



SOURCES
OF STRENGTH



ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

3RD-6TH GRADE

SAMPLE

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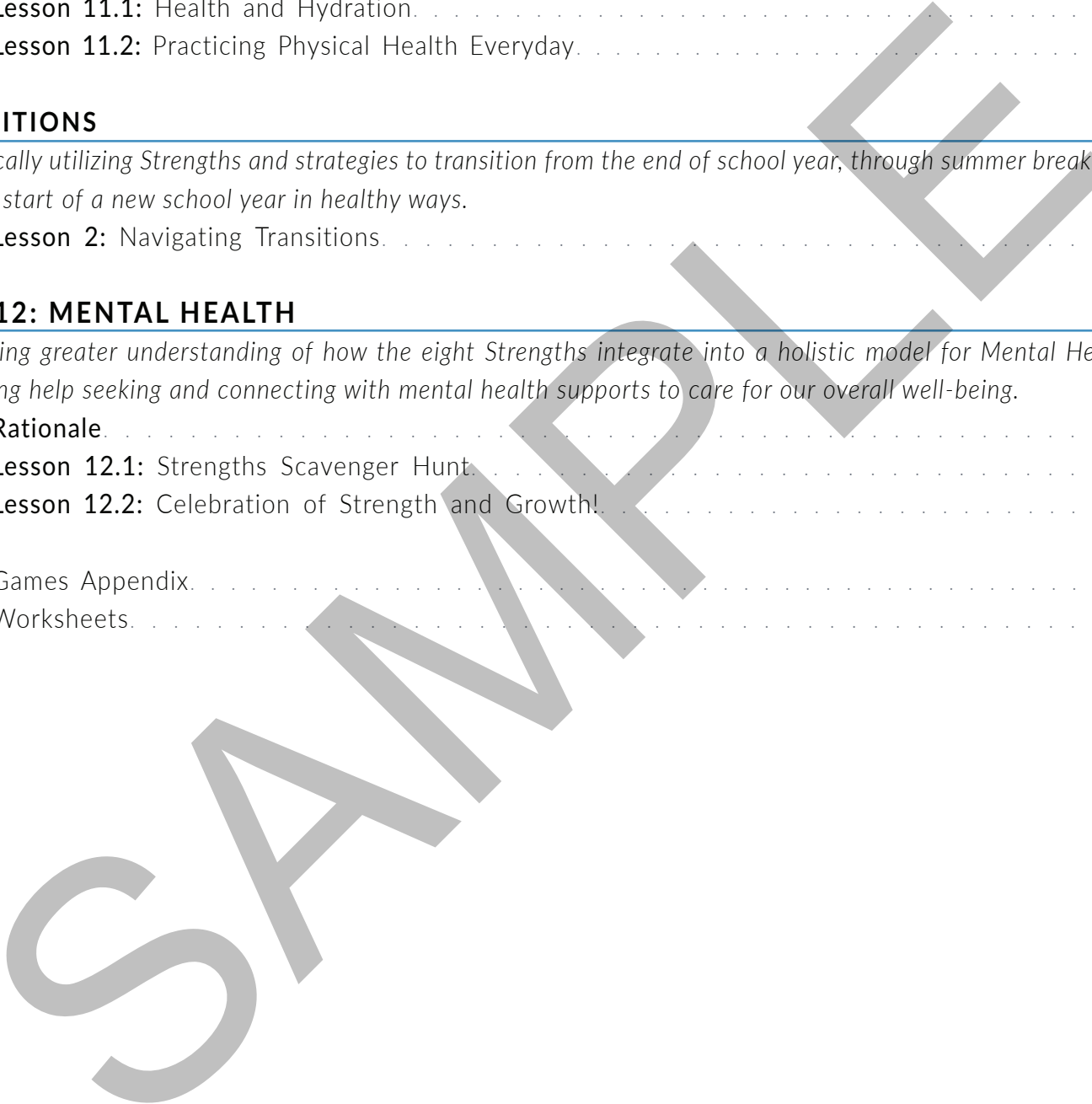
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES OF STRENGTH ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

The work of prevention is not done solely through focusing on risk factors, warning signs, and intervention. Rather involves discovering, teaching and celebrating resilience, help-seeking, creating connections, cultivating Strength, and belonging.

Sources of Strength is an evidence-based, upstream prevention program that employs a Strength-based wellness approach to improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. This program has been implemented within a variety of settings, cultures, and age groups across the country and internationally.

Our Elementary Curriculum continues our commitment to moving further upstream, increasing health and wellness and decreasing negative downstream outcomes through empowering individuals and communities full of connection, belonging, and resilience.

As Sources of Strength works to give students tools to develop their Strength, resilience, and help-seeking behaviors, we feel it is of utmost importance to ensure we are using evidence-based practices to inspire meaningful outcomes. Below are some core components of how and why we do what we do.

Evidence-Based: The Sources of Strength secondary school model has become one of the nation's most rigorously evaluated and widely disseminated suicide prevention programs. The program has shown outcomes in increasing healthy coping, help-seeking, connection and trust toward adults, and utilization of protective factors associated with reduced risk for suicide, substance misuse, and violence. The elementary program is evidence-informed by these outcomes and will undergo rigorous randomized control trials to establish an elementary specific evidence-base.

Upstream: Our primary focus is to move upstream in the prevention field in order to build resiliency and wellness. We strive to create a healthy culture around early help-seeking, and promote internalized Strengths at the individual and community levels to prevent the onset of crisis and help people live healthy, thriving lives.

Strength-Based: Sources of Strength cultivates the identification, development, and utilization of eight protective factors, or Strengths. These protective factors are Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, Healthy Activities, Generosity, Spirituality, Physical Health, and Mental Health. Ultimately, these eight Strengths can empower individuals and communities to lean into their own sense of resilience in order to promote health and wellness in themselves and others.

Curriculum Structure

Sources of Strength Elementary Curriculum is comprised of 12 units containing several lessons that build upon the unit topic. The lessons can be implemented within grades three through five. Lessons are designed to be approximately 30 minutes in length, and typically facilitated one to two times per week. The lessons can be led by a classroom teacher, social-emotional learning specialist, school mental health professional, or classroom paraprofessional. The classroom teacher is strongly encouraged to participate in lessons for greater integration and application of concepts in the classroom.

Curriculum Components

It is a driving principle of Sources of Strength to incorporate student voice and active engagement with our teaching practices. We believe that the deepest learning occurs when we approach the subject matter from a positive mindset, and bring awareness to our Strengths while also incorporating interactive learning components. This helps people of all ages fully internalize and apply the concepts to their own lives. Each unit includes the following core elements:

- **Instructor Participation** is written into the curriculum on every level. Social-emotional learning is a lifelong

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES OF STRENGTH ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

process and is applicable for both students and adults. As the instructor, you are invited to share authentically and participate throughout the curriculum. If the instructor is not a classroom teacher, we strongly encourage you to invite them to participate in the lessons. The classroom teacher will be able to provide continuity and application of the skills and concepts from the lessons throughout the school day. Social-emotional learning happens everyday, all the time, when young people see these skills modeled by the adults in their lives, they continue to internalize healthy strategies for navigating life's ups and downs. This is co-regulation.

Co-regulation is when an adult with a trusting relationship comes alongside, and models healthy emotional regulation strategies to help young people name, understand, and navigate their emotions and actions. These skills are not taught once, but rather modeled and supported regularly, leading to understanding and integration. Just as we learn any skill, practice leads to growth and coaching is the key. Co-regulation looks like being a thermostat rather than a thermometer.

- **Active Learning** is a core component of the Sources of Strength curriculum. We believe that the process is as important as the content. How we engage and are engaged matters. It is important that we understand that games aren't just games. Movement and laughter promote connection, light up critical learning centers in the brain, and help us engage with and internalize information in lasting ways.
- **Talking Circles** facilitate a collaborative sharing time that fosters connection and empathy, empowers student voice, and promotes equity. Every voice has power and deserves to be heard. Talking Circles give students an opportunity to learn from each other while practicing authentic sharing and active listening. This sharing facilitates pro-social conversations and positive social norming between peers. Centering the student voice empowers them to identify and share their own Strengths, as well as learn to empathize while hearing how Strengths show up in others.

