



# Training and Resource Manual

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2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

# **My-Life Explorer**

## **Training and Resource Manual**

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## Acknowledgements

Programs like those created and implemented by 5 Peaks Youth Solutions are developed through initial ideas, formation of theories, launching pilot models, evaluation, and multiple iterations. This is far from a solo endeavor.

I'd like to honor and offer my deep appreciation to the following individuals who have contributed to the development of the My-Life Explorer program and the training and resource content you will find in these pages...

***Alyssa Clark***  
***Gabriel Groppi***  
***Sarah Walsh***  
***Kayla Tanner***  
***Rachael Reuther***  
***Isobel Osgood-Cooper***  
***Tiffany Witt***

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack". The signature is stylized and cursive, written over the word "Gratefully,".

## Getting Trained as a My-Life Explorer Facilitator

Following our three-part learning process: Watching, Reading, Doing

**Watching:** The online video content is one-third of the training process. We've made an effort to confine the video content to the core ideas and frameworks that support our intervention methodology. This way you'll be able to see and hear primary concepts explained and illustrated for that part of your learning and memory process.

**Reading:** The manual that you've been given for this training includes information that you'll need to read. Some of you say that you are a visual learner, we get that, but there are parts of your brain and learning processes that are not reached by any other practice than reading. To help you with that, you'll find some questions at the end of each video session that quiz you to see if you are understanding what you are seeing, hearing and reading.

**Doing:** We will get you playing the games and practicing leading the activities you'll eventually do with the students, but the most valuable part of doing will happen as they say, "on the job." You will learn a ton just in the first couple weeks of groups.

We want to particularly emphasize the importance of post-group debriefs with your coaching partner. These don't have to be long, but they are highly important for you to continue learning about your abilities, strengthening your relationship with your coaching partner and most importantly, how you can improve your ability to connect with and influence the lives of the children who have been recommended for our intervention.



# Introduction & Core Philosophy

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

*Understand the purpose of Explorer groups. Construct a primary rationale for the necessity of this intervention. Grasp the developmental need for executive function and self-regulation and learn methods to help increase or improve them in students.*

## 5 Peaks Youth Solutions

Mission: Helping children and teens elevate their life skills so they can grow confident emotionally, succeed academically, and thrive socially.

- 5 Peaks Youth Solutions' (5PYS) flagship program called Basecamp was originally designed and implemented on campuses to facilitate social & emotional development in High School students through a group coaching method.
- Expanded to serve Middle School students in 6th-8th grades.
- The My-Life Explorer program was added with a focus on group activities for 3rd-5th grade students.
- Recent adaptations to Explorer groups included expanding program scope to address the needs of kindergarten through 2nd grade students.

## My-Life Explorer Groups (MLE)

### Structure

Explorer is a weekly group of up to 6 students led by two facilitators. These groups meet on campuses during the regular school day.

### Purpose

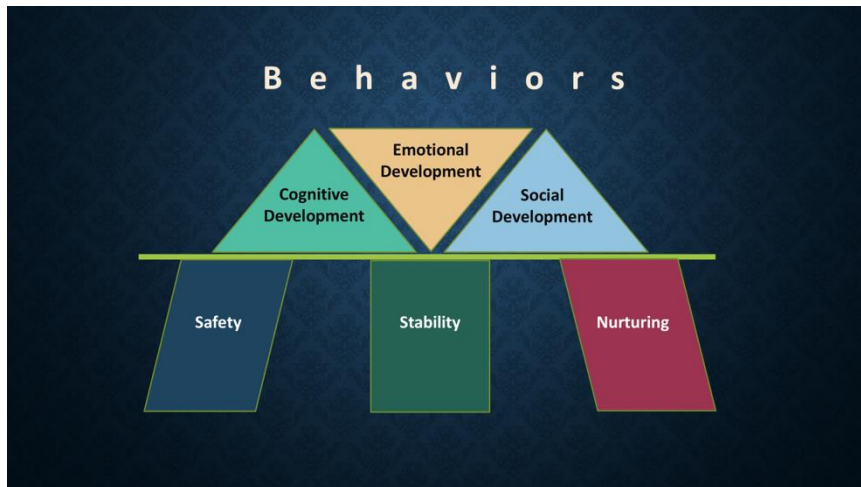
***The purpose of Explorer groups is to help K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students understand and manage their feelings, grow in their abilities to navigate social relationships, and adapt higher skills in executive functioning.***

This intervention model is based on interactive games, stories, and activities that help students explore what they are experiencing inwardly in their emotions and outwardly in their social relationships with others.

## Fundamental Philosophy

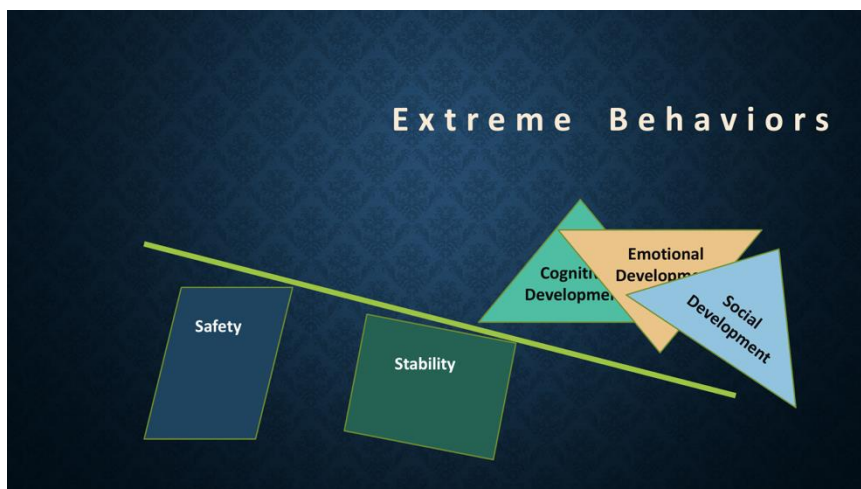
Understanding and intersecting with the social-emotional development needs of kindergarten through fifth grade students.

### 1. First, is addressing the compromised under-pinning's of safety, stability and nurturing

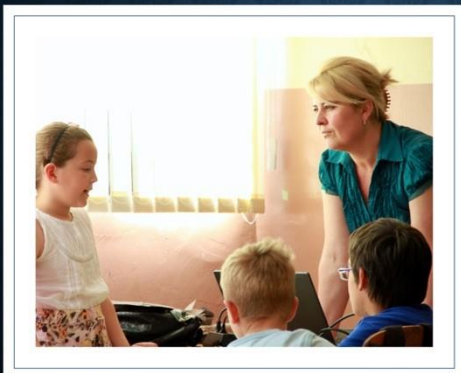


The cognitive, social, and emotional development of children is built on the foundations of safety, stability, and nurturing. When those underpinnings are solid, growth in those developmental areas will be steady and predictable.

Sadly, the number of children who have experienced threats to their emotional and physical safety, instability, and lack of caring nurture is rising.



The need for creating environments and relationships that provide safety, stability, and nurturing through early, middle, and even late adolescence is crucial. Some of those underpinnings can be reset in the lives of children. Sometimes that requires a therapeutic intervention, but children in MLE groups make great progress through focused, regular interaction with a skilled caring adult.



K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students are in the beginning stages of this active to passive movement. The presence of safe, stable and nurturing adult interactions remain critically important for their healthy development.

As children mature, parental interactions move by necessity from active to passive so that true social interdependence and emotional independence is not hindered by coddling or over-protection. However, the presence of safe, stable and nurturing adult interactions beyond their parents is still important for their development. This is the environment of MLE groups and the role you can serve as a facilitator.

## **2. Slowing Down to the Developmental Speed of Children**

A research book on childhood development written about 30 years ago by a collection of pediatric psychiatrists expressed concern over what they saw in the growing cultural and parental goal of precocity. The opinion of these psychiatrists is that the drive among adults to push children beyond their years was producing more harm than good. Their collective experience and research led them to encourage parents and educators to let children be children and let them develop mentally, socially and emotionally at their own pace. MLE groups provide this student-paced development by allowing each student to respond to activities, games and stories without the need or expectation of measuring their participation against age or grade-based norms.

### Resist Imposing Developmental Milestones:

- Let children be children
- Let them develop socially and emotionally at their own pace
- MLE groups provide the space and setting for this to happen without imposing age or grade-based norms.



### 3. Allowing for Varied Social-Emotional Development Trajectories

From a collection of research reports that measured the efficacy of different social-emotional learning (SEL) programs being used on school campuses across the nation, one study found that a primary limiting factor to school-wide curriculum-based SEL efforts was the timetable and pathway for this kind of development is hugely individualistic. **They concluded that neither of the two students followed the same trajectory for social-emotional development.** It's a mistake for us to set out age-based developmental markers that determine where a student should be in their understanding of cause and effect, self-regulation, or demonstrating adaptive social skills.

Those arbitrary milestones only tend to contribute to our anxiety, which contributes to our fixing interventions. Timetable fixes offer no real help to the students.

### Executive Function and Self-Regulation Skills

The best way to facilitate social-emotional growth among students in this age group is through a focus on executive function and self-regulation skills. These skills provide critical support for academic learning and social-emotional development.

**Executive function and self-regulation skills allow students to retain and work with information in their brains, focus their attention, filter distractions, and switch mental gears.**

### 3 Basic Dimensions of These Skills:

1. **Working Memory** — The ability to hold information in mind and use it.
2. **Inhibitory Control** — The ability to master thoughts and impulses so as to resist temptations, distractions, and habits, and to pause and think before acting.

3. **Cognitive Flexibility** — The capacity to switch gears and adjust to changing demands, priorities, or perspectives.

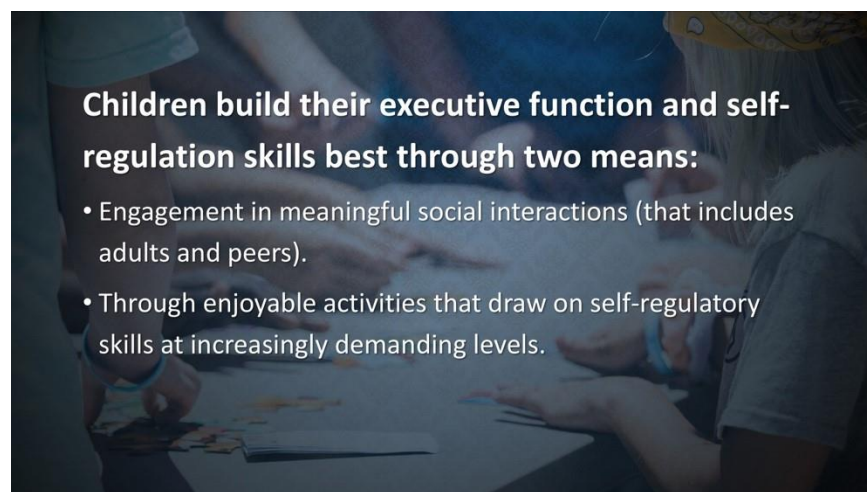
***These Skills Help Children:***

- Remember the information they need to complete a task
- Filter distractions
- Resist inappropriate or non-productive impulses
- Sustain attention during a particular activity

They also help children set goals and plan ways to meet them, assess their progress along the way, and adjust the plan, if necessary, while managing frustration so they don't act on it by giving up.

**These skills are not purely cognitive.**

You may be thinking that this skill-building is the work of educators, but these skills are not purely cognitive. Children build their executive functioning and self-regulation skills best through two means: One is engagement in meaningful social interactions (that includes adults and peers). The second means is through enjoyable activities that draw on self-regulatory skills at increasingly demanding levels.



In this regard, MLE group facilitators provide environments that are supplemental to the classroom and in some cases better because, unlike teachers, you do not have to manage the difficult balance

between socialization and game or play-based interactions with the demands of meeting specific grade-based academic standards of achievement.

MLE group facilitators provide environments that are supplemental to the classroom and in some cases better because, unlike teachers, they do not have to manage the difficult balance between socialization and game or play-based interactions with the demands of meeting specific grade-based academic standards of achievement.

### **Building and Expanding Student's Emotional Vocabulary**

Students will benefit greatly by being helped to understand what they are feeling, and why they are experiencing that feeling. Putting words to those feelings is essential for that understanding.

An interpretation of emotions is a complex matter. The role of MLE group facilitators is to help the students interpret what they are experiencing in their feelings and improve their ability to interpret what they notice in others' emotions.

Adult emotions can be very confusing to children. They can get inconsistent and mixed signals from adults. Our objective is to help them read and interpret those emotions in others.

### **Emotions Chart |**

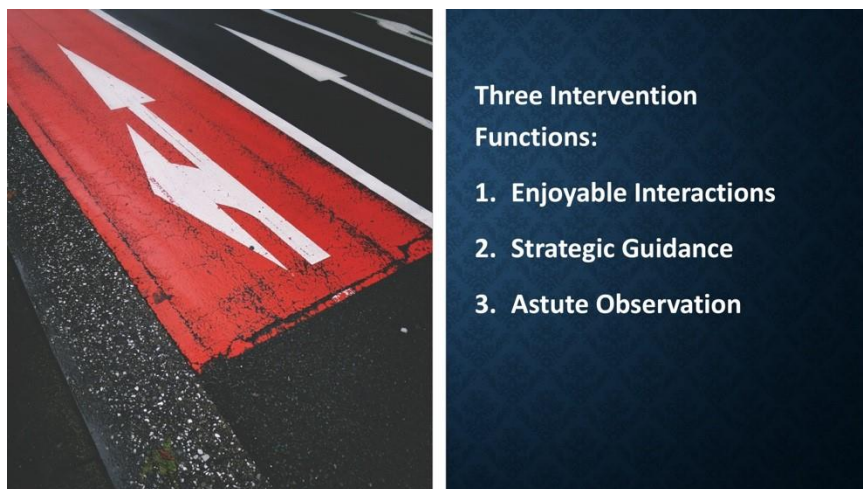
[Hope 4 Hurting Kids - Emotions Chart](#)

## A Preventative Intervention

### Learning Objective

*Understand the three actions of this intervention. Ability to defend the practice and importance of “play” in our program. Understand the role of interaction and modeled behaviors. Learn to expand the benefits and minimize the hazards of scenario-based applications. Ability to explain the two purposes of astute observation. Understand the two primary types of childhood trauma and our primary goal in serving children affected by them.*

### MLE Groups - Designed to Function as a Preventative Intervention



We provide an important layer of resource toward the cognitive, social, and emotional wellness of students through three primary functions (enjoyable interactions, strategic guidance and astute observations):

#### **1. Enjoyable Interactions – Safe, Stable, and Nurturing actions and reactions between adult and student**

Responsive relationships early in life are the most important factor in building sturdy brain architecture. Educators are often trying to build frameworks of learning on poor developmental foundations. The scaffolding approach that we hear so much about in education depends on healthy brain development at primary stages of growth in each child. Think of building a house; it’s constructed in a certain order and the foundation establishes a base upon which everything else is built. The same is true with developing brains. Brain architecture consists of trillions of connections among neurons across different areas of the brain.

A major active ingredient in this developmental process is the serve-and-return interaction between children and their parents and with other caregivers in the family or community. When an infant or young child babbles, gestures, or cries, and an adult responds appropriately with eye contact, words, or a hug, neural connections are built and strengthened in the child's brain.

We tend to neglect this development after children enter grade school, but what if that interaction has been neglected? This need for responsive relationships continues into early adolescence and is especially important in children where serve and return relationships through the first 5 years of life have been limited. Our goal is to provide caring adults who have the ability to be sensitive and responsive to a young child's signals and needs. Caring adults are able to provide an environment rich in serve-and-return experiences and help create or recreate better foundations for ongoing brain development.

## Enjoyable Interactions – Safe, Stable and Nurturing actions and reactions between adult and student

Supporting and encouraging rewards a child's interests and curiosity. Never getting a return can actually be stressful for a child. When you return a serve, children know that their thoughts and feelings are heard and understood.

- Harvard – Center for the Developing Child

**5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return**  
from *Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FINO)*

Child-adult relationships that are responsive and attentive—with lots of back and forth interactions—build a strong foundation in a child's brain for all future learning and development. This is called "serve and return," and it takes time to play! Follow these 5 steps to practice serve and return with your child.

- 1

Notice the serve and share the child's focus of attention.
- 2

Return the serve by supporting and encouraging.
- 3

Serve and return interactions make everyday moments fun and become second nature with practice.

Relationships also help build resilience throughout childhood and into adulthood. The single most common factor for children and teens who develop the capacity to overcome serious hardship is having at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.

These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness and protection that comes from consistency and safety. These relationships also model developmental capabilities—such as the ability to plan, monitor, adjust, and regulate behavior—showing ways to respond adaptively to adversity and thrive. This combination of supportive relationships, adaptive skill-building, and positive experiences can provide secure foundations for building resilience.

For children, responsive relationships with adults have a double benefit, both promoting healthy brain development and providing the buffering protection needed to prevent very challenging experiences from producing a toxic stress response. Healthy relationships also boost well-being,

providing emotional support and strengthening hope and confidence, all of which are needed to survive and weather stressful situations.

By providing responsive, serve-and-return interactions between adults and children, and modeling prosocial healthy relationships, MLE group facilitators tap into the power to promote children's healthy development and reinforce core life skills.

Relationships also help build resilience throughout childhood and into adulthood.

**\*The single most common factor for children and teens who develop the capacity to overcome serious hardship is having at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.**

These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness and protection that comes from consistency and safety.

**Your interactions can provide consistency and safety,  
and model developmental capabilities**

- Planning, monitoring and adjusting
- Regulating behavior
- Responding adaptively to adversity
- Building resilience

For children, responsive relationships with adults have a double benefit, both promoting healthy brain development and providing the buffering protection needed to prevent very challenging experiences from producing a toxic stress response.

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2. **Strategic Guidance** – Leading students into specific activities that are designed to draw out social and emotional responses to real-life experiences through exposure to situational or scenario-based examples

## 2. Strategic Guidance – leading students into specific activities that are designed to draw out social and emotional responses to real life experiences through exposure to situational or scenario-based examples.

"Alex told a lie about Sophie because he was mad about the way she treated him on the playground..."



Do you remember when you were mad at someone? What did you do? How did you feel about what you did?

The missing element in most curriculum-based social-emotional learning efforts is experiential proximity. Younger children need exposure to described situations or scenarios because tying an event that happened in their past to a suggested theme like sadness or confidence requires a level of abstract thinking that can be beyond their developmental reach. However, concrete thinking can allow children to separate persons in the scenario from the protagonists or antagonists in their own experience because there are not enough clear commonalities between the friend in the story to their own friends to make them appear the same.

Any use of scenarios must be quickly connected to real life experiences if they are going to be successful in applying new patterns of behavior, techniques for inhibitory control and practice cognitive flexibility in current or future situations.

Experiential learning is vital to the comprehension and adaptation of core life skills. This is particularly important as children mature. The connections suggested in scenario-based examples will need to be navigated carefully as children move from concrete to abstract thinking. While abstract thinking is helpful in the development of non-cognitive social capacities like empathy or grasping non-concrete concepts like forgiveness, there are definite downsides to it.

The ability to mentally “put yourself in a specific situation,” contains by means of that same imaginative process the ability to catastrophize events or overgeneralize by perceiving a set-back as evidence that you’re a failure. Children who suffer with anxiety or depression are particularly vulnerable to the downside of abstract thinking. The solution is to help children explore real life situations from scenario examples or stories as quickly as you can.

### 3. Astute Observation – What MLE group facilitators observe in each student or the whole group, serves two primary purposes:

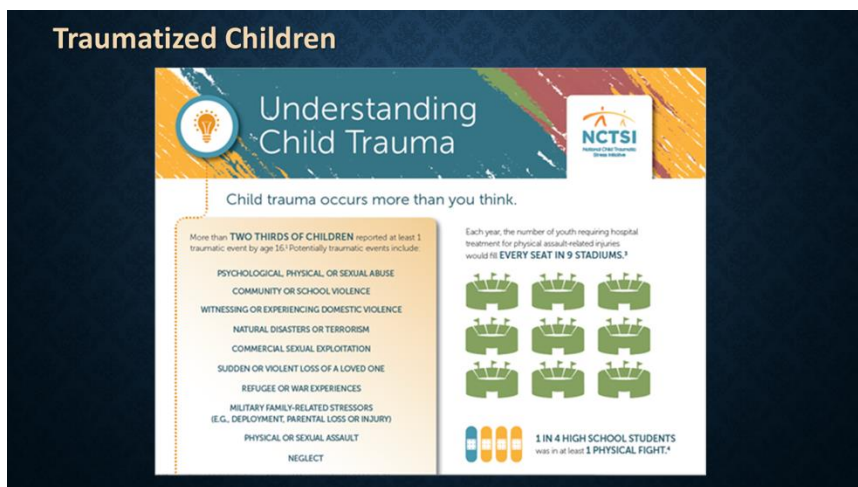
- Observations are necessary to inform the focus of group interactions and necessary adaptations to the theme or content. We’ve provided a recommended structure, and I know that some of you are rule-keepers or recipe-followers so this may be disconcerting for you

to hear, but it will be important that you make adaptations from time to time so you can tailor the subject and content to an individual student needs, or to common behaviors or difficulties evident in the group as a whole.

