

## HIGH SCHOOL



### Unit Summary

This unit contains eleven lessons that help students care for themselves by becoming aware of and managing their emotions. These lessons specifically build self-awareness and self-management skills and also focus on social awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills, which the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning has identified as the five components of social and emotional learning. The lessons incorporate a variety of teaching methods to develop the knowledge and skills needed to regulate emotions by coping with stress, reframing thoughts, building support systems and recognizing strengths, which are ways to show compassion and caring toward self and others. The unit ends with a project that helps develop a more supportive school community.

### Kindness Definition

A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.

### Kindness Concepts

- Caring: Feeling and sharing concern for others.
- Compassion: Feeling empathy for and/or a desire to help someone.
- Self-Care: Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words and actions.

***Questions about teaching these lessons or the RAK program? See the [Program Overview](#).***

LESSON TITLE	LESSON GOALS	LESSON MATERIALS
Lesson 1: SEL and Kindness, pp. 5-10	Students will be able to identify the key elements of social and emotional learning and discover how to work toward being more socially and emotionally competent, as well as inspired and empowered to act kindly toward themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Are You Really Thinking? sheet, one for each student</li> <li>• Kindness Paradigm sheet, one for each student (or project on board)</li> <li>• Ball of yarn</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student.</li> </ul>
Lesson 2: Introduction to Kindness and the Unit, pp. 11-14	Students will be able to explore the meaning of kindness, describe its importance and identify ways to be kind to themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ7_WX-gyVU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ7_WX-gyVU</a></li> <li>• Paper and pen or pencil</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 3: Adolescent Brain and Kindness, pp. 15-18	Students will be able to identify changes that are happening in their brains, analyze how these changes are impacting them and discover some techniques that will help them become aware of their emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDQaEx-OK6U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDQaEx-OK6U</a></li> <li>• Paper and pencil</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 4: Emotional Awareness, pp. 19-23	Students will be able to recognize the importance of and develop skills to enhance emotional awareness and emotional regulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Awareness sheet, one per student</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 5: Managing Emotions, pp. 24-28	Students will be able to recognize emotional styles and evaluate ways to regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Awareness sheet, one for each student</li> <li>• How Do You React? sheet, one per student</li> <li>• Paper and pencil</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 6: Reframing Techniques, pp. 29-35	Students will be able to evaluate how to use reframing techniques as a way to regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframing Thoughts Situations, one per group</li> <li>• Poster sheet with techniques</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>

LESSON TITLE	LESSON GOALS	LESSON MATERIALS
Lesson 7: Building Support Systems, pp. 36-40	Students will be able to examine the importance of support, identify how to build a support system and evaluate how a support system can help decrease mental and emotional distress, which is a way to be kind to themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.values.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/86-track-coach">http://www.values.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/86-track-coach</a></li> <li>• Who's Your Support System? sheet, one for each student</li> <li>• Poster Sheet with techniques</li> <li>• Blindfolds</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 8: Recognizing Strengths, pp. 41-44	Students will be able to recognize their strengths, how to develop these strengths and how they can use these strengths to show kindness to themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheets of paper, one fewer than the number of students in class</li> <li>• Sticky notes, pencils or markers</li> <li>• Butcher block paper</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 9: Coping with Stress, pp. 45-50	Students will be able to recognize sources of stress, evaluate effective strategies for managing stress and analyze ways to speak up for themselves to help maintain mental and emotional health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masking tape</li> <li>• Ways to Care for Myself sheet, one per student</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 10: Demonstrating Kindness, pp. 51-54	Students will be able to integrate what they learned about reframing techniques, coping with stress, using personal strengths and building support systems as ways to help them show kindness to themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIHtuKc3Gig">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIHtuKc3Gig</a></li> <li>• 8 1/2 x 11 blank sheets</li> <li>• Reframing Techniques poster sheet</li> <li>• Pencils, markers</li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student</li> </ul>
Lesson 11: Emotional Care Project, pp. 55-56	Students will design a project that helps create a supportive school community and encourages people to care for themselves and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar9oXnlJrKw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar9oXnlJrKw</a></li> <li>• Student RAK Journals</li> <li>• Materials will vary depending on project</li> </ul>

The lessons in this unit ask students to be vulnerable as they talk about their emotions and coping with stress. Creating a classroom culture where students and teachers trust each other can help students feel comfortable enough to share during RAK lessons as well as during other subjects. RAK has developed strategies to help teachers build a trusting classroom. Listed below are some ways to provide emotional support and create healthy group dynamics. For more suggestions, plus ways to provide academic support and extend learning, please see RAK's [Building Trust in the Classroom](#).

