

LESSON 2.1 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

The Roots of the BrainTree

Lesson Spotlight

I can listen to my brain and body.

Materials

BrainTree visual (page [122](#))

Preparation

Print BrainTree visual

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

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

Instructor Overview

This lesson briefly introduces the BrainTree metaphor, helping students understand the various parts of our brain and their functions. For more information, see Unit 2 Rationale on page [45](#). In kindergarten we focus primarily on the Brainstem, or the Roots of the BrainTree. The Brainstem/Roots communicate the primary physiological needs of our body. This is where our heartbeat, body temperature, blinking, thirst, hunger, and fight/flight/freeze responses are located. This lesson helps us begin to notice what our body is feeling and connect it to what our brains and bodies might be telling us.

Opening Talking Circle (1 min)

Invite the students to the Talking Circle. Welcome them as they arrive. **“Today, we are going to talk about the ways that our brains and our bodies are connected. Point to your brain.”** Model.

“Our brain gives us good information to help us know how our bodies are doing. It can tell us when our body is hurt, like when we have a skinned knee, or if our tummy hurts because we are hungry. When our brain tells us how we are doing, we can make choices to give our body what it needs. For example, we can then get a Band Aid™ for our knee or some food for our hungry tummy. Today, we are going to practice listening to our brains and our bodies as we play a game.”

Sources Says Game (4 min)

“Let’s play another game of Sources Says. Remember this game is like Simon Says. In the game Sources Says, no one gets out. If I say ‘Sources Says’ you do what I say, but if I don’t say ‘Sources Says’ you don’t do what I say. Listen for what ‘Sources Says.’” Model each of the actions as you go.

“Stand up.” Pause. **“Oh whoops... Sources didn’t say stand up. Now, Sources Says, stand up.”**

“Sources Says, make a big smile with your face!” Model.

“Sources Says, wave at your friends in the class.” Model.

“Now wave at your shoes. Oh, I didn’t say ‘Sources Says!’ Sources Says, jump up and down like a bunny.” Model.

“Now, Sources Says, pretend you are a tiger and run in place.” Model.

“Stop!” Pause. **“Oops! Sources didn’t say stop. OK, Sources Says stop.”**

“Now, Sources Says, put your hands on your heart, right in the middle of your chest.” Model.

“Sources Says, feel your heart beating.” Model.

“Sources Says, feel your breath move your chest up and down.” Pause. Breathe audibly.

“Is your breathing fast or slow?” Pause.

“Sources Says, breathe in through your nose.” Pause.

“Sources Says, breathe out through your mouth.” Pause.

“Sources Says, notice the air going in your nose and out of your mouth.” Pause.

“Put your hands on your belly.” Pause. **“Now Sources Says, put your hand on your belly. Can you feel your belly moving in and out while you breathe?”** Pause.

“Sources Says, listen to the sounds in our space. What do

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you hear?" Pause.

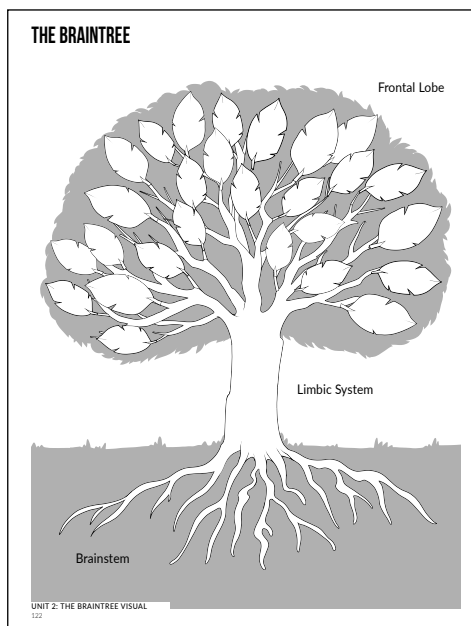
"Sources Says, sing your name out loud like this." Model singing your name.

"Now sit down. Ha, I didn't say Sources Says! Sources Says, sit down.

"Thanks everyone for playing that game with me. Now let's learn more about our brains!"

Introduction to the BrainTree (15 min)

Allow students to settle back down in their spots in the circle. Show students the image of the BrainTree.



"A tree has three main parts. A tree has roots, a trunk, and branches and leaves. Our brain also has three parts that work together just like the parts of a tree." Refer to the BrainTree visual.

"The roots of a tree provide food and water and help the tree be safe. There is a part of our brain that also tells us when we are hungry, thirsty, or need to go to the bathroom, and helps us be safe. Let's make our fingers into roots and touch the ground and pretend they are the roots of a really tall tree." Model.

"Has anyone ever really had to go to the bathroom?" Get a show of hands. "Yeah, that was the Roots of our BrainTree telling us what we need."

"The Trunk of the tree helps support the tree as it grows tall and strong.