- 5 Peaks programs are method focused and child centered. That means we respond to the child's individual needs while maintaining adherence to the program methodology. Your astute observations allow you to see needs that require adaptations in theme and content.
- Observation also facilitates networking resources through appropriate referrals of students into possible therapeutic care and through reporting of suspected conditions of neglect or abuse. We have a whole section on referrals and reporting elsewhere in this training, so we won't focus much on it here. Suffice it to say that MLE groups provide another vital set of eyes on the students that will help identify those who are struggling or suffering in ways that are beyond the scope of help provided in these groups.

## Traumatized Students

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration documents that over 60% of children report at least one traumatic event by age 16.



**MLE groups provide an additional layer of resources toward the mental, social, and emotional wellness of students.**

MLE group facilitation, as we have already discussed, is a preventative intervention. We are not pretending to be therapists, but we do provide an additional layer of resource toward the mental, social, and emotional wellness of students. We administer this resource by providing students with a safe, stable, and nurturing environment that can help them navigate through what we would call “little t – traumas”

## Traumatized Students

### Big “T” and little “t” traumas

- Big “T” involves events including serious injury, sexual violence, or life-threatening experiences.
- Little “t” might involve non-life-threatening injuries, emotional abuse, death of a pet, bullying or harassment, and loss of significant relationships.

People have unique capacities to handle stress, referred to as resilience, which impacts their ability to cope with trauma. What is highly distressing to one person may not cause the same emotional response in someone else, so **the key to understanding little “t” trauma is to examine how it affects the individual rather than focusing on the event itself.**

Little “t” traumas can be extremely upsetting and cause significant emotional damage, particularly if an individual experiences more than one event or if these traumas occur during important periods of brain development like early childhood and adolescence.

Evidence now concludes that **repeated exposure to little “T” traumas can cause more emotional harm than exposure to a single big “T” traumatic event.**

## Traumatized Children

Your role as a MLE group facilitator serves a vital role in helping students with little “t” traumas experience some healing by:

- Understanding their emotions
- Learning how to identify the actions of others as safe or unsafe
- Understanding the source of the actions of others

## **Emotional Suffering**

If expectations of developmental norms need to be individualized and protracted for non-traumatized children, it is expected to see unusual or non-related development patterns and longer timelines for those who have.

Example of a non-related development pattern:

A child who demonstrates strong empathetic skills to read and understand the emotions of others has significant difficulty naming and managing their own emotions.

### **Traumatized Children**

Your role as a MLE group facilitator serves a vital role in helping students with little “t” traumas experience some healing by:

- Understanding their emotions
- Learning how to identify the actions of others as safe or unsafe
- Understanding the source of the actions of others

In the role of astute observer, MLE group facilitators will observe things about the student’s reactions or behaviors that bring up a cause for concern.

The Cause for Concern report will help you more clearly identify what you are seeing and have concrete observations to share with other school staff or resource providers so the child can be offered the best possible help.

This will also allow you to have concrete observations to share with other resource providers in the network so the child can be offered the best possible help.

# Social-Emotional Development - Theories and Efficacy

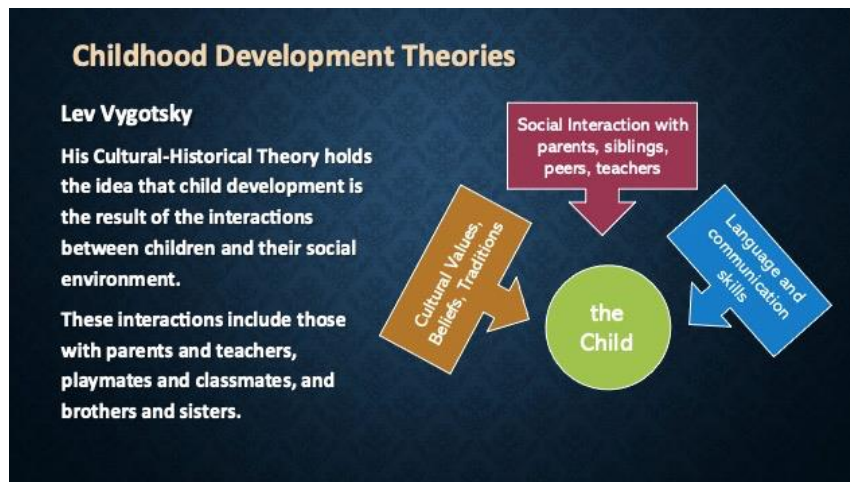
## Learning Objective

In this section of your training, we want to accomplish three things, first, to introduce you to two Childhood Development theories that inform our focus on group socialization. Second, we want to address what is regarded as the fixed window of development for children aged zero to five, and then build a basis of confidence for you regarding the efficacy of interventions like ours among school-aged children. Third, we will briefly define emotional and cognitive development as processes that cannot be separated from social interactions.

Our intervention leans heavily on the students' social relationships, which is why we have you facilitating groups. The importance of this group socialization process is built on the contributions of two prominent theorists on childhood development.

## Childhood Development Theories:

**Lev Vygotsky** (Russian psychologist) argued that children have the capacity to accomplish larger amounts of cognitive improvement through social interactions.



Other interactions involve relationships with significant objects, such as books or toys, and culturally specific practices that children engage in the classroom, at home, and on the playground.


Vygotsky believed that a **child's mind develops when they interact with other people's minds**. During this interaction, children use language to ask questions, and others respond to them. This process contributes to the development of the cognitive ability of children. Children are active

partners in these interactions, constructing knowledge, skills, and attitudes and not just mirroring the world around them. This aligns with our program focus on the importance of play and current theories of serve and return that we introduced in the first section of this training.

**Childhood Development Theories**

Vygotsky believed that a child's mind develops when they interact with other people's minds.

During this interaction, children use language to ask questions, and others respond to them, this process contributes to the development in the cognitive ability of children.



The diagram consists of a horizontal double-headed arrow. The left half of the arrow is light blue and points to the left. The right half is a darker blue and points to the right. In the center of the arrow, the word "INTERACTION" is written in bold, uppercase letters, with "(Serve and Return)" written below it in a smaller font.

When we first started the My-Life Explorer groups we primarily focused on socialization and emotions. Two things drove us to expand this focus into the cognitive and executive functioning areas in childhood development.

First, is the reality as Vygotsky observed, that these developmental domains are interconnected. In the same way that the five vital summits in the 5 Peaks name seek to encompass the whole child, social connections, emotional management, physical activity and fitness, curiosity and learning, and the outward-facing actions of Helping and giving, we believe that by including cognitive development we are addressing a more comprehensive set of more needs in the whole child.

The second driver that led to our expansion of focus to include cognitive development, was the sheer need. Many children manifesting behavioral problems are struggling with learning. Some practitioners describe this as, “Kids will choose to be seen as bad rather than dumb.” Bad behaviors might be connected to learning difficulties as opposed to being antisocial or defiant.

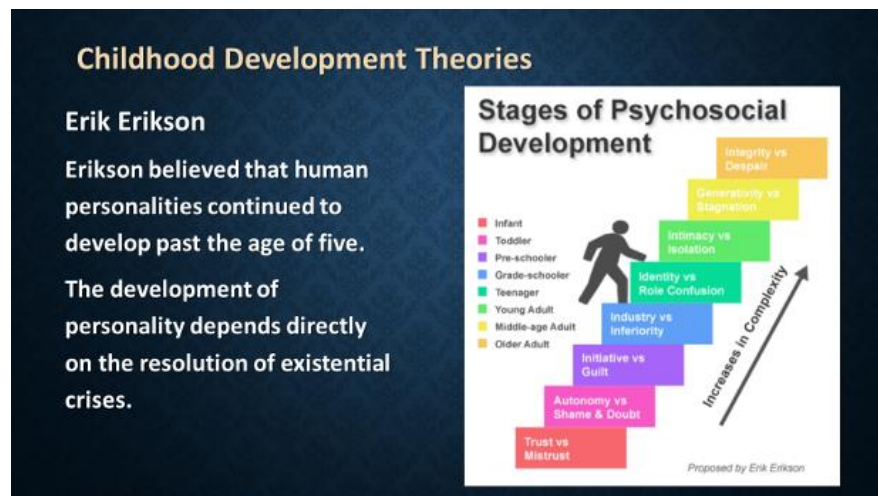
Vygotsky felt that learning could lead to development if it occurs within the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD contains skills and concepts that are not yet fully developed but are "on the edge of emergence." He believed that these skills and concepts emerge only if the child is given appropriate support. These theories have informed our process by having adults, who are not educators interacting and supporting these emerging developmental skills.

The second seminal theorist in childhood development we considered in our program methodology is Erik Erikson.

**Erik Erikson's** humanist theory of psychosocial development agrees with Vygotsky's socialization perspective, but he applies the benefits beyond a singular focus on cognitive growth. Erikson believed that humans' personalities continued to develop past the age of five.

This aligns with current research that is punching holes in the hard line that was previously drawn that a child's learning and personality is fixed at five years of age. There certainly is good evidence that we must pay attention to those first critical years, but many child development experts are seeing the value of interventions like ours to affect positive change in children well into late adolescence. This is core to our program beliefs and objectives. We work to intervene in the positive growth and social-emotional development of the children with whom we interact, seeking better outcomes in their cognitive strengths, behavioral improvement and growth in social skills.

Erikson also believed that the development of personality depended directly on the resolution of existential crises like trust, autonomy, intimacy, individuality, integrity, and identity. His best-known work is his theory that each stage of life is associated with a specific psychological struggle, a struggle that contributes to a major aspect of personality. Erikson called the fourth stage of personality development, the crisis of industry versus inferiority. The way he defines this stage, which is in children ages six through 11 is helpful for understanding the social emotional development of the children we're serving in Explorer groups.

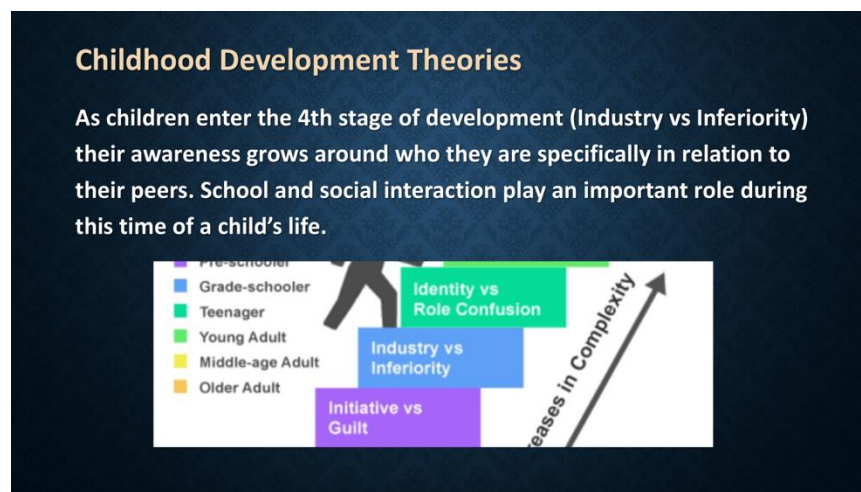


As children enter this stage of development, their awareness grows around who they are, specifically in relationship with their peers. School and social interaction play an important role during this time of a child's life, a child's social world expands considerably as they move away from primary interactions with family members and caregivers to enter school and gain new friendships with peers.

This social milestone is filled with hazards, as you might imagine, the friend they played alongside in the previous stage is now being viewed as better or worse than them, as they participate in

schoolwork, sports and games, this shift in social awareness may lead to a sense of pride in what they can do, but it can also lead to a sense of inferiority because of others having abilities that are better than theirs. As children receive praise and improvement assistance, they will grow in their feelings of confidence.

They may also begin to use comparison between their abilities and the abilities of others as the fuel of industry, as Ericsson would describe it, seeking to be the best artist, the fastest runner, the smartest student, etc.... Most of these comparisons, particularly in the early side of this stage, will be in their abilities, rather than dress, wealth, or appearance. Those measurements of comparison will come a bit later.



You will notice episodes of this in children in kindergarten or 1st grade, and by the time they enter fifth grade, the industry versus inferiority crisis will be in full operation. Friends and classmates play a role in how Children progress through the industry versus inferiority stage.

Through proficiency at play and schoolwork, children can develop a sense of competence and pride in their abilities by feeling competent and capable, children are also able to form a strong self-concept. Our program seeks to create pro-social interactions as the students engage in games and activities. These activities are designed to help them see themselves and understand their emotions in the context of their social interactions with you as the adult facilitator and with their peers.

### Fixed Brain Development

Further answering the question of fixed brain development. Is brain development fixed at age 5? Neuroscience Research has been broadly interpreted to support the conclusion that the critical area of brain development occurs between age zero to three, in some circles or others, would extend that to age five. This has led to governmental and educational policies that stress the

necessity and urgency of preschool programs to help children have the best possible developmental foundation. We don't argue with that at all.

These broad interpretations, however, have unfortunately led to conclusions that suggest a closed door on the foundational development determining that basic brain architecture is set by age five. These positions are based on a generalization of neurological studies that focused on sensory systems as models of brain development, and they were primarily based on animal data, which cannot or probably should not be compared to the cognitive, social and emotional development of humans.

Charles Nelson from Harvard Medical School wrote a document titled ***From Neurons to Neighborhoods*** for the National Research Council Institute of Medicine. In that paper, Nelson claimed that assertions that the die has been cast by the time the child enters school are not supported by neuroscience evidence. He warned that this false assertion can create unwarranted pessimism about the potential efficacy of interventions that are initiated after the preschool years.

### Fixed Brain Development?

"...assertions that the die has been cast by the time the child enters school are not supported by neuroscience evidence and can create unwarranted pessimism about the potential efficacy of interventions that are initiated after the preschool years."

Charles Nelson - Harvard Medical School

We are spending time digging into this neurological subject because the emphasis on age zero to five interventions have been broadly accepted and adopted into national education policies and funded with billions of dollars. The pessimism Nelson referred to about social emotional interventions with older school aged is real. Our objection to fixing specific, opened and closed windows of developmental opportunity is that this tends to be done without the consideration of the longer arc of brain development. A neurological argument can easily be made that brain development is a lifelong process, especially when measuring higher mental social and personality development.

Holding this view is important to the work we are doing with children from 6 to 11 years old. We have an opportunity to significantly impact their social and emotional development and their wellbeing through targeted interactions in years beyond the critical first five.

**Emotional development and socialization are found on the same pathway.**



The last important philosophical structure to consider is the idea that emotional development and socialization are found along the same pathway. Here's a reminder of our purpose. *The purpose of Explorer groups is to help K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students understand and manage their feelings, grow in their abilities to navigate social relationships, and adapt higher skills in executive functioning.*

Your role is to aid them in this exploration by enjoyable interactions, strategic guidance and astute observations. Think of your role as a kind of wilderness guide that leads students to new areas or Vista points, helping them to see and appreciate the environment. This wilderness environment involves what's around them, their social relationships and interactions and what's inside of them, the confluence of their thoughts, perspectives and feelings.

Some people are inclined to delineate the “around them discovery” as separate from the “inside them discovery”, and deal with those developmental processes independently. The research tells us that these processes go on interdependently and concurrently. We hold to the belief that social and emotional development should not be disconnected. They are to use that well-worn phrase, two sides of the same coin.

Think about it for a minute. What percentage of your feelings originate purely from your internal self, your thoughts, your perspectives, values and beliefs? Sure, you have a few emotions that surface from an internal sense of being stuck, confused, or maybe wrestling with the harsh judgments of your inner critic.

Some of your feelings surface from your internal state of mind, but most of them are based on interactions with the world around you. Feelings of loneliness, being overwhelmed, angry, excited, annoyed, hurt, thankful, guilty, worried, impatient, panicked, shocked, bitter, disgusted or heartbroken, all have a direct connection to the people and situations around you. And further, feelings that are stimulated from outside interactions are not best sorted out and contextualized through exclusively internal processes.

This is where the excesses in promoting emotional safety are contributing to higher levels of depression and anxiety in children. You don't learn anything about the source of your feeling of jealousy or how to manage it by withdrawing into isolation and ruminating in it.

Even a talk therapy approach with children, whether that is done professionally or by parents who constantly pull their child out of conflict situations and encourage them to talk about how they feel is not necessarily the best answer. Interaction is where we find the greatest opportunities to understand our feelings and sort out the way to act on what we feel, or to manage and contextualize that emotion.

All that to say is that emotional development cannot be separated from socialization. Both Vygotsky and Erikson affirmed the significance of this interrelationship. This is an important time to intervene with the students in these age groups, because they are entering into a brand-new discovery of who they are as individuals, apart from their previous sense of belonging and identity in their primary families.

As children reach 6 or 7 years old, their social relationships begin to matter to them on an enlarging and accelerated scale. Our intervention is focused on helping that social expansion, grow and develop in tandem with their emotional and cognitive wellness.



### **Social-Emotional Development**

**As children reach 6 years old their social relationships begin to matter to them on an enlarging and accelerated scale.**


**Our intervention is focused on helping that social expansion grow and develop in tandem with their emotional wellness.**

Through this intervention, you can create pro social environments, model healthy adult social behaviors and provide affirming guidance for students in the exploration and management of their emotions. This is important work, and I hope you know how significant you are in making it happen.

## Development Stages & Interactive Practices

### Learning Objective

*Understand the general cognitive and social frameworks present in each grade level. Adopt best practices for engaging and interacting with students based on the stage of development. Adopt best practices for group facilitation.*



**Purpose:**

The purpose of Explorer groups is to help K-5th grade students understand and manage their feelings, grow in their abilities to navigate social relationships, and adapt higher skills in executive functioning.

We're going to make some general observations in this section. By general, we mean that they will not apply to every student, but they will provide a framework to work with in understanding who they are in relation to their developmental stages and how they think and relate to the world around them.

### General Observations | Cognition and Communication

Children in these ages tend to be very literal or black and white in their way of thinking, even though they have very active imaginations and will often seamlessly combine the factual with the fantastic their reasoning will default to its either this or that. They will not relate well to gray area communication or have much capacity for nuanced ideas.

### General Observations – Cognition & Communication

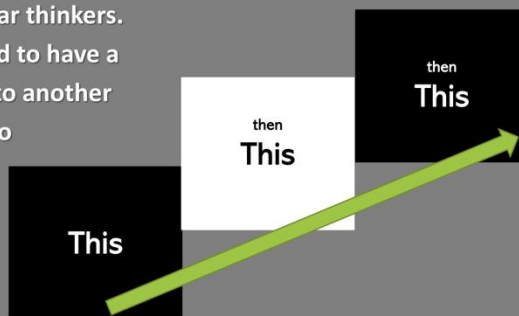
- Children in these ages tend to be very literal or black and white in their way of thinking.



They are also linear thinkers. One idea will need to have a clear connection to another if they're going to understand their relationship. They will not relate well to people who communicate through hints or ambiguous suggestions.

### General Observations – Cognition & Communication

- They are also linear thinkers. One idea will need to have a clear connection to another if they are going to understand their relationship.



One other consideration is that students of these ages appear to have the need to talk in order to think. Many classroom environments are arranged around calm and quiet, so you should be prepared for the explorer groups to be full of noise and chatter. These kids like to talk, and part of the way that they process, and think is out loud. We want to make allowances for that kind of chatter at the beginning of the group and move toward lower commotion and one person speaking at a time by the end of the group, but there needs to be a tolerance for a bit more of that chatter so they can express themselves.

#### Practices:

Work on keeping your language simple, direct and clear. One of your best tools would be to communicate through simple questions. It's easy to fall into the trap of expecting adolescents to

grasp something because it's been explained to them. Questions allow the students to make connections in their own mind that are necessary for that linear reasoning. Their linear thinking will also make it difficult for them to create alternate options in problem solving. So, you might find the need to make suggestions and then follow those options and suggestions with questions like:

- Which of these do you like the best?
- Which one would make you happier?
- Which one would be more difficult?
- Which one is your favorite?
- Which one would help you the most?"

Another important tool to employ is the use of memory, asking the question, do you remember when blank happened? Then building new ideas and thoughts based upon what they already know. This is the primary basis of scaffolding in education, and it works as well in social and emotional understandings as it does in mathematics.

It's difficult for children to create alternate options in problem-solving due to linear thinking.