There are three types of sharing that happen in Talking Circles: full Circle Share, pair share, and popcorn share. During full Circle Share, every student will have an opportunity to speak and be heard. Pair share allows students to respond and share with a partner or neighbor while sitting in the circle. Popcorn share allows for a few answers or responses to be shared with the large group.

During a full Circle Share, it is OK for a student to pass. It can take time for everyone to feel comfortable and safe sharing with the whole group. Sometimes, students simply need more processing time and are willing to share at the end when given the opportunity. We recommend you use a Talking Piece as it can slow the pace of conversation and encourage thoughtful and reflective interactions. Suggested Talking Pieces could include a smooth stone, seashell, feather, stuffed animal, stress ball, or anything of significance for your class.

There are many opportunities to use the Talking Circle throughout your academic curriculum, especially if you feel that a limited number of voices are being heard in class dialogue. Also, when a class wide situation or conflict arises, the Talking Circle can be used to foster empathy and active listening while sharing possible ways to navigate the situation. Restorative Circle practices are used in classrooms around the globe and more information can be found online.

- **Guided reflection** is practiced in various forms throughout the curriculum. This practice is not intended solely for the students, but also for the instructors/teachers as it increases self-awareness and active engagement. Sources of Strength can serve as a mirror in one's life to reflect and explore the resources and assets that you and your community already possess. Exercises include breathing, sensory, and mindfulness activities that support self-regulation and self-awareness. Reflective practice has huge benefits in increasing self-awareness, which is a key component of emotional intelligence and in developing a better understanding of others.

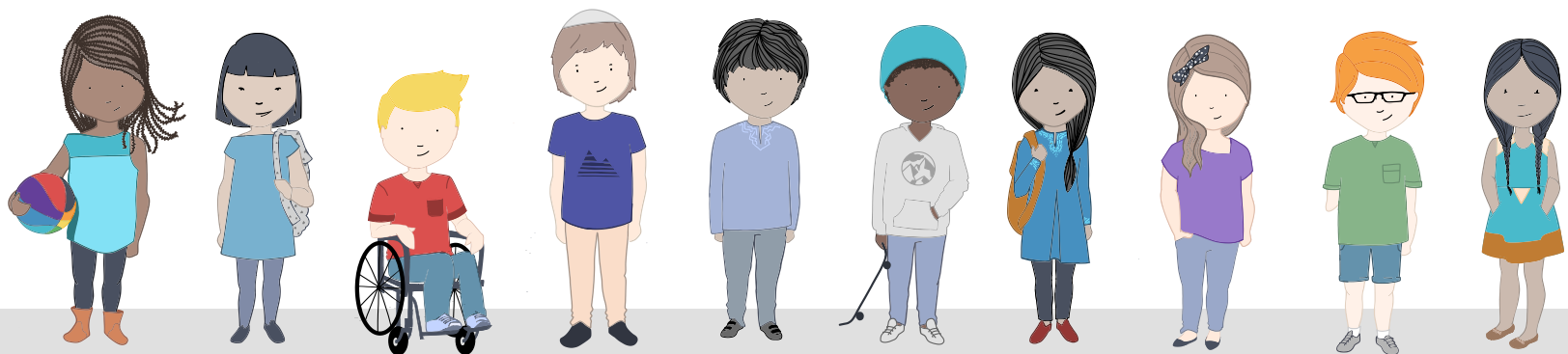
INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES OF STRENGTH ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

Reflective practice can also help you to develop creative thinking skills and encourage active engagement in work processes.

Reflection questions also appear at the end of each lesson inviting instructors to pause and reflect on the growth of their students and themselves and provide lesson feedback to Sources of Strength.

- **Celebrations of Growth** are an integral part of each unit providing opportunities for students and staff to apply and celebrate a growth mindset in themselves and others. The focus of these celebrations is centered on the process of growth and development of personal and collective resilience. In the academic setting, the focus tends to center on outcomes such as grades, attendance, behavior, etc. In the Sources of Strength curriculum, we are intentionally focusing on celebrating the process of students applying Strengths and strategies to their everyday lives. The class BrainTree is the focal point for these celebrations as we recognize each and every student for their process of growth and unique contributions of Strength to the class. Noticing and celebrating everyone in the class builds stronger connections, belonging, and purpose, supporting the growth of safer, more resilient communities. The BrainTree wall display will have Leaves added to it as a visual representation of your class growth throughout the year.
- **Everyday Applications** are written into various lessons throughout the curriculum. These applications highlight and provide touch points for instructors and classroom teachers to integrate the concepts being learned into everyday interactions, transitions, and relationships in the classroom. Social-emotional learning happens all day, every day. When practiced and applied intentionally it has an incredible impact on the wellbeing, safety, and academic engagement for students and adults alike.
- **The Social-Emotional Focus** section of each unit aligns with the core social-emotional learning competencies in the model developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). This curriculum integrates well with many of the practices and programs that schools are already using, such as Restorative Practices, Mindfulness, RTI, MTSS, PBIS, etc.

At Sources of Strength, we wholeheartedly believe in the Hope, Help, and Strength each individual can cultivate in themselves and others. This is as relevant to young children as it is to adolescents and adults. With this Elementary Curriculum, our goal is to help students better understand themselves, their Strengths, and their power to positively influence their world. We are honored to partner with you in empowering a well world!



SOURCES OF STRENGTH WHEEL



FAMILY SUPPORT

Family Support, whether immediate, extended, or family of choice, are the people who support, nurture, and care for us.

POSITIVE FRIENDS

Positive Friends lift us up and make us laugh. They are honest with us, and are there for us when we need them.

MENTORS

Mentors are people who are cheering for us in life. They listen when we need it, and help us learn new things and navigate life's ups and downs.

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

Healthy Activities, whether social, physical, or mental, help us regulate our emotions in healthy ways and create opportunities for connection and growth.

GENEROSITY

Generosity can look a lot of different ways. Acts of kindness towards others and ourselves both big and small, can positively impact how we feel about ourselves.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality includes many people, places, and practices that can lift our spirit and connect us to something bigger than ourselves.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

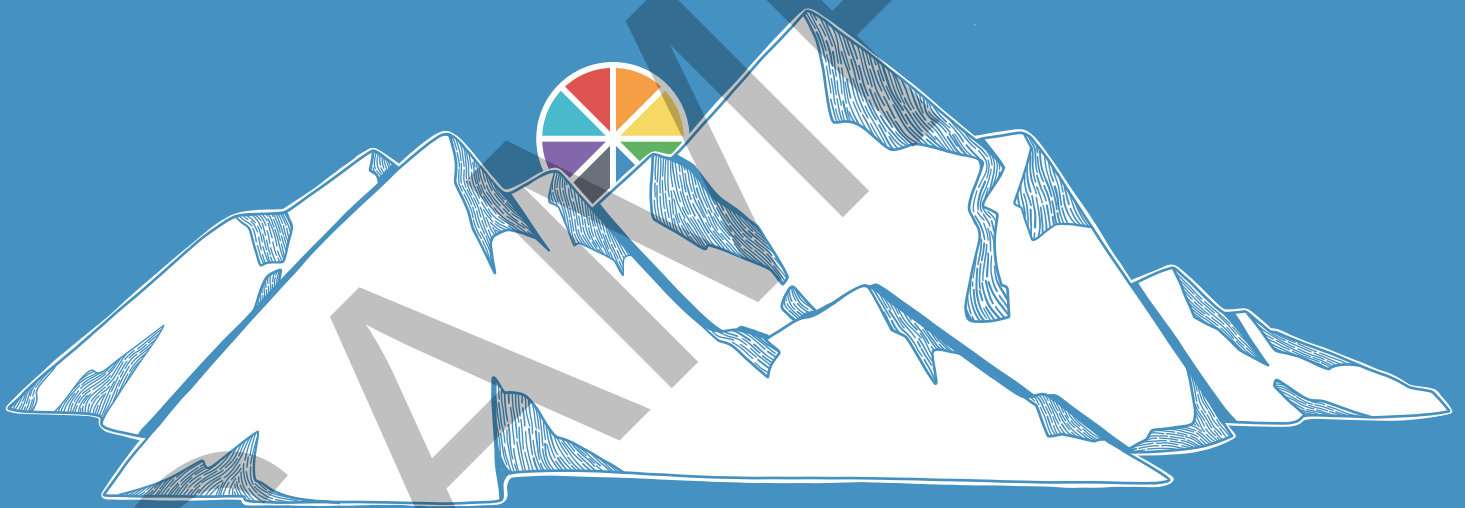
Physical Health includes the way we care for our bodies on a regular basis, as well as when we are hurt or sick and need to seek medical access.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health is not the absence of illness, but rather the presence and practice of the Strengths and strategies that contribute to our wellbeing. This includes connecting to Trusted Adults and mental health professionals for support.

