

LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Setting the Stage for Connection

Lesson Spotlight

I can be an active listener and learn from others.

Materials

- Talking Piece: Any easy-to-pass object such as a stuffed animal, painted rock, feather, etc. It can be helpful if the Talking Piece is significant to the class. It may be something handmade or that you already have on hand.
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page [111](#))

Preparation

- Determine what your Talking Piece will be
- Print Talking Circle Norms anchor chart

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social-Awareness, Self-Management

Instructor Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to begin building community and establish norms and routines for the Sources of Strength lessons. One of the ways we do that is through Talking Circles. Time in Talking Circles is a meaningful opportunity for students to practice active listening and turn-taking through the use of a Talking Piece, which in turn helps create connection and safety. The Talking Piece is a powerful equalizer. It provides every student an equal opportunity to speak and acknowledges that everyone has something important to offer to the group.

This lesson introduces the first three of the following norms that will be established and used throughout the Sources of Strength lessons:

Norms:

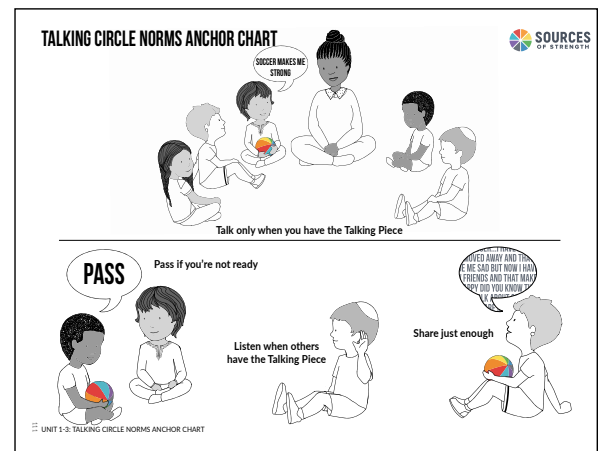
- Talk only when you have the Talking Piece
- Pass if you are not ready
- Listen when others have the Talking Piece
- Share just enough (to be introduced in the next lesson)

This lesson models two types of sharing in the Talking Circle:

- **Popcorn share** is used most frequently in the curriculum and allows for student voice as you move through the lessons. Call on a diverse group of voices and experiences when using Popcorn shares to create an equitable sharing space. Remember that not everyone processes questions at the same rate, so don't forget to pause for a moment and call on a diverse group of students, rather than just the first to raise their hands.
- **Full Circle share** is when every student has an opportunity to share on the prompt provided. Students are always allowed to pass if they are not ready when the Talking Piece reaches them. Make sure to go back and give those students another opportunity to share at the end if they are ready, though never require a student to share.

This lesson also introduces the concept that we share things in common with others and also have things that make us unique and different. Seeing our differences as a sign of strength and uniqueness helps us promote a sense of curiosity over a fear of differences.

As students play games and potentially become dysregulated, a calming breath exercise can serve as an opportunity for you to help students co-regulate (see more about co-regulation in the Introduction on page [2](#)). The topic of emotion regulation will be the focus of Unit 2.



LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Setting the Stage for Connection

Introduction (5 min)

Invite the students to sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs with no obstructions or obstacles in the middle. Welcome the students as they join. “Today, we are going to begin Sources of Strength lessons! Every week we will have time to come together to connect, play games, and talk about things that make us strong and healthy.

“We will talk about what makes our bodies strong. Everyone flex your arms with me.” Model flexing your arms.

“Eating healthy food, drinking water, and going to the doctor are a few things we can do to help our bodies be strong.

“We will talk about how we make our hearts strong. Let’s all put our hands over our hearts.” Model putting your hand over your heart.

ADAPTATION

If your students are able to put their fingers together to form a heart, you can do that instead of them putting their hands over hearts.

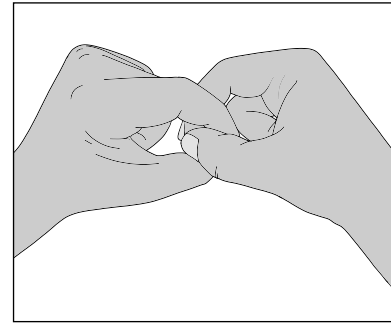
“We will learn and practice helpful things to do when our emotions like being happy, sad, or mad get really big, and we’ll learn to build healthy friendships with others.

“We will also talk about how we make our minds strong. Put your fingers to your head like this.” Put your fingers to your temples, like you are using mind control.

“We will talk about how we can learn and grow, especially when we make mistakes, when we need help, or when we go through hard things.

“And, we will talk about how we can make our classroom a strong, safe, and connected place. Everyone connect your thumb and your pointer finger on each hand to form a circle. Now connect the two circles to form a chain link to show how we can be connected.”

Model connecting by forming a chain link with your fingers. If not all students can do this, that is OK.



“We will explore how we can make a classroom where everyone feels like they belong and are connected to each other.