- Make suggestions and give examples.
- Follow-up questions:

Ask, "Do you remember when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?" Help them build new ideas/thoughts based on what they already know.

**Practices:**

- Keep your language simple, direct and clear.
- Communicate through simple questions
- Offer suggestions and have them choose between options.
- Use memory to build on what they already know.

**Simplicity**  
**Questions**  
**Choices**  
**Memory**

## **General Observations | Relationships with Adults**

The next general observation I want to make is around their relationships with adults. Students at these ages want to feel cared for and liked. They want and desire adult affirmation, especially if they lack that at home. The easiest way to get to know them is to play games and interact with them in cooperative group activities. Their natural personalities will come out in those situations... a natural leader, a class clown, a person who sees everything as unfair.

As their social world expands and they begin to relate to others outside their family systems, these new relationships will include adults and peers. Your role will be different than that of a teacher, and it creates a unique opportunity to establish a positive and safe example of what an adult to unrelated youth relationship can or should be.

Model a way to be a part of their life as an unrelated adult. By showing them respect and keeping them safe in your language and in the way that you interact with them, you're setting up a model of behavior that defines boundaries which are necessary for their protection.

It's going to be natural for you to find students that are more likable, or perhaps they're just kids that you would naturally enjoy. Just keep that in your awareness, so that you're providing an evenly distributed display of attention and affirmation.

## **Grade-Based Development Distinctives**

Let's move on to explore grade-based developmental distinctives. We've separated these into K-2nd grade, third graders, fourth graders and fifth graders.

### **Children in Kindergarten - 2nd Grade:**

One of the most significant early skills a Kindergarten-aged child is capable of developing is empathy. Through K-2nd grade, these kids begin to develop meaningful friendships. By meaningful we suggest these friendships will be increasingly based on connection and preference. You'll see the early signs of what we later call cliques, but at this age, these are not status groups. They are expressing autonomy over their friendships and will begin to gravitate toward one friend over others.

At this stage, children will also begin to develop more mature skills in emotional and behavior management. They will move (not completely), but clearly away from toddler crying fits to communicate their feelings with words and gain some ground in regulating feelings. They may still cry to express negative emotions, but they are moving away from that being the only way to express their frustrations.

Sometime between kindergarten and second grade, most students begin to develop a sense of right and wrong. They begin to understand why certain rules exist, and why certain actions are considered “against” the rules.

They can also now form and express opinions beyond surface-level favorites, their likes, and their dislikes. Parents tend to simultaneously love and hate this stage. They love that the personality of their child is manifesting through preference. The child is finding things that interest them and that they enjoy. They start developing their unique behaviors and even their sense of humor will begin to be displayed. The part that parents dislike in this stage is also based on the clear development of preference. The child will clearly not like certain foods, activities and confinements and they have no issue letting adults know what those preferences are.

Outside of children at these ages still resorting to emotional outbursts, interactions around games, stories and activities are enjoyable as you get to see them grow in their cognitive, social and emotional abilities.

### **Children in 3rd-5th grade:**

- Desire to feel cared for and liked. They want and desire adult affirmation, especially if they lack that at home.
- The easiest way to get to know them is to play games and cooperative group activities.
- As their social world expands and they begin to relate to others outside of their family systems, these new relationships will include adults as well as peers.

### **3rd Graders - Social Development**

As students reach this age, you'll find that they increasingly want exclusive groups of friends. Some Child Development Professionals refer to this age as entering the best friend years. Their friendships involve cooperation and give and take, but these relationships can also be transient. They can fall in and out of those relationships quickly. They are still moving out of the former stage where they were only interested in themselves and what they want. So, some regression away from caring interest in the lives of others is to be expected.

Their social relationships at this stage have become important and enjoyable for the most part. So, they don't like being absent from school. The new independent view of self allows for their broader socialization, but it also means that they may criticize peers and teachers freely.

Their movement into independence is gaining momentum as they enter the third or fourth grade, so you should expect to see them taking actions to separate themselves from teachers and parents. Most children at this age enjoy sports and games. They take clubs, teams and groups seriously, and

they may have a crude sense of humor and may tell inappropriate jokes and laugh at the expense of others.

#### **4th Graders - Social Development**

As we explored in the last session, the student's social awareness by 4th grade is shifting into what Erickson called a crisis of industry versus inferiority. They will begin to evaluate adults and peers more critically and view them in terms of being better than her or worse than him. This stage of development for them can involve a desire to be seen as popular, which prompts high levels of conformance behavior.

You will need to watch for the natural leaders in the group and carefully diffuse their influence if their behavior starts to shape conditions of insiders and outsiders, or if you observe students pulling back from expressing ideas and opinions.

Friendships will easily become a part of a hierarchy at this stage. They have close friends, they'll have popular friends, they'll have best friends. This hierarchy, however, is fluid and friends flow in and out of those categories quickly and easily.

The criticism you observe in the third graders is likely to evolve into the prevalence of teasing, gossiping and bullying in the fourth grade. You may even notice that their thinking is beginning to change. At this stage, they become less concrete and absolute thinkers and can infer and see gray areas more easily. This gives you a bit more latitude in the use and complexity of scenarios, but you'll still need to monitor carefully how they are tracking with abstract ideas and comparisons.

#### **5th Grade - Social Development**

By the fifth grade, students are very aware of social trends. They know what is popular to wear, activities to participate in, and music to listen to. This can make them seem somewhat superficial. With some students this stage can mark a shift away from engagement in academics and classroom learning as their interests align more with popularity, social trends and interpersonal dramas.

Others now having longer attention spans, will excel at problem-solving, take more pride in their schoolwork, and enjoy reading independently. Some students will grow more truthful and develop a more mature sense of right and wrong, while others in the same grade may grow more secretive and more sophisticated at concealing the truth.

This is their last year in elementary school, so they are likely to be anticipating a move to a different school, or the anxiety of moving from the highest rung of the social ladder to the lowest at the end of summer.

It likely started in the fourth grade, but by the fifth grade, they are experiencing changes to their physical bodies, which can translate or create insecurity and uncertainty. They may experience mood swings and require more privacy. Self-esteem, particularly among females, will become a regular point of struggle. They can be kind and silly one moment, and self-centered and disrespectful the next. Fifth grade will also mark a new kind of testing. They will test out new attitudes, challenge clothing boundaries and push on limits while they are figuring out how and where they fit in the family, in social structures and academic structures.

### **Practices in Group Facilitation**

#### 1. Be okay with what is -

Understanding these social developmental stages can help facilitators leverage the things that are important to children into places of engagement and self-reflection. If you (as the facilitator) are irritated by the gossip, their fascination with superficial things, or their crude sense of humor, you can miss the opportunities to guide them into a better understanding of themselves and others.

#### 2. Use conflicts -

Expect that students will argue. Also, expect that the arguments will tend to end quickly so don't let your concern over ending the conflict distract you from the social learning opportunity inherent in the episode. Ask questions like, "What did you feel?" or "What's one thing you could have done differently?" as opposed to "What happened?"

#### 3. Maximize the sense of "group" -

All the games, activities, and reading times provided in the MLE program are designed as group activities. Build on their ability to enjoy working with others and encourage full participation.

#### 4. Upgrade personal energy -

Your energy and buy-in to leading these games and activities are critical to their success. If you don't enjoy a game, figure out a way to modify it to make it fun and engaging, or find another activity to introduce. When you are reading books, ramp up your expressiveness with noises, and different voices, or ask a student how something or someone in the story would sound.

#### 5. Respect privacy but encourage meaningful sharing -

A lot is going on in those young lives. Be careful that the students are not disclosing information that could be too much for the setting, so let the games, stories, and activities draw out the responses as they are designed.

#### 6. Let it flow -

Groups should be interactive so times with these ages will be messy. Don't try so hard to control the environment that it feels like a classroom. Dealing with students in these age groups can be messy

and frustrating, so develop a “let it flow” frame of mind. Don’t allow the groups to get out of hand but be tolerant of more activity and silliness than seen in a typical classroom.

7. Follow a process that includes -

Play. Interact. Appreciate/Affirm. Guide. Observe.

- **Play**

We've established that play is important to their social and emotional development. Let them play, play games with them, engage with them.

- **Interact**

Interact with them around the play and activities. “What's going on in this story? What do you think is happening in the group? What are you feeling? What do you think (a specific student) is feeling? What are you experiencing?”

- **Appreciate and Affirm**

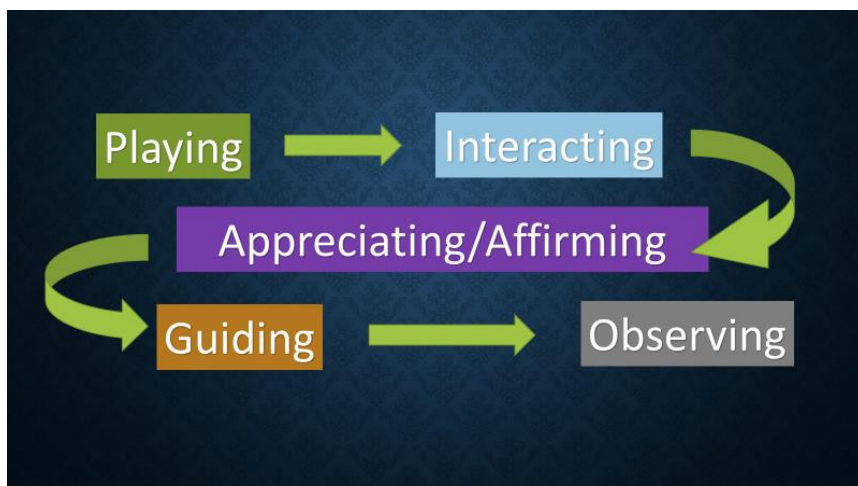
We really want to make sure that these kids are valued and appreciated for who they are, for what they're contributing, for how they're participating. Appreciation and affirmation are hugely important in building trust in your relationships but also helping the students to heal and to experience a kind of settling in their lives, into their own identity, in their place, which is in a great deal of flux at this stage of their life.

- **Offer Guidance**

Your role as a facilitator is going to include strategic guidance. Watch the group and see what's going on, and then move the discussion, or move the activity into something that's going to have the greatest benefit for those students. Tailor the activities and discussions or pull out a particular book that's going to fit a particular need.

- **Observe**

The end point of your work as facilitators in these groups is to be able to observe what's going on in the group as a whole and what is happening with the students individually. Those observations inform the process and content for future groups and interactions, and they inform the things you bring to the attention of school counselors as concerns or to CPS as mandated reports.



This is the age group that we're working with in MLE groups. These are fun kids. A lot of them will be troubled kids. They won't have much self-awareness related to their emotions or the things they're thinking and experiencing.

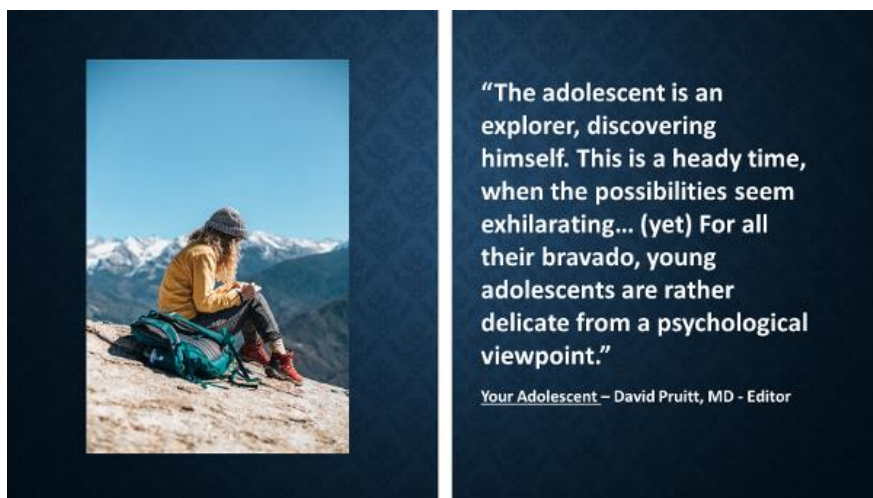
You get to play a vital role in helping them figure out who they are, what they're feeling, what they're experiencing, and who they are in relation to the social world around them. It's a gift to them, but you will need to understand them and follow a process that will be helpful in providing that gift.

## Assessment, Data Collection, Referrals & Reporting

The last content section of this training, we will define the methods that we use in making and reporting observations. This involves your ability to analyze, to see what's going on, to watch the students, to watch how they interact with each other, to watch how they respond to rejection, and how they're dealing with specific things that are going on in the group, in relation to school activities, and in their off campus lives.

These are general points of observation that you'll collect from week to week so that you can better serve the students as you move forward in the group. These observations will also be important to inform school staff about general group activities, provide internal data for efficacy documentation, and file cause for concern reports.

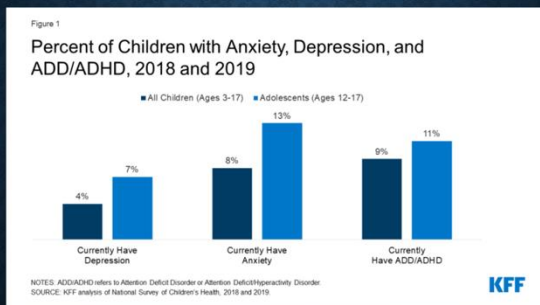
One of the primary reasons we use the term exploration in the name of this intervention is that this age in the life of children is all about exploration. The pediatric psychiatrist who contributed to the book “your adolescent” states, “the adolescent is an explorer discovering himself. This is a heady time when the possibilities seem exhilarating. Yet for all their bravado, young adolescents are rather delicate.”



### **The delicate psychological status of children is cause for increasingly great concern.**

As you look back through the characteristics in the developmental stages we reviewed in the last section, it's important to understand that those descriptions are norms, as opposed to extremes. There is good cause for concern over the mental and emotional wellness of students today.

## We have cause for concern...



- These realities are the reason that interventions like MLE groups are so important.

We could spend a couple of hours listing the causes of particular vulnerabilities, including social media, distracted or neglectful parenting, video games, screen time, or 100 other causes, but we are still left with the realities of social isolation, widespread anxiety and depression, trauma, and other indications of emotional and mental compromise.

These realities are the reason that interventions like the Explorer groups are so important. Those realities also set up the requirement that we collect accurate data so that vulnerable students can be identified and connected to the resources that can help them. In this final content section, I'm going to explain our use of the student assessment tool, the importance of data collection and the process we follow for referrals and reporting.

### Overview of Regular Data Collection and Reporting:

**Social-Emotional Wellness Survey (SEWS):** We use a simple student self-report at the beginning and end of each semester. This report gathers a combination of state of social/emotion (SSE) and competency status point (CSP) responses from the students' subjective viewpoint. The SSE responses tell us how a student is doing as a point in time measurement of social-emotional wellness. The CSP responses tell us what abilities they have to manage their emotions and social relationships. These responses along with notes from the wellness coaches report provide the essential measurement of MLE program efficacy. It is therefore very important that they are completed accurately, and with appropriate guidance and support for student supplied responses.

**Pediatric Symptom Checklist:** At the midpoint of each semester, we use the state of California adopted pediatric assessment tool called the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC). It is a psychosocial screen designed to facilitate the recognition of cognitive, emotional and behavioral problems so that appropriate interventions can be initiated as early as possible. This report is

completed by you from your vantage point as the facilitator, as opposed to the student self-report assessment. It is to be completed at the midway point in each semester for each student.

PSC-35

The standard PSC has 35 questions, but 6 questions are removed from our Program version due to items not able to be observed in our context.

PSC-35 v.P (Program)

Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the 5-point scale to indicate the frequency of identified behavior that best describes the child:

		Never	Sometimes	Often
		1	2	3
1. Complains of aches and pains	1			
2. _____	2			
3. Tires easily, has little energy	3			
4. Fidgety, unable to sit still	4			
5. Has trouble with teachers	5			
6. Less interested in school	6			
7. Acts as if driven by a motor	7			
8. Depressed or sad mood	8			
9. Distracted easily	9			
10. Is afraid of new situations	10			
11. Feels sad, unhappy	11			
12. Is irritable, angry	12			
13. Feels hopeless	13			
14. Has trouble concentrating	14			
15. Less interested in friends	15			
16. Fights with other children	16			
17. Absent from school	17			
18. _____	18			
19. Is down on him or herself	19			
20. _____	20			
21. Worries a lot	21			
22. _____	22			
23. _____	23			
24. Feels he or she is bad	24			
25. _____	25			
26. Gets hurt frequently	26			
27. Seems to be having less fun	27			
28. Acts younger than children his or her age	28			
29. Does not listen to rules	29			

Students with PSC scores that fall into the concerned category as defined in the scoring guide, must be submitted to clinical professionals associated with the school or hosting organization. If there are no clinical psychological resources connected to the school or hosting organization, facilitators are to submit those assessments to appropriate points of contact in 5 peaks Youth Solutions. 5 Peaks will ensure that a clinical professional interprets the results and provides a referral notification to the school.

You'll find PDFs of this assessment in the online resource area for the MLE groups. There is an accompanying document or explainer videos explaining how to use the student self-report and Pediatric Symptom Checklist.

**Weekly Wellness Notes:** Additionally, we will have you complete simple forms for group and individual student observations. These observations are simple check-ins and brief observations, but they are important for internal supervision and for passing along general information to school administration or counseling staff.

**Coaches Wellness Observations:** As opposed to the weekly notes, these notes span the whole semester providing initial impressions and concluding observations of students in relation to their group participation and personal growth. Coaches are also asked to identify significant improvement gains or points of struggle for each student in this summary report.

Here's the short list of ordinary things we will need you observing, collecting, documenting and submitting as a part of your role as an MLE group facilitator:

1. Student Self-Report Social-Emotional Wellness Survey (SEWS)
  - Collected two times in each semester
  - Once within the first 4 weeks of the semester and again within the last two weeks of the semester
2. Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)
  - Collected once
  - Administered at the midpoint of each semester
3. Attendance Report
  - Collected weekly
4. Group and student update notes
  - Collected weekly
  - Summary report submitted to school admin or counseling staff weekly
5. Wellness Coach Observations
  - Collected two times in each semester
  - Recording initial observations in the first 4 weeks of the semester and completing a final summary report in the last week of the semester

### **Extraordinary Reporting:**

As a MLE group Wellness Coach, you will either be working as a 5 Peaks employee or as an employee of an organization in our Licensed Affiliates Network. In either case, **you are responsible to identify the contact person and protocols of the host organization for the prompt and accurate reporting of concerns over the mental, emotional, or physical safety of individual students.** It's important to observe and collect accurate data so that vulnerable students can be identified and connected to the resources that can help them. Beyond ordinary reports listed above, there are two avenues you can use to document and report extraordinary incidents or observations. These relate to the threat to the students' health and safety.

### **Mandated Reporting:**

As paraprofessionals working on school campuses or alongside community-based programs, you assume the same obligations and requirements as educators in relation to mandated reporting. The laws regarding mandated reporting can change and they vary from state to state, so we provide the full text of those statutes for you in a separate document from this manual.

In general terms, the requirements with which you must comply are as follows:

- A mandated reporter must make a child abuse report “whenever the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows, or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect...”
- Proof of abuse is not required; that will be determined through investigation by child welfare professionals and/or law enforcement.
- The responsibility for reporting rests solely with the mandated reporter. Reporting suspected abuse to an employer, supervisor, school principal, school counselor, coworker, or other person is not a substitute for reporting to a child protective agency and does not fulfill the obligation to report.

### **Reporting requirements fall into three primary categories:**

1. Physical Abuse - a physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means on a child, or intentionally injuring a child.
2. Sexual Abuse - sexual assault or sexual exploitation.
3. Neglect - the negligent treatment or the maltreatment of a child by his/her caregiver that results in harm or could be harmful. The term includes both acts (e.g., locking a toddler in a hot car) and omissions (e.g., not providing food) on the part of the responsible person.

Again, the full text of current Mandated Reporting statutes will be provided in a separate document along with specific training.

### **Concerns over reporting mandates**

Mentor-coaches are regularly concerned about how Mandated reporting and/or the submission of a CCRF might impact the trust of their wellness coaching relationships with the students.

It is essential that you give reminders at the beginning of EVERY group about the limits of confidentiality. They must understand that this confidentiality ends at the point that you discern that they may be in danger of harming themselves or others.

You will find that for the most part the students understand and at a deeper level appreciate the care expressed in those actions.

Another concern coaches have in relation to Mandated Reporting and filing CCRF's is feeling confident that what they suspect or observe warrants these actions.

This is another great reason we have two coaches engaged with each MLE group. You can consult with your coaching partner to verify that the things you are noticing are being perceived in the same way by them.