## Provide Emotional Support. How?

**By modeling trust and respect for the students through your actions and language. Here are some ways:**

- Align yourself with students as a coach and mentor.
- Make it a point to connect with each and every student.
- When a student shares in class, validate their contribution.
- Paraphrase what students say with a statement like: "So, what I am hearing you say is ..." Then give students a chance to clarify their ideas if you have misunderstood.
- Start or end each class with a moment to focus on kindness to self and others.
- Help students reframe the language they are using (see Reframing Techniques lesson, pp. 29-35).
- Before class, find out the school policy for reporting concerns about a student's mental health to a school counselor or administrator.
- Have a list of community resources available for students who want more information about a topic that comes up in class.
- Take care of yourself in and out of school as a way to model to your students the importance of respecting themselves.



## Create Healthy Group Dynamics. How?

**By encouraging students to think of the class as a place that belongs to everyone. Here are some ways:**

- Allow students to define together the rules of class discussions (see SEL and Kindness lesson, pp. 5-10).
- Be intentional about letting students know you want to create a safe place to learn.
- Create a time during class where everyone who wants to has a chance to speak. Students could gather in a circle and pass a talking stick or an object, which allows each student the opportunity to speak.
- Post group norms, such as RAK's Kindness Concepts, and refer to them during each class. Have students complete the [RAK Student Self Assessment](#) to help them decide what concepts they want to develop individually or as a class.
- Break large group activities into smaller groups to help facilitate sharing.
- Take time to solve problems when they arise.
- At the start of the year or when the group is having challenges, play games to facilitate better listening and trust. For ideas see: <http://www.greatgroupgames.com/icebreaker-games-for-teens.htm>



## Goals

Students will be able to identify the key elements of social and emotional learning and discover how to work toward being more socially and emotionally competent, as well as inspired and empowered to act kindly toward themselves and others.

## Time

Preparation: 30 minutes

Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

## Materials

- What Are You Really Thinking? sheet, one per student
- Kindness Paradigm sheet, one per student (or project on the board)
- Poster sheet, for class rules
- Ball of yarn
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

## Lesson Background for Teachers

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** SEL is about building the skills needed to develop the five SEL competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making. Students will learn that building these skills is an ongoing process and that as we grow, so does our capacity for kindness, compassion and caring for ourselves and others.

**Inspire, Empower Act and Share:** RAK's goal is to inspire and empower people to act kindly toward others and share kindness. This paradigm, which is part of all the lessons, helps students understand how to apply the concepts in kind and caring ways.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Improving skills and awareness around recognizing and managing emotions, solving problems, taking care of ourselves and developing care and concern for others, creating and maintaining healthy relationships with others and handling challenging situations.
- **Well-Being:** Being comfortable, healthy and happy.
- **Vulnerability:** Trusting those around you enough that you are willing to share personal experiences or ideas.
- **Trust:** Having confidence in and being able to rely on those around you.
- **Inspire:** Becoming excited & encouraged to connect with what we're learning.
- **Empower:** Developing the tools and confidence needed to act on the changes we are inspired to make.
- **Act:** Using this new information to be kinder to yourself & others.
- **Share:** Spreading kindness to those around you and inspiring others.
- **Kindness:** A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.

## Tips for Diverse Learners

- Instead of having students work independently on the worksheet, make a class list of things you're really thinking about in class.
- Post key terms on the board or in class for a few days for students to revisit.
- For web of kindness activity: Go through the first example together. If students still need help, continue helping with the responses for the whole activity.

## Resources

- Edutopia website: <http://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning>
- If your state, district or school has social and emotional goals or standards, share these with the students. You could also share the CASEL standards on p. 57.