"Make a circle with your arms out in front of your body like the trunk of a tree." Model.

"The Trunk is the part of the BrainTree where our memories and emotions live. This part of the brain is like the trunk of the tree and helps us be healthy and strong.

"Has anyone ever felt sad?" Get a show of hands.

"Has anyone ever felt happy?" Get a show of hands.

"Has anyone ever felt excited?" Get a show of hands.

"The Trunk of your BrainTree is where each of those emotions live.

"The branches and leaves of a tree provide shade and help the tree get what it needs from the sun. Move your arms into the air over your head like leaves and branches of a tree giving you shade and gently blowing in the breeze." Model.

"The Branches and Leaves of our BrainTree is the part of our brain that helps us think, learn, and make choices. Raise your hand if you have learned something new in kindergarten." Pause. "What is something you have learned?" Get a few Popcorn answers (letters, lining up, writing, people's names, etc.).

"Great examples, the Branches and Leaves of your BrainTree helped you learn those things!

"Today we are going to talk about the part of our brain that is like the roots of a tree. While we played 'Sources Says,' our brains and bodies were talking to us. Not in the same way that you and I talk to each other but in a different way. You see, our bodies talk to us by telling us when we are hungry, thirsty, or tired.

"Has anyone ever felt their tummy growl or rumble?" Get a show of hands.

"What sound does a growling tummy make? Let's all make it together. 'Grrrrr.'" Pause.

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“Raise your hand if you could feel your heart beating when we played the “Sources Says game.” Get a show of hands.

“Yep, that is the Roots of our BrainTree talking to us. Let’s put our hands on our hearts again and feel for our heartbeat.” Model and pause.

“How fast or slow our hearts beat is a way that our bodies and brains are connected. Our hearts beat all the time. There are different things we do that make them beat faster or slower. Was your heart beating fast or slow after our game?” Get a few Popcorn answers if you have time.

“What do you think the oldest part of a tree is? Do you think it’s the roots, the trunk, or the branches and leaves?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“When a tree grows, which part of the tree grows first?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“The roots! The roots of a tree begin to grow before the trunk and the branches and leaves can grow, because the roots help feed the tree. The rest of the tree needs the roots in order to grow!” Refer to BrainTree visual.

“Our brain works in the same way. The Brainstem is a special part of our brain that controls things like our breathing, blinking, our heartbeat and it even tells us when we need to go to the bathroom, eat food, or drink water, just like the roots of a tree. Touch the back of your neck right where your hair stops. This is where our Brainstem is, which is the Roots of our BrainTree. It is the oldest part of our brain. As we grow it is important to listen to this part of our brain because it knows a lot about how to keep us healthy and safe.

“Let’s do an activity to practice listening to what our brain and body are telling us. Imagine we were outside in the wintertime without a jacket. Our body might start to shiver and get goosebumps. What do you think our brain and body are telling us?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“Right, they are telling us it is cold! What could we do to give our body what it needs?” Get a few Popcorn answers (go inside, put on a jacket, go home, etc.).

“Yes, we could grab a jacket, go back inside, or drink some hot chocolate to warm us up!”



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- Begin the day with a “body check-in” by asking students to use their Roots and notice their body. Are they ready to learn? If not, what does their body need to be ready (use the restroom, have a snack, regulate emotions etc.)? You are encouraged to model listening to your Roots and sharing with students when you notice different needs and emotions in your body. For example, “My Roots are telling me I’m cold. What are your Roots telling you right now?”

Read Alouds

- *How is My Body Feeling?* Read, S. (2020). Self-published.

Home Connection

- Encourage caregivers to help their student practice checking in with their body by asking, “What is your body telling you right now?”

Academic Integration

- **Science:** When you are learning about the body in science you can connect it to listening to our brains and bodies through the BrainTree metaphor. This can be divided into two separate reflections or done as one.
- “Let’s think about what our Roots are saying and what we might learn as we listen. Let’s practice together. Think about a time when your heart beats fast. What might you be doing or what might be happening around you that made your heart beat fast? If I said your heart is beating fast, what are times you can think of when your heart may beat fast?” Pause. Get a few Popcorn answers. Share your own example that includes a physical and emotional response.

“What if we were playing out on the playground and we saw a T-Rex running towards us? What might happen in our bodies if we saw that?” Get a few Popcorn answers, keep it silly.

“Yes, we might scream, our heart might start beating fast, we might even pee our pants! What do you think our brain and bodies are telling us?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“Run! Danger! Our body is telling us that we are scared and our heart begins beating fast so we have the energy we need to run away. Good thing there aren’t really any T-Rexes on our playground, right?”

“What if someone just called us a mean name and we started to feel tears in our eyes? What are our brain and body telling us?” Get a few Popcorn answers (feel sad, mad, alone, hurt, etc.).

“Yes, they are telling us we are feeling sad or maybe angry. Our brain and body can help us know what emotions we are feeling and help us make choices to be healthy and safe.”