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH



Lesson 1.1: Discovering and Identifying Our Strength **7**

Lesson 1.2: Stories of Strength **11**

Lesson 1.3: Continued Stories of Strength **16**

Worksheets **170**

Lesson Spotlight

Sharing our personal stories of Strength and resilience allows us to explore the meaning of the Strengths on the Sources of Strength wheel

Materials

- Sources of Strength wheel, one per student (page 15 & 170)
- Personal Sources of Strength Wheel Worksheet, one per student (page 171)
- Strength Posters from Lesson 1.1
- Norms poster from Lesson 1.1

Preparation

- Display Strength Posters from Lesson 1.1 or make available for reference
- Make copies of the Personal Sources of Strength Wheel Worksheet, one per student (page 171)
- Fill out a Personal Strengths wheel as an example for the group

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social-Awareness

Instructor Overview

This lesson introduces the Sources of Strength wheel. We will define Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, and Healthy Activities, and then invite students to share personal stories of these Strengths in their lives. Students will fill out their own personal Strength wheel drawing connections to their group posters from Lesson 1.1 and the specific Strengths on the Wheel. As students share their stories, draw out more than one-word answers by prompting them to share what or why that Strength is meaningful for them. Get a variety of students from diverse backgrounds to share.

We will continue to collaborate on the development of class norms to be used throughout the Sources of Strength curriculum. This process allows for student voice in the development of class norms. While our goal is consensus, we recognize that this can be a challenge. The important thing is to follow up and hear from anyone who does not agree with the norm. They may have meaningful input that would make the norm better for everyone.

Strengths Wheel Talking Circle (15-20 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and have them bring a writing utensil. Reference the Strengths Posters the groups created in the previous lesson.

“Remember in our last lesson we drew what gives us Strength on our posters. Take a look at our posters.” As you ask the following questions, get a show of hands from students. **“Who drew pictures of your family? Who drew pictures of your friends? Who drew activities or things that you enjoy?”**

Hold up the Sources of Strength wheel for everyone to see. **“This is the Sources of Strength wheel. You’ll notice that many of the things you wrote on your posters are a part of the Wheel. The Sources of Strength wheel is made up of eight Strengths that help us be healthy and navigate life’s ups and downs.”** Pass out copies of the Personal Strengths wheel.

“We’re going to talk about the first four Strengths on the Wheel today. After we hear a few stories for each

Strength, we are going to fill in our own Strengths wheel with examples from our own lives.”

The curriculum briefly explains each Strength and asks for a couple of examples from students via popcorn sharing about what these Strengths look like in their lives. Try and get a variety of students from diverse backgrounds to share. If the students give one-word or short answers, try draw out an explanation as to how that is a Strength for them by asking follow-up questions. Each time you ask students a poll or survey-style question, raise your own hand to non-verbally model for students to raise their hands.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Students are generally excited to share during this portion of the lesson, however it is scripted, to be able to cover four Strengths of the Wheel in 15 minutes.

INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH - LESSON 1.2

Stories of Strength

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

If you have flexibility in your lesson length, you can allow more students to share or create other times during the school day where students can share.

Family Support

"The first Strength on the Wheel we'll talk about is Family Support. A lot of you put family members on the posters from the last lesson, and now, we are going to take a moment to share about those people and how they show up as Strengths in our lives.

"Who is close to their grandma or grandpa?" Get one or two popcorn answers and have them briefly share about their grandparents, what they are like, and why they feel close to them. If students need more thinking time, you can share an example of your own.

"Is anyone close to a brother or sister?" Get a show of hands. "Cousins or aunts or uncles?" Get a show of hands. "What about a parent?" Get one answer and ask the student to share what makes their parent a Strength for them.

"Who has people that aren't related to you, but still feel like family? We call these people our chosen family, and they can be really special and protective for us. They might be your best friend's parents, a neighbor, or someone else who shows up as family in your life." Get one or two answers from the group.

"Now, take one minute and draw or write down some of the people who show up as Family Support for you in that section of your Personal Sources of Strength wheel." Hold up your own example of the Wheel for students to see.

Positive Friends

"The next Strength is Positive Friends. Positive Friends lift us up and make us laugh. They are honest with us and are there for us when we need them. Turn to a neighbor and pair share about a friend who has helped or encouraged you." It is OK if there are groups of three. Keep an eye out for anyone that does not pair up with a partner, and connect them to a group. Give students one

minute to pair share.

"What are some things that make a person a Positive Friend?" Get a few popcorn answers naming some of the characteristics of a Positive Friend (good listener, kind, shares, cheers me up, etc.).

"We're going to talk about this more throughout the year. We want to practice these characteristics so that we can be Positive Friends for one another.

"Now, take one minute and draw or write down some of the people who show up as Positive Friends for you, or some of the characteristics you appreciate in a Positive Friend."

Mentors

"Next is Mentors. A Mentor is someone older who is cheering for us in life. Mentors listen when we need it, help us learn new things, and can help us with life's ups and downs. They help us to be the best version of ourselves. Who has a teacher, coach, parent, sibling, cousin, or an older student who encourages you and cares about you?" Get two stories from the group.

"Now, take one minute and draw or write down some of the people who show up as Mentors for you."

Healthy Activities

"The next Strength is Healthy Activities. You all had a lot of different types of Healthy Activities on your Strength Posters from our last lesson."

Get a show of hands for the following questions.

- "Who likes sports?"
- "Who likes outdoor activities, like taking walks, fishing, or swimming?"
- "Who loves to read or write?"
- "Does anyone here like playing video games or building with Legos?"
- "Who likes drawing, painting, or coloring?"
- "Who likes to play, listen, or sing along to music?"
- "Who likes to spend time with their pets?"
- "Who likes to cook or bake?"

"We just raised our hands for so many different kinds of activities. What do these activities do for us? What

makes them a Healthy Activity?" Get a few popcorn answers (they are fun, they calm me down, I get to be with my Positive Friends, they help me get my energy out, it is something I am good at, etc.).

"Now, turn to a neighbor, and pair share what some of your go-to Healthy Activities are and what they do for you." Give students one minute to pair share.

"No matter what Healthy Activities you choose, this is a Strength that can help us navigate our feelings and emotions. Healthy Activities can calm us down if we're too fired up, they can pump us up when we're feeling too down, and they can make us feel happy and strong.

"Now, take one minute, and draw or write down some of your Healthy Activities. The Strengths of Family Support, Positive Friends, Mentors, and Healthy Activities can be powerful, helping us grow stronger and healthier both inside and out. We'll talk about the other four Strengths in our next lesson. Thanks for sharing how these Strengths show up in your lives."

Rock, Paper, Scissors Game (3-4 min)

This Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament is single-elimination, rather than best two out of three. The winner will go on to the next round and the loser will become the winner's cheering section. If the pair ties, then they will continue until a winner is determined. The winner will then raise their hand to find and face off with another winner. Eventually, there will be two finalists, each having roughly half of the room cheering behind them.

