask for either written or recorded responses. Compile responses to present during a whole class virtual meeting.



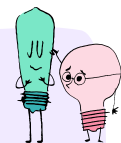
Step 4: Bring Ideas to Life

First, select the two or three ideas you want to test. Project all ideas in a visible space. Give students three sticky notes (or however many is appropriate) and tell them to vote on three ideas. You may provide them with specific **criteria and constraints** to help guide their evaluation of ideas.

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.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION TIP

Create a poll or use another appropriate method for students to vote virtually.



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. This can be done through a digital presentation or video. [The kindness.org team would love to share your story tool](https://www.kindness.org/team-would-love-to-share-your-story-tool/)

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

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- Give someone a compliment
- Thank someone for something
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