Closing Talking Circle (8 min)

“We’re going to finish our lesson today thinking about the things that help us when our brain and body tell us we are sad or upset. Turn to a neighbor and share one thing that helps you feel better when you are sad.” Give the students a few minutes to Pair share. If you have extra time you can turn this into a Full Circle share.

“Just like how we can grab a jacket if we are cold or we can run away if we see a T-Rex, we can make choices to do things that help us feel better when we have big emotions! Thanks for sharing today. We will keep talking about our brains, bodies, and emotions in our next lessons!”

“My heart beats fast when I’ve been running or when I was scared because someone just jumped out of the closet and said ‘BOO!’ My heart also beats fast when I’m really excited, like during my birthday party. Or maybe it’s beating fast because I’m excited for a birthday party.

“Let’s go through a few more. What if you notice that you are breathing faster?”

“Take a big deep breath if your breathing gets faster when you’re about to try something new.

“What if you notice there are tears in your eyes? You might be laughing a lot, sad about something, happy to see someone, or maybe you got hurt.

“When we listen to our body, it can help us be healthy.”

Mindfulness

- “We’re going to do a body listening activity so we know if we’re ready to learn. As you are sitting, what are your feet telling you? Are they wiggly and needing to move, or are they still and ready to help you focus and learn? How about your hands? Are they curious and wanting to touch things, or are they ready to be used for writing, creating, and helping others? What about your tummy? Is it full and quiet, or is it empty and growly? If your body needs something, now is the time to give it what it needs so you’re ready to learn.”

Talking Circle Prompts

- “When you stop and listen, what kinds of things does your body tell you?”
- “Who is someone that can help you if you aren’t able to give your body what it needs?”

Creative Expression

- Create an art station or center with various art supplies (beans, yarn,

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Reflection

construction paper, scissors, glue, etc.) and invite students to create pictures of their BrainTree.

Transitions

- Restroom breaks are a great time to listen to our bodies. Invite students to listen to their bodies throughout the day and give them what they need.



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!



ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS LESSON 2.4

Celebrating Relationship Repair: See the Hurt

Time

20 minutes

Preparation

Cut strips of construction paper for Celebrations and Connections Wall Display (optional)

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Helpful Apologies visual (page [124](#))
- Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's visual (page [123](#))
- Construction paper (optional)

SEL focus

Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

This Celebration Lesson deepens the concept of Helpful Apologies that See the hurt and Help the hurt. Sometimes when we are dysregulated, we may hurt people with our actions or our words. Sometimes our words or actions hurt someone by accident, or unintentionally, and we have an opportunity to See the hurt and Help the hurt. This lesson provides further practice in Seeing the hurt and then offering a Helpful Apology to Help the hurt. The lesson concludes with a Talking Circle where everyone chooses one Affirmation, Apology, or Aha to share.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Apologies can be a step toward re-establishing trust, which can be a powerful form of repair for all involved. There may be times when all involved need an opportunity to take responsibility for their own words and actions and offer repair.

Talking Circle (20 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **“Last time, we practiced the stops on the Regulation Railroad. Who remembers what regulation means?”** Get a few Popcorn answers, and support students in getting to the definition (regulation is helping our bodies and emotions stay in balance, not too much or not too little).

“Yes, in our last lesson, we learned that regulation is about balance, not too much and not too little. We learned that we can regulate our voices, body temperature, and our emotions. We can use the Regulation Railroad every day to help check in with our body and make healthy choices to regulate. We might do this when we feel big emotions like anger, sadness, worry, or even excitement.

“Sometimes when we have big emotions, we make mistakes that hurt the people around us. We might yell, use mean words, or hurt someone with our bodies. It might be an accident or on purpose, either way we can

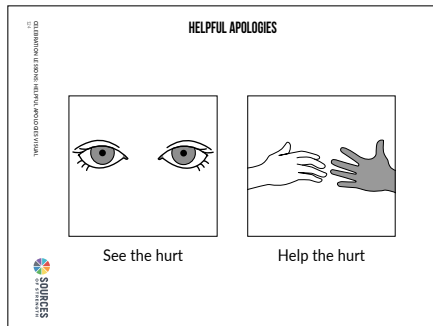
use the Regulation Railroad to regulate our own big emotions. When we have regulated our own emotions it's easier to notice, or See the hurt, that another person is feeling. We might see the other person's body or feelings have been hurt.

“What are some ways that you might notice, or see, that another person is hurt?” Get a few Popcorn answers (crying, blood or a bruise, face looks angry, sad, worried, etc.).

“Thanks for sharing ways we can see when someone is hurt. Now, let's pretend someone has yelled at me and called me a mean name. Watch me as you try to See the hurt.” Act out having your feelings hurt and being mad. Be as melodramatic as possible and add in comments or thoughts that communicate being hurt and angry (stomp your feet, frown, say you're mad, etc.).