“We all have Strengths in our lives that help us be healthy and strong. Our voices are strong. We can use our voices to help build a classroom where everyone feels connected and safe. Every day we have the chance to use our voices and actions to build a strong classroom community.

“Who knows what the word community means?” Get a few Popcorn answers (See Instructor Overview). (A group of people, our school, neighborhood, our town, etc.). It is NOT necessary at this point for students to have a complete understanding of the word community. Take a few of their responses and try to weave them into the following statement:

“Good answers! A community can be a group of people who work together and support each other. They can also be connected by the things they have in common. Can you think of a time when we have worked together as a class?” Get a few Popcorn answers. (Lining up, cleaning up, helping others out, sharing, listening when others talk, etc.).

“Those are great examples, and we’ll talk more about ways we are connected in our lessons together. We’ve been sitting for a while, so let’s stand up and play a game.”

Moose or Mouse Game (5 min)

“In Sources of Strength we get to share and we also get to have fun! Through laughing, playing, and having fun together we connect and build our community. Let’s play a game called Moose or Mouse. Everyone make your best moose antlers.”

LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Setting the Stage for Connection

Model antlers with your hands on the side of your head and say, “Moose, moose, moose!”

“Great job, now everyone show me your best mouse whiskers.”

Place your fingers out from the sides of your mouth as whiskers and say, “Squeak, squeak, squeak!”

ADAPTATION

If there are students who are physically unable to make these motions, please adapt them so all students can participate. Feel free to use any distinctly different, simple gestures representing two animals that your students would be familiar with or enjoy.

“I’m going to turn around. When I say ‘Moose or Mouse,’ you will choose to be a moose by making your moose antlers or a mouse by making your mouse whiskers.” Make the motions as you say the options.

“I’ll count down 3, 2, 1, and before I turn around, you put up your moose antlers or your mouse whiskers like we just practiced. If you match me, you win that round. Let’s practice.” Do a practice round first, then play as many rounds as you like. No student is out. They simply try to match you each time.

“Great job everyone! Now, let’s sit back down in our Talking Circle.”

Invite the students to settle back down in their spots in the circle. “Thanks for playing a game together. I know when I play a game it can sometimes make my heart beat faster, or I start breathing fast. Sometimes my arms or legs might still feel like moving, or I might even be giggly or want to talk to my friends about the game. When I notice those things in my body, it’s helpful for me to calm my body before I move on to the next thing.

“Notice what’s happening in your body right now. Now let’s take three long deep breaths to get our bodies and brains ready for our Talking Circle.”

Make your breaths audible so students can co-regulate with you.

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Emotion regulation will be taught in Unit 2. Inviting students to notice what’s happening in their bodies is the first step in regulation. Here, we are simply seeding this language of noticing bodily sensations and practicing breathwork as one way to regulate. (For more information on co-regulation, see page 2)

“Who noticed a change in their body?” Pause for responses.

“Did anyone feel like their breathing slowed down or notice that your legs and arms are less wiggly?” Share your own experience. (Example: I feel like my breathing slowed down and now my legs feel less wiggly.)

Talking Circle (15 min)

“For us to build a strong community where everyone feels safe and like they belong, it is really helpful for us to get to know each other better. One way we’ll do this is by listening and sharing in this Talking Circle throughout the year. Sometimes in this circle we will use what is called a Talking Piece.” Show the class the Talking Piece you have selected.

“Along with our Talking Piece, we will have some norms, or agreements, that help us know what we do during our Talking Circle time. For example, one norm is that the person holding the Talking Piece is the one who gets to talk. When we don’t have the Talking Piece, we get to listen. Listening when others have the Talking Piece is another one of our norms.” Refer to Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page 111).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

The use of the word norm in this curriculum is intentional. A norm is a routine or practice that helps maintain a safe and equitable environment for all. When a norm is not followed, consider it an opportunity to invite that student into practicing the norm with you. Inviting them to practice the norm together creates positive social norming and opportunities for relationship building and co-regulation. The Norms anchor chart may be a helpful tool to display on a classroom wall.

“Let’s practice these norms now. We are going to pass the Talking Piece around the circle. When you are holding the Talking Piece, you can share your name and then pass it to the next person in the Talking Circle. I will start and then pass it to my neighbor, they will share and pass it to their neighbor, and so on around the circle. Remember, our norms tell us that we can only talk when we have the Talking Piece. If we don’t have the Talking Piece, then we get to practice listening. When it is your turn with the Talking Piece, you will share your name.” You will start the sharing and then pass the Talking Piece.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

If your students seem tired, invite them to stand up and shake their wiggles out for 30 seconds, or if they are feeling energized take another few deep breaths together.

“Great job! Another norm we will use in Talking Circles is that you don’t have to talk if you do not want to. If you don’t want to talk, just say ‘Pass’ or pass the Talking Piece to the next person.” Model gently passing the Talking Piece.

“Now, let’s practice sharing again. This time when you have the Talking Piece, share which animal is your favorite while the rest of us listen.” You will start the sharing and then pass the Talking Piece around the circle.