### **Cause for Concern Reports:**

We provide Cause for Concern Report Forms (CCRF) to all 5 Peaks wellness coaching staff. This form ensures that circumstances of concern are brought to the attention of school or organizational staff and 5 Peaks Youth Solutions Supervisors. These reports are for things that you notice, but don't rise to the level of triggering a mandated report to CPS.

Our goal is to maintain robust communication with school counselors, so student needs are not falling through the cracks. The CCRF includes reporting on the following areas:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Extreme or Alarming Behavior
- At-risk of self-harm
- At-risk of harming others
- At-risk of being harmed
- Excessive isolation
- Violent or threatening language
- Evidence of self-harm
- Repeat occurrence of previously reported concern

### **Making Recommendations for Mental Health Services**

You will find a list of indicators on the second or back side page of the CCRF. It lists 15 observed points of concern or conditions that would warrant cause for concern and prompt the action of referring a student to a helping professional.

As in reporting a threat, counseling staff in the hosting organization should be consulted and involved in the recommendation process. This means that you should not casually suggest that a student "get some counseling," however, you should also not minimize the signals you detect and do nothing.

Consult with your coaching partner and if both of you share the same concern, complete a CCRF, check the box on page one indicating “Recommendation for Mental Health Services,” complete the section on page two, sign the form and submit a copy to school or organization POC and submit original document to your 5 Peaks supervisor.

Here are the indications from the CCRF that a student should be recommended for mental health services:

- They are highly emotional or needy in most sessions
- They are constantly in some crisis and reactionary mode
- You have a sense that the student's issues are beyond what can be addressed through a wellness coaching relationship
- The student stays in a continual stuck place and cannot move forward on even the most basic goals
- The student continually refers to a traumatic event or some occurrence of abuse in their past
- You discover that the student is participating in addictive behaviors that are sabotaging their efforts

Other indicators:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Unexpected weeping or excessive moodiness
- Eating habits that result in noticeable weight loss or gain
- Expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Paranoia and excessive secrecy
- Self-mutilation, or mention of hurting himself or herself
- Obsessive body-image concerns
- Excessive isolation
- Abandonment of friends and social groups

### **CCRF and Mandated Reporting**

Some of the items on the CCRF fall into the conditions requiring a Mandated Report to Child Protective Services. Filing a CCRF **does not replace that requirement**. If you see or suspect

physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, you must report that observation or concern directly to CPS.

The CCRF ensures that all personnel responsible for the protection and safety of children are informed about potential threats and actions against students, and any violence or harm students may potentially bring to themselves or others.

- The CCRF is to be completed and signed by the person making the report. Copies of the completed report are to be made and delivered to the recognized point of contact (POC) at the school or organization and to 5 Peaks supervisors. It is your job to know who that point of contact is and submit the report directly to them.

## MyLife Explorer Group Management

While we expect a lot of energy and chatter from students in Explorer groups, it will be important to set up and keep some behavior management guidelines so the greatest amount of help can be gained from each session.

### Well-Managed Groups Have:

**Deep Engagement** - Students are actively involved and interested in their learning.

**Clear Expectations** - Students understand what is expected of them and what they need to do.

**Efficient Use of Time** - There is minimal wasted time, confusion, or disruption.

**Positive Atmosphere** - The environment is both coaching and goal-oriented, yet relaxed and pleasant.

## Group Management 101

- Have a Plan
- Have Procedures
- Have Clear Expectations
- Be Consistent
- Have an Inviting & Caring Environment
- Speak with Authority
- Create Group Culture

### 1. Have a Plan

Plan, plan, plan, and plan some more. *Planning and following through builds a predictable environment.* The initial group should focus on establishing expectations and procedures, and teaching students what effective groups should look like. The following number of groups/weeks should emphasize consistency and predictability.

**“All battles are won or lost before they are fought.” -Sun Tzu**

### Ways to Be Prepared as an Explorer Coach:

- Arrive on Time: Ensure you arrive early to set up your space.
- Organize Chairs: Arrange chairs in order before the session begins.
- Be Ready and Welcoming: Be present and approachable, ready to engage with the group.
- Prepare for the Day: Have all materials and plans ready for the day's activities

### Key Messages to Convey to Your Group:

- **Entering Groups:** “Take a seat at the table.”
- **Leaving Class for Groups:** “No running or yelling.”
- **Arriving Late:** “Enter quietly and respectfully.”
- **Conversation Topics:** Outline the expectations for appropriate topics during coaching and group time.

## 2. Have a Procedure

The procedure is a routine that students do repeatedly without any prompting or supervision. Your mission during the first few groups is to establish habits and routines while gaining authority and trust. Students will develop their own habits or routines in a group when coaches don't set and communicate procedural expectations.

### Seating arrangement/assignments:

You can clarify what you want to achieve by how you have seating arranged - circles say we're doing this together.

Seat yourselves strategically for success. Think about which students will need close attention and an authoritative presence.

### Students cannot follow procedures that do not exist.

Rules dictate how students behave, and procedures determine how things are done. Well-established routines create a well-managed group. Remind the class of procedures and affirm them when procedures are done correctly. Be sure to celebrate when a group goes well!

***The major challenge in the group management is not enforcing discipline, it is establishing a procedure that eliminates the need for discipline.***

*Take note:* Each school might already have procedures in place. Our job is to maintain those procedures. For example, “Walking to and from class” is a procedure, allowing students to run would be disrespecting those procedures.

### **Helpful Hint |**

Know and learn the My Life Explorer group rules that were made on the first day. Keep the sign and actively use it in the classroom:

Two fingers - I need to use the bathroom

Three fingers - I need water

Five fingers - I need help

### **Procedures we need to have set before beginning a group:**

1. How students enter the classroom/group
2. How students respond to a question or conversation
3. How they come to attention as a group
5. How bathroom breaks are handled
6. How students move around during the group
9. Saying please and thank you
10. How students are dismissed at the end of the group
11. What happens if they come in late
12. What happens if a student needs to get something

Procedures do not control students. Procedures allow students to have ownership and be in control of their own lives. Understanding the difference between being reactive and proactive is crucial. Being reactive means addressing issues as they arise.

For example, if we move and sit next to Bobby each week in response to his behavior, that’s reactive. In contrast, a proactive approach would involve asking Bobby to sit next to you at the start of the group to prevent issues. Similarly, if Sam and Jenny are constantly talking and giggling during coaching, a reactive approach would be to address it after the fact. Being proactive would involve placing yourself between them before the coaching begins. If Johnny gets overstimulated and cries at the start of craft time, reacting by assigning a coach to work with him afterward is reactive. A proactive approach would be having a coach consistently work with Johnny during craft time to help prevent overstimulation.

### 3. Have Clear Expectations

*“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t, you’re right.” – Henry Ford*

#### Positive Expectations

Your expectations for your students greatly influence how things go in Explorer groups. You can help determine the success of group times by setting high expectations, both for yourself and your students.

#### Two types of expectations

Positive or High Expectations- “I know you're going to do so well in the group today!!”

Negative or Low Expectations- “You always interrupt but you can’t do that today, ok?”

#### Set the bar high:

*“My teacher thought I was smarter than I was, so I was.” – Quote by 6 years old*

From the moment students enter a group, let them know you believe in them and that you expect them to succeed in your group and life.

#### An Effective Coach....

- Is consistent and predictable
- Has positive expectations and is ready for the first day/group
- Creates a group climate that communicates positive expectations
- Models’ positive behavior and attitude to all students and colleagues

### 4. Be Consistent

Students thrive in environments that are consistent, predictable, reliable, dependable, and stable. Learning and growth take place when students know what to do. Effective coaches have a script and are ready for the first day of groups. This will show students you know what you are doing and what you want to achieve as their coach.

*Note:* If you do not have structure in your group, the students will structure the group for you.

#### As a coach, show up the same way every week:

- Your group is well planned out

- You engage the students with the same attention and care every week
- The students know your expectations and know you will follow through
- You keep order and peace every week
- You do not tolerate inappropriate behavior or language
- The conversations are guided with the same attention week to week
- Both coaches are engaged and a part of the group (no one has more authority than the other, both support and guide the group)
- Staying in your seat is expected - your expectation is the same week-to-week

## 5. Create an Inviting & Caring Environment

- Learn about your students
- Complement and encourage! (Complement new hairstyles, shirts, etc. Notice improvements. Acknowledge insightful responses and thoughtful answers.)
- Smile and make good eye contact
- High-fives
- Listen attentively
- Warm welcomes

Greet each student individually and warmly on the first day. Assure them that they are in the right spot, introduce yourself, ask for their name, and let them know you will explain everything about the MyLife Explorer group shortly.

Share the welcoming time with your coach: No coach is “head coach” at this point, both coaches are gaining authority and trust. Don’t miss any students - smile, let them know that you’re glad they are there. The way you introduce yourself and greet your students on your first day can determine how much you will achieve together for the rest of the year. Be confident!

*You do not get a second chance to make a first impression.* Every time you act you validate who you are. You are a walking, talking advertisement of who you truly are, effective coaches are kind, caring, loving people.

### **Here are five key concepts that foster courtesy:**

1. **Use Their Name:** Address each student by their name. Doing so demonstrates that you recognize and respect their individuality, treating them with dignity and honor.

2. **Say “Please”:** Using "please" shows respect for the other person’s freedom and dignity. When you say "please," you’re acknowledging their value with kindness.
3. **Express Gratitude:** Saying "thank you" conveys that you appreciate their time and effort. Adding their name makes your gratitude even more personal and heartfelt.
4. **Smile:** A genuine smile, nurtured by a supportive environment and a consistent approach, communicates understanding, peace, and safety. It also helps to defuse tension and encourages a positive atmosphere.
5. **Show Love:** Effective coaching involves not just skills but also compassion. True growth happens when students feel genuinely cared for. As the saying goes, "Love is life—if you miss love, you miss life." The deepest form of service is rooted in listening, caring, and loving.

*Note: You don’t need to tell your students you love them for them to feel loved, express love, and care through kind words and actions.*

### **Truly effective coaches lead with both their minds and hearts:**

1. **Be Present:** Offer emotional presence to those you coach. This powerful gesture shows respect, enhances communication, and builds stronger relationships.
2. **Embrace Play:** Infuse creativity, enthusiasm, and fun into your approach. Viewing challenges as opportunities to "play with ideas" fosters curiosity and innovation in everything you do.
3. **Make Their Day:** Seek out simple yet meaningful ways to positively impact others. Do this not out of obligation, but because it reflects the person you aspire to be.
4. **Choose Your Attitude:** Take ownership of how you respond to life's challenges. Your attitude shapes interactions and affects others. Reflect on whether your attitude supports a message of respect and strengthens relationships.

## **6. Speak with Authority**

### **How to Speak with Authority to the Class**

- **Speak Clearly and Effectively:** Ensure your voice is clear and authoritative but avoid shouting. Aim for a balanced volume that conveys confidence without being overwhelming.
- **Use Volume Wisely:** Avoid constant yelling, which can be counterproductive. Instead, use variations in volume to emphasize key points and convey authority, precision, and passion.

- **Master Nonverbal Communication:** Use body language, facial expressions, and eye contact to reinforce your message and establish presence.
- **Communicate Control:** Demonstrate command and composure in your speech and actions. Effective communication of control helps maintain respect and attention from the class.

### 5 Powerful Tips for Speaking with Confidence and Authority:

1. **Own the Room:** Use confident body language. Pay attention to your posture—whether you’re standing or sitting—and project authority.
2. **Know Your Audience:** Tailor your message to fit the needs and interests of your groups. Understanding who the students are helps you connect more effectively.
3. **Be Direct:** Get to the point and avoid overcomplicating your message. Clarity and simplicity reinforce your authority.
4. **Replace Filler Words:** Substitute “um” with more assertive language. Speak with confidence and conviction in what you’re saying.
5. **Use Relevant Stories:** Share stories only if they directly relate to your topic. They should enhance, not distract from, the core message.

### How to sound more authoritative:

- Look confident
- Lower pitched voice
- Stronger emphasis
- Vocal tone which is inflected down at the end of sentences. (Practice this) Do your commands sound like a question? Higher pitch? Note the difference.
- Confident and articulate flow

*Note: Don't confuse being authoritative with being aggressive. Pair authority with warmth, not aggression. Use passion and compassion to collectively gain their trust, respect, and attention.*

## 7. Create Group Culture

In groups, culture means fostering an environment where students feel safe and encouraged to participate. It's a space where acceptance and inclusion are paramount, allowing students to

express their feelings openly. Mentors should be receptive to these expressions, using them to enhance learning and coaching.

**Practical tools that create a safe and effective group culture:**

1. We sit safely in our chairs. “Four on the floor.”
2. Coaches are with their students
3. One student doesn’t dictate the whole conversation
4. Daily questions are ready for the students before the group begins
5. Safety and honesty are protected and conveyed clearly
6. Coaches manage the environment and guide procedures for students to follow
7. Breakdown of time is predetermined- No “winging it”

**How to establish group rules:**

Never more than five rules at a time. Make the rules short and easy to remember for students. Rules are used to define what is acceptable and what is not.

*Example Rules:*

- Respect each other and be kind to each other
- Four on the floor
- No hitting - hands to yourself
- Stay seated

Please keep in mind these students are surrounded by adults laying down the law to their rules all the time. Have them join the conversation about what agreements they would like to have with each other to define how they function together as a group.

**Corrective Actions:**

Pull student(s) aside and talk with them privately. This gives the opportunity to use the tree house, see where they are at, what they can do in order to move forward in group, and rejoin the group.

When a student is being disruptive and talking over others that would be a warning. Pull student aside and have a conversation

Point out students who do well in the group. Use the reward system.

## Curriculum Overview

Congratulations on exploring the core theories and philosophies of the My Life Explorer program! With a solid understanding of social-emotional development, preventative interventions, the necessity of collecting and reporting relevant data, and some guidance on group management, you are ready to apply My Life Explorer practices effectively as a facilitator.

To bring these concepts to life, we offer a range of lesson plans and activities, including mindfulness exercises, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks that are engaging and practical for students of various ages and developmental stages.

We are excited to introduce new elements for all levels of the My Life Explorer curriculum—Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. These include group activities, books, games, crafts, and discussions designed to reinforce key concepts and provide tools for play, learning, and goal achievement.

You will also learn about our Location Ladder, based on Deb Dana's 2018 Autonomic Ladder, which will be used to help students learn how to regularly check-in with their nervous system and provides practical ideas for how to respond. Additionally, the curriculum features "Trails" for you to guide students in exploring different emotions. Each Trail is organized by "Routes" for deeper exploration of specific topics.

The My Life Explorer curriculum connects social-emotional data with practical tools to make a meaningful impact in students' lives. We will now provide practical advice on leading groups and implementing this curriculum in fun, engaging, and accessible ways.

### Organization of groups

The first four weeks of groups are organized around creating group culture, getting to know the students and building trust. Guides are provided for the week-to-week activities through this initial period.

At week five, you will be able to select a specific focus or "Trail" for your group based on what you've observed in student needs. Trails are three-week-long concentrations on specific social, emotional, or cognitive themes. This concentration allows for the saturation of understanding and application of tools to aid in student self-regulation.



Two additional trails can be selected for older aged students at weeks 8-10 and 11-13 of each semester.



We want to give group coaches the opportunity and freedom to shape the curriculum content in a way that best aligns with what you have been observing in student needs and behaviors. This design is intended to increase student learning and skills-adoption by focusing the content and concentrating on specific areas of social-emotional skills and management.

Alternate trails can be selected from the Executive Functioning Explorer training sections in a subsequent training section.

## Explorer Location Finder - *The Tree House*

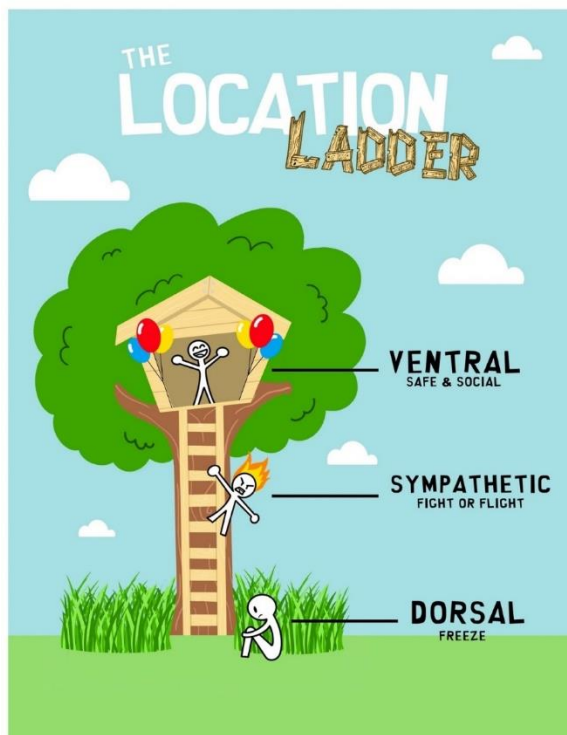
The Explorer Location Finder is going to help students figure out how to identify what they're feeling mentally and how that is affecting them physically. We will guide and encourage them to look through their survival kits to find what tool will help them when they're not at their best. The goal is to help them have self-awareness and grow in their ability to self-regulate.

The Vagus nerve is the longest nerve in your body, running from your brainstem all the way to your colon. It links your brain and body, helping your brain keep track of what's going on inside you.

This nerve plays a key role in controlling things like your heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, digestion, and even your ability to speak. It sends information about these functions to your brain, which then decides how to respond based on what's happening around you and inside you.

The Autonomic Ladder, as envisioned by Deb Dana (2018), is one way to visually represent the three physiological states your nervous system constantly moves through in response to information it observes in your everyday life.

We have three different regulation locations: The tree house, the ladder, or on the ground. Each location has a category of different emotions. The location communicates to us where we're at and what we need to do next. We have tools available in a survival kit to help each student make their way back to their tree house.



**Ventral: In your tree house**

You're calm, happy, focused, ready to learn, proud, safe. This is when you have the most self-control and can make good decisions. (Being in the green location makes one feel better and makes other people feel comfortable/safe.)

**Sympathetic: Climbing the ladder**

**Are you getting closer or further from the tree house?** When you're feeling extreme emotions and have explosive behavior; You might feel stress, frustration, anxiety, surprised, afraid, overwhelmed, nervous, uncomfortable, uncontrolled anger, rage, panic, grief, aggression (yelling/hitting). This is when we've lost control and need to pause.

**Dorsal: Stuck on the bottom**

**Do you feel like getting to the treehouse is hard?** You're sad, tired, sick, lonely, bored, zoned out, moving slow, hopeless,

**Tool Kit:**

Will have tools a student can use depending on their current need. These tools help calm and bring a sense of self-awareness.

We all function differently, which means a regulating tool that works for one student might not work for another. Over the semester the students will figure out what tools work for them. As an observing coach, you'll begin to recognize what is helpful for each of your students.

**THE LOCATION LADDER****When you're in the tree house:**

- Participate
- Have fun
- Make positive choices
- Compliment someone
- Be creative
- Drink water

- Eat a healthy snack
- High five a friend
- Have a mindful moment
- Get your work done

## **TOOL KIT**

### **Climbing the ladder:**

- Take a break/find a safe, quiet space
- Belly Breathing
- Squeeze and release
- 5,4,3,2,1 grounding exercise
- Walk
- Fidget
- Count to 20
- Draw a picture
- Gratitude
- Hug yourself for 20 seconds
- Jumping jacks

## **TOOL KIT**

### **Stuck on the ground:**

- Stand, Walk, Stretch
- Doodle
- Build something
- Read
- Play an instrument
- Positive self-talk

- Gratitude
- Get a drink of water
- Rest

## Semester Schedule

### Week 1:

**WELCOME** | Welcome the students to this new group setting. “We are excited for you to be joining our Explorer groups! “Keep in mind that students aren’t always aware of why they’re in this group or what its purpose is, so they most likely will be curious or shy. Greet them warmly and enthusiastically and be sure to be fully present while receiving the students into the room/group space.

**INTRO** | As you explain this new program make sure you’re energetic and excited as you explain what Explorer Groups' purpose is to the students.

Example: “We are gathering each week to Explore emotions and the role they play in our lives. Over the next semester (13/15 weeks) we will have opportunities to play games, read books, make crafts, have great conversations, and explore emotions! Have you ever seen Inside out? It's like that, we will get to know emotions and how they work for us.” Once you explain this you will give students time to ask questions about the group. Once you have gone over this part of the explanation you will do a short 10-minute activity.

**ACTIVITY** | A great first group activity is the question ball. Students will safely pass the ball back and forth from student to student. Wherever their thumb lands when you catch the ball is the question they will answer! Make sure each student has an opportunity to answer a question. Also, use good time management. Keep this to 10-minute activity so you will have time to go over the rest of today's agenda. A good way to implement this is to set a timer.