“What did you see that might tell you my feelings were hurt?” Get a few Popcorn answers (stomping, crying, looking sad, etc.).

LESSON 2.4 - CELEBRATING RELATIONSHIP REPAIR: SEE THE HURT



“We’ve been learning about how to offer Helpful Apologies. A Helpful Apology Sees the hurt and Helps the hurt. You all just did a great job Seeing the hurt together.

“Now let’s think about how we might Help the hurt we’ve caused. What are some things we might say or do if we yelled at someone and called them a mean name?” Get a few Popcorn answers (say we’re sorry, invite them to play, offer a hug, etc.).

“Exactly. If I had yelled and called someone a mean name, my Helpful Apology might sound like this:” Audibly take three deep breaths to model regulation.

“I’m sorry, 🙌 I see that my words hurt your feelings. Can we try and play together again?”

“Let’s walk through one more scenario together. Can we have a volunteer who can pretend that they have been hit in the face by a ball?” Invite the student to show us the hurt with their face and their actions.

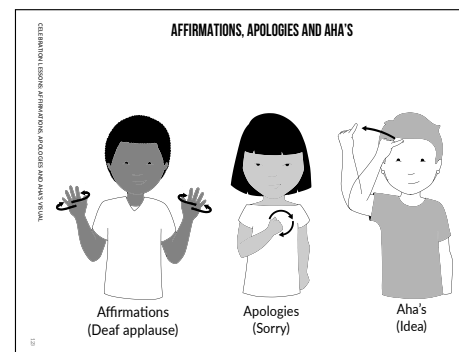
“What did we see that might tell us they are hurt?” Get a few Popcorn answers (crying, hold hand to face, etc.).

“If I was the person playing with the ball that hit my friend, even if It was an accident, I can still See the hurt and Help the hurt as I offer a Helpful Apology. It might look and sound like this: ‘I’m sorry, 🙌 I see that the ball hit you in the face and you are hurt. Can I help you by getting an ice pack from the nurse’s office?’

“What made that a Helpful Apology?” Get a few Popcorn answers (saw the hurt, apologized, tried to help them feel better, etc.)

“Sometimes it can be hard to offer a Helpful Apology because we feel embarrassed, sad, or even mad. When this happens we can always check in on the Regulation Railroad to help bring our big emotions back down to size and then offer to See the hurt and Help the hurt.

“Let’s do a Full Talking Circle where we can each celebrate others with an Affirmation, 🙌 offer an Apology, 🙌 or celebrate our own growth and learning with an Aha! 🙌 We will pass the Talking Piece around the circle and you can choose if you want to share an Affirmation, an Apology, or an Aha. When it’s your turn, tell us which celebration you are choosing. “For example, ‘I choose an Affirmation. 🙌 If you choose to share a Helpful Apology, 🙌 remember to See the hurt and Help the hurt as you Apologize.” Reference the Helpful Apologies visual as you do the ASL sign for each word.



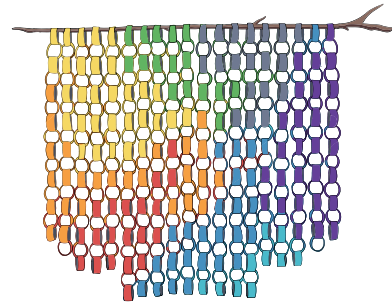
Review Talking Circle norms, if needed.

“Who would like to start?” Pass the Talking Piece to the volunteer to begin and continue sharing around the circle. Be sure to offer another chance to anyone who passes. As the instructor, you are encouraged to share a relevant and authentic Helpful Apology.

LESSON 2.4 - CELEBRATING RELATIONSHIP REPAIR: SEE THE HURT

OPTIONAL: As students share an Affirmation, Apology, or Aha set aside a chain link piece of paper and collect them to add to the Celebrations and Connections Display in Lesson 2.8.

“Thank you all for sharing your Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha’s!”



REFLECTION

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Lesson Spotlight

I can use breathing strategies to regulate my body and my emotions.

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Regulation Railroad worksheet (page [127](#))
- Sources of Strength wheel poster from Lesson 1.7
- The Regulation Railroad visual (page [125](#))
- The Regulation Railroad song - Optional (page [126](#)) (scan QR code)
- Speaker



Preparation

None

Time

30 minutes

SEL Focus

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

Instructor Overview

This lesson continues the practice of the Regulation Railroad and explores breathing as a helpful regulation strategy. Our breathing is controlled by the Brainstem. Regulatory breathing strategies help integrate the information being received by the Brainstem and manage our stress response. The continued practice of regulation strategies outside of a state of dysregulation helps build the skill and habit of healthy regulation. This builds new neural pathways that help increase healthy coping norms. The lesson begins with a refresher on the Regulation Railroad stops by filling in the Regulation Railroad worksheet together as a class. The lesson then teaches and practices two breathing techniques: Flower Breath and Body Breath. Lastly, the students engage in a fun but slightly dysregulating game in order to practice each breathing technique to regulate their bodies and emotions.