EXTENSIONS

Read Alouds

- A Name Like Mine*. Sandore, S.C. (2020). Self-published.
- Your Name Is a Song*. Thompkins-Bigelow, J. & Uribe, L. (Illustrator). (2020), Seattle: The Innovation Press.

Home Connection

- Share the Parent/Caregiver (page [131](#)) introduction letter with families.
- Invite families to begin a practice of sharing something new that they learned each week. Encourage parents to also share as an opportunity to model a growth mindset. “What is something new that you have learned?”
- Send home this sharing prompt and invite everyone in the family to share: “What was something you really enjoyed about kindergarten?”

Academic Integration

- Make a connection between rules (classroom, school, community) and norms. Both help create and keep order, as well as keeping us safe.
- Pair up students and have them teach each other how to write the letters in their name. Partners could also look for similar and different letters in their names.
- When discussing the weather, ask students about similarities and differences they notice from the previous day.

Talking Circle Prompts

- Try to utilize the Talking Circle process and Talking Piece several times (daily if possible) between lesson 1.1 and 1.2. Prompts might include...
- “Share one or two words that tell us what you enjoyed today.” (experiment, play, write, count, etc.) This will take a

LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Setting the Stage for Connection

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

In this lesson, you are encouraged to share first to set the tone and model the expectations for sharing. In future Full Talking Circles, ask for a volunteer to go first. This reinforces the importance of student voices in the classroom and in Talking Circles.

“Thanks for sharing your favorite animal! We will keep sharing in Talking Circles this year. What you share is important, and listening to one another helps us build a strong and connected community.”

Similarities and Differences Activity (5 min)

“Now we’re going to do an activity that will help us build connections with each other. In every community, there are some things that are the same for everyone and others that are different. Similarities are the things that are the same or almost the same; they help connect us to others in our community. Differences are a part of what makes our community special and strong. In this activity, you’ll notice the ways friends are the same as you and the ways they are different from you. Let’s all stand up right where we are.

“Alright, if you are in kindergarten, raise your hand.” Model.

“Look around. Each of us has that in common; we are all connected by being in kindergarten. OK, you can lower your hands.

“Everyone pretend you are a bird and flap your arms like wings.” Model.

“Now, everyone pretend you’re a fish and hold a bubble in your mouth.” Model.

“Think about which animal you’d rather be: a bird or a fish. I’ll count to three, and then everyone use one of those actions to show us which animal you’d rather be.” Model. “Ready? 1, 2, 3!

“Look around again. Now we can see some ways that we are different from each other. Some of you would like to be a bird and others would like to be a fish. It’s nice to have some of each animal. Now let your bubbles out or put your wings down.

“If you have ever felt sad, make a frowny face.” Model.

“Look around at your classmates. It looks like we have all felt sad at some point.” Pause.

little bit of skill to build but can be a really nice way to see into the minds and experiences of your students on a regular basis.

- “How did you feel connected to someone in our class today?” (I am connected to Maria because we both want to be dogs. etc.)
- “Share about your favorite place.”
- “Share about something fun you’ve done.”
- “If you were an animal, what would you be and why?”

Mindfulness

- When finishing a high energy activity, have the students check in and notice their heartbeat or breathing and take a few slow, deep breaths with you.

Music

- Play a variety of music genres to expose students to various styles of music and talk about how we may like different types of music.
- What are the ritual songs that you already have for lining up, cleaning up, or even just being a good friend? These are great ways to practice norms and set rhythms in the classroom.
- After reading *Your Name Is a Song* (see book extensions), put each student’s name to song allowing students to help create the sound of their name.

Creative Expression

- Create ‘I am Me’ introduction posters. Celebrate how students bring unique skills and knowledge into the classroom.
- Invite students to bring a Talking Piece from home or create their own to use in future Talking Circles.

Transitions

- When lining up after recess, ask for volunteers to share the name of a person they connected with during recess.

“Now, if you have ever felt happy, make a smiley face.” Model.

“Wow, everyone has also been happy! Sad and happy are two emotions we all feel sometimes. A few other emotions we all experience are scared, excited, and angry. Everyone feels these emotions from time to time too.

“If you have a pet at home, put up one hand.” Model. “Keep that hand up.

“If you have no pets, make an X with your arms.” Model. “Keep those X’s up.

“If you have more than one pet, put up both hands.” Model. “Look at that; the number of pets we have is different for some people and the same for others. You can put your hands down now.

“Now, think about your favorite animal. On the count of three, everyone make the sound of that animal. Ready? 1...2...3... GO!” Be sure to join the students in this, and feel free to embrace the silliness of the moment as you share the noise of your favorite animal.

“That was wonderful! Let’s sit back down in our circle spots.” Pause while everyone gets settled.

“Thank you all for sharing a little more about yourselves today and for listening so well to others as they shared in our Talking Circle. Learning about one another helps us build a strong community.”