ACCOMMODATION

This is a loud, energetic game. If you have any students who have sensory needs, or if you are worried about being too loud for nearby classrooms, you can instruct students to cheer silently by using their hand movements and facial expressions.

"OK, We've been sitting and talking for a while. Let's play a game to energize our bodies. We're going to have a Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament. This is single elimination, not best out of three. For this tournament, we are going to add in a little twist. If you lose, you will

stand behind the person who won and cheer for them. If the person you are cheering for loses, your whole group stands behind the person they lost to and now cheers for them. This will continue until we have two finalists left with about half the room cheering for each of them."

Get two students to demonstrate how to play the game (clarify if players throw their hands on "scissors" or "shoot"). Remind the winner to put their hand up in the air and quickly find a new opponent to face off with. If the pair ties, have them continue until there is a winner.

Talking Circle Norms (6 min)

Invite the students back to the Talking Circle after the game. "Thank you all for the ways that you have been respectful as we've listened to each other's stories today."

The purpose of this next activity is to collaboratively agree on two more Talking Circle norms. See examples below of potential norms.

"Last time we talked about the norm of active listening where we focus our attention on the speaker and listen to understand. Let's take some time to think about some other norms that we could have in place that will help everyone feel seen, heard, and respected.

"What kinds of things can others do and say to help you feel seen, heard, and respected?" Get a few popcorn answers. Capture student responses on the whiteboard (don't interrupt, look at me, ask about my perspective, don't share my story without my permission, etc.).

"What kinds of things can we do and say to help others feel seen, heard, and respected?" Get a few popcorn answers. Continue to capture student responses on the whiteboard (speak from your own perspective, allow others time to share by not talking too much, take responsibility for my words or actions, speak for myself not for others, don't interrupt, etc.).

"Are any of these ideas similar and we can combine into one statement?" Highlight the ideas that are similar and can be combined and put into a positive action statement.

For example:

- "Listen actively" rather than "don't interrupt"

INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH - LESSON 1.2

Stories of Strength

- “Allow equal sharing for everyone” rather than “don’t hog the speaking time”
- “Respect others’ ideas” rather than “don’t be mean”

Once two norms have been identified and phrased as a positive action statements, allow students to vote for the norms using a thumbs up vote. Take note of any students that don’t give a thumbs up, and make a point to connect with them later and hear more about what they are feeling. Add the two norms to the Norms Poster from Lesson 1.1.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

We are looking for as close to class consensus as possible.

“Thank you for working together on the norms and for sharing your powerful stories of Strength today.”

REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on this lesson. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or a journal.

What was a highlight from this lesson?

What would you do differently the next time you teach this lesson?

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or in your class during this lesson?

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself during the lesson?

Is there a story or experience from this lesson that you’d like to capture or remember?

Other thoughts or reflections?

We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit www.sourcesofstrength.org/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!



UNIT 2

BRAIN AND BODY SCIENCE



Rationale 21

Lesson 2.1: Brain and Body Connections 22

Lesson 2.2: Growing Balanced BrainTrees 26

Lesson 2.3: Stuck and Unstuck 32

Lesson 2.4: Strengthening our Branches and Leaves 36

Worksheets 172

Understanding how our brain works is a core component in better understanding and regulating our emotions and behaviors. Our brains are not static, but rather continue to develop, heal, rewire, and grow throughout our lives. The expanding field of Neuroscience continues to reveal ways to increase agency in our lives in how we respond to the world around us. When students understand the relationship between their brain and body, they are empowered to move toward Strength and resilience and to grow in healthy ways.

This unit focuses on three primary areas of the brain using the metaphor of the BrainTree: the Brainstem (Roots), the Limbic System (Trunk), and the Frontal Lobe (Branches and Leaves). Each of these areas of the brain has a distinct role in our day-to-day functioning physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. Our brains are continually growing with the different parts working together to support a healthy and balanced BrainTree. The more these areas of the brain can develop and increase communication with each other, the better we are able to care for our physical needs, navigate emotions, learn, grow, and make healthy decisions throughout our lives.

In education, the focus is often on developing critical thinking skills, a function of the Frontal Lobe (Branches and Leaves). While these skills are important in setting students up for success, there is a hierarchy of needs within the brain. The Brainstem (Roots) provides information related to our basic needs, which if unmet, inhibits our ability to learn new skills, absorb new information, and make informed decisions. The Limbic System (Trunk) houses our emotions and memories, which if continually activated, can override our ability to access the Frontal Lobe (Branches and Leaves). Healthy Roots and a healthy Trunk are foundational for our Branches and Leaves to grow and flourish.

When the parts of our brain do not work in harmony, our BrainTree can become lopsided. When a person's Roots are unmet due to basic needs (lack of safety, food insecurity, dehydration, not being able to use a restroom, lack of shelter, etc.), they can become overactive. Similarly, when a person's Trunk is continually activated by big emotions (fear, anxiety, sadness, etc.), the Trunk can become oversized. This is also true of the Branches and Leaves; when a person focuses solely on learning and performance while neglecting the Roots and Trunk, the tree can become lopsided and lack the Strength to stand when the storms of life come. Having a healthy and balanced BrainTree helps us to be more resilient, and possess the skills to navigate our emotions and needs when difficult things happen. Focusing and engaging in higher-level thinking like reading and math is far more accessible with a balanced BrainTree.

When a person feels overwhelmed, threatened, or is in a heightened state of stress, the Fight-Flight-Freeze responses can be activated in the brain. These responses are important in certain survival-oriented situations. However, these responses can also become overactive, causing a person to become stuck in a cycle of fear or stress. In the classroom, this activation may manifest in different ways; Fight can turn into a power struggle, Flight may look like a student leaving the room or not coming to school, and Freeze could look like a student not getting a pencil out for a test or being unable to remember what they have learned. Caring relationships with Trusted Adults who model and practice regulation skills with students can be one of the most powerful tools in integrating the different parts of their brains to foster health and wellbeing.

BRAIN AND BODY SCIENCE - LESSON 2.3

Stuck and Unstuck

Lesson Spotlight

Using the Strengths on our Sources of Strength wheel can help us get unstuck when we experience Fight-Flight-Freeze and move through stress in healthy ways.

Materials

- BrainTree Loops image (page 33)
- Printed visuals of the three Lopsided Trees from Lesson 2.2 (page 174-176)

Preparation

- Ensure adequate space for the two games in this lesson.

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

As students continue to gain an understanding of the brain, this lesson will expound upon the three highlighted regions of the brain/BrainTree: the Brainstem/Roots, Limbic System/Trunk, and Frontal Lobe/Branches. In this lesson, students will learn about the Fight-Flight-Freeze response and its impact upon our nervous systems when it becomes overactive. Students will play a game (Jump In, Jump Out) to demonstrate the ways the brain can act without thinking. We can tap into our Strengths and find healthy ways to respond to stressful experiences without automatically falling into the Fight-Flight-Freeze response. Students will discuss and identify what helps us get unstuck when we experience stress in life.

Talking Circle (4 min)

"In the last few lessons, we talked about how our brains are much like a tree. Who remembers what the Roots of our brain do? Who remembers what the Trunk does?"

Take one or two answers for each and remind them of the following if they need support: Roots communicate about our physical needs (bathroom, nutrition, hydration, sleep, safety), and the Trunk houses our emotions and memories.

"Today we are going to be talking about how our Roots and Trunk deal with stressful experiences. Our brains are designed to keep us safe. One of the ways our brain does this is through something called the Fight-Flight-Freeze response. For example, if we were walking through the jungle and we saw a tiger, our brain might trigger a response to Fight and try to confront the tiger, Flight and run away, or Freeze and stay still so the tiger didn't see us.

"However, when we experience stress or when something scares us, our brain can still jump into the Fight-Flight-Freeze response even if there is nothing dangerous or unsafe.

"So when people experience stress they can sometimes get upset or angry (Fight), they can sometimes want to

hide or run away (Flight), and they can sometimes shut down or not want to do anything at all (Freeze). These are normal responses that all people have and may at times even keep us safe and healthy. We also know that if we get stuck in those responses there are things we can do to get unstuck."