Opening Talking Circle (3 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **“Who remembers our lesson when we practiced the stops on the Regulation Railroad?”** Get a show of hands.

“Who remembers how many stops there are on the Regulation Railroad?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“Right! There are four stops. Let’s review each of them.” Refer to the Regulation Railroad Visual.



“The first stop is noticing what we feel in our body, the second stop is naming the emotions we are feeling, the

third stop is noticing how big the emotion is, and the last stop is choosing what we will do to regulate our emotions. Today we are going to practice the Regulation Railroad a bit more, and we’ll spend some time at that last stop exploring what helps us regulate.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Remember to practice the Regulation Railroad frequently as a class throughout the week to reinforce these concepts and build a habit of healthy regulation.

“When we go through the stops on the Regulation Railroad what does it help us do?” Get a few Popcorn answers (helps us make better choices, helps me slow down and think, helps me use kind words, listen to my body, etc.).

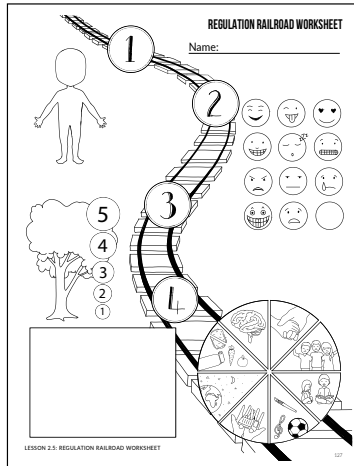
“Yes, regulation can help us make a healthy choice when we are upset, get a snack when we are hungry, or put on a jacket if we are cold. When we practice the stops on the Regulation Railroad together in class, it can help us know what to do when we experience big emotions. The more we practice, the better we’ll get at listening to our brain and our body.”

LESSON 2.5 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

Practicing Regulation

Regulation Railroad Worksheet (10 min)

“As we start our lesson, let’s practice the stops on the Regulation Railroad by filling out this worksheet together.”



Hand out the Regulation Railroad worksheet and fill it out collectively to model how this tool can be used.

“Imagine you were running out on the playground and fell down and scraped your knee. Now look at the first stop on the Regulation Railroad. **Stop 1** asks, ‘**What do I notice in my body?**’ Let’s color in what we might feel in our bodies if we were to fall down and scrape a knee. What do we think we would notice in our body?” Get a few Popcorn answers.

Color in the body using student answers (color the knee since it hurts, eyes are filling up with tears, mouth is frowning, lump in throat, etc.)

“Now let’s go to the second stop. **Stop 2** asks, ‘**What emotion do I feel?**’ Let’s circle or color in the face of the emotion you might be feeling if you fell and scraped your knee. Which faces show the emotions we might feel?” Get a few Popcorn answers and color in the faces mentioned.

“Yeah, we might circle the sad face because our knee hurts or maybe we are feeling a bit embarrassed about falling.

“Next we go to the third stop of the Regulation Railroad. **Stop 3** asks, ‘**How big is the emotion?**’ What do you all think? Are the emotions we just circled small, medium, or big? Are we feeling a little sad, mad, angry, are we feeling kind of in the middle, or is our emotion really big? It’s

probably not a 1 because it does hurt, and it might not be a 5 because it is not the worst hurt we’ve had. What do you think?” Get a few Popcorn answers and color in corresponding sizes.

“Alright, we are now at the last stop of the Regulation Railroad. **Stop 4** asks, ‘**What will I do to regulate myself?**’ Let’s look at the Sources of Strength wheel. Who are some people or what are some things that might help?” Reference the Sources Wheel poster from Lesson 1.7.

“What or who do we think could help us regulate our emotions in order to feel better?” Get a few Popcorn answers and connect the answers to the Strengths on the Wheel (Positive Friends helping me up, a family member giving me a hug, doing a Healthy Activity, Flower Breaths, coloring, crying, Physical Health, the school nurse giving me a BandAid™, etc.).

“Those are all great answers. When someone is hurt and has big emotions, several slices of the Wheel might be helpful. Maybe a Positive Friend sees we are in pain so they get a teacher who takes us to the nurse to get ice and a BandAid™ so we can feel better faster. Or maybe we use our Physical Health and Healthy Activities; maybe we just need to take a deep breath and then we are able to keep playing the game we were having fun with.

“Thanks for going through the stops on this worksheet together. Did anyone notice we experienced different emotions and they were different sizes for some of us too? Our experiences are just as unique as we are, which is why it is so helpful to have many different ways we can regulate our emotions. These worksheets will be available if anyone would like to use them in the future when we notice we are feeling a big emotion.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Consider playing/singing the Regulation Railroad song again together as a class to continue reinforcing these concepts.