Looking Ahead

The next lesson is the first Celebration Lesson. These lessons are intended to incorporate celebrations of student growth, as well as learning about and practicing how to offer apologies when someone is hurt. These lessons are structured as Full Talking Circles and are structured to last 20 minutes. Any remaining time could be filled with Extensions from this lesson 1.1. (Please see page [7](#) for more information about the Celebration Lessons.)

- Have students turn to the person next to them in line and ask, “Could you please share something cool/fun that I might not know about you?”

LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Reflection



REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

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

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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/K2Feedback to give feedback on this lesson!



CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY LESSON 1.2

Celebrating my own Growth: Aha!

Time

15-20 minutes

Preparation

None

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page [111](#))

SEL focus

Self-Awareness

Instructor Overview

This first Celebration Lesson continues the practice of Talking Circle norms while doing a Full Circle share to celebrate our growth and personal insight. This lesson introduces the fourth norm: Share Just Enough. Some students may have a hard time being succinct with their sharing, and this norm helps us move the Talking Circle sharing toward greater equity of voice for all students. Regularly revisit the Talking Circle norms throughout the curriculum as needed.

The use of Aha's as celebrations of personal growth and discovery is introduced in this lesson. When students and adults share their Aha's, they tell their own story through a lens of strength and a growth mindset. Students will continue learning about and utilizing Aha's throughout the school year and the curriculum.

If you have not already done so, please read the Celebration Lesson Rationale on (page [7](#))

Talking Circle (15 min)

Invite the students to sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs with no obstructions or obstacles in the middle. Welcome the students as they join.

"In our first Sources of Strength lesson, we built connections in our community by playing a game and laughing together. We also shared and listened to one another in a Talking Circle. This week we will have another Talking Circle to help us connect with one another. Who remembers the norms for how we use the Talking Piece?" Allow students to answer and fill in any missing information as needed.

Norms:

- Talk only when you have the Talking Piece
- Pass if you are not ready
- Listen when others have the Talking Piece
- Share just enough (introduced in this lesson)

"These are our Talking Circle norms. We'll practice these every time we have a Talking Circle to help us build a classroom where everyone feels connected and like they belong. Today, we are going to practice these

norms and add one more. One of the ways we can help everyone feel heard is by noticing how much time we talk while we have the Talking Piece. We all want to listen to your stories and Strengths, and we want to make sure everyone else has a chance to share their stories and Strengths too.

"The new norm is 'Share just enough.' This norm will take some practice. If a story is going a little too long, you might hear me say, 'Thank you so much for sharing. In order to be sure we are able to hear the rest of the class too, could you please finish up your share?' If I share too long, those who are sitting next to me can nicely remind me in the same way.

"Now let's practice our norms. We will pass the Talking Piece around the circle. When you are holding the Talking Piece, share about something you are good at doing. As we share, let's remember our norms and share just enough, listen when others are talking, and share only when you have the Talking Piece."

You may choose to share first in order to model and set

LESSON 1.2 - CELEBRATING MY OWN GROWTH: AHA!

the time expectation or ask for a volunteer to go first. If a student volunteers, let them decide which direction to pass the Talking Piece around the circle. As the students share, refrain from commenting or reframing their words. Gently remind students of the norms as they learn the process.

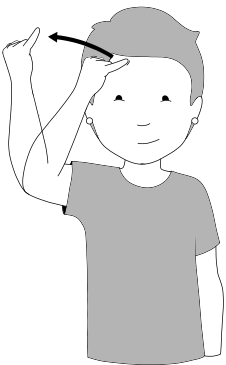
INSTRUCTOR NOTE

There is a fine balance to strike here. We don't want students to feel cut short; rather, we want to help them build awareness when they begin sharing for too long. This is a skill-building opportunity that will likely need to be practiced over and over again throughout the year. Don't be discouraged if some students need more frequent reminders; this is a skill that will benefit students for the rest of their lives.

Once the sharing is finished, "Thank you all for sharing and listening with one another as we practiced our Talking Circle norms together. You all did a great job sharing just enough.



"As I was listening, I heard _____ is good at _____. Who else was listening as others shared? Who learned something new about a classmate as you listened?" Get a few Popcorn answers. Encourage students to use the pattern 'I heard _____ is good at _____.'

"Throughout the year, we are going to celebrate ourselves and others. When we celebrate ourselves, we will call those Aha's."





Each time you say Aha, put your right pinky finger to your temple and make an outward and upward motion. This is the sign for 'idea' in American Sign Language.


"An Aha might happen when we


learn something new or grow better at something. When we say Aha, we are going to put our pinky finger to the side of our forehead and move it up towards the sky."  Model for students. Invite students to say 'Aha!' with you. 


"This sign is the word for 'idea' in American Sign Language. We will make this sign every time we say the word Aha.


"Aha,  I learned how to tie my shoe!" Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.


"It is an Aha when we have grown better at something. Aha,  I wrote my name!" Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.

"Aha!  I went higher on the swings today!" Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.