**Ladder Check-In** | This is a very important area to help students discover where they are each day as they arrive in groups. Go over the Explorer Location Finder Tree House on page 52. Use laminated printouts as you explain the Location Ladder.

**GROUP AGREEMENTS** | Bring poster board and markers to create 5-6 group agreements. Encourage students to come up with group agreements, if they are struggling - brainstorm with them. Have students write down the agreements that they came up with (offer to help if they struggle writing). Once you have all the group agreements students will sign and then help design the poster. Bring this every week and remind students of group agreements.

Examples of group rules: Be kind, 4 on the floor, no running, hands to yourself, no cell phones, no talking while others are speaking.

**PRIZES** | Let students know that on the last day of groups, they will have a celebration party where they will receive gifts and snacks as a thank you for being a part of My Life Explorers!

**REWARD SYSTEM** | Students earn weekly rewards based on classroom behavior as a whole and have individual reward systems. Please see the reward system chart for more details.

**WRAP UP** | Wrap-up time is a great space to reiterate that you will be meeting regularly in this group setting, reminding the students when they will be back for the next group sessions and going over the agreed group rules before walking respectfully back to class.

\*Note: Check in with your school to see how you should receive and/or pick/drop off your students. Make sure students follow school rules.

## Week 2:

**Location Finder Recap** | Remind students of the Location Finder Ladder and have a quick check-in with them on where they are at today.

**Emotions Detective Book** | - Read the Emotion Detective Spot book until you get to the emotions page. Show students a page and discuss all the different emotions and which ones each student most often feels. Pay attention to these details to see where your students are and how they feel about themselves. Engage in healthy conversations about the emotions students are bringing up.

**Activity** | Statue Game

Bring one student out of the room while others stay in and use the Emotion Detective book as a map to choose what emotion each student will become a statue of. Have the student outside come back into the room and give them the book to find each student's emotion. You can play this multiple times.

## Week 3:

**Location Finder Recap** | Remind students of the Location Finder Ladder and have a quick check in with them on where they are today. Remember to show laminated printout so they have a visual.

**Activity** | *Beginner*: Feelings Flashcards with Charades. Have students act out the flashcard that they received. Afterwards engage with questions like: What did you notice that gave that emotion away? If you are angry, what else can you do?

***Intermediate/Advanced: We're Not Really Strangers- Kids Edition. This is a great way to get to know your students.***

**REWARD SYSTEM** | Students earn weekly rewards based on classroom behavior as a whole and have individual reward systems.

**WRAP UP** | Wrap-up time is a great space to reiterate that you will be meeting regularly in this group setting, reminding the students when they will be back for the next group sessions and going over the agreed group rules before walking respectfully back to class.

## Week 4:

**Location Finder Recap** | Remind students of the Location Finder Ladder and have a quick check in with them on where they are today. Go over tools on the backside of the printout.

**Assessment** | Make sure students have their Chromebook charged and ready. Have students pull up their camera or QR scanner on their Chromebook. Use individual QR codes, scan, and then take the SEWS lite assessment. Once completed, students use Participants QR code to fill out their Participants Forms.

**Body movement tool** | Let's play a fun game with your muscles!

**Pick a Muscle Group:** Start by picking one part of your body, like your left hand.

**Squeeze and Hold:** Take a deep breath and make a super tight fist with your left hand, like you're squeezing a ball. Hold it tight for about 5 seconds. You might feel your hand getting warm or a little shaky. That's okay!

**Release:** Now, let go of that tight fist and let your hand go loose, like cooked spaghetti noodles. As you relax your hand, breathe out and feel all the tightness leave your muscles. Try to make your hand as floppy as possible.

**Focus Only on That Muscle:** Try to only squeeze and relax your hand and not your arm or shoulder. It might be tricky at first, but you'll get better with practice!

**Be Gentle:** Remember, this should feel like a gentle squeeze, not like you're trying to hurt yourself. If it ever feels too uncomfortable, just relax a little bit.

**Feel the Difference:** Notice how your hand feels when it's tight and when it's relaxed. This is the most important part! It helps your brain remember what feeling relaxed is like.

**Move to the Next Muscle Group:** After your hand feels super relaxed, rest for about 10 seconds. Then, pick another muscle group, like your other hand or even your feet, and do the same clench and release steps.

**REWARD SYSTEM** | Students earn weekly rewards based on classroom behavior as a whole and have individual reward systems.

**WRAP UP** | Wrap-up time is a great space to reiterate that you will be meeting regularly in this group setting, reminding the students when they will be back for the next group sessions and going over the agreed group rules before walking respectfully back to class.

## Weeks 5-7: TRAIL 1

**Location Finder Recap** | Remind students of the Location Finder Ladder and have a quick check in with them on where they are at today. Go over tools on the backside of the printout.

**Trails** | You are officially starting your first trail! Use the knowledge you have gleaned from the first 4 weeks to choose your first “Trail” for your group. Whichever trail you choose will be a 3-week-long focus on that specific emotion or topic.

**REWARD SYSTEM** | Don’t forget to encourage students by rewarding them with their badges throughout the group time and rewarding good group behavior.

**WRAP UP** | Wrap-up time is a great space to reiterate that you will be meeting regularly in this group setting, reminding the students when they will be back for the next group sessions and going over the agreed group rules before walking respectfully back to class.

## Weeks 8-10: TRAIL 2

**Location Finder Recap** | Remind students of the Location Finder Ladder and have a quick check in with them on where they’re at today. Go over tools on the backside of the printout.

**Trails** | You have successfully completed your first trail and are ready to move on to the next. Based on what you saw from your previous trail you can move onto the next best trail for your group.

**REWARD SYSTEM** | Don’t forget to encourage students by rewarding them with their badges throughout the group time and rewarding good group behavior.

**WRAP UP** | Wrap-up time is a great space to reiterate that you will be meeting regularly in this group setting, reminding the students when they will be back for the next group sessions and going over the agreed group rules before walking respectfully back to class.

## Weeks 11-15: TRAIL 3

If you are in the first semester with 13 weeks, choose something for a bye-week (See below). If you are in the second trimester with 15 weeks, choose a third trail to focus on. During the last two weeks of groups, you will have students complete their second Social Emotion Wellness Survey (SEWS) and the Afterthoughts survey. In the last week of the group, prepare for a group party with snacks, prizes, and words of encouragement for students.

### For Party Week or Bye-Week:

“What Should Danny Do” book, Jenga, or craft of your choosing.

## Weekly Outline Example (Overview)

### Group Layout

- Movement
- Location Finder
- Path Activity
- Rewards

### Semester Schedule

#### Week 1:

*Welcome - Ladder Check-In - Introduce Reward System*

#### Week 2:

*Location Finder - Emotion Detective Book - Statue Game*

(1 Student walks out of the room while others stay in and use the Emotion Detective book as a map to choose what emotion they will become a statue of. Student then comes back into the room and is given the book to find each student's emotion.)

#### Week 3:

*Location Ladder Recap – Charades Game*

*Beginner and Intermediate: Charades Game*

Charades Game with Feelings Flash Cards (Engage with questions: What did you notice that gave that emotion away? If angry, what's something else you can do?)

*Advanced: We're Not Really Strangers Card Game - Kids Edition*

#### Week 4:

*First Assessments*

Introduce the “clench and release” technique. Review what emotions they feel throughout their body.

Weeks 5-7:*TRAIL 1*

The first “Trail” that coaches and their group will explore for the first 3 weeks pertaining to a specific emotion.

Weeks 8-10:*TRAIL 2*

The second “Trail” will connect to the previous trail that was explored.

Weeks 11-13:

A third TRAIL and/or Assessment and Party

For Party Week or Additional Weeks:

“What Should Danny Do” book, Jenga Game, or Craft

***Advanced:***

Start off each Trail with a “Talk show interview” where you will interview each student and ask them questions from the “Talk Show Question Cards.”

# Beginner Explorer

## Kindergarten - 1st Grade

### Anger Trail

#### ROUTE 1

##### Week 1: Anger Monster

Read: "A Little Spot of Anger" by Diane Alber

Discussion: Engage in a short discussion about what they've learned from the book. Ask them to use their imagination and picture what their unmanaged anger would look like if it transformed into a monster.

Activity: Anger Monster

Have students draw their anger monster. On the back, they can write something they can do to help them calm down.

Example: "When I'm Angry, I can..."

*Supply List: Anger Monster Printout*

##### Week 2: Finger Puppets

Activity: Create finger puppets to act out different scenarios like "I don't like the food I have", "my parents turned off tv and/or took tablets", not getting a toy you want, having to go to bed, getting in trouble, losing a game, etc. Engage students in conversation about handling frustrating situations.

*Supply List: Finger puppet printout, Scissors, Glue, Markers, Popsicle Sticks*

##### Week 3: Anger Management

Activity 1: A twist on the classic game Bingo!

It's a game of chance where you get to mark off questions about anger. The first person to mark off all the questions in a row, column, or diagonal wins!

You will be the designated caller. As the caller you will have a copy of the words on your sheet. You will randomly pick a word on the sheet and create a scenario in which that word would be used to describe the situation. If a student can tell you which word you are alluding to, they can mark it off their Bingo card. (They can use a marker, a chip, or just a pen to cross it out.)

### Example

Word Selected: "Cool Off"

Scenario given: "You see a friend that's really angry and say 'Hey! It seems like you're really upset? Maybe you need to sit down and \_\_\_\_\_' What word do you think that is?"

Winning the Game - The first person to mark off five words in a row wins. The row can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. When you have marked off five words in a row, you shout "Bingo!" to let everyone know you have won.

*Supply List: Bingo Printouts, Bingo Chips*

### Activity 2: Four Corners

Moving your body helps manage anger. Let's play a game where we can move our bodies! Before starting, assign each corner with one of the following activities; calm down techniques, drawing, exercise, reading/writing. Play four corners like you normally would but allow a short amount of time in between each round for students to practice managing their anger.

*Supply List: Paper, Coloring Utensils, Something to Read*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Sensory Bottles**

Sensory bottles are used as a helpful way to calm down. The purpose is to be able to focus on something else, so your body has time to relax. *\*In groups, it is best for the adults to add the glue, glitter, water and food coloring.*

- Fill each bottle with water. (Leave about 1½ inches of space.)
- Add about 1 tbsp of magic glue.
- Choose a color and add a few drops of food coloring.
- Add desired amount of glitter and beads.
- Seal the lid by adding super glue and allowing it to sit for 3 minutes before shaking.
- Explain to the students how a sensory bottle can be used as a tool to help them calm down.

*Supply List: Plastic Bottles, Food coloring, Magic glue, Super glue, Funnel, Glitter, Beads, Stickers, Water*

## Week 2: Mindful Moments

Read: “Clovis Keeps His Cool” by Katelyn Aronson

Discussion: Engage in a short conversation about what they have learned from the book, ask questions like, “When was there a moment you had a hard time keeping your cool like Clovis?” Then move onto making Mindful Breathing Bracelets.

Activity: Mindful Breathing Bracelets are a creative tool that can help us calm down. They are designed to promote deep breathing when feeling upset. To use a breathing bracelet, you slowly move one bead at a time across the pipe cleaner while taking a deep breath in, and out. You can repeat this process until your body feels calm.

- Explain how to use the Mindful Breathing Bracelet.
- Choose a pipe cleaner.
- Add only 5 beads to allow space for movement.
- Twist the pipe cleaner around the wrist.

*Supply List: Book, Pipe Cleaners, Beads*

## Week 3: Mad Dragon

Activity: Mad Dragon

This fast-paced therapeutic card game helps children ages 6-12: Control their anger in the moment; Practice 12 effective anger management techniques; Understand what anger feels and looks like; Avoid anger-provoking situations; Express and

understand their feelings; Identify anger cues; Learn that they have choices about how to express anger.

Mad Dragon plays like the popular game UNO. Players race to get rid of their cards while learning anger control skills.

*Supply List: Mad Dragon Game*

## Sadness Trail

### ROUTE 1

#### Week 1: Spot of Sadness

Read: “A Little Spot of Sadness” by Diane Alber

Activity: Simon Says - Sadness Edition

In this version of Simon Says, “Simon” will direct the students to use tools that can help with sadness. Simon can also call out movements or body language that represents sadness to help bring awareness to what someone else might look like if they’re feeling sad.

Examples: Hug yourself, blow out candles, three deep breaths, trace your hand, close your eyes, compliment someone, clench your fist, pretend to cry, show me what sadness looks like.

## **Week 2: When Sadness Is at Your Door**

Read “When Sadness is at Your Door” by Eva Eland

Discussion: Talk about the importance of accepting sadness and how it's ok to feel sad. Then teach students the finger breathing technique to use when sadness is a bit too overwhelming to help calm themselves.

Activity: Finger Breathing Technique - Give each student 1 blue circle sticker to place on their thumb. They will then tap each finger to their thumb, while breathing in and again while breathing out.

*Supply List: Blue Stickers*

## **Week 3: A Shelter for Sadness**

Read: “A Shelter for Sadness” by Anne Booth

\*Or use link below to listen to a child reading the book. (Be sure to have a large enough screen and Wi-Fi accessibility)

*LINK: <https://youtu.be/dSNXm7ltLlc?si=suPOx7OmdaVqlNsh>*

Activity: Use the printout, “A Home for Sadness” and have students draw their sadness shelters. Engage in conversation as they complete their shelter.

*Supply List: Book, A Home for Sadness Printouts, Crayons, Markers*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Sadness Will Pass**

Activity: “Grab the Clouds of Sadness”

Help students glue cotton balls onto the clouds then allow them to color the sheet if they would like. Talk to them about how sadness is like clouds; it won't always be there/in the sky. Sadness eventually moves on and the sun shines through again!

*Supply List: Grab the Clouds of Sadness Printout, Cotton Balls, Glue, Crayons*

## **Week 2: Sadness Flash Cards**

Activity: Give students index cards and markers. Have students write down or color a picture of something that helps them feel

better when they are feeling sad. Shuffle all the cards after each student is done and go through them one by one, discussing whose card it is, why it makes them feel better, and if any other students thought that would help them.

*Supply List: Sadness Flashcards*

## **Week 3: Positive Thoughts Chain**

Activity: Have students make a positive thoughts chain for days when they need a little pick-me-up! Follow instructions on the "Positive Thought Chain" printout for more information.

*Supply List: Positive Thought Chain Printout, Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Staples.*

## **Fear Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: "What If?"**

Read: "The What If's" by Emily Kilgore

Discussion: Engage in a conversation about what they have learned from the book, what their "What Ifs" are, and how they handle them. Then move on to the activity.

Activity: Draw your own "What If"! You can create a What If that is Hopeful or Scared!

*Supply List: Book, My What If Printout, Crayons, Markers*

#### **Week 2: Maybe**

Read: "Maybe" by Kobi Yamada

Discussion: Engage in a short discussion about what they've learned from the book, what are their "maybes" and how can they learn to move forward? Then move on to the activity.

Activity: Dandelion Breathing Tools

The book ends with the main character wishfully blowing a dandelion. Now Students will be able to make their own dandelions which double as a breathing tool!

- Using one cardboard disk, place feathers in a circle around it to resemble a flower.
- Glue a smaller cardboard disk in the center to hold feathers in place.
- Trim the feathers slightly around the larger disk
- Glue a thin green popsicle stick to the back of the larger disk as a stem.

How To Use:

Instruct students to close their eyes, think of something positive, and blow on their dandelion using breathing techniques.

*Supply List: Book, Feathers, Cardboard Discs, Glue, Markers, Popsicle Sticks*

### **Weel 3: Mystery Bag**

Activity: This activity is much like "Fear Factor." It's designed for students to use their sense of feeling to guess a hidden unknown object.

Collect your items. Look for anything safe to handle without sharp edges that might cut you.

Examples:

- Plastic bugs
- Slime or Squishy
- Macaroni
- Rocks
- Put various items in the bag so they can't be seen.
- Get the students excited by asking what they think could be in the bag. Is it a snake or spider?
- Encourage them to be brave!
- Have a student reach into the bag and guess by feeling.

- Give each student a turn before revealing what was really in the bag.

Discussion Questions:

- “How did you feel putting your hand in the Mystery Bag not knowing what you were going to feel?”
- ” What were you thinking before you put your hand in the Mystery Bag?”
- ” Was putting your hand in the Mystery Bag worse than you thought?”
- “What helped you feel brave enough to try?”

*The goal of these questions is to help students understand that 99% of the time what we’re afraid of doesn’t end up being as bad as what we thought.*

*Supply List: Mystery Bag with Various Items*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: The Lion Inside**

Read: “The Lion Inside” by Rachel Bright

Activity: Lion & Mouse and Fear Unscripted

- Have students color the Lion & Mouse printout.
- After they are done coloring, help them cut out each lion and mouse.
- Help students glue popsicle sticks to each of the cut outs. One for each lion and mouse.
- Complete Fear Unscripted printout, then have the students act out the story with their puppets.

*Supply List: Book, Printout, Popsicle Sticks, Crayons, Glue, Unscripted Printout*

### **Week 2: Courage**

Read: “A Little Spot of Courage” by Diane Alber

Discussion: Engage in a short discussion about what they have learned from the book. Ask questions like “When have you had courage?” then move on to the activity.

Activity: Fear Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, writing/coloring utensils*

### **Week 3: Trying**

Read: "Trying" by Kobi Yamada

Activity: Statue Game

Have students create a statue that represents/is based on an emotion and other students can guess the emotion.

*Supply List: Book*

## Joy Trail

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Three Things That Make You Happy**

Read: "A Little Spot of Happiness" by Diane Abler

Activity: Use the "Three Things That Make You Feel Happy" printout and discuss the answers.

*Supply List: Book, Printout, Writing Utensils*

## **Week 2: Let's Talk About Happiness!**

Discussion: Lead group in conversation about happiness!

“Let's explore all the things that make us happy.” Ask students:

- What sports make you happy?
- What places make you happy?
- What's a food that makes you happy?
- What's something at school that makes you happy?

Activity: Cut paper plates in half, have students draw different happy facial expressions and then act out different things that make them feel happy.

*Supply List: Paper Plates, Crayons, Markers, Scissors*

## **Week 3: Find Your Happiness**

Activity: Hide happy face stress balls around the room before students arrive. Lead students in a scavenger hunt to find their happiness. Encourage students who haven't found theirs yet.

*Supply List: Smiley Face Stress Balls*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Growing Happiness**

Read: “Grow Happy” by Jon Lasser

Activity: Happy Flowers

Students will pick out their own flower cut out. They can write different things that make them happy on it as well as decorate it. Afterwards, they will glue their flower onto a green popsicle stick.

*Supply List: Book, Flower Printouts*

Discussion: Coaches can have a conversation with them about where they would like to “plant” that flower at home so they can see it all the time. Ask how they think they can grow that happiness more.

## **Week 2: Laughter**

Read: “The Serious Goose” by Jimmy Kimmel

Activity: The Laughing Game

Sit in a circle and take turns making funny faces or silly noises. Encourage children to laugh freely and enjoy the moment. The goal is to see who can make others laugh the most and help students understand that sometimes laughter is the best medicine!

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 3: Thankfulness**

Read: “A Little Spot of Thankfulness” by Diane Abler

Activity: Thank You Cards

Give students two thank you cards each and have them think of caring adults in their lives that they are thankful for. Instruct them to give these cards to the adults they wish as an opportunity to spread joy and gratitude!

*Supply List: Book, Thank You Cards, Markers, Crayons*

## **Love Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: A Spot of Love**

Read: “A Little Spot of Love” by Diane Alber

Discussion: Engage in a short discussion about what they’ve learned from the book. Talk about the different kinds of love; friendship, family, teachers, etc. Then move on to the activity.

Activity: Have students write kind and encouraging notes to hand out to people at school.

*Supply List: Book*

#### **Week 2: Kindness Jars**

Discussion: Remind the students about the trail they’re on and have a short conversation about how being kind to yourself is an act of love.

Activity: Create Kindness Jars

Bring craft supplies to decorate their kindness jars. Once finished, help students write nice things about themselves to place in their kindness jars. Then have students write one nice thing about each other to add as well.

*Supply List: Paper, Glue, Markers, Stickers, To-Go Soup Containers*

### **Week 3: “I Am Love”**

Read: “I Am Love” by Susan Verde

Discussion: Go over the questions included at the end of the book, then move on to the activity.

Activity: Go through yoga poses at the end of the book.

*Supply List: Book*

## **ROUTES 2**

### **Week 1: Friendship Ball**

Activity 1: Have students throw around the Friendship Ball. What their thumb lands on, they answer that question.

*Supply List: Friendship Ball*

Activity 2: Friendship Bracelets

Using pipe cleaners and beads, create matching or coordinating friendship bracelets for both you and a friend. Decorate them and make them special. Share them with your friend after and surprise them with their new bracelet.