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

### INSPIRE

#### Writing Activity (5 mins)

Begin class by handing out the **What Are You Really Thinking?** sheet. Then say: *“We are going to start today with a writing activity. I want you to draw thought bubbles above the picture of the student and in those bubbles, write what you are really thinking about in class, like: ‘I wonder what’s for lunch.’ ‘I wonder if Latoya is going to meet up with me or flake again.’ ‘I hope my step-mom isn’t there when I get home from school.’ etc. Write as many bubbles as you want, but at least two.”*

Allow students time to write in their thoughts. Ask for volunteers to share.

Then say: *“That’s what **social and emotional learning** (or SEL) is: things in life you have to deal with in addition to school, your relationships, problem solving, figuring out what other people are doing and thinking, trying to get everything done, figuring out what you want and need to do, listening to all the messages you get from everywhere...that’s all part of SEL. It’s about how we think, act and react to our lives. The good news is that just like learning a new sport or a new subject at school, SEL is full of skills we can learn and practice and get better at, which helps improve our **well-being**. It does take effort, so that’s why we want to practice it, so we can be our best selves and get what we want out of life.”*

### EMPOWER

#### Optional: Rules for a Kind Classroom (10 mins)

Ask: *“How did you feel when you were thinking about and writing your thoughts? What about when you were asked to share them with the class?”*

Say: *“It takes **vulnerability** and being able to **trust** our classmates to talk about and share personal things. What rules do you think we can all agree to that would help create this kind of trust during these lessons and in this class?”*

Spend a few minutes writing some rules (such as respecting other people’s property, listening without interrupting, etc.) Ask students by a show of hands which rules they agree with. During or after class, write a list of the rules on a poster sheet and have all the students sign. Keep the rules posted in the room.

#### Discussion (3 mins)

Project the **Kindness Paradigm** image on p. 9 and pass out the sheet. Say: *“Just like in math and science, there are a lot of ways to teach SEL. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation uses this model to teach both SEL and kindness. Let’s review the definitions for **inspire, empower, act** and **share** together.”*

Ask: *“What do you think this has to do with **kindness**?”* Allow students to respond.

Then continue: *“The cycle just keeps going around and around. You get Inspired, which means you feel like you want to do something, but maybe you don’t know how. So you Empower yourself by getting some information and the skills. Act: you try it out, Share: it is your turn to do it in a way that might inspire others.”*

Continue to project the paradigm; have students refer to the paradigm or write Inspire, Empower, Act, Share on the board in case anyone forgets the order.

Have everyone stand in a circle and hand one student a ball of yarn. Then say: *“Now we are going to do an activity where we can learn more about what it means to Inspire, Empower, Act and Share. I will read an example or situation. The person holding the ball of yarn will say “Inspire” and what the example or situation might inspire them to do. Then that person will throw the yarn to someone else in the circle while still holding on to a piece of the yarn; that person will say “Empower” and describe something they might need to learn in order to act on*

#### Web of Kindness Activity (10 to 15 mins)

## Activity (cont.)

that inspired idea. Then that person will throw the yarn to someone else, who says “Act” and gives an example of how they could act in a kind way now that they are inspired and empowered. The next person will say “Share” and a way they can share the kind act. Then we will start again with a new example. Once we all have a turn, we will create a web of kindness. Any questions?”

Read example to the students: *Your friend volunteers at a senior center.*

*Inspire: You see what your friend is doing and want to volunteer too.*

*Empower: You ask around and find places where you can volunteer.*

*Act: You sign up to volunteer one afternoon a week at a homeless shelter.*

*Share: You share your time and company with people at the shelter.*

Continue the activity until everyone has had a chance to share, creating a web.

Use these examples or create your own:

- *You hear about people saving pets from the pound before they are put down.*
- *You hear a story of someone who always wanted to go to college, but never had a chance and started college at age 35.*
- *You see someone return a lost wallet.*
- *You see one student stand up for another when some kids are teasing them.*

## Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

### Evaluation Questions

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *How does social and emotional learning connect to your life?*
- *How does the Inspire, Empower, Act, Share Kindness model help us learn about SEL?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *SEL is a lifelong process. How do you see it benefiting you?*
- *How can we create a school or classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable enough to share their emotions?*

### Summary

Say: *“Kindness connects us all...we may not even know it, but we do affect those around us. In each lesson in this unit, we will be talking about ways to inspire and empower each other to act kindly and share kindness with others.”*

## ACT

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Have students turn to a classmate and share a compliment about someone else in the room, something kind about their character, actions or the way they think.