"Aha's can also be noticing those things that we are good at doing. Aha,  I am a good listener!" Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.

"Simply noticing how we are feeling can be an Aha too. Aha,  I felt angry and took a deep breath." Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.


"Noticing the good things in our life can be an Aha. Aha,  I am feeling happy because class was fun today." Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.

"Earlier, we all shared about things that we are good at doing.  These are all Aha's of celebration, way to go!" Make the sign and say "Aha!" all together.

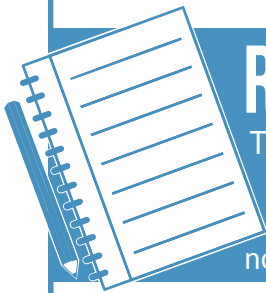
LESSON 1.2 - CELEBRATING MY OWN GROWTH: AHA!

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Whenever the word Aha is said, you are encouraged to use the sign for 'idea' in American Sign Language. We will continue to practice naming and celebrating Aha's throughout the year. Taking the time to notice our Strengths, acknowledge when we are learning and growing, and recognize moments of mindfulness and gratitude helps build a powerful and protective growth mindset and a sense of self-worth.

"As we continue learning and growing together in kindergarten let's look for ways to celebrate our own Aha's.  We'll have many opportunities to share our Aha's together during our Sources of Strength lessons."

Continue to use the Aha sign on an ongoing basis throughout the school day with students. You can reinforce the recognition and celebration of Aha's in many ways. Be sure to both help students celebrate their Aha's and to share your own ('Aha! I remembered to take attendance today!') If you are not the classroom teacher, encourage the classroom teacher to keep up this practice.



REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

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

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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/K2Feedback to give feedback on this lesson!



LESSON 1.5 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Strengths Wheel: Things We Do That Make Us Strong

Lesson Spotlight

I can name things I do that help me be healthy and strong.

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Speaker and calm music
- Coloring utensils
- Sources of Strength wheel image 2 (page [114](#))
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page [111](#))
- Things We Do That Make Us Strong worksheet (page [115](#))

Preparation

- Print Things We Do That Make Us Strong worksheet, one per student
- Make sample Things We Do That Make Us Strong worksheet

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social-Awareness, Self-Management

Instructor Overview

This lesson introduces students to the next three Strengths on the Sources of Strength wheel: Healthy Activities, Generosity, and Spirituality. Students will be invited to color in icons and draw pictures of things that help them be healthy and strong. The class will participate in a Talking Circle naming the Strengths that help them to feel calm. This helps to introduce language and familiarity around the concept of regulation that will be explored further in future lessons.

A note about Spirituality: Spirituality is a big word for kindergartners and can carry a lot of different meanings and significance for people of all ages. Given this, you might ask why Spirituality is one of the eight Sources of Strength. The simple answer is that we could not in good conscience leave it out. Research has shown that Spirituality is incredibly protective throughout our lives. As with all of the Strengths, we approach this protective factor by casting a wide net. There are millions of people, places, practices, traditions, cultures, and expressions of spirituality throughout the world. Our purpose here is not to promote any one practice or expression over another, but rather to allow students the opportunity to explore what this protective Strength looks like in their lives.

There is no expectation that kindergartners will walk away with a deep understanding of Spirituality but rather that they will have exposure to the word and the different ways it can show up in their lives. Whatever the expression, ultimately anything that lifts our spirits, makes us feel connected, or brings us hope and healing during hard times can be a form of Spirituality and serve as a protective factor in our lives.

Moose or Mouse Game (5 min)

Have the students stay at their desks to begin this lesson. Invite the students to stand as they are able to participate. Play the game at a quick pace to energize the students.

“We are going to play another round of Moose or Mouse! Who remembers how this game works?” Get a few Popcorn answers. Fill in any gaps on how to play the game that students don’t mention. (See page [13](#) from lesson 1.1 for instructions.)

“That’s right, in a moment everyone will try and match me as a moose or a mouse. Let’s remind each other of the actions we use for a moose. Everyone turn and show each other your best moose antlers.”

Model antlers with your hands on the side of your head and say “Moose, moose, moose!”

“Great job, now let’s remind each other of the actions for the mouse and show me your best mouse whiskers.”

Put your fingers out from your mouth as whiskers and say, “Squeak, squeak, squeak!”

LESSON 1.5 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Strengths Wheel: Things We Do That Make Us Strong

ADAPTATION

If there are students who are physically unable to make these motions, please adapt them so all of your students can participate. Feel free to use any distinctly different, simple gestures that represent two animals that your students would be familiar with or particularly enjoy.

“I’ll turn around. Then, each one of you will choose to be a moose or a mouse.” Make the motions as you say the options.