*Supply List: Pipe Cleaners, Beads, Scissors*

### **Week 2: Helpful Ninjas**

Read: “Helpful Ninja” by Mary Nhin

Discussion: Engage in a discussion about what they’ve learned from the book. Ask students about times they have been helpful and point out times you have personally seen them as helpful. Then move on to the activity.

Activity: A Little Help from Your Friends

Give each student a tissue to place on their head. Instruct students to move around to the tune of music while keeping the tissue on their heads. If a tissue falls off, the student will freeze. Another

student needs to help the frozen one by placing the tissue back on the frozen student's head, allowing the frozen student to rejoin the game.

*Supply List: Book, Tissues.*

### **Week 3: Totem**

Activity: Play the Totem Card Game with students. For Beginner Explorers, focus more on what animal they think their peers are as opposed to whether the verbiage matches their character. Be sure to observe and make sure everyone is being appropriate and respectful.

*Supply List: Totem Card Game*

## **Jealousy Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Jealous Ninja**

Read: "Jealous Ninja" by Mary Nhin

Activity: Give each student the task of finding one thing they like about the person to their left and encourage them in that. This is the "praise" part of the 3 P's talked about in the book. Then challenge students to take the "3 Ps" and practice the rest of the days.

*Supply List: Book*

#### **Week 2: Choices | Jealousy**

Read: "What Would Danny Do?" by Ganit Levy

Activity: "Who's in the Driver's Seat?"

Read scenarios on the back of the printout to get students thinking about how they can make decisions to calm their minds.

*Supply List: Book, Driver's Seat Printouts, Crayons*

#### **Week 3: Empathy for Jealous People**

Read: "Wally and Freya" by Lindsay Pointer

Discussion: Have a conversation with students about how sometimes when people are mean to you, they might be jealous. Get curious! Be kind! Maybe they just want to be a part of the fun you're having.

*Supply List: Book*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Jealousy In Friendships**

Read: "Peanut Butter and Jellyous" by Michael Genhart

Activity: Things We Have in Common

Come up with different things that students would have in common (Favorite colors, favorite foods, same color hair, etc.) and ask them to raise their hand. This is to get students to recognize there are other kids who have things in common with them and that they could potentially be new friends.

*Supply List: Book*

*Added Challenge: "Go make two new friends on the playground let us know next week how it went!"*

### **Week 2: "It's Mine!" Teamwork**

Activity: Drawing together!

Bring one sheet of paper and markers and have a student draw one thing on it, then pass it to another student until everyone has had a turn. Then read the "It's Mine" book.

Read: "It's Mine!" by Leo Lionni

Discussion: Have conversations around how they worked together while drawing and then have them add to the drawing again. (If full, give another paper and start a new picture).

*Supply List: Book, Blank Paper, Coloring Utensils*

### **Week 3: Jealousy Tree**

Activity: Jealousy Tree Printout

Grab the Jealousy Tree printout and green sticky notes. Cover the tree with sticky notes so that the beautiful colors of the tree are hidden. Ask students about things that make them feel jealous and

write them on each of the sticky notes. Help students come up with ways to “prune” the tree by finding positive ways to deal with that emotion. Once a student comes up with a positive way to deal with one of the sticky notes, they get to take that sticky note off, revealing a beautiful tree.

*Supply List: Jealousy Tree Printout, Green Sticky Notes, Writing Utensils*

# Intermediate Explorer

## 2nd - 3rd Grade

### Anger Trail

#### ROUTE 1

##### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like they your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of anger and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

##### Week 2: Anger Monster

Discussion: Engage in a short conversation about how unmanaged anger feels and what it would look like if it transformed into a monster.

Activity: Anger Monster

Have students draw their anger monster. On the back, they can write something they can do to help them calm down.

Example: “When I’m Angry, I can...”

*Supply List: Anger Monster Printout*

##### Week 3: Anger Defuser

Discussion: Before playing today's game, start by reminding the group of this trail's theme. Engage in a brief discussion about things that can make us angry, then move into explaining today's game.

Activity: Play the board game “Anger Defuser”

Somebody defused explosive anger! But which character was it? And where? What coping skill was used? Players play the role of a detective, searching for clues to the mystery. Finding answers to the who, how, and where, all while learning important coping skills and techniques to control anger.

*Supply List: Anger Defuser Board Game*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Question Ball**

Activity: Play “Anger Question Ball” with your students to get the conversation started about anger and to see where they are with this emotion.

*Rules: Pass the ball and whoever catches it must answer the question their thumb (left or right) lands on*

Different Ways to Play:

- Classic: Pass the ball around and answer the questions
- Hot Potato: Play “Hot Potato” with the ball and whoever it lands on must answer the question
- Silent Ball: Play “Silent Ball” and whoever drops the ball first must answer a question

*Supply List: Anger related Question Ball*

### **Week 2: Mad Dragon**

Activity: Mad Dragon

This fast-paced therapeutic card game helps children ages 6-12: Control their anger in the moment; Practice 12 effective anger management techniques; Understand what anger feels and looks like; Avoid anger-provoking situations; Express and understand their feelings; Identify anger cues; Learn that they have choices about how to express anger. Mad Dragon plays like the popular game UNO. Players race to get rid of their cards while learning anger control skills.

*Supply List: Mad Dragon Game*

### **Week 3: Keeping Your Cool**

Read: “Clovis Keeps His Cool” by Katelyn Aronson

Activity: Simon Says!

Give each student a plastic teacup and instruct them to place it on their heads. The last person to keep the teacup on their head wins.

Challenge Examples:

- Squat
- Touch your toes
- Stand on one leg
- Walk back and forth in the room
- Spin

*Breathing Exercise: Try a breathing exercise with students while the cups are on their heads. Remind them that when they get angry there might not always be a cup on their heads, but they can imagine there is one, so they do not break anything in their anger.*

*Supply List: Book and Plastic Teacups*

## Sadness Trail

### ROUTE 1

#### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of sadness and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

#### Week 2: Sadness At Your Door

Read: “When Sadness is at Your Door” by Eve Eland

Discussion: Talk about the importance of accepting sadness.

Activity: Simon Says - Sadness Edition

In this version of Simon Says, “Simon” will direct the students to use tools that can help with sadness. Simon can also call out movements or body language that represents sadness to help bring awareness to what someone else might look like if they are feeling sad.

Examples: Hug yourself, blow out candles, three deep breaths, trace your hand, close your eyes, compliment someone, clench your fist, pretend to cry, show me what sadness looks like.

*Supply List: Book*

### **Week 3: Grounding**

#### Activity 1: 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

Give each student a 5 Senses Grounding print out and work with them on how to use it.

- 5 things they can see
- 4 things they can feel
- 3 things they can hear
- 2 things they can smell
- 1 thing they can taste

*Note: Bring extra copies in case students would like to bring one home with them.*

Activity 2: Play “I Spy” with students to get them to start engaging their senses.

*Supply List: Grounding Exercise Printout*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Sadness Unscripted**

Activity: Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").

- The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

#### Activity 2: Finger Breathing Technique

Give each student 1 blue circle sticker to place on their thumb. Instruct them to tap each finger while breathing in and again while breathing out.

### **Week 2: Mindfulness Matters**

Activity: Mindfulness Matters Game

Dealer shuffles and deals four cards to each player face up (question side up). Remaining cards placed face up in a pile. Do not look at the back of the cards. On each turn, one player picks a card from their hand and reads it, and the group must respond to the question. If the answers are deemed appropriate, the letter is placed face up in the middle as the group spells “mindful” together.

*Supply List: Mindfulness Matters Game*

### **Week 3: Positive Thoughts Chain**

Activity: Have students make a positive thoughts chain for days when they need a little pick me up!

Follow the instructions on the “Positive Thought Chain” printout for more information.

*Supply List: Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Stapler*

## **Fear Trail**

### **ROUTE1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of fear and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week: 2 “What If?”**

Read: “The What If’s” by Emily Kilgore

Discussion: Engage in a conversation about what they have learned from the book, what their “What Ifs” are, and how they handle them. Then move on to the activity.

Activity: Draw your own “What If”! You can create a What If that is Hopeful or Scared!

*Supply List: Book, My What If Printout, Crayons, Markers*

### **Week 3: Maybe**

Read: “Maybe” by Kobi Yamada

Discussion: Engage in a brief discussion about what they have learned from the book, what are their “maybes” and how can they learn to move forward? Then move on to the activity.

Activity: Dandelion Breathing Tools

The book ends with the main character wishfully blowing a dandelion. Now Students will be able to make their own dandelions which double as a breathing tool!

- Using one cardboard disk, place feathers in a circle around it to resemble a flower.
- Glue a smaller cardboard disk in the center to hold feathers in place.
- Trim the feathers slightly around the larger disk
- Glue a thin green popsicle stick to the back of the larger disk as a stem.

How to Use:

Instruct students to close their eyes, think of something positive, and blow on their dandelion using breathing techniques.

*Supply List: Book, Feathers, Cardboard Discs, Glue, Markers, Popsicle Sticks*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: The Lion Inside**

Read: “The Lion Inside” by Rachel Bright

Activity: Lion & Mouse

This is a twist on the classic game “Duck, duck, goose.” Have the students and coaches sit in a circle on the ground. (Coaches are only there to help create the circle, they will not be mice.) The “mouse” will go around and choose a “lion” to chase. The lion has the freedom to run around the circle or use the center of the circle as a safe zone. They can only be in the safe zone for 5 seconds. If the lion gets caught, they then become the mouse and choose a new lion to chase.

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 2: Embracing Your Fears**

Activity: Fear Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts*

Activity 2: Mystery Bag

This activity is much like “Fear Factor.” It is designed for students to use their sense of feeling to guess a hidden unknown object.

- Collect your items. Look for anything safe to handle without sharp edges that might cut you.

Examples:

- A bag of dried beans or rice
- Plastic bugs
- Slime or Squishy
- Macaroni
- Rocks
- Put assorted items in the bag so they cannot be seen.
- Get the students excited by asking what they think could be in the bag. Is it a snake or spider?
- Encourage them to be brave!
- Have a student reach into the bag and guess by feeling.
- Give each student a turn before revealing what was really in the bag.

Discussion Questions:

- “How did you feel putting your hand in the Mystery Bag not knowing what you were going to feel?”
- ” What were you thinking before you put your hand in the Mystery Bag?”
- ” Was putting your hand in the Mystery Bag worse than you thought?”
- “What helped you feel brave enough to try?”

*The goal of these questions is to help students understand that 99% of the time what we’re afraid of does not end up being as bad as what we thought.*

*Supply List: Mystery Bag with Various Items*

### **Week 3: Anchor Your Stress**

Activity: Play the game “Anchor Your Stress.”

A card game based off the classic “Go Fish” but with questions to help students manage stress.

*Supply List: Anchor Your Stress Game*

## Joy Trail

### **ROUTE1**

## **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of joy and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: Find Your Happiness**

Activity: Hide happy face stress balls around the room before students arrive. Lead students in a scavenger hunt to find their happiness. Encourage students who have not found theirs yet.

*Supply List: Smiley Face Stress Balls*

## **Week 3: Gratitude**

Activity 1: Share Chairs

Set up three chairs in a row then another three opposites of those chairs. Equal to the number of students you have. Have students sit in chairs and ask the group a question. Each child will share their answer with the peer in front of them. Once they have done this, have each child move one seat down and repeat the process. After each child has shared an answer with their peers, move on to the next activity.

Activity 2: Practicing Gratitude

Give each student a printout and have them draw/color something they are grateful for. This can be something they shared during the game or something they thought of on the spot.

*Supply List: Gratitude Printouts and Pencils*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Creating Happiness**

Activity 1: Happy Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

Activity 2: Little Box of Happiness Magnets

Have students create happiness sentences with the magnets and discuss things that help make them happy.

*Supply List: Unscripted Printout, Happiness Magnets*

## **Week 2: Laughter**

Read: The Serious Goose by Jimmy Kimmel

Activity: The Laughing Game

Sit in a circle and take turns making funny faces or silly noises. Encourage children to laugh freely and enjoy the moment. The goal is to see who can make others laugh the most and help students understand that sometimes laughter is the best medicine!

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 3: Thankfulness**

Activity: Thank You Cards

Before the group, fill out a Thank You card print out for each student and give it to them when they arrive. Once you have explained the day's activity, give each student two thank you cards and have them think of caring adults in their life that they are thankful for. Instruct them to give these cards to the adults they think of to give them an opportunity to spread joy!

*Supply List: Printed Thank You Cards, Writing Utensils*

## Love Trail

### ROUTE 1 – Kindness

#### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of love and be able to observe how they show and receive it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

#### Week 2: Kindness Jars

Discussion: Remind the students about the trail they are on and have a short conversation about how being kind to yourself is an act of love.

Activity: Create Kindness Jars

Bring craft supplies to decorate their kindness jars. Once finished, help students write nice things about themselves to place in their kindness jars. Then have students write one nice thing about each other to add as well.

*Supply List: Paper, Glue, Markers, Stickers, To-Go Soup Containers*

#### Week 3: “I Am Love”

Read: “I Am Love” by Susan Verde

Discussion: Go over the questions included at the end of the book, then move on to the activity.

Activity: Go through yoga poses at the end of the book.

*Supply List: Book*

## **ROUTE 2 - Friendship**

### **Week 1: Friendship Ball**

Activity 1: Have students throw around the Friendship Ball. What their thumb lands on, they answer that question.

*Supply List: Friendship Ball*

Activity 2: Friendship Bracelets

Using pipe cleaners and beads, create matching or coordinating friendship bracelets for both you and a friend. Decorate them and make them special. Share them with your friend after and surprise them with their new bracelet.

*Supply List: Pipe Cleaners, Beads, Scissors*

### **Week 2: We're Not Really Strangers**

Activity: Play "We're Not Really Strangers: Kid's Edition" with students and engage with them in conversation around the question cards. How to play: Start with level one, each student receives 10 cards, take turns asking and answering questions as you move through the game. Each level progresses as the levels get deeper.

*Supply List: WNRS Card Game*

### **Week 3: Totem**

Activity: Play the Totem Card Game with students. For Intermediate Explorers, focus more on what animal they think their peers are as opposed to whether the verbiage matches their character. Be sure to observe and make sure everyone is being appropriate and respectful.

*Supply List: Totem Card Game*

## **Jealousy Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of jealousy and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: “It’s Mine!” Teamwork**

Activity: Drawing together!

Bring one sheet of paper and markers and have a student draw one thing on it, then pass it to another student until everyone has had a turn. Then read the “It’s Mine” book.

Read: “It’s Mine!” by Leo Lionni

Discussion: Have conversations around how they worked together while drawing and then have them add to the drawing again. (If full, give another paper and start a new picture).

*Supply List: Book, Blank Paper, Coloring Utensils*

## **Week 3: Choices | Jealousy**

Read: What Would Danny Do?

Activity: “Who’s in the Driver’s Seat?” Sheet

Read off scenarios on the back of the sheet to get students minds running on how they can make decisions to calm their minds

*Supply List: Book, Driver’s Seat Printout, Coloring Utensils*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Jealousy In Friendships**

Read: “Peanut Butter and Jellyous” by Michael Genhart

Activity: Things We Have in Common

Come up with different things that students would have in common (Favorite colors, favorite foods, same color hair, etc.) and ask them to raise their hand. This is to get students to recognize there are other kids who have things in common with them and that they could potentially be new friends.

*Supply List: Book*

*Added Challenge: "Go make two new friends on the playground let us know next week how it went!"*

## **Week 2: Jealousy Tree**

Activity: Grab the Jealousy Tree printout and green sticky notes.

Cover the tree with sticky notes so that the beautiful colors of the tree is hidden. Ask students about things that make them feel jealous and write them on each of the sticky notes. Help students come up with ways to "prune" the tree by finding positive ways to deal with that emotion. Once a student comes up with a positive way to deal with one of the sticky notes, they get to take that sticky note off, revealing a beautiful tree.

*Supply List: Jealousy Tree Printout, Green Sticky Notes, Writing Utensils*

## **Week 3: Empathy for Jealous People**

Read: "Wally and Freya" by Lindsay Pointer

Discussion: Have a conversation with students about how sometimes when people are mean to you, they might be jealous. Get curious! Be kind! They just want to be a part of the fun you are having.

*Supply List: Book*

## **Self-Esteem Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and "interview" them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with self-esteem and be able to observe where they are at.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: Trying**

Read: "Trying" by Kobi Yamada

Activity: Statue Game

Have students create a statue that represents/is based on an emotion and other students can guess the emotion.

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 3: Who You Were Made to Be**

Read: "Who You Were Made to Be" by Joanna Gaines

Activity: 3 Things I Like About Myself

Give each student a hot air balloon printout and encourage them to write three things they like about themselves in the three spots on the balloon. Once they have written those three things down, they can color the rest of the sheet.

*Supply List: Book, 3 Things I like About Myself Printout, Coloring Utensils*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Shaky Confidence**

Activity: Totika - Self-Esteem Pack

Play Totika, a balancing tower game based on the classic game of Jenga. Once students pull a different colored block and balance it back on top, they will then answer a question of the corresponding color.

*Supply List: Tokita Game*

### **Week 2: Who You Are on the Inside**

Read: "After the Fall" by Dan Santat

Activity: Paper Airplanes

Have students write 3 things they like about themselves on a piece of paper, and work with students struggling with this activity. Once completed with their three words they decorate the paper before making them into paper airplanes and then letting them fly. A fun twist is to have students compete in whose paper airplane can fly the farthest!

*Supply List: Book, Paper, Crayons*

### **Week 3: Changing Our Words**

Activity 1: Negative to Positive Statements

Go over the negative to positive statements worksheet with your group and ask students how they can turn a negative statement to a positive one!

Activity 2: Have one student leave the room and while they are gone, have one of the remaining students change one thing about their appearance. Have the student outside come back in and try to spot which student's appearance has changed.

*Supply List: Negative to Positive Statements Printout*

## **Bullying Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

**Week 1: Talk Show Game** (*approx. 10 Minutes*)

Activity 1: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and "interview" them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on. **(Max 2 Students per week for this Trail)**

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with bullying and be able to observe how they handle it.*

Activity 2: Read "Confessions of a Former Bully" by Trudy Ludwig (*approx. 20 Minutes*) *\*You will need to pre-read this book thoroughly to help students understand and help navigate the different portions of this book. You will not read every page to the students and sometimes will just read*

*portions of the page itself. This route will vary depending on your group and the different key points you will need to focus on as a coach.*

Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book. This first week you will focus on the introduction of the book pages. Briefly go over “A Note from Katie” and then move into “About Bullying.”

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards and Book*

## **Week 2: Confessions of a Former Bully**

Activity: Read “Confessions of a Former Bully” by Trudy Ludwig - Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book. This week you will continue the section on “About Bullying” up to the “Quick Facts” page.

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 3: Confessions of a Former Bully**

Activity: Read “Confessions of a Former Bully” by Trudy Ludwig - Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book. This week you will focus on “Not All Kids Who Bully Look Like Bad Guys”. During the section skip the quick facts” and move onto “Empower tools.” If you have time at the end, you can revisit the quick facts.

*Supply List: Book*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with bullying and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Bully Origin Story**

Read: Milly B. Fierce by Jane Manning

Activity: Bullying Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

### **Week 3: We're Not So Different**

Activity: Mountain of Emotions

Play Mountain of Emotions from the Social Skills Board Game with students. Engage in conversation as they talk about different emotions their game piece lands on. The goal is to create conversation around their answers and encourage a sense of empathy.

*Supply List: Mountain of Emotions Board Game*

# Advanced Explorer

## 4th - 5th Grade

### Anger Trail

#### ROUTE 1

##### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of anger and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

##### Week 2: Anger Defuser

Discussion: Before playing today's game, start by reminding the group of this trail's theme. Engage in a short discussion about things that can make us angry, then move into explaining today's game.

Activity: Play the board game “Anger Defuser”

Somebody defused explosive anger! But which character was it? And where? What coping skill was used? Players play the role of a detective, searching for clues to the mystery. Finding answers to the who, how, and where, all while learning important coping skills and techniques to control anger.

*Supply List: Anger Defuser Board Game*

##### Week 3: Review Anchor Point - ANGER

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle anger. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Mad Dragon

This fast-paced therapeutic card game helps children ages 6-12: Control their anger in the moment; Practice 12 effective anger management techniques; Understand what anger feels and looks like; Avoid anger-provoking situations; Express and understand their feelings; Identify anger cues; Learn

that they have choices about how to express anger. Mad Dragon plays like the popular game UNO. Players race to get rid of their cards while learning anger control skills.

*Supply List: Mad Dragon Game*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of anger and be able to see how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Anger Management Bingo**

Activity: A twist on the classic game Bingo!