While they are sharing compliments, hand out the **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. You could also post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals. Then say: *“Before the next class, write down someone who inspires you or who you admire and why.”*

## WHAT ARE YOU REALLY THINKING?







Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRO TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**Directions:** Before our next meeting, think of someone who inspires you or who you admire and why. Write it down to share next class.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRO TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

**Directions:** Before our next meeting, think of someone who inspires you or who you admire and why. Write it down to share next class.

**Goals** Students will be able to explore the meaning of kindness, describe its importance and identify ways to be kind to themselves and others.

**Time** Preparation: 15 minutes Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

**Materials**

- Kindness video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO7\\_WX-gyVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO7_WX-gyVU)
- Paper, pencils
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

**Lesson Background for Teachers** **Self-awareness:** In this lesson, students are asked to think about being consciously aware of thoughts, feelings and reactions. Being self-aware can help students make thoughtful decisions, which is an important skill that develops the ability to show caring and compassion toward themselves and others.

**Key Terms for Students** Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK journals as reference.

- **Kindness:** A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.
- **Caring:** Feeling and sharing concern for others.
- **Compassion:** Feeling empathy for and/or a desire to help someone.
- **Self-Care:** Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words and actions.
- **Well-Being:** Being comfortable, healthy and happy.
- **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing your own emotions and thoughts and understanding how they impact your actions.

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- Introduce the key terms and definitions the day before the lesson, then review before the video.
- Play the activity as a whole class. Have students guess how many kindness ideas they will develop, then write the ideas on the board and see if students can exceed their prediction.

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS



(2 mins)

Write the following on the board before class: *Using your homework as a guide, share with another student or in a small group who inspires you or who you admire and why.*



**Video Clip**  
(5 mins)

Have students begin as soon as they enter the room. Collect homework.

Introduce the video by saying: *“In the last lesson, we talked about what it means to be inspired and empowered to act kindly and share **kindness**. Today, we are going to start by watching a video that features high school students talking about kindness, made by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, a group that helps create a culture of kindness in schools, homes and communities through lessons like these and other resources. Before we start, I have a question: ‘What is kindness?’”* Allow students to volunteer ideas very briefly.

Then continue: “As you watch the video, be **aware** of your thoughts, feelings and reactions. After the video, we’re going to talk more about kindness, so consider writing down a comment or idea from the video that was meaningful to you and also your own questions.”

As a group, watch the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO7\\_WX-gyVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO7_WX-gyVU)

## EMPOWER

### Discussion (7-10 mins)

Read the definitions for **caring**, **compassion** and **self-care** that are written on the board. Then, discuss a few of the questions below either as a small group or as a whole class. Another option would be to project these questions on a screen; have the students work with a partner or a small group and assign a few questions to each pair or group. Groups could share their responses at the end of the discussion.

- *Do you agree with the definition of kindness written on the board? How would you define kindness?*
- *What thoughts, feelings or questions did you have during the video?*
- *Do you think kindness is important? Why or why not?*
- *Who or what do you think inspires or motivates people to be caring?*
- *When is it easy to show kindness to others? When is it hard to show kindness? What would it take to show kindness in those situations?*
- *What are some ways people can show kindness to themselves?*

### Group Activity (10 mins)

Partner students and give each pair a piece of paper and a pen or a pencil.

Explain the following: “Now we are going to do a kindness activity. With your partner, write down acts of kindness or kind attitudes and thoughts like caring or gratitude. You will have two minutes.”

Say “GO!” and, after two minutes, say “STOP!”

Have each pair share one way they can show kindness and write it on the board.