Jump In, Jump Out Game (5 min)

"Let's play a quick brain game. This game is called Jump In, Jump Out. Everyone stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Now, I'd like you to say what I say and do what I say.

- "Jump in" (everyone jumps into the circle while saying "jump in")
- "Jump out" (everyone jumps backward while saying "jump out")
- "Jump left" (everyone jumps left while saying "jump left")
- "Jump right" (everyone jumps right while saying "jump right")

Repeat one time. "Great job! This time, say what I say, but do the opposite."

This is difficult and will result in students jumping in the wrong direction and possibly bumping into one another.

This is part of the teaching point.

- “Jump out” (everyone jumps in while saying “jump out”)
- “Jump in” (everyone jumps backward while saying “jump in”)
- “Jump right” (everyone jumps left while saying “jump right”)
- “Jump left” (everyone jumps right while saying “jump left”)

Repeat one time.

If you choose, you can also do a round where everyone needs to do what you say, but say the opposite of what you say. For example, If you say “jump in” everyone would say “jump out” while jumping in.

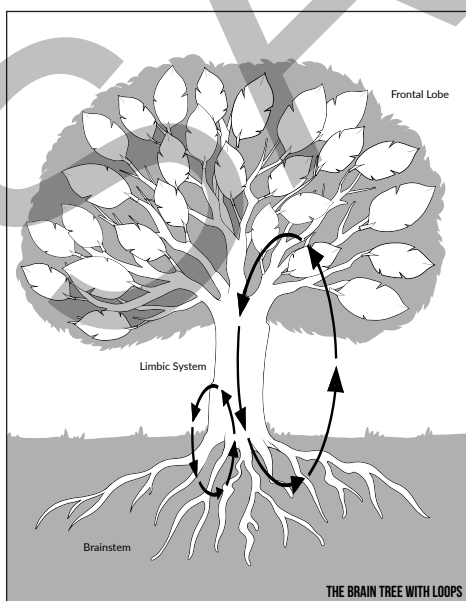
“Did any of you have a hard time in the second round? Who automatically did the thing you were saying? Sometimes we do things that feel automatic, meaning we do them without even thinking. Our Fight-Flight-Freeze response is an example of this. We can react to things very quickly by just using our Roots and Trunk rather than bringing in our Branches and Leaves. However, we can grow in our ability to manage those first reactions.”

Automatic Responses and The BrainTree

(10 min)

Invite the students to the Talking Circle.

Show the students the image of the BrainTree with loops.



“Notice how this first loop goes from the Roots to the Trunk and back down.

“Now notice how the second loop goes from the Roots, to the Trunk, up to the Branches, then back down to the Roots. Which of these loops would be faster to go around? Which would be slower?” Get one or two answers from the group (the smaller circle would be faster).

“This is what can happen to us in big or scary situations. When we are in our Fight-Flight-Freeze response, our bodies and brains are reacting quickly to a situation, and they don’t have time to communicate to our Branches and Leaves, or our Frontal Lobe, about what we should do. Has anyone ever been surprised and screamed without thinking?” Get a show of hands, but do not ask for students to share at this point.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

The purpose of this question is to normalize that we all experience one or more of these reactions, We do NOT want the students to be sharing stories of moments when they have experienced Fight-Flight-Freeze.

“That’s because your Roots and Trunk are talking to each other without communicating with your Branches. In many cases, this can be really helpful to keep us safe. However, if we always react very quickly, or we get stuck in our Fight-Flight-Freeze response, we might miss the chance to make the healthiest choice by not using our Branches and Leaves. Let’s imagine we are walking together and saw a snake. What would you do?” Get a few popcorn answers (I would run away and scream, I would call an adult, or I would try to run after the snake). If a student answers that they like snakes or would pick it up, you can highlight how everyone is different, and we aren’t always afraid of the same things.

“The next day you are walking and you see a garden hose, and mistake it for the snake you saw last time. You might grab a stick and chase after the hose, you might run away from the hose, or you might freeze and hold still hoping the hose doesn’t see you. If you used your Branches and Leaves, you could pause and notice that the hose might look like a snake, but it is actually safe and you don’t have to worry about it.”

BRAIN AND BODY SCIENCE - LESSON 2.3

Stuck and Unstuck

"In the same way, our brains sometimes go into Fight-Flight-Freeze response when it is unnecessary and unhelpful. For example, maybe we are stressed about taking a test. Our stress response might make us want to argue with the teacher (Fight), pretend we are sick and avoid the test (Flight), or make it difficult to remember anything we've learned (Freeze). However, if we can bring in Branches and Leaves, we can take a few deep breaths, calm ourselves down, and remember what we have learned."

Using the Wheel to get Unstuck (5 min)

Reference the printed visuals of the Lopsided Trees.

"When stressful situations come up, we can get stuck in big emotions or in our Fight-Flight-Freeze response. Like we talked about in the last lesson, if our emotions stay too big for too long, the Trunk of our BrainTree can get really big. When this happens, our BrainTree can become lopsided which makes it difficult for us to access our Branches and Leaves to help us learn, grow, and make healthy decisions. The Strengths on the Sources wheel can help us get unstuck and bring those emotions back down to size. Sometimes the people on the Strength wheel can be really helpful with that, like a Trusted Adult, a counselor, or someone from your Family Support.

"Turn to a neighbor and share one thing on the Sources of Strength wheel that has helped when you have felt stressed." Pair share. Give students a couple of minutes to share.

"Is there anyone who would like to share what helps when they are stressed out?" Get two or three students to share.

Human Knot Game (6 min)

"All right, we are going to get into small groups of four or five students. Once you have your group together, I want you to stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle."

Once the small groups are formed, continue with the instructions. "First, take two baby steps toward the middle. Reach your right hand out into the middle of the circle. Now use your right hand to grab the right hand of someone across from you in the circle. Make sure you don't grab the hand of the person next to you." Help facilitate everyone getting connected to someone across the circle.

"Now reach your left hand out into the middle of the circle, and grab the hand of another person across the circle from you. Has everyone found a hand to hold? Great!

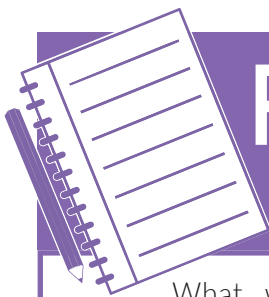
"When I say 'GO,' your goal as a team is to untangle yourselves from this knot and work until you are back into a circle again. The only rule is that you aren't allowed to let go of the hands you are holding. Ready...GO!" Offer help to students if they seem to stay stuck.

After the groups have untangled their human knots, gather back together in the Talking Circle, "What were some of the things you did to become unstuck?" Get a few popcorn answers.

"Those are great answers. We didn't get overwhelmed or stuck; we all worked together, using our Branches and Leaves to be creative, communicate, and problem solve. Great job."

REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on this lesson. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or a journal.



What was a highlight from this lesson?

What would you do differently the next time you teach this lesson?

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or in your class during this lesson?

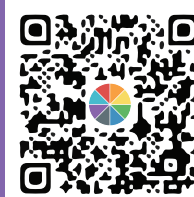
What is something you noticed or learned about yourself during the lesson?

Is there a story or experience from this lesson that you'd like to capture or remember?

Other thoughts or reflections?