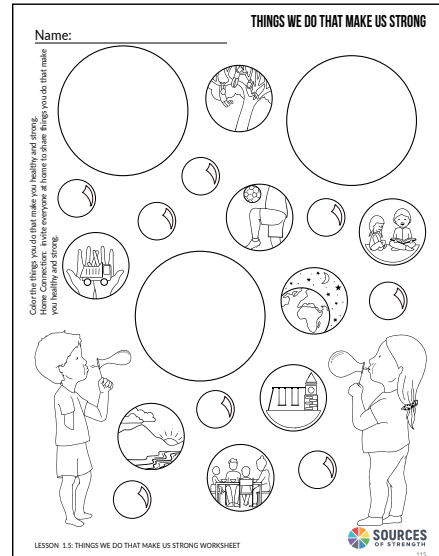
“I’ll count down 3,2,1 and before I turn around, you put up your moose antlers or your mouse whiskers like we just practiced. If you match me, you win that round. Let’s practice.” Do one practice round for students if needed. Play four to five rounds. No student is out. They simply try to match you each time.

“That is a fun and silly game! Playing games helps me feel more energy in my body.” Highlight where you notice the energy in your body (wiggly arms and legs, breathing faster, etc.)

“Now let’s practice listening to our bodies, what do you feel? Maybe you feel like there is energy in your arms and legs, and they want to keep moving. Maybe you notice your face is smiling because you matched me, or maybe your face is a bit sad because you did not match each time. Your breathing may have gotten faster or slower. Whatever you feel is just fine. It can be helpful to check-in and listen to our bodies especially when we go from a silly energizing game to a calmer activity. Let’s do an activity to help us calm our bodies, so we are ready to listen and share in the Talking Circle.”

The Things We Do To Be Healthy and Strong

(10 min)



Hold up the ‘Things We Do That Help us be Healthy and Strong’ worksheet. “As you look at the worksheet, you will notice that there are lots of different things that can help each of us be healthy and strong.

“Who feels happy or excited when you get to play at recess with your friends?” Get a show of hands.

“Who likes to build with blocks?” Get a show of hands.

“Who feels happy or calm when you color or draw?” Get a show of hands.

“These are examples of things we do to be healthy and strong.

“Let’s take the next few minutes to color in the different things we do to help us be healthy and strong. That might mean they help us to feel connected to each other, feel different emotions, or make us happy.” Show the class your example and name a few different things that make you healthy and strong.

“There are some blank spaces where you can draw more things that make you healthy and strong. We all have different Strengths that help us every day. Listening to music and coloring are both Healthy Activities for many people, so I’m going to turn on some music while we color. Now, we’ll pass out the worksheets so you can color in the things that make you healthy and strong.”

Pass out worksheets. Play some calm music while students color. Walk around the room supporting and connecting with students as they color. This can serve as a great opportunity to develop deeper relationships with individual students.

LESSON 1.5 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Strengths Wheel: Things We Do That Make Us Strong

“I like how you all worked hard during that time. I saw so many different things that each of you do to be healthy and strong. Let’s take a moment and notice how your body feels now. I notice that I have less energy in my body. My arms and legs don’t feel so wiggly now. What do you notice?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“Now everyone hold up your worksheet and look around to see how different each one is. We all have many different things that we do to be healthy and strong. Let’s all head to the Talking Circle so we can hear more from everyone.”

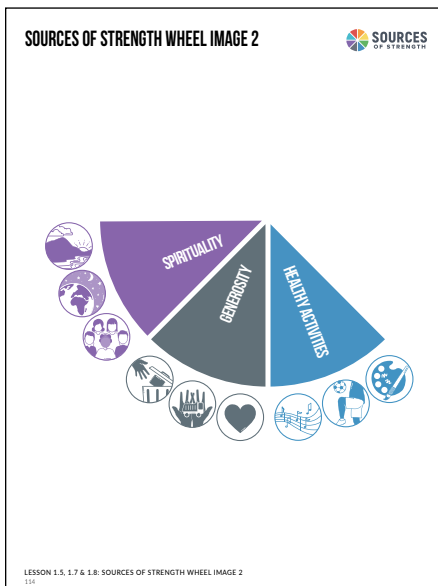
INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Make a copy of the completed worksheets to use as a menu of things to try when students are dysregulated. Invite students to circle activities that are calming for them, and with another color, circle the activities that energize them.

Talking Circle (15 min)

Invite the students to the Talking Circle.

“In a moment we’ll have a chance to hear from everyone about the things you do to be healthy and strong. Before we do, let’s look at the next group of Strengths.” Uncover three more Strengths of the Wheel: Healthy Activities, Generosity, and Spirituality. Reference Sources of Strength wheel image 2.



“These Strengths are: Healthy Activities, Generosity, and Spirituality. They help us be healthy and strong in all sorts of different ways.

“Raise your hand if you feel energized when you are playing by yourself or with others.” Model. “Playing can be a Healthy Activity.

“Raise your hand if you like helping others. Maybe you help by setting the table, sharing a toy, passing out papers, or in another way.” Get a show of hands.

“Those are all great examples of Generosity. Being generous helps us feel good and connects us to others.