Regulation Station Strengths and Strategies

(14 min)

“Today we are going to spend some more time talking about that last stop on the Regulation Railroad, the Regulation Station. Like we just saw, there are a lot of things that can help us regulate. Breathing is one important and helpful strategy to remember when we feel big emotions. Raise your hand if you know how to breathe.” Pause.

“Yes we all know how to breathe, don’t we? That is something all of us have in common. Every person, animal, and plant needs to breathe. Remember the Roots of our Braintree, or the Brainstem, help our body breathe in and out to keep our bodies healthy. Sometimes taking deep breaths can help us to regulate when we feel big emotions. Have you ever cried really hard and had a difficult time breathing or even talking?” Get a show of hands.

“Has anyone ever laughed so hard that it was hard to catch your breath?” Get a show of hands.

“Yeah, me too. Sometimes big emotions can make it hard for us to get all the air our body needs. We have the ability to slow down our breathing to help us regulate and give our bodies what it needs.

“There are lots of helpful ways we can control our breathing and listen to what our brain and body needs. Today we are going to try two ways to practice breathing to help regulate our emotions. The first one is called a Flower Breath. Let’s pretend we are holding a pretty flower that smells really nice.” Model holding a flower in front of your face.

“Now, let’s all take a deep breath in through our nose and smell our flower.” Inhale audibly through your nose as you model smelling a flower.

“Now, blow our breath out through our mouth as we gently blow on our flowers.” Model a slow release of breath through your mouth.

“Great job, let’s practice that again. Breathe in and smell our flower.” Pause.

“Breathe out and gently blow on our flower.” Do two

more Flower Breaths together. “Great job!”

“Now let’s practice another way to breathe that helps us regulate. This one is called a Body Breath. As you give yourself a hug, exhale and blow out all the air in your lungs.” Model giving yourself a hug with arms crossed across your chest and breathing out audibly.

“Now open your arms out wide and inhale by taking a deep breath in.” Model stretching your arms out wide and behind you, opening up your chest for a deep breath.

“OK, now let’s do that a few more times together. Ready? Give yourself a big hug and exhale to breathe out. Now open your arms wide and inhale by breathing in deep.

“Now breathe out and give yourself a hug. Breathe in as you open your arms wide.” Repeat as many times as you would like.

“That was great practice using the Body Breath and the Flower Breath!”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

When doing regulatory breathing exercises, three repetitions is a starting point. Depending upon the level of dysregulation, more repetitions may prove beneficial.

“Let’s play a game where we can practice our Flower Breath and Body Breath. Everybody stand up in the circle. We are all going to move to our left around the circle by slowly walking.” Demonstrate which direction.

“OK, let’s all start walking around the circle and as we do I am going to tell us how to move.” Students should each begin walking to their left, moving around the circle for ten seconds or so.

“Now let’s skip around the circle.” Skip around the circle long enough for everyone to skip a few times.

“Now let’s stomp our feet around the circle like we are giants walking through the forest.” Model.

“OK, now stop where you are in the circle. Let’s practice

LESSON 2.5 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

Practicing Regulation

the Regulation Railroad stops together.

“**Stop 1, what do you feel in your body?** Put your hand on your chest and listen to your heart.” Pause.

“If your heart is beating fast, nod your head.” Model.

“Now, if you are breathing fast, raise your hand.” Model.

“What is your brain and body telling you? What information is it giving you?” Pause.

“OK, **Stop 2, what emotion do you feel? Is anyone feeling excited? Happy? Nervous?**” Get a few Popcorn answers.

“**Stop 3, how big is the emotion you are feeling?** Hold your hands close together like this if you are feeling a small emotion.” Model by having hands facing a few inches apart.

“Hold your hands shoulder width apart if you are feeling a medium emotion.” Model by holding your hands at shoulder width.

“Spread your arms out super wide for a big emotion.” Model.

“Alright, now the last stop on the Regulation Railroad is **Stop 4: the Regulation Station. What will we do to regulate ourselves?** Let’s all try the Flower Breath to see if it helps us regulate. Everyone hold your flower!” Model.

“OK, take a deep breath in through our noses as we smell the flower.

“Now gently blow on the flower as we let our breath out. Let’s do that again.

“Breathe in...Breathe out... OK, last time. Breathe in...Breathe out...

“Good job! Does anyone feel like their body or emotion is feeling a bit more regulated? Has your heart slowed down, or has your breathing gotten calmer?” Pause. Or model raising hand.

“OK, let’s do another round of our game. This time let’s hop around the circle like we are kangaroos.” Model.

“OK, now let’s move around the circle really slowly like we are turtles.” Model.