If there is time, ask questions like:

- *How can kind actions or thoughts help create a strong school community?*
- *What are some ways that people can be caring to other group members? What would compassion look like in our class?*

### Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What is kindness?*
- *What are some ways to show kindness to self and others?*

## Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *What does it feel like to experience kindness?*
- *What does it feel like to perform an act of kindness? Who benefits?*

## Summary

To summarize the lesson, say something like this: *“Today we talked about what it means to be kind. In the coming weeks, we are going to be talking about ways to be kind to ourselves while we are experiencing mental, physical and emotional changes. High school can be stressful and overwhelming, which can prevent us from being kind to ourselves and others. We are going to discuss what is happening to the teenage brain, how to become aware of and manage emotions, what it means to have support systems, recognizing our strengths, what causes stress and how to cope with stress. RAK chose these topics to help students better understand emotional **well-being**, which is the ability to use our emotions in positive ways to benefit our health and happiness. The goal is to develop the skills needed to deal with emotions and make decisions that connect the mind and heart in a way that encourages kindness. After completing these lessons, we will create a project that focuses on encouraging others to care for and be kind to themselves. So be thinking about how we can share what we are learning with the school community and what kind of project we want to create. Throughout the RAK lessons, the goal is for you to be inspired and empowered to act kindly and share kindness with others.”*

## ACT

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Before the students leave, have them turn to another student and smile. Be sure everyone is trying this. Explain that while it might feel awkward at first, even a silly smile probably made someone laugh. Remember that simple acts of kindness can help create a kinder community.

While they are smiling at each other, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *“Before the next meeting, try to do one kind thing for yourself or others. It might be as simple as smiling at someone like you just did! The next time we meet, we will share what we all did and what it was like to show kindness to yourself or others. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.”*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRO TO KINDNESS

**Directions:** Before our next meeting, try to do one kind thing for yourself or others. Write down what you did. The next time we meet, we will discuss what people did and what it was like to show kindness to yourself and others.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRO TO KINDNESS

**Directions:** Before our next meeting, try to do one kind thing for yourself or others. Write down what you did. The next time we meet, we will discuss what people did and what it was like to show kindness to yourself and others.

**Goals** Students will be able to identify changes that are happening in their brains, analyze how these changes are impacting them and discover some techniques that will help them become aware of their emotions.

**Time** Preparation: 15 minutes Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

**Materials**

- Adolescent brain video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDQaEx-0K6U>
- Paper and pencil
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

**Lesson Background for Teachers**

**Self-Awareness:** Students are asked to think about being consciously aware of thoughts, feelings and reactions. Having self-awareness can lead to thoughtful decision making, which is a way for students to act kindly toward themselves and others.

**Brain Remodeling:** As described in the video, the brain is being remodeled during adolescence as synapses are “pruned” and myelin is formed. While adolescence can seem confusing and overwhelming at times, learning strategies to focus the body can actually help students calmly reflect on a situation rather than reacting in an emotionally dysregulated way. This type of self knowledge can lead to treating themselves and others with more compassion.

**Insight and Empathy:** As the brain is changing during adolescence, it is developing the ability to have insight and empathy. This lesson helps students recognize that having empathy toward others and insight into their lives is an important step toward treating themselves and others with kindness.

**Key Terms for Students**

Consider writing these key terms on the board before class and previewing them before the video. You could also pause the video to explain concepts as you go. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Pruning:** Process during adolescence when some synapses are removed or “pruned” as the brain starts to specialize.
- **Myelin:** A healthy sheath that allows connected neurons to communicate with each other more effectively.
- **Insight:** The ability to have deep understanding of yourself or another person or situation.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand or imagine another person’s feelings in a given situation.

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- Pause video at 2:00 and 3:15 to review the content and also review at the end. You also may want to watch the video twice to ensure understanding.
- Simplify the lesson by removing vocabulary related to specific parts of the brain and focus on the processes happening.

**Resources**

- *Brainstorm* by Daniel J. Siegel (Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2013)
- *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation* by Daniel J. Siegel (Bantam, 2010)
- [www.drdansiegel.com](http://www.drdansiegel.com)

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS



Ask a few students to quickly share with the class what kind thing they did for themselves or others since the last meeting, as they wrote about for their homework.

(1 min)

Collect homework.