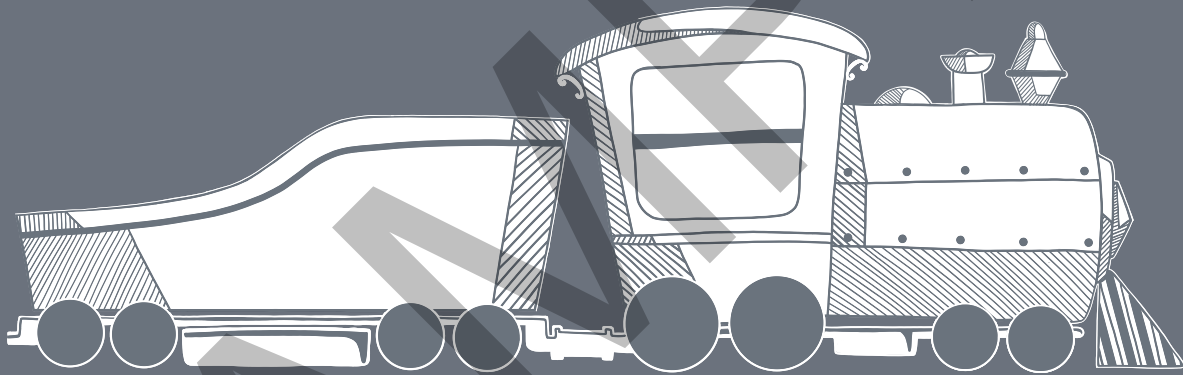
We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit www.sourcesofstrength.org/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!



UNIT 3

EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Rationale **41**

Lesson 3.1: Understanding and Normalizing Sensations, Emotions and Thoughts **42**

Lesson 3.2: Big Emotions **46**

Lesson 3.3: Regulation Railroad **49**

Lesson 3.4: Practicing Regulation **55**

Worksheets **178**

Emotional regulation is a critical skill for all people to continually cultivate throughout a lifetime. Regulating our emotions requires first becoming aware of and understanding what we are experiencing physically and emotionally. This awareness allows us to slow our thinking, and reduce the reactivity from our Fight-Flight-Freeze response by integrating the different regions of our brain. We are then able to draw upon Strengths and strategies to help us reduce activation and navigate our emotions in healthy ways. These skills are critical for developing and maintaining relationships, engaging in healthy coping strategies, and creating ideal conditions for learning and growth. Emotional regulation is not just about managing difficult emotions or behavior modification. Neuroplasticity research has shown that using a growth mindset and a Strength-based lens through which we view the world can rewire our brains for greater resilience and wellbeing. This leads to improved social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

Co-regulation is a critical component of emotional regulation that happens through trusting relationships. When a Trusted Adult comes alongside and models healthy emotional regulation strategies, it helps students understand and navigate their own emotions. Co-regulation looks like being a thermostat rather than a thermometer, helping regulate the temperature in the room rather than simply reacting to it. These skills are not taught once, but rather modeled and supported regularly, leading to greater understanding and integration. Students and staff enter the classroom with varying degrees of experience with regulatory skills. It is critical that adults practice these skills side-by-side through co-regulation throughout this unit, across the entirety of the Sources of Strength elementary curriculum, and in our everyday interactions with students. As adults, we do a disservice to young people by projecting that we have it all together when we experience challenges or big emotions. This can leave young people feeling isolated, insecure, and overwhelmed by their own big emotions. Through relationship building and co-regulation, we create connection, understanding, and shared Strengths and strategies that help us all regulate in healthy ways.

In the Brain and Body Science Unit, students gained a better understanding of how our brains and bodies communicate. The Emotional Regulation Unit builds upon that foundation by moving from theory to practice. Students will develop greater fluency in understanding emotions and their connections to the brain and body. Throughout the unit there are opportunities to practice and explore the Strengths and strategies for healthy emotional regulation.

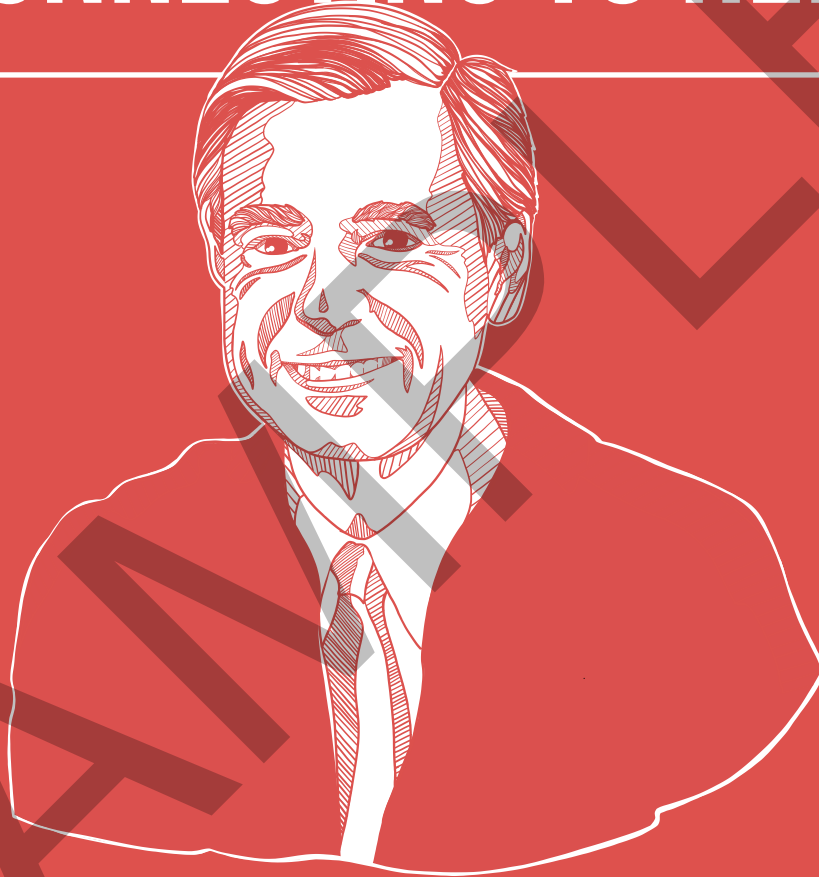
We will introduce the Regulation Railroad tool. The Regulation Railroad helps us notice our physical response to emotions, identify and name our emotions, become aware of how big the emotions we are experiencing are, and help us identify Strengths and strategies we can use to regulate our emotions in healthy ways.

Understanding and continually modeling emotional regulation can be a crucial skill for an educator. Disruptions to the school day are persistent and common in elementary schools, and can be highly dysregulating for some students. These disruptions may look like transitions to assemblies or recess, field trips, safety drills, or emotional and behavioral outbursts. It is important that we model and teach healthy emotional regulation and de-escalation when these disruptions occur. For example, if students are experiencing fear or anxiety following a lockdown drill, taking time to create a space to process and regulate through these experiences can be a healing practice for both students and staff.

Thank you for engaging in the work of emotional regulation in your own life and with your class. The fruit of the time invested in developing these skills is abundant and far-reaching in your students' lives, in the classroom, in your school culture, and in our world.

UNIT 4

CONNECTING TO HELP



Rationale **61**

Lesson 4.1: Who are the Helpers **62**

Lesson 4.2A: Connecting to Help **65**

Lesson 4.2B: Connecting to Help: Suicide Specific Adaptation **68**

Worksheets **183**

Connecting to Help is a crucial life skill and protective factor for each one of us. Everyone experiences physical, mental, and emotional hurt at some point in their lives. Just as we need support when we are physically sick and injured, receiving help for mental and emotional pain is incredibly important. Help-seeking is a critical component of effective prevention. The field of prevention has shown that healthy help-seeking Norms and the presence of a Trusted Adult in a young person's life to be profoundly protective. A culture where young people trust adults and where asking for help is seen as a sign of Strength rather than weakness fosters a community in which fewer students struggle in silence and isolation. Within this culture, young people are able to connect to the help they need and deserve. Healthy help-seeking Norms are not only instrumental in effectively intervening in a crisis, but also in preventing such a crisis in the first place by connecting people to help and protective factors further upstream.