“OK, now let’s fly around the circle like we are birds. Flap your wings! Be careful to not let your wings bump your neighbors in the



Everyday Application

- As students begin to demonstrate understanding of the Regulation Railroad stops, encourage them to be a Positive Friend acting as the train conductor and help other students who require more guidance.
- If your daily/weekly routine involves student sharing time (e.g., Special Person, Show & Tell, etc.), ask the student to share one of their Strengths from the Wheel. (“Isabel, who is a Mentor for you?” or “De’Sean, what is something you did with your Family Support this week?”)

Read Alouds

- *The Little Engine That Could*. Piper, W., & Hauman, G., Hauman, D. (Illustrators). (2021). New York: Platt & Munk.
- *A Little Story about Big Feelings*. Fletcher, L., & Bishop, G. (2020). Brave Kids Books.
- *The Choices I Make*. Gordon, M. (2021). Self Published.
- *I Don’t Draw, I Color!* Lehrhaupt, A., & Sala, F. (2017). New York. Simon & Schuster Books.

Home Connection

- Invite everyone at home to practice the two breathing techniques together at home. Include the directions in your weekly communication.

Academic Integration

- Use the Regulation Railroad worksheet as you transition from one subject area to the next and invite students to fill in their own answers. This helps to continue the process of students developing their own Strengths and strategies when it comes to healthy regulation.
- Create a Regulation Station in the

circle.” Model.

“OK, now let’s stop where we are in the circle and think about the Regulation Railroad stops again.

“**Stop 1, ‘What do you notice in your body?’** Take a moment to notice what you feel in your body.” Pause.

“OK, **Stop 2, ‘What emotion do you feel?’** Take a moment to think about what emotion you are feeling.” Pause.

“**Stop 3, ‘How big is the emotion you are feeling?’** Is the emotion you are feeling big, medium, or small?” Pause.

“OK, for the last stop let’s practice our other breathing regulation strategy. This time let’s use the Body Breath. Everyone breathe out slowly as you give yourself a big hug.

“Now stretch your arms out wide and take a deep breath in, filling your lungs with an inhale.

“Now breathe out as you give yourself another hug.” Repeat as necessary.

“Great job! Does anyone feel like the Body Breath helped them regulate?” Get a show of hands.

“Thanks for playing that game and practicing our Flower Breaths and Body Breaths. Remember, we can use our breathing to help us regulate our brains and bodies when we experience big emotions.”

Closing Talking Circle (3 min)

“OK, let’s sit back down in our Talking Circle. Turn to a neighbor and Pair share which breath you would want to practice if you are feeling a big emotion later today: Flower Breath or Body Breath.” Pair share. As students finish thank them for sharing.

“We can use either of these breaths any time we need them. The really helpful thing about these breaths is that we can also do them anywhere: at home or at school, on the playground or in the classroom.”

classroom with a copy of the Regulation Railroad visual, along with different sensory and regulation strategies that students can access whenever they need.

Talking Circle Prompts

- “What are the things you do to be healthy and well?”
- “What are the things that make you feel happy?”
- “What helps your body be healthy?”
- “What helps your friendships be healthy?”
- “What are the things that help your mind be healthy?”
- “When was a time you used the Regulation Railroad in the last week?”

Mindfulness

- Use thankfulness as a regulatory activity.
 - “Everyone stop and think about one thing you are thankful for today.
 - “Picture that person, place or thing in your imagination.
 - “You can close your eyes if that feels comfortable to you or look at a spot on the floor.
 - “What emotion do you feel when you think about this person, place, or thing?
 - “Now as I count down from five we are going to say ‘Thank you’ out loud when I get to one.
 - “5...4...3...2...1...Thank you.”

Music

- Continue to play and sing the Regulation Railroad song together as a class.

Creative Expression

- Make glitter jars with the students and use them as a regulation tool in the Regulation Station.
- Invite students to use building blocks

LESSON 2.5 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

Reflection

to create a train.

- Read the book *I Don't Draw, I Color* listed in the Read Alouds and invite students to draw what they are feeling using different colors like the character in the story.

Transitions

- Offer Flower Breath or Body Breath as a regulation strategy when returning from recess or lunch.
- If a student is re-entering the classroom after some dysregulation or disciplinary issues invite them to use the Regulation Railroad worksheet as a proactive tool to help navigate big emotions.
- Sing the Regulation Railroad song during transitions.

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!



ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS LESSON 2.6

Celebrating Specific Affirmations

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Talking Piece
- Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha’s visual (page [123](#))
- Construction paper (optional)

Preparation

- Reflect upon a specific Affirmation for a student or a group of students connected to emotional regulation to share in the Talking Circle.
- Cut strips of construction paper for Celebrations and Connections Wall Display (optional)

SEL focus

Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

Instructor Overview

This lesson opens with an invitation to think about a time students might use the breathing regulation strategies from the previous lesson. As kindergartners grow in the practice of offering Affirmations for others, this lesson builds in the layer of adding more specificity. Modeling Affirmations that celebrate student progress in using healthy regulation strategies invites students to notice and name similar progress in their peers. This contributes to a healthy classroom community. The lesson concludes by allowing everyone to choose one Affirmation, Apology, or Aha to share in the Talking Circle.