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- Use the Wheel icons as reminders for students and staff of preferred calming activities. (Icons can be cut out and taped to student desks for easy reference)

Read Alouds

- My Many Colored Days.* Seuss, D. & Johnson, S., Fancher, L. (Illustrators). (1996). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- We Are Grateful.* Sorell, T. & Lessac, F. (Illustrator). (2018). Watertown, Charlesbridge.
- Counting Kindness: Ten Ways to Welcome Refugee Children.* Kurman, H. & Barroux. (Illustrator). (2020). Watertown, Charlesbridge.
- Kindness Gets a Thumbs Up.* Li, B. (2020). Self-published.
- Kindness is My Superpower.* Ortego, A. (2020). Self-published.

Home Connection

- Send home this sharing prompt and invite everyone in the household to share: “Share about the things you do to help you be healthy and strong.”
- The worksheet from this lesson contains directions for family and household members to discuss their Strengths together.

Academic Integration

- Use a new copy of the worksheet and talk with students about using one color to represent calming activities and another color to represent energizing activities. These activities can serve students throughout the day when they are dysregulated.

Talking Circle Prompts

- “What are some Healthy Activities that make you feel happy, excited or

LESSON 1.5 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Strengths Wheel: Things We Do That Make Us Strong

“Raise your hand if you have a special place you like to spend time. Maybe that’s a grandparent’s house; a place like a church, temple, or mosque; being in nature; or somewhere else that lifts your spirits?” Get a show of hands.

“There are all kinds of people, places, and things we do that lift our spirits. These are all a part of the Strength of Spirituality.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Remember we don’t need students to deeply understand the meaning of Spirituality at this time. We just want them to recognize there are things in their lives that help lift their spirits.

“Raise your hand if you feel calm when you read a book, listen to music, or hang out with your pets?” Get a show of hands. “These are more examples of Healthy Activities!”

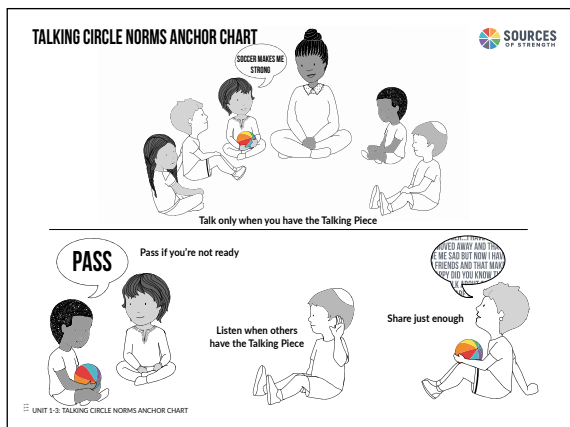
“Healthy Activities, Generosity, and Spirituality are all powerful Strengths that help us be healthy and strong. I’m excited to hear from each of you about the things you do to be healthy and strong.

“We are going to pass the Talking Piece around and share about one thing that helps you calm down when you have a lot of energy in your brain or body. You can name a Healthy Activity, a way you are generous to others, or something that lifts your spirit and helps you calm. As we all share, let’s remember to use our Talking Circle Norms.”

Review Talking Circle Norms if needed using anchor chart:

Norms:

- Talk only when you have the Talking Piece
- Pass if you are not ready
- Listen when others have the Talking Piece
- Share just enough



connected to others?” (read, ride my bike, play with legos, color, etc.)

- “Share something you do to get more energized, maybe when you are tired or sleepy during the school day.” (dance to upbeat music, do some jumping jacks, get a snack)
- “Share about a way that you want to be generous to someone else this week.”
- “Share about something in your life that you are thankful for.” (This is a form of Spirituality.)

Mindfulness

- Use the suggestions from the calming or energizing ideas and invite students to draw or cut out pictures of those Healthy Activities. This can be used as a reference chart for a regulation station.

Music

- Listen to various types of music and discuss how it is calming or energizing for different students (there is no correct answer).

Creative Expression

- Create a dance that energizes or calms, create art that energizes and calms, or create different music that energizes or calms.
- Play different types of music and invite students to draw or color what they feel in their body. Example; Heavy lines for faster, energizing beats, lighter swirls with more relaxing sounds or tempo.

Transitions


- Remind students that transitions are a great time to practice Generosity. By listening, helping others, and following directions they are being Generous to their teacher and their classmates.

LESSON 1.5 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

Strengths Wheel: Things We Do That Make Us Strong

The Instructor may share first to norm the sharing length and depth. "Let's all practice together. 'One thing I do to feel calmer is ____.'" Instructor models by sharing an example.

Pass the Talking Piece around the circle. Be sure to offer another chance to anyone who passed.

"Thank you all for sharing about your Strengths today. We can celebrate these Strengths in ourselves with an 'Aha'  And next time we will learn more about celebrating these Strengths in one another. When you take your worksheet home you can ask the people you live with to share what helps them be healthy and strong."