It's a game of chance where you get to mark off questions about anger. The first person to mark off all the questions in a row, column, or diagonal wins!

You will be the designated caller. As the caller you will have a copy of the words on your sheet. You will randomly pick a word on the sheet and create a scenario in which that word would be used to describe the situation. If a student can tell you which word you are alluding to, they can mark it off their Bingo card. (They can use a marker, a chip, or just a pen to cross it out.)

#### Example

Word Selected: "Cool Off"

Scenario given: “You see a friend that's really angry and say ‘Hey! It seems like you're really upset? Maybe you need to sit down and \_\_\_\_\_’ What word do you think that is?”

Winning the Game - The first person to mark off five words in a row wins. The row can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. When you have marked off five words in a row, you shout "Bingo!" to let everyone know you have won.

*Supply List: Bingo Printouts, Bingo Chips*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - ANGER**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle anger. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Anger Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
- The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
- The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

## **Sadness Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of sadness and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

## Week 2: A Sad and Solemn Occasion

Activity: Sit in a circle and have everyone look sad. Select someone to start the game by saying, "This is a sad and solemn occasion, is it not (says another player's name)?" That person must reply, "Yes (leader's name), it is indeed a sad and solemn occasion." The "Reply-er" then becomes the "Ask-er." Keep going, making the replies more and more dramatic because the object of the game is not to laugh...but someone probably will! When the activity is completed, move onto the discussion.

Discussion Questions:

- "Has there ever been a time where you were in a sad situation, felt awkward, and wanted to laugh?"
- "Why did it feel easier to laugh than to sit with sadness?"
- "If you saw a friend who was really sad, how could you sit with them and their sadness?"

*Sometimes when students experience sad situations or hear sad stories, their first response is to laugh because they feel awkward and uncomfortable with the sadness of the situation which, in turn, can communicate a lack of respect. The goal with these questions is to challenge that subconscious response and have them engage with empathy.*

## Week 3: Review Anchor Point - SADNESS

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle sadness. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Sadness Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.

- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of sadness and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Cards*

### **Week 2: Stand UP**

Activity: Have students sit in a circle on the floor. Give each student a plastic spoon and have them place the handle of the spoon in their mouths. Place a plastic egg on the end of their spoons. Whoever can stand up first without dropping their egg wins.

Discussion Questions:

- “Feeling happy again can be hard, especially when you feel a lot of sadness. Is it hard for you to “get back up” or find joy when you’ve been sad for a while?”
- ” What’s the hardest part about that?”
- ” What’s something that makes you happy?”
- ” How could you do that thing the next time you’re sad?”

*The goal of these questions is to help students discover healthy coping skills, some of which they may subconsciously already be doing, that will help them when they are feeling sad.*

*Supply List: Spoons and Plastic Eggs*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - SADNESS**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle sadness. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Dominoes

Find creative ways to set up Dominoes and take turns knocking the first one down to see if all the other Dominoes will fall after. Encourage students to work as a team as they set them up and create different, fun, challenging ways to play this classic game.

Discussion Questions:

- “Did you see how one small domino caused all the other dominoes to fall? Do you think small actions can make a big impact? Why?”
- “What is something small you could do when you feel sad that could make your day a lot better?” (Examples: Talking to a trusted adult, getting a snack, hanging out with a friend, etc.)
- ” Have you ever done something like that before when you’ve felt sad?” (Celebrate them if they give you an answer, even if it’s small)

*The goal of these questions is to help students see the value of the small things they do when they’re feeling sad and how those small actions can make a big impact on their day. It’s okay to feel sad, but eventually we need to get up, take a step forward even if it’s small, and experience the joy life has to offer.*

## Fear Trail

### ROUTE 1

#### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of fear and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

#### Week 2: What’s Behind the Door?

Activity: Grab the two “What’s Behind the Door?” print outs (Doors 1&2) and select either a challenge or reward (candy?) for one door, then choose the opposite for the other door. One by one, have a student pick Door number 1 or Door number 2 and give them the challenge or reward you pre-selected for that door.

*Supply List: What’s Behind the Door Printouts*

Discussion Questions:

- “Have you ever been scared to try something, but mustered up the courage and did it anyway? How did that go?”
- “Oppositely, have you ever been scared to try something and decided not to because you were too scared? How did that go?”
- “(For both) What do you think would have helped make the scary thing you did or didn’t do easier?”
- “The next time you’re scared to try something, do you think that would be a useful tool in your tool belt?”

*The goal of these questions is to get students to think about times they were scared, without going into therapy-land, so that they can discover tools and coping skills they may already be in possession of or have the opportunity to create new regulating tools with their Wellness Coaches for future needs.*

### **Week 3: Review anchor point - FEAR**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle fear. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Fear Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here’s a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
- The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").

- The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of fear and be able to see how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Mystery Bag**

Activity: This activity is much like “Fear Factor.” It’s designed for students to use their sense of feeling to guess a hidden unknown object. Collect your items. Look for anything safe to handle without sharp edges that might cut you.

Examples:

- A bag of dried beans or rice
- Plastic bugs
- Slime or Squishy
- Macaroni
- Rocks
- Put various items in the bag so they can't be seen.
- Get the students excited by asking what they think could be in the bag. Is it a snake or spider?
- Have a student reach into the bag and guess by feeling.
- Give each student a turn before revealing what was really in the bag.

Discussion Questions:

- “How did you feel putting your hand in the Mystery Bag not knowing what you were going to feel?”
- ” What were you thinking before you put your hand in the Mystery Bag?”
- ” Where in your body do you experience anxiety?”
- “What do you do when you feel anxious?”
- ” Was putting your hand in the Mystery Bag worse than you thought?”

*The goal of these questions is to help students understand that 99% of the time what we're anxious about doesn't end up being as bad as what we thought.*

*Supply List: Mystery Bag with Various Items*

### **Week 3: Review anchor point - FEAR**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle fear. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Anxiety's Comfy Corner

Have students imagine and create the comfiest corner in their mind for anxiety to relax in! They can draw a reclining chair, a couch with a lot of pillows and blankets, whatever feels the most relaxing to them. This is going to be a place for them to picture in their heads when they feel anxiety running rampant in their mind.

Discussion Questions:

- \*Ask students about their comfy corners and why they decided to put what they did in their corners\*
- “What about the things you put in your corner help you relax?”
- “Do you think you could physically do or find any of these things to help you relax when you feel anxious?”

*Supply List: Anxiety's Comfy Corner printout, Paper, Crayons, Pencils*

## Joy Trail

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of joy and be able to see how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: Find Your Joy Scavenger hunt**

Activity: Hide happy face stress balls around the room before students arrive. Lead students in the scavenger hunt to find their happiness, encouraging those who haven’t found theirs yet.

Discussion Questions:

- “Raise your hand if it’s been really hard to find your happiness some days. What was a day when happiness was hiding really well?”
- “Did you end up finding your happiness?”
- “Where do you usually find happiness / What makes you happy?” (Friends, family, your favorite game, etc.)
- “Is there someone (a friend, trusted adult, etc.) that you can talk to when Joy is hard to find? Maybe share with them some of the places you usually find it so they can help you look!”

*The goal of these questions is to create awareness in students' minds of where they can find happiness in their every day. Assure them that of course they will experience other emotions like Sadness, Fear, Anger, etc. but it's important for them to know where they can always find Joy when they need it. ☺*

## **Week 3: Review anchor point - JOY**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to find your joy. When finished, move onto today's activity that will bring everyone joy.

Activity: Apple, Orange and Banana!

Some of the best quick icebreakers promote team bonding by simply encouraging the group to be silly and have fun. This game is designed to do just that!

Start by asking your group to stand in a circle with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front. Explain that when you shout either apple, orange or banana they must perform the associated action: moving forward, backward or spinning around. When the group is comfortable, mix it up by saying two or even three words in sequence!

This great icebreaker game gets everyone moving and generates lots of laughter.

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of joy and be able to see how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Security Guard and the Thieves**

- Place one of the Smiley Stress Balls in the center of the room
- Choose one student to be the Security Guard. The rest will be thieves.
- The Security Guard’s job is to protect his/her Smiley Stress Ball from the Thieves
- The Thieves will try to move around the room and get as close as possible to the Smiley Stress Ball so they can grab it, but they must freeze before the Security Guard sees them!
- If they move while the Security Guard sees them, they must go back where they first started

Discussion Questions:

- “Do you think people can steal your Happiness? Why or why not?”
- “Has a friend, bully, or someone that’s just having a bad day ever tried to steal your Happiness? What happened? What did you do?”
- “Do you think people want to steal your happiness or do you think that sometimes they’re just having a bad day and take it out on you?”
- “What can you say to someone if they are having a bad day and what they’re doing makes you feel sad?”

*The goal of these questions is to create a mental connection between “things that have value” and “joy” in students' minds. Bully’s might intentionally try to take their joy. Peers might be having a bad day and take it out on them unintentionally. Parents or Teachers may ask them to do something they don’t want to do which makes them sad/mad. Not everything will be a threat, but the important thing for them to know is that they will always have a choice to be kind anyway.*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - JOY**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to find your joy. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Smile Surveillance

Give each student a Smile Surveillance printout and go through each section together. Game plan as a group on how they can protect their happiness throughout everyday life. When you arrive at a new “security checkpoint” ask them questions like “If this were to happen, how do you think you could protect your happiness while still being kind?”

Discussion Questions: *True or False*

- “Your Parents or Guardians are trying to steal your joy by giving you chores to do” (False)
- ” A kid at school tried to steal your joy by saying something hurtful to you because they saw you were having a good day” (True)
- “A kid that got hurt on the playground tried to steal your joy by yelling at you when you asked if they were ok” (False)
- ” Your sibling is angry at you because you get more time to play video games, so they try to steal your joy by unplugging your game console” (Maybe)

*The goal of these questions is to help students come up with solutions on how they can have sustainable happiness even when friends, bullies, etc. are mean to them. Emphasize that this does not give them permission to be mean back. They have something cool they’re keeping safe, and if you have kindness, it means you get to give kindness too.*

Supply List: Smile Surveillance Printout

## **Love Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of love and be able to see how they show and receive it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: Friendship Mirror**

Activity: Start with two students who sit back-to-back and link arms. They try to stand up at the same time, without their backs losing contact. Then, add another pair and try it with four. Keep adding two people at a time until the entire group is trying to stand together.

Discussion questions:

Talk through the activity with the following questions and work on going towards a coaching conversation.

- How did you communicate with your partner or group while trying to stand up? What strategies worked best?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you had to work as a team to solve a problem? How did it compare to this activity?
- How does trust in a group setting compare to trust in a one-on-one friendship?
- What role did you play in the group? Did you take on a leadership role, or did you prefer to follow?

## **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - LOVE**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to show love. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Friendship Telephone

This is another classic children’s game that teaches a great lesson about gossip. Children sit in a circle. The starting child picks a sentence or phrase to pass around the circle via whispers. The last child says the sentence out loud, and the whole group laughs about how much the wording may have changed. Even the simplest piece of information can get garbled and confused as it passes from person to person. This reminds kids not to believe everything they hear from others but also to think about their own words when speaking.

Talk about what makes good friends and how to be a good friend yourself. Use the telephone game to show how important our words are to our friends.

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of love and be able to see how they show it.*

Supply List: *Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Kindness Telephone**

Activity: This round of Telephone we will focus on compliments. Students sit in a circle. The starting student picks a sentence based on a compliment or phrase to pass around the circle via whispers. The last student says the sentence out loud, and the whole group laughs about how much the wording may have changed.

This round focuses on how nice it feels to receive a compliment.

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - LOVE**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to show love. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Totem Card Game

- Shuffle the deck of ANIMAL cards, then deal seven cards to each student.
- Choose one student to be in the spotlight.
- The other players will look at their cards without showing them to the other players and then choose the strength they see that most represents the “Spotlight Student.” Each player places the card they have chosen face down on the table. Once all the players have chosen their card, the coach will shuffle them before giving them to the Spotlight Student, that way they cannot tell who selected what card.

- The Spotlight Student will then look at the cards chosen for him/her. *Remind the other players that this is ANONYMOUS.* The Spotlight Student will rank the cards in order of preference on the table, placing the card representing the strength that he/she recognizes the least in himself / herself on the left, and the card representing the strength they agree with the most on the right.
- The player who selected the ANIMAL card that the spotlight students ranked least representing and most representing must identify himself/herself and explain to the Spotlight Student, in a few words, why he/she chose this strength for him/her. While directly addressing the Spotlight Student,
  - Describe in a few words in what circumstances he/she has witnessed this strength.
  - Describe in a few last words the positive impact this strength has had on the people around the Spotlight Student.
- Continue these steps until all students receive a Totem.

*Supply List: Totem Card Game*

## Jealousy Trail

### ROUTE 1

#### Week 1: Talk Show Game

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of jealousy and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Talk Show Question Cards*

#### Week 2: Jealousy Unscripted

Discussion: Start with a brief discussion on what jealousy is and how it can affect relationships and self-esteem. Go on to play Jealousy Unscripted. Students will create their own situation and then find out the truth behind the person they are jealous of. Have conversations about how jealousy affects us and others surrounding us.

Activity: Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here’s a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:
  - The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
  - The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - JEALOUSY**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Have a conversation about fighting jealousy with gratitude. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Gratitude Chain

Have students make a Gratitude Chain to help them practice gratefulness instead of jealousy! Encourage them to write out things they are grateful for. Follow instructions on the "Positive Thought Chain" printout for more information.

*Supply List: Positive Thought Chain Printout, Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Staples.*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and "interview" them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with the emotion of jealousy and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Week 2: Jealousy Tree**

Activity: Grab the Jealousy Tree printout and green sticky notes. Cover the tree with sticky notes so that the beautiful colors of the tree is hidden. Ask students about things that make them feel jealous and write them on each of the sticky notes. Help students come up with ways to “prune” the tree by finding positive ways to deal with that emotion. Once a student comes up with a positive way to deal with one of the sticky notes, they get to take that sticky note off, revealing a beautiful tree.

*Supply List: Jealousy Tree Printout, Green Sticky Notes*

## **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - JEALOUSY**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to handle jealousy. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: A twist on the classic game Bingo!

It is a game of chance where you get to mark off questions about anger. The first person to mark off all the questions in a row, column, or diagonal wins!

You will be the designated caller. As the caller you will have a copy of the words on your sheet. You will randomly pick a word on the sheet and create a scenario in which that word would be used to describe the situation. If a student can tell you which word you are alluding to, they can mark it off their Bingo card. (They can use a marker, a chip, or just a pen to cross it out.)

Winning the Game - The first person to mark off five words in a row wins. The row can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. When you have marked off five words in a row, you shout "Bingo!" to let everyone know you have won.

*Supply List: Bingo Cards, Bingo Chips*

## **Self-Esteem Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom!

Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with self-esteem and be able to observe where they are at.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

## **Weel 2: Mindful Breathing Bracelets**

Discussion: Explain what self-esteem is. "Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves and how we value who we are." Emphasize that everyone has strengths and areas to improve, and it is important to be kind to ourselves through positive self-talk.

Activity: Have students create mindful breathing bracelets and incorporate the word STOP for the breathing technique you will be teaching later. Supplies needed: Pipe cleaner, beads, STOP beads. While creating the bracelet engage with the following questions:

- "How do you think having good self-esteem can help you in school and with friends?"
- "How do you feel when someone says something unkind about you?"
- "What are some ways you can stay kind to yourself even when others are not?"
- "What are some things you like about yourself?"
- "How can you support your friends when they're feeling down about themselves?"

### S.T.O.P Breathing Technique:

S: Stop: Take a brief pause.

T: Take a Breath: Take a deliberate and mindful breath, focusing on inhalation and exhalation.

O: Observe: Acknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and the environment without judgment.

P: Proceed Mindfully: Proceed with intentionality, choosing a response consciously.

## **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - SELF-ESTEEM**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to raise your self-esteem and check in to see what they learned. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Totika - Self-Esteem Pack

A balancing tower game based on the classic game of Jenga. Once students pull a different colored block and balance it back on top, they will then answer a question of the corresponding color.

*Supply List: Totika Game*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with self-esteem and be able to observe where they are at.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: Negative to Positive Statements**

Activity: Go over the negative to positive statements worksheet with your group and ask students how they can turn a negative statement to a positive one!

*Supply List: Self-Talk Printout*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - SELF-ESTEEM**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on how to raise your self-esteem and check in to see what they learned. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Positive Thoughts Chain

Students will write down positive thoughts on each chain, when they are feeling down, they can pull one off.

*Supply List: Paper, Scissors, Markers, Stapler*

## **Bullying Trail**

### **ROUTE 1**

#### **Week 1: Talk Show Game (approx. 10 Minutes)**

Activity 1: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on. **(Max 2 Students per week for this Trail)**

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with bullying and be able to observe how they handle it.*

Activity 2: Read “Confessions of a Former Bully” by Trudy Ludwig (approx. 20 Minutes) \*You will need to pre-read this book thoroughly to help students understand and help navigate the different portions of this book. You will not read every page to the students and sometimes will just read portions of the page itself. This route will vary depending on your group and the different key points you will need to focus on as a coach.

Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book. This first week you will focus on the introduction of the book pages.

Briefly go over “A Note from Katie” and then move into “About Bullying.”

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards and Book*

## **Week 2: Confessions of a Former Bully**

Activity: Read “Confessions of a Former Bully” by Trudy Ludwig - Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book.

This week you will continue the section on “About Bullying” up to the “Quick Facts” page.

*Supply List: Book*

## **Week 3: Confessions of a Former Bully**

Activity: Read “Confessions of a Former Bully” by Trudy Ludwig - Walk your students through this book on bullying. Be sure to take your time and create conversation around the topics discussed in the book.

This week you will focus on “Not All Kids Who Bully Look Like Bad Guys.”

During the section skip the quick facts” and move onto “Empower tools.” If you have time at the end, you can revisit the quick facts.

*Supply List: Book*

## **ROUTE 2**

### **Week 1: Talk Show Game**

Activity: Create a talk show in your classroom! Bring one student up at a time and “interview” them with question cards centered around the trail you are currently on.

*Remember: Be energetic and make them feel like your sole attention is on them.*

*The goal of these questions is to get students familiar with bullying and be able to observe how they handle it.*

*Supply List: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

### **Week 2: The Empathy Game**

Discussion: Invite your students to describe their understanding of what empathy means. This may be an opportunity to redefine their beliefs about having empathy for others.

Activity: You pick a card and tell your story. Afterwards the listeners engage with your story by throwing the dice and exploring elements of their human experience.

*Supply List: Empathy Game*

### **Week 3: Review Anchor Point - BULLYING**

Discussion: Ask engaging questions with the group based on the last two weeks. Encourage good conversation on what they learned about bullying. When finished, move onto today's activity.

Activity: Bullying Unscripted

Unscripted is a fun and silly word game where players fill in blanks in a story to create humorous and unexpected results. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to play:

- Start with a pre-written story that has blank spaces labeled with types of words (e.g., noun, verb, adjective).
- Gather the Players: One person is the "reader" who has the story template, and the others are the "players" who will provide the words.
- Fill in the Blanks:

- The reader asks the players for specific types of words without showing them the story (e.g., "Give me a noun," "Give me an adjective").
- The players provide words based on these prompts.
- Read the Completed Story: Once all the blanks are filled in with the words provided by the players, the reader reads the completed story aloud. The result is often funny and surprising!

*Supply List: Unscripted Printouts, Writing Utensils*

# Anchor Points

**Anchor points** are key concepts used to teach and develop essential life skills. Each anchor point focuses on a specific emotion or behavior, providing a structured way to understand and manage these feelings in everyday life.

## Components of Anchor Points ||

### Description -

This is a simple explanation of emotions or life skills. It helps students understand what the emotion or skill is and why it's important.

### Understanding It -

This part provides insights into why we experience this emotion or need this skill. It helps students recognize that their feelings are normal and gives context for why they should learn to manage them.

### Questions for Reflection -

These are thought-provoking questions that encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences and feelings related to the emotion or skill. They help deepen understanding and foster personal growth.

**Note:** *As you discuss these questions with students, listen closely to their responses and use follow-up questions to delve deeper into their thoughts and feelings. This approach allows you to engage in a more meaningful conversation and helps students explore the topics more thoroughly. You don't need to stick to a script—flow naturally within the interaction, adapting to their answers and encouraging them to think more deeply.*

### Growth Tips -

These are practical strategies and actions that students can use to develop their skills or manage their emotions. They offer tangible ways for students to practice and improve.

## Purpose of Anchor Points ||

**Promote Emotional Awareness:** Anchor points help students identify and understand their feelings, making them more aware of their emotional states.

**Teach Effective Strategies:** They provide students with practical tools and strategies to handle their emotions in a constructive manner.