**Video**  
(5 mins)

Introduce the video by saying: *“As you may have discovered while doing your homework, sharing kindness can feel natural sometimes; other times it can be difficult. Dr. Dan Siegel is a professor of psychiatry, author and a leading expert on how the adolescent brain is changing in amazing ways during adolescence, which he defines as happening between 12 and 24 years old. Understanding changes that are happening to our brains and bodies and realizing that most teenagers are coping the best they can might just help us be more kind and compassionate to ourselves and others. Let’s watch a video where he talks about those changes and then we will look at how this relates to kindness. As you watch, be aware of your thoughts, feelings and reactions. We will be talking about the video afterwards, so you may want to write down any thoughts, feelings or reactions or write one thing that you already knew or something new that you learned. You can also write down any questions.”*

As a group, watch the video about the Adolescent Brain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDQaEx-0K6U>



Discuss a few of these questions in small groups or as a whole class. You may want to project the questions using a computer or document camera. You could even assign a few questions to each group and then share as a whole class.

**Discussion**  
(10 mins)

- *What was one thing that you already knew from the video and something new you learned? Did the video raise any questions for you?*
- *Did you have any thoughts, feelings or reactions that you would like to share?*
- *During adolescence, the brain is “remodeling,” which allows teens to be aware of emotions, want to interact with other people, be curious about new things and do things they like doing. During this process, teens can learn to focus their minds in ways that can change the activity and the structure of the brain. What are some ways in which people can show kindness to themselves and others mentally and physically while all these changes are happening?*
- *Dr. Siegel suggests that as the teen brain is changing, it can develop **insight and empathy**. (Point to the definitions on the board as you read:) **Insight** is the ability to have deep understanding of yourself or another person or situation; **Empathy** is the ability to understand or imagine another person’s feelings in a given situation. How can having insight and empathy help people be more compassionate toward themselves and others?*

**Mindsight Exercises**  
(10 mins)

Then say: *“In his book **Brainstorm**, Dr. Siegel suggests that Mindsight techniques can help the brain as it is changing. These include (write on the board): deep breathing, focusing the mind on one thing, having downtime, connecting with others, getting enough sleep, playing, getting exercise and paying attention to thoughts and feelings.”*



## Exercises (cont.)

Divide students into groups of three and assign one of the techniques to each group. Have students briefly discuss and then write down on a piece of paper or in their RAK Journals a few ways they think the technique they are assigned could help them become aware of and manage their emotions.

If time, have the students share their responses with the whole class.

## Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What are some changes that are happening in the teenage brain?*
- *How do these changes impact teenagers?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *What parts of your character and talents do you want to make sure you keep during the pruning process?*
- *Do you think that being aware of how these changes are affecting you can help you treat yourself and others with more compassion and kindness? In what ways?*

## Summary

To summarize the lesson, say something like: *"The adolescent brain is going through incredible changes. Being aware that all teens are going through these changes and are coping the best they can might help us all be more caring toward ourselves and others. We discussed some different ways that we can learn to manage our emotions, which we will discuss during the next few weeks."*

## ACT

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Have the students write on their hand or on a piece of paper a way they can show caring to themselves. Encourage them to look at it during the week.

While they are writing, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *"As a way to care for and show kindness to yourself this week, be aware of how situations may be impacting you and how they make you feel. Try at least one of these ways to help you increase awareness of your emotions this week: taking a deep breath, taking time for yourself, talking to or spending time with others, exercising, having downtime, getting enough sleep, paying attention to your emotions and feelings. Next time we meet, be prepared to share which technique/techniques worked for you. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date."*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADOLESCENT BRAIN

**Directions:** As a way to care for and show kindness to yourself, be aware of how situations may be impacting you and how they make you feel. Try at least one way of becoming aware of your emotions this week: deep breathing, taking time for yourself, talking to or spending time with others, exercising, having downtime, getting enough sleep, paying attention to your emotions and feelings. Write below what worked for you. Be prepared to share the next time we meet.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADOLESCENT BRAIN

**Directions:** As a way to care for and show kindness to yourself, be aware of how situations may be impacting you and how they make you feel. Try at least one way of becoming aware of your emotions this week: deep breathing, taking time for yourself, talking to or spending time with others, exercising, having downtime, getting enough sleep, paying attention to your emotions and feelings. Write below what worked for you. Be prepared to share the next time we meet.