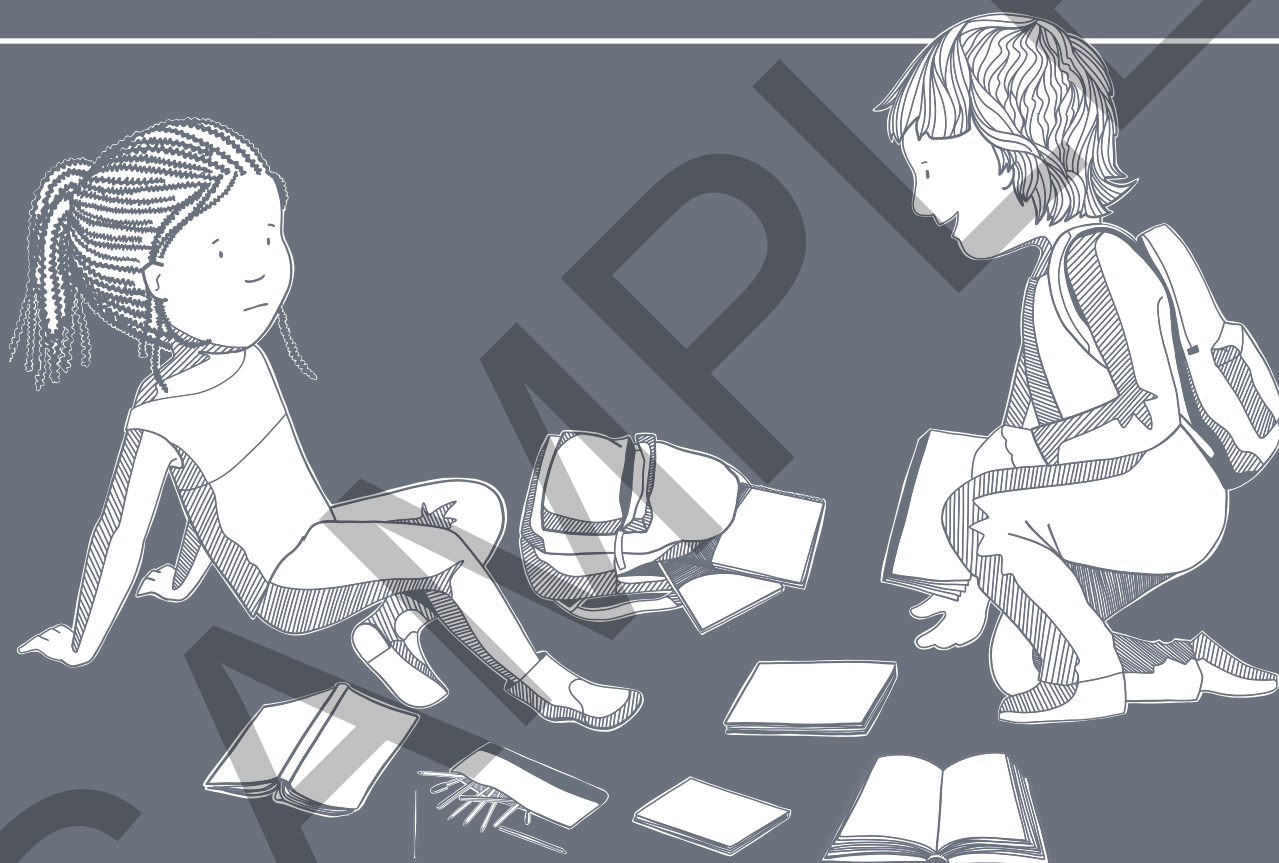
The Connecting to Help Unit normalizes help-seeking, and invites students to identify the helpers within multiple contexts of their lives. The unit also explores how students can be connectors to help when they see someone who is hurting, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Lesson 4.2 has two versions: 4.2A explores what connecting to help looks like when we see a friend who is hurting physically, mentally, or emotionally. Lesson 4.2B provides an adaptation that specifically introduces the topic of suicide, discusses warning signs, and teaches the importance of connecting to help. The lesson is designed to strike a hopeful tone, focusing on connecting people to the help they need and deserve. Many students are familiar with the topic of suicide by the time they reach upper elementary. It is valuable to provide a safe and open environment for students to learn about the importance of connecting to help for themselves and others when they are struggling. Classroom instructors are encouraged to invite school Mental Health staff to be present for this lesson to help answer student questions and address what help-seeking at the school can look like.

Thank you for being Trusted Adults in the lives of young people in your school. Your presence is a vital protective factor in their lives.

UNIT 9

GENEROSITY



Lesson 9.1: The Power of Generosity **119**

Lesson 9.2: Practicing Generosity **123**

Lesson 9.3: Celebrate and Spread Generosity **126**

Worksheets **204**

GENEROSITY - LESSON 9.1

The Power of Generosity

Lesson Spotlight

Practicing Generosity in big and small ways can help us build healthy connections as well as lift our spirits.

Materials

- 5-8 large (9x12) sheets of paper with the word 'Generosity' written in the middle
- Markers for each poster group
- What's Generosity Like? Prompts, cut apart (page 204)

Preparation

- Write 'Generosity' in the middle of the large sheets of paper and set them around the room for different work groups

- Type out poster prompts or write one on each poster for the What's Generosity Like? activity
- Designate a more permanent space in the classroom for the Generosity posters to be kept after the lesson for the rest of this unit. Future lessons will refer back to these posters

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness, Growth Mindset

Instructor Overview

In this lesson, we will take a deeper look at the impact of Generosity in our lives; how it makes us feel and different ways we can accept Generosity from others. Throughout the lesson, we will be developing a definition and common understanding of Generosity, and discuss what being generous to others looks like. We'll explore the impact of Generosity in our own lives and the lives of others through a group writing activity. We'll do a little experiment to demonstrate how Generosity can be contagious and how it can lift the spirit of those around us. Practicing Generosity allows us to increase connections to those around us. Generosity impacts the amygdala, connected to both the Brainstem and Limbic System of the brain (the Trunk and Roots of the BrainTree), and decrease the reaction of Fight-Flight-Freeze under stress.

Talking Circle (5 min)

Invite all students to the Talking Circle.

"Today we are going to talk about Generosity. We can be generous with our money, actions, time, and attention. We can be generous towards others like friends, family, animals, and the environment. Science shows Generosity has a positive impact on our brains and bodies when we are stressed. But it doesn't stop there, it can also help us build strong and healthy community connections."

Give students a moment to pause and reflect on their answers to the following questions.

"Try to think of a time when you were generous to someone. What did you do? Were you generous to a friend, family member, animal or the environment? How did you feel after? Proud? Grateful? Excited?"

Get popcorn answers to the following questions and capture the students thoughts on the whiteboard.

- What does the word Generosity mean?
- What are some examples of Generosity you've seen or experienced?

- What kind of impact can Generosity have in a community? (Classroom, school, family).

GENEROSITY

Generosity is a willingness to give more help or support than is usual or expected. Generosity happens both ways; often, when we give of ourselves we get back in ways we don't expect. Practicing Generosity is part of what makes our communities strong and safe.

Don't limit this conversation to only people, it could include an impact on the environment, animals, and even our attitudes, perspectives, and the appearance of public spaces. **"Practicing Generosity helps us build community and releases dopamine in our brains that helps us feel happier."**

GENEROSITY - LESSON 9.1

The Power of Generosity

Pair Share (8 min)

“Who is one person in your life who is generous? What makes them generous?” Give students a minute or so to share. “OK let’s do a quick poll. As I ask the following questions, raise your hand if your answer is yes.

- Have you experienced someone being generous to you in the last week?
- Have you practiced Generosity this week with a friend, family member, an animal or the environment?
- Have you been generous towards yourself this week?

Be sure to pause after each question to compliment the group for their Generosity.

Invite a few of the students who raised their hands to share how they have practiced Generosity towards themselves. If no one raised their hand share a few examples:

- Take a long, slow, deep breath to help yourself calm down.
- Sit quietly on the couch for a few minutes after a long day.
- Smile at yourself in the mirror to boost your mood.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

You can also create an opportunity for students to practice Generosity towards themselves during this lesson:

- "Get up and get a drink of water."
- "Give yourself a high five, fist-bump, or hug."
- "Think of something you're proud of."
- "Give yourself a compliment."

What's Generosity Like? Activity (15 min)

Cut along the dotted lines, and give one slip to each group.

WHAT'S GENEROSITY LIKE? PROMPTS
Print and cut along dashed line. Give one prompt to each group.

Use the markers to draw lines from the word Generosity and make a web of words, phrases, or ideas that come to mind based on the following prompt.