Talking Circle (20 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **“In our last lesson, we learned how we can use breathing to help us regulate our emotions. Can someone show us how to do the Flower Breath?”**

Get a volunteer. Support the student in successfully demonstrating the Flower Breath. **“Let’s all do one Flower Breath together.”**

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

You are encouraged to call on a diverse group of students throughout the curriculum. Providing additional wait time will allow students who are not often the first to raise their hand an opportunity to share and have their voices heard.

“Great job! Now, can someone show us how to do the Body Breath?” Get a volunteer.

“Well done! Let’s all do one Body Breath together. Now, take a moment and think about a time in the school

day when we might feel nervous, excited, or another big emotion, and we could use a Flower Breath or a Body Breath to help us regulate.” Pause.

“Now, turn to a neighbor and share when you would use a Flower Breath or a Body Breath. Once you finish sharing, practice a Flower Breath together.” Pair share.

“When we see or notice someone is regulating their emotions, it is something to celebrate! It’s a celebration because that person is taking care of themselves and helping to make our classroom a stronger and safer place. When we see someone regulating themselves, this is a chance to offer them an Affirmation.” 🙌🙌🙌

“When we offer Affirmations 🙌🙌🙌 to others, it can be helpful to be specific. Who knows what the word ‘specific’ means?” Get a few Popcorn answers (includes an example, details, etc.). If students are not familiar with the term ‘specific,’ explain that it means including examples, providing more information, or providing more details.

“Listen to these two Affirmation 🙌🙌🙌 examples. The first one is, ‘Good job Dianté.’” Pause.

LESSON 2.6 - CELEBRATING SPECIFIC AFFIRMATIONS

“The second one is, ‘Dianté, good job taking some deep breaths to regulate when you were upset.’

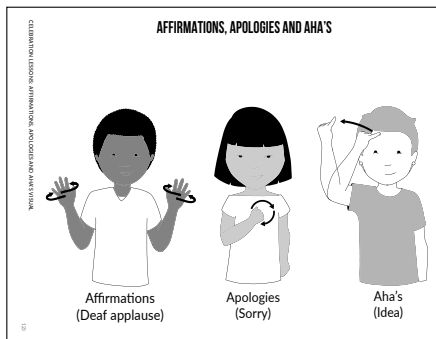
“Now, listen again, and this time, give a thumbs up if you think the Affirmation is specific or a thumbs down if you think it is not specific.”

“‘Good job Dianté.’” Pause for student responses.

“Or, ‘Dianté, good job taking some deep breaths to regulate when you were upset.’” Pause for student responses.

“The second example was specific because it gave more information about what Dianté did. It can be helpful to give more details when we are giving someone an Affirmation, 🙌👤🙌 so they know exactly what they did well.

“In our Talking Circle today, we will all have a chance to celebrate others with an Affirmation, 🙌👤🙌 offer an Apology, 🙏 or celebrate our own growth and learning with an Aha! 🙌👤🙌 The Talking Piece will go around the circle, and you can choose which one you want to share.” Reference the Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha’s visual.

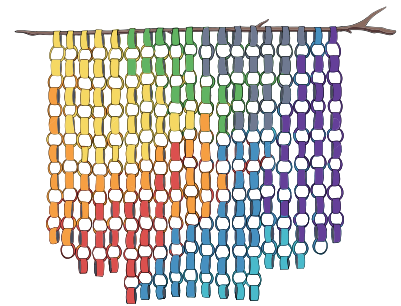


“If you choose to share an Affirmation, 🙌👤🙌 try to be specific and share details about what the person did or does that you appreciate. When it’s your turn, tell us which celebration you are choosing. For example, ‘I choose an Affirmation...’” 🙌👤🙌 As the instructor, you are encouraged to share an Affirmation specific to a student’s or group of students’ use of an emotional regulation strategy.

“Who would like to start?” Pass the Talking Piece to

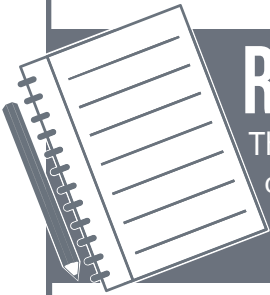
the volunteer and continue sharing around the circle. Be sure to offer another chance to anyone who passes. Review Talking Circle norms if needed.

OPTIONAL: As students share an Affirmation, Apology, or Aha set aside a chain link piece of paper and collect them to add to the Celebrations and Connections Display in Lesson 2.8.



INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Focusing on growth over outcomes is important when we think about modeling Affirmations for students regularly. As you offer Affirmations for student growth throughout the week, you can invite students to notice their own growth with you in the form of an Aha. You can do this by asking one of the following questions: ‘What helped you make that happen?’ or ‘What did you do to make that happen?’



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