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Take note of the different examples students share that are calming for them. These can serve as a great list of calming regulation strategies that students are already using in their lives. Knowing what helps each student calm can allow us to move toward them with their Strengths and regulation strategies during moments of dysregulation.

REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

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

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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/K2Feedback to give feedback on this lesson!



CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY LESSON 1.8

Celebrating our Connections and Community

Time

20 minutes

Preparation

Cut construction paper chain link strips

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page [111](#))
- Sources of Strength wheel image 1, 2 & 3 (page [112,114 & 119](#))
- Construction paper chain link strips
- Stapler or tape
- Music and speaker

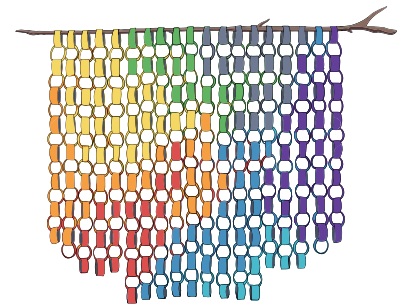
SEL Focus

Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Self-Awareness

Instructor Overview

In this final lesson of the Celebrations and Connections Unit, the Talking Circle provides an opportunity to celebrate both Affirmations and Aha's. The Celebrations and Connections Wall Display will be started in this lesson if it has not already been created in previous Celebration Lessons (see Celebration Lesson Rationale on page [7](#)). This display is intended to represent each Affirmation and Aha that is shared in the Talking Circles. Creating opportunities for students to see their growth over the course of the year is a helpful way to celebrate progress rather than outcomes.

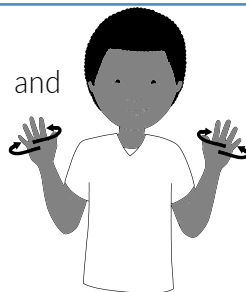
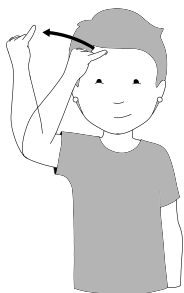
The Celebrations and Connections Wall Display can be created in a number of ways. The eight colors of the Sources of Strength wheel may be used, or three colors may be used to represent Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's. The display can look like the image to the right by hanging the links from a branch, broom handle, curtain rod, or other object. Instructors may choose to create one long continuous chain around the classroom or shorter chains from ceiling hooks. Have fun with the construction of the display! As the display grows over the course of the year, students will be able to see how they are participating in building a stronger and healthier classroom community. Instructors may choose to make chain link strips available to be added to the wall display at any time during the week. For more information on these celebrations, see Celebration Lesson Rationale on page [7](#).



Talking Circle: (20 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **"Today we will be sharing Affirmations and**

Aha's." Make the ASL signs.



"Who can remind us what an Aha is?"

Get a few Popcorn answers and fill in any gaps (something we are getting better at, learning or growing in).



"Nice job remembering those Aha's." In our last Celebration Lesson we also learned about Affirmations."

"An Affirmation is when we notice and say out loud something we like or appreciate about the people around us. Last time we thought about people special to us and named the things we like and appreciate about them.


"Today we are going to have an opportunity to

LESSON 1.8 - CELEBRATING OUR CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY



share Affirmations for people at school or Aha's for ourselves. Our Affirmations could be for someone in our class, another class, or anyone we see in our school community such as the librarian, your bus driver, or the custodian.

"As we share, I will add a paper chain link to this Celebrations and Connections Display for each Aha and Affirmation. We will continue to add chain links when Affirmations  or Aha's  are shared during our Sources of Strength time. This Celebrations and Connections Display can remind us how we are all connected. As we celebrate others and ourselves, we are building a stronger and healthier classroom. Our sharing helps us better understand each other and build connections to help everyone know they belong in our class."

Review Talking Circle norms if needed.

"We will pass the Talking Piece around the circle as we share an Affirmation for someone at school or an Aha for ourselves. Let's remember to use our sign language signs, too. If you give yourself an Aha, we'll do this."  Model.

"If someone shares an Affirmation, we can all celebrate together with our Affirmation sign."  Model.

"Who has an Affirmation  or an Aha  they are ready to share?" Ask for a volunteer, pass them the Talking Piece, and continue sharing around the circle.

Add one chain link to the Celebrations and Connections Wall Display to represent each Affirmation or Aha shared.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

If students only provide Affirmations with limited specificity, you may encourage them to share more detail by asking a follow-up question. "It is great that Juan is a good friend. What does he do that makes him a Positive Friend?"

"Thank you all so much for sharing your Affirmations and Aha's today. Remember, we can give Affirmations to anyone, at any time, not only during our Celebration Lessons.

"Now, let's end our celebration with a dance party." Set up whatever parameters you need to have a fun dance party while keeping everyone safe. Don't forget to bust some moves too. After the dance party is an ideal time to practice some regulation techniques with your class (Flower Breath, noticing three things of the same color, grounding exercises, etc.)

LESSON 1.8 - REFLECTION

REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

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

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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/K2Feedback to give feedback on this lesson!