WRITE DOWN WORDS DESCRIBING GENEROSITY

Use the markers to draw lines from the word Generosity and make a web of words, phrases, or ideas that come to mind based on the following prompt.

WRITE DOWN FEELINGS YOU EXPERIENCE WHEN PRACTICING OR RECEIVING GENEROSITY

Use the markers to draw lines from the word Generosity and make a web of words, phrases, or ideas that come to mind based on the following prompt.

WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU CAN SAY OR DO WHEN SOMEONE IS GENEROUS TO YOU

Use the markers to draw lines from the word Generosity and make a web of words, phrases, or ideas that come to mind based on the following prompt.

WRITE DOWN HOW YOU CAN PRACTICE GENEROSITY (THINK BIG AND SMALL)

SOURCES
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Number the students off into small groups with no more than five students per group. You may have multiple groups responding to the same prompt. Give each group their prompt and the large paper with Generosity written in the middle.

“Each group will have a large piece of paper with the word Generosity on it. Use the markers to draw lines from the word Generosity, and make a web of words, phrases, or ideas that come to mind based on your prompt. You will have four minutes to add as many words to your web as possible.” Give them a one minute warning, and ask them to choose one to two people from their group to share their prompt and three to five things from their poster.

The prompts are:

- Write down words describing Generosity.
- Write down feelings you experience when practicing or receiving Generosity.
- Write down what you can say or do when someone is generous to you.
- Write down how you can practice Generosity (think big and small).

Feel free to add an additional prompt if you'd like.

If students need a jump-start, you may ask the group for one example from each prompt while the class is all together and then divide them up into small groups.

GENEROSITY - LESSON 9.1

The Power of Generosity

Bring students back together and have each group share their prompt and three to five of the things they wrote on their posters. Collect posters and display them for reference in future lessons.

"Remember we can practice Generosity with ourselves and others. What is something you can do to be generous to yourself? What can you practice in class, at home, or in a stressful moment?" Get a few popcorn answers.

"Practicing Generosity with others can be as simple as a smile or sharing a snack, or as big as running a race for cancer research, or writing a card to someone who needs it." Incorporate the student answers from the discussion and posters into your examples.

Contagion Activity (2 min)

"Generosity helps us feel better and is contagious so it can help others feel better too. Lets do a simple and fun experiment with Generosity. OK, everyone put on their biggest cheesiest smile, and look around at your fellow classmates."

You can also do this activity with laughter instead of a smile. What tends to happen is that even though our initial smile or laughter feels fake, it becomes real when we see other people smiling and laughing as well. Model this for the class.

"Who's feeling even just a bit better?" Raise your hand to model participation.

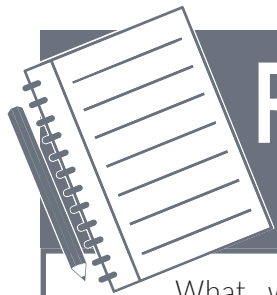
"In the same way that our smiles got bigger as we looked around the room Generosity can be just as simple and contagious as our smiles."

SAMPLE

EVERYDAY APPLICATION

Add the ideas that were shared around self-Generosity into the Regulation Station.





REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on this lesson. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or a journal.

What was a highlight from this lesson?

What would you do differently the next time you teach this lesson?

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or in your class during this lesson?

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself during the lesson?

Is there a story or experience from this lesson that you'd like to capture or remember?

Other thoughts or reflections?

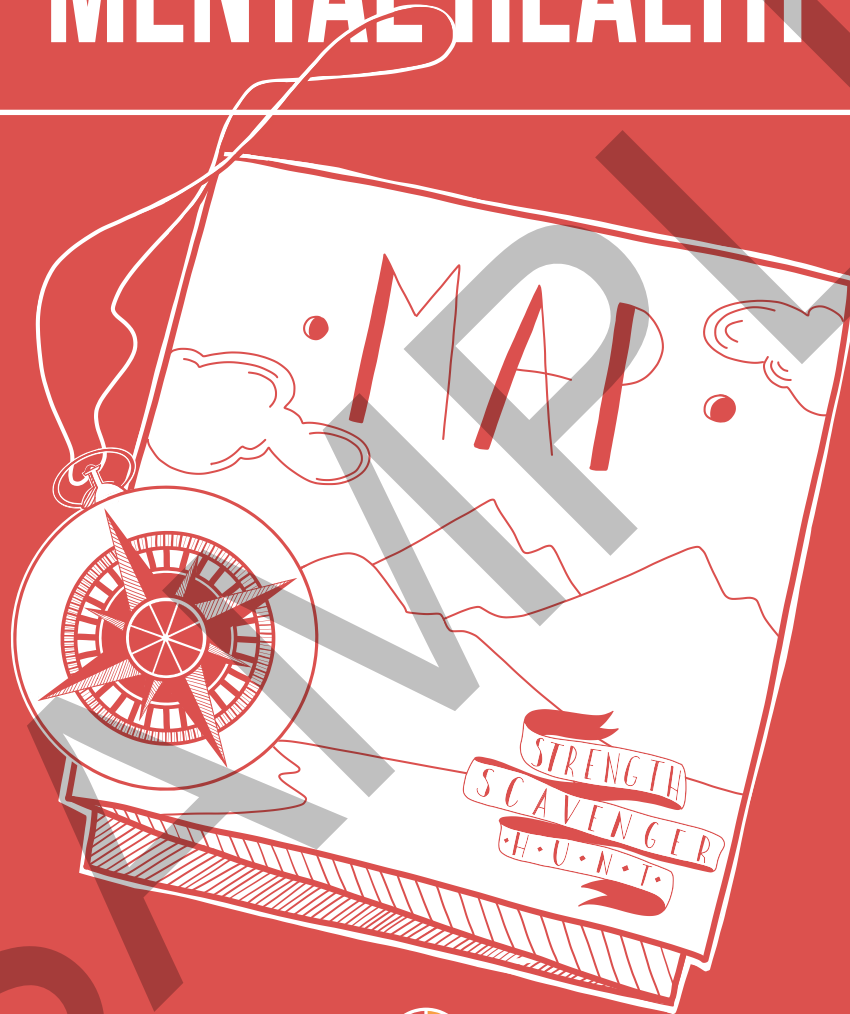
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UNIT 12

MENTAL HEALTH



Rationale **153**

Lesson 12.1: Strengths Scavenger Hunt **154**

Lesson 12.2: Celebration of Strength and Growth! **158**

Worksheets **212**

The Mental Health Unit serves as the culmination of the Sources of Strength Elementary Curriculum. The truth is that every aspect of this curriculum has been a part of Mental Health. All that we have covered this year: understanding our brains, regulating our emotions, navigating transitions, identifying and cultivating our Strengths, is a part of Mental Health.

This unit serves as a celebration and reflection of all the ways we have grown in our Mental Health throughout the year. In the first lesson, we revisit our learnings from the previous units and highlight their connections to our Mental Health. In the second lesson, we reflect on and celebrate the growth we have experienced both individually and as a class throughout the year.

Remember the story about the Brooklyn Bridge in Building Below the Waterline at the beginning of the curriculum. We often get to the end of the school year and look around to see what type of bridge we've built. It is important to remember that we have spent this year building below the waterline. This work is foundational, and it is as a result of this work that the bridge will stand the test of time. These seemingly small daily interactions can build into changing the course of a child's life. When we work together with students to ask for help, learn to navigate conflict, move through transitions, regulate emotions, and cultivate Strengths, we are building Anchor Points in their lives. These Anchor Points translate into reduced risk of violence, suicide, addiction, harassment, truancy, homelessness, and more. Your work in building below the waterline creates a foundation for health, connection, community, resilience, hope, Strength, and belonging. In short, it empowers a well world. Your work with students this year has an impact far beyond what you can see right now.

Thank you for the investment of your time, energy, and passion. Thank you for practicing Strength in your own life and creating a space of connection and safety for your students to do the same. You and your students are powerful agents of change bringing more Hope, Help, and Strength to our world!

SAMPLE