**Encourage Personal Growth:** By reflecting on their feelings and behaviors, students can work on improving their emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills.

**Support Positive Relationships:** Understanding and managing emotions effectively leads to healthier relationships with peers and adults.

### **ANCHOR POINTS**

Anger - Sadness - Fear - Joy - Love

Jealousy - Bullying - Self-Esteem

## ANGER ||

### **Description:**

Anger is a strong feeling that happens when we're upset, or things don't go our way.

### **Understanding It:**

It's okay to feel angry, but it's important to manage it so it doesn't hurt you or others.

### **Questions:**

What makes you feel angry?

- *Understanding what triggers your anger can help you find ways to manage it better. Once you understand anger, you can create a plan!*
- *\*Note: If their anger is towards people you will need to point out that we cannot control others but only ourselves.*

How do you usually express/show your anger?

- *Reflect on your reactions and whether they are helpful or hurtful.*

What are some ways you can calm down when you're feeling angry?

- *Think about strategies that work for you to manage your anger.*

Where do you feel anger?

- *Knowing where we feel anger can help us identify it in the future.*

What can you do to get more understanding when things are misunderstood?

- *Sometimes anger comes from misunderstanding someone or feeling misunderstood.*

How can you think differently about the situation?

- *When we are angry, it's hard to see things clearly. Sometimes we need to look at the problem from a different perspective.*

### **Growth Tips:**

Take deep breaths and count to ten. What's your favorite breathing technique to use? Bonus points if you share with the group.

Use "I feel" statements to talk about your feelings. Recognize the emotion.

Find a healthy way to express anger, like drawing or talking to a trusted adult. What other healthy ways can you express your anger?

## **SADNESS ||**

### **Description:**

Sadness is a feeling we get when we're upset or when something doesn't go our way.

### **Understanding It:**

Everyone feels sad sometimes, and it's important to know that it's okay to feel this way.

### **Questions:**

What situations or events make you feel sad?

- Identifying the sources of your sadness can help you understand your emotions better.

How do you feel when you're sad, and how does it affect you?

- Reflect on your emotional and physical responses to sadness.

What are some activities or actions that help you feel better when you're sad?

- Consider what helps lift your spirits and make you feel happier.

Why is it important to sit with sadness?

- Think about what can help you identify sadness, so you can work through it.

How can you care for sadness to keep it from growing too big?

- Sometimes when sadness grows too big it can make us not feel good, and we will need to find a way to manage it.

### **Growth Tips:**

Talk to a friend or adult about what's making you sad.

Do something that makes you happy, like a fun activity or hobby.

Example: Writing down your thoughts, talking to a friend, going for a walk, or listening to music.

Write down your feelings.

If students struggle with question 5, consider reading *When Sadness Is at Your Door*.

## FEAR ||

### **Description:**

Fear is when we feel worried or scared about something that might happen.

### **Understanding It:**

Feeling afraid is normal, but we need to learn how to face our fears in a safe way.

### **Questions:**

What are you afraid of, and why?

- Understanding your fears can help you address them more effectively.

How does fear affect the way you act or make decisions?

- Reflect on how fear influences your behavior and choices.

What are some things you can do to face your fears or feel safer?

- Think about strategies or actions that can help you overcome your fears.

What about fear could be helpful?

- Think about how fear can keep you from getting hurt. Sometimes fear is like a warning sign telling us something is wrong. Example: Fear might keep you from climbing REALLY high, falling and getting hurt.

What makes you brave?

- Think about a time you were brave when you felt afraid. What was the outcome?
- \*Use the following questions in conjunction with Route 2.

How does anxiety affect your body?

- When fear turns into anxiety, it can cause a tummy ache, make you sweat, or make your chest and insides feel tight or shaky.

What are some examples of when someone might feel anxiety?

- Understanding what makes you anxious can help you work through this feeling.

### **Growth Tips:**

Talk about your fears with someone you trust.

Learn about what scares you and find ways to make it less scary. Sometimes finding out facts about what you're afraid of helps.

Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing.

## JOY ||

### **Description:**

Happiness is the feeling we get when something makes us feel good or joyful.

### **Understanding It:**

It's great to feel happy, and sharing your happiness can make others feel good too.

### **Questions:**

What makes you feel happy and joyful?

- Identifying what brings you happiness can help you seek more of those experiences.

How do you show or share your happiness with others?

- Reflect on how your happiness impacts those around you.

What are some things you can do to create more moments of happiness in your life?

- Consider activities or habits that can help you find more joy.

How do your thoughts and actions affect your joy?

- Choosing to think positively about a situation can help you grow and bring more joy.

What are things you're grateful for?

- Reflect on what you're thankful for or proud of. Do these thoughts bring you joy?

### **Growth Tips:**

Share what makes you happy with others.

Think about things you are grateful for.

Keep a happiness journal where you write or draw about happy moments.

## LOVE ||

### **Description:**

Love is a warm feeling we have for people we care about and who care about us.

### **Understanding It:**

Showing love through kindness and care helps us build strong relationships.

### **Questions:**

Who are the people you care about most, and why?

- Reflect on the important relationships in your life and what makes them special.

How can you show love when you don't like someone?

- Example: Show kindness, be curious, have empathy.

How do you show love and care to others?

- Think about your actions and words that express your affection.

What are some ways you can make others feel loved and appreciated?

- Consider how you can positively affect the people you care about.

How can you love yourself?

- Think about what you can do each day to take care of yourself. This is called self-care.

What makes you feel loved?

- Reflect on experiences that made you feel cared for and loved.

### **Growth Tips:**

Show kindness to friends and family.

Express appreciation by saying "thank you" or doing something nice.

Spend quality time with the people you care about.

## JEALOUSY ||

### **Description:**

Jealousy is when we feel upset because we want what someone else has or wish we were in their place.

### **Understanding It:**

It's okay to feel jealous, but it's important to handle these feelings without letting them control us.

### **Questions:**

What do you feel jealous of, and what about it makes you feel this way?

- Understanding the root of your jealousy can help you address it more effectively.

How does jealousy make you feel about yourself and others?

- Reflect on the impact of jealousy on your self-esteem and relationships.

How have you handled jealousy in the past?

- It is normal to feel jealous sometimes.

What are some different ways to handle jealousy in the future?

- Think about strategies for managing jealousy.

What are you grateful for?

- Reflecting on things you're thankful for is a great way to overcome jealousy.

What can you learn from jealousy?

- Think about how understanding jealousy can help you grow.

### **Growth Tips:**

Talk about your feelings and why you feel jealous.

Focus on your own strengths and achievements.

Set personal goals and work towards them.

## **SELF-ESTEEM ||**

### **Description:**

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves and our own worth.

### **Understanding It:**

Having good self-esteem means you believe in yourself and your abilities.

**Questions:**

What are some things you like about yourself?

- Reflect on your positive qualities and achievements.

How do you feel about yourself when you accomplish something?

- Consider how achievements impact your self-esteem.

What can you do to build and keep a positive self-image?

- Think about actions and thoughts that help boost your self-esteem.

What influences are affecting your Self-Esteem? Are they negative or positive?

- Think about the things you watch, listen to or even who you hang out with. Are they helping you feel better about yourself?

What does your self-talk sound like?

- Practicing positive self-talk is a choice you can make to help build your self-esteem.

**Growth Tips:**

Make a list of things you're good at and proud of.

Celebrate your successes, no matter how small.

Challenge negative thoughts by thinking of positive things about yourself.

**BULLYING ||****Description:**

Bullying is when someone repeatedly hurts or picks on another person on purpose.

**Understanding It:**

It's important to stand up against bullying and support those who are being bullied.

**Questions:**

Have you ever experienced bullying, or have you ever bullied others before? How did it make you feel?

- Reflect on your experiences and emotions related to bullying.

What do you think is the right way to stand up to bullying or help someone being bullied?

- Consider appropriate and effective responses to bullying situations.

How can you support friends or classmates who might be dealing with bullying?

- Think about ways you can be an ally and support those affected by bullying.

Have you ever felt angry at someone for mistreating another person?

- You have a high sense of justice! Sometimes anger might come up when we see something bad happen to someone we care about. This is a great opportunity to help the person being mistreated but also be curious about why the other person is bullying.

What do you think would cause someone to be a bully?

- Understanding why someone is being a bully might change how you treat them.

How can showing empathy help a bully?

- Consider that a bully could be hurt inside and might need kindness.

**Growth Tips:**

Report bullying to a trusted adult.

Be a friend and stand up for others who are being bullied.

Learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully.

# Curriculum Supplies & Resources

## Beginner Supplies

### BOOKS

- Emotion Detective
- Little Spot of Anger
- Little Spot of Sadness
- Little Spot of Courage
- Little Spot of Happiness
- Little Spot of Thankfulness
- Little Spot of Love
- Clovis Keeps His Cool
- When Sadness Is at Your Door
- A Shelter for Sadness
- The What If's
- Maybe
- Trying
- The Lion Inside
- Grow Happy
- The Serious Goose
- I Am Love
- Helpful Ninja
- It's Mine
- What Should Danny Do
- Peanut Butter and Jellyous
- Wally & Freya

- Jealous Ninja

## **GAMES**

- **Friendship Ball**

*Supplies: Friendship Question Ball*

- **Mad Dragon**
- **Mystery Bag**

*Supplies: Mystery Bag, Assorted Items for Bag*

- **Find Your Happiness**

*Supplies: Smiley Face Stress Balls*

- **Totem**
- **Bingo**

*Supplies: Printouts, bingo chips*

- **Tissue Dance**

*Supplies: Tissues, something to play school appropriate music*

## **CRAFT**

- **Finger Puppets**

*Supplies: Finger Puppets printout, Markers, Glue, Popsicle Sticks*

- **Sensory Bottles**

*Supplies: Plastic Bottles, Liquid Activator, Food Coloring, Glitter, Beads, Super Glue, Stickers (to decorate bottles)*

- **Clouds of Sadness**

*Supplies: Clouds of Sadness printout, Cotton Balls, Glue, Markers*

- **Sadness Flashcards**

*Supplies: Index Cards, Markers*

- **Positive Thoughts Chain**

*Supplies: Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Glue Dots*

- **Dandelion Breathing Tool**

*Supplies: Paint Chip Circles, Feathers, Glue, Scissors, Popsicle Sticks*

- **Lion and Mouse Sticks**

*Supplies: Lion and Mouse printout, Markers, Popsicle Sticks, Glue*

- **Happiness Flowers**

*Supplies: Large Flower Cut Outs, Markers, Popsicle Sticks, Glue*

- **Kindness Jars**

*Supplies: Paper, Markers, To-Go Soup Containers, Stickers*

- **Friendship Bracelets**

*Supplies: Pipe Cleaners, Bead*

## **PRINTOUTS**

- Anger Bingo
- Anger Monster
- Finger Puppets
- A Home for Sadness
- Clouds of Sadness
- Fear Unscripted
- Lion and Mouse
- Three Things That Make Me Happy
- My What If
- Thank You Cards
- Jealousy Tree

## **Intermediate Supplies**

### **BOOKS**

- Emotion Detective
- Clovis Keeps His Cool
- When Sadness Is at Your Door
- The What If's
- Maybe
- Trying
- The Lion Inside
- The Serious Goose
- I Am Love
- It's Mine
- What Should Danny Do
- Peanut Butter and Jellyous
- Wally & Freya
- Confession of a Former Bully
- Millie B. Fierce
- Who You Were Made to Be
- After The Fall

## **GAMES**

- Feeling Flashcards
- Anger Defuser
- Anger Question Ball
- Friendship Ball
- Mad Dragon
- Totem
- Mindfulness Matters
- Anchor Your Stress

- Little Box of Happiness Magnets
- We're Not Really Strangers Kid's Edition
- Mountain of Emotions Social Skills Board Game
- Social Skills Board Game: Mountain of Emotions
- Find Your Happiness

*Supplies: Smiley Face Stress Balls*

- **Totika**

*Supplies: Totika, Self-Esteem Edition Question Cards*

- **Talk Show**

*Supplies: Printed Talk Show Question Cards*

- **Mystery Bag**

*Supplies: Mystery Bag, random items to put in bag*

- **Simon Says**

*Supplies: Plastic Cup*

## **CRAFTS**

- **Positive Thoughts Chain**

*Supplies: Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Glue Dots*

- **Kindness Jars**

*Supplies: Paper, Markers, To-Go Soup Containers, Stickers*

- **Paper Airplanes**

*Supplies: Paper, Markers*

- **Dandelion Breathing Tool**

*Supplies: Feathers, Cardboard Discs, Popsicle Sticks, Glue*

## **PRINTOUTS**

- Anger Monster
- Driver's Seat

- Sadness Unscripted
- Fear Unscripted
- Joy Unscripted
- My What If
- Thank You Cards
- Jealousy Tree
- 3 Things I Like About Myself
- Negative to Positive Statements

## Advanced Supplies

### BOOKS

- Emotion Detective
- Confessions of a Former Bully

### GAMES

- **We're Not Really Strangers Kid's Edition**
- **Anger Defuser**
- **Mad Dragon**
- **Egg Balance**

*Supplies: Plastic Spoons, Plastic Eggs*

- **Dominos**
- **Mystery Bag**

*Supplies: Mystery Bag, random items to put in bag*

- **Joy Scavenger Hunt**

*Supplies: Smiley Face Stress Balls*

- **Security Guard and the Thieves**

*Supplies: ONE Smiley Face Stress Ball*

- **Totika**

*Supplies: Totika, Self-Esteem Edition Question Cards*

- **The Empathy Game**
- **Bingo**

*Supplies: Printouts, Bingo Chips*

## **CRAFTS**

- **Positive Thoughts Chain**

*Supplies: Construction Paper, Scissors, Markers, Glue Dots*

## **PRINTOUTS**

- Anger Bingo
- Anger Unscripted
- Sadness Unscripted
- Bullying Unscripted
- Talk Show Cards
- What's Behind the Door
- Anxiety's Comfy Corner
- Smile Surveillance
- Jealousy Tree
- Jealousy Bingo
- Negative to Positive Statements



# Reward System

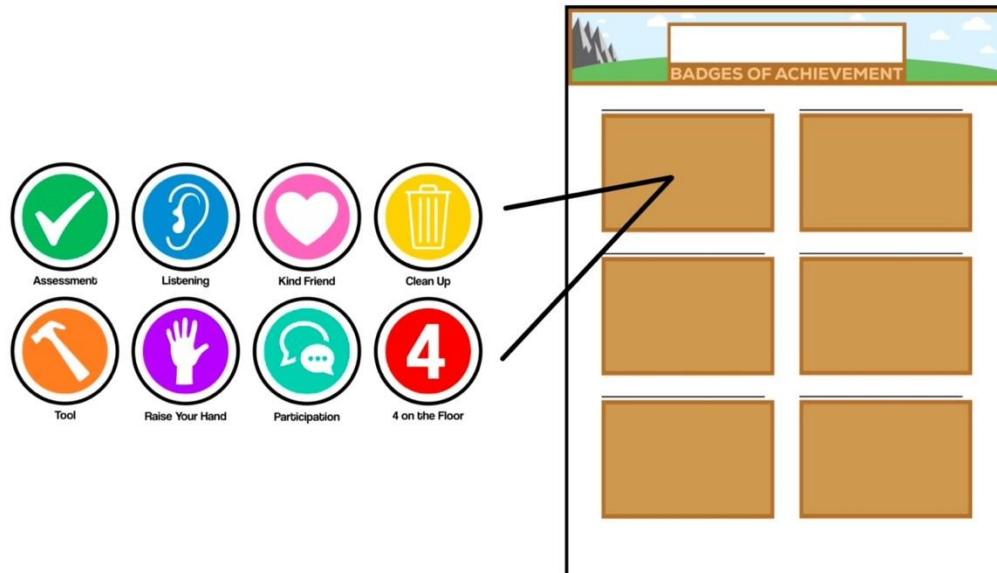
## Introducing Our Exciting Group Reward System!

We're thrilled to announce a new way to celebrate achievements and encourage positive behavior in our classroom! Our Group Reward System is designed to recognize both individual and group efforts with a fun and interactive approach.

### Here's How It Works:




1. **Individual Badges:** Each coach will have a reward system printout. Each printout will have a space for the group name and slot for each student. Badge stickers will be placed under the student section to earn throughout the semester. The badges correspond to different categories of positive behavior and accomplishments:
  - **4 on the Floor:** Showing excellent posture and readiness.
  - **Completed Assessment:** Finished both self-assessments.
  - **Helped Clean Up:** Helped clean without being asked.
  - **Kind Friend:** Showing kindness and respect towards other students.
  - **Listening:** Paying attention and following directions.
  - **Participation:** Actively engaging in class activities and discussions.
  - **Raised Your Hand:** Showing initiative and respect by raising your hand before speaking.
  - **Used a Tool Badge:** showcasing a tool that they have learned in a group.

## Individual Badges



2. Students who fill their badge system by end of the semester will earn a special fun prize! This encourages them to engage in positive behaviors and celebrate their efforts and achievements.
  
3. **Group Reward System:** In addition to individual recognition, we will also have a group reward system. As a class, students will work together to earn group rewards. These are recognized and awarded for collective achievements and efforts, such as:
  - **Teamwork:** Successfully completing a group project or task.
  - **Group Clean-Up:** Working together to keep the classroom organized.
  - **Class Participation:** Engaging as a group in discussions and activities.
  
4. Once the group fills up the badges, they will be rewarded with a fun group activity or special treat. This system promotes collaboration, collective responsibility, and team spirit.

## Group Badges

GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS			
	ATTENDANCE		
	TEAMWORK		
	WALKING FEET		

### Why This System?

Our Group Reward System aims to:

- Foster a positive and supportive classroom environment.
- Encourage students to take pride in their individual and group achievements.
- Reinforce important behaviors and skills.
- **Make** learning and classroom participation enjoyable and rewarding.

# Movements

## **STRETCHING |**

Stretching as body movement. Play “Simon Says” with you as the leader. Touch your toes, stretch your arms, as a few examples. Be creative in getting the students to stretch while staying in their own spaces.

## **SLOW STRETCHING |**

Walk the kids through slow stretches using their arms, legs, neck, and ankles. Remind them to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. Slow and steady. Breathing out for a deeper stretch.

## **SIMON SAYS |**

A quick game of “Simon Says”. Let one of the students lead if you feel out the time, group attention, mood, energy, and obedience level would be ok for a quick student-lead game. Otherwise, you are officially Simon for the next few minutes.

Note: Use the leader role as reward for someone who has stood out as being respectful and/or has contributed to the group's conversation.

If you're Simon today, guide them through 5-6 movements such as jumping jacks, squats, toe raises, self-hugs, touching the sky. Etc.

## **FROZEN FEET DANCE |**

Let's have a frozen feet dance party! The goal is to have everyone glue their feet to the ground. (For obvious reasons this helps keep things from getting too crazy and or hurting each other) and show you their best dance moves while keeping their feet frozen.

## **BIG STRETCHES |**

Use whole-body stretches - arms, legs, neck, back, ankles, wrists, etc. Move through a quick series of movements with the students and allow for a few minutes of whole-body movements.

## **HAND TRACING |**

A hand tracing breathing exercise! Using your left hand and right pointer finger, trace your left finger's outline super slow, matching your breath to the movements of your finger as your finger traces up-breath in, as your finger runs down-breathe out. Again, this movement is super slow breathing - breathing slowly, deep breaths as well as long breaths. This would be an example of a good habit when stressed.

### **1-2-3-4 EXERCISE |**

- 1- Hug Yourself
- 2 - Big Arm Circles
- 3 - Elbow Behind Head (left and right)
- 4 - Arms Across the Body Stretch (left and right)

### **CHAIR POSE |**

Let's try the "Chair Pose"! (Google for example). How deep can you get in this pose? Can you feel your leg muscles? How straight are your arms? What does this pose/stretch feel like?

### **BELLY BREATHING |**

Belly breathing for kids is a simple and effective starting point. The focus is on breathing deeply through the belly (instead of a shallow chest breath).

Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your upper chest.

Take a deep breath in through your nose, filling your lungs.

Watch your belly expand as your bottom hand rises.

Breathe out slowly through your mouth as your bottom hand lowers back down.

### **COUNT TO FIVE |**

Hold up your hand. Breathe slowly in through your nose to the count of five, as you trace the fingers from your thumb to your pinky finger. Breathe slowly out through your mouth counting down as you trace the fingers from your pinky to your thumb.

**COSMIC KIDS' YOGA |**

If your classroom has access to a screen, Wi-Fi, and space we encourage you to find time to use Cosmic Kids Yoga especially for 3rd-4th grade.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02E1468SdHg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM8NjfCfOg0>

**GUIDED MEDITATION BY GO NOODLE |**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTzXFPh6CPI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp7B7CEqRYk>