## Resources

- Adapted with permission from [www.schoolpsychiatry.org](http://www.schoolpsychiatry.org), Jeff Bostic, MD, EdD, Mass General Hospital; [http://www2.massgeneral.org/schoolpsychiatry/classroom\\_selfregulation.asp](http://www2.massgeneral.org/schoolpsychiatry/classroom_selfregulation.asp)
- [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/emotions/power-positive.html#cat20124](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/power-positive.html#cat20124). Information provided by KidsHealth®, one of the largest online resources for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids and teens. For more information, visit KidsHealth.org or TeensHealth.org. © 1995-2014. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. All rights reserved.
- <http://www.danielgoleman.info/the-brain-and-emotional-intelligence-an-interview-with-daniel-goleman/>

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

### SHARE



(2 mins)

Write the following on the board before class: *Using your homework as a guide, share with another student or in small groups about what technique helped you care for yourself (taking a deep breath, taking time for yourself, talking to or spending time with others, exercising, having downtime, getting enough sleep, paying attention to your emotions and feelings). Was it helpful? If not, why not?* Have students get started as soon as they walk into class. Collect homework.

### INSPIRE



### Breathing Activity

(2-4 mins)

Say to students: *“Last time, we talked about how the brain is changing during adolescence and what it means to have insight or deep understanding of ourselves and others. Today we are going to be exploring **emotional awareness**, which is about understanding how **emotions** make us and others feel mentally and physically, and what they look like. One way to develop emotional awareness is to use deep breathing to calm our bodies, which you may have tried as your Kindness in Action. We are going to practice for two minutes: close your eyes and take a few deep breaths – in through your nose for five seconds and out through your nose for five seconds. (Say each body part slowly) Now, become aware of your head...your arms...your hands...your fingers...your upper body...your legs...your feet...your toes. Now, open your eyes. What did your body feel like?”*

### Identifying Emotions

(5 mins)

Then say: *“Now, let’s identify some emotions.”* Allow students to volunteer emotions and write these on the board. Or you could have students brainstorm with a partner or in a small group and share emotions with the class. If students are having a difficult time naming emotions, suggest the following or you could make a list and hand it out: *angry, hurt, upset, overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, unhappy, scared, frustrated, sad, jealous, joyful, happy, grateful, excited, amused, peaceful, proud, inspired, amazed, loving, hopeful, awed, serene, calm, enthusiastic, guilty, pessimistic, afraid, disappointed, passionate.*

### Optional: Role-Plays

(5-7 mins)

Divide into small groups and assign a few different emotions to each group. Then explain: *“Just like caffeine and sugar can make you jittery or hyper, emotions can also affect how our bodies feel. When I point to your group, each group member will act out the emotion you were assigned. Say the emotion and what you are feeling in your body, which might be different for different people! So, for example, when you feel angry, you might feel a knot in your shoulders, chest or stomach. If you feel excited, this might make your legs or arms jittery or you may have butterflies in your stomach. There are no right answers.”*

Move quickly from group to group. If you have time, allow students to go again.

## EMPOWER

### Worksheet (12-15 mins)

Then say: *"All of these emotions and how they make us feel are normal, although some emotions may be more challenging for us to handle than others. We can react in helpful or hurtful ways to ourselves and others when we are experiencing certain emotions. Experts call this **emotional regulation**, which is being able to notice our emotions and make a decision about how to outwardly respond rather than reacting impulsively. When we are aware of and regulate our emotions, that is called **emotional intelligence**. Let's read about how the brain regulates emotions, how it can get **'hijacked'** by our emotions and then answer some questions."*

Hand each student the **Emotional Awareness** sheet. Divide students into groups of three or four or have them stay in existing groups; take turns reading a paragraph. Then have the students discuss the questions together in their groups. Another option would be to complete the worksheet as a class, writing key ideas on the board.

Collect at the end of class to reference during the Managing Emotions lesson.

### Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

#### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *Can emotions be positive or negative? How or why?*
- *What are some things that people can do to be more emotionally aware? What are some different ways to experience emotions?*

#### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *How can being aware of your emotions help us to be kinder to ourselves? Do you think it will also make us kinder to others? Why?*
- *We are better able to observe our emotions when we are calm. What are some things that help you calm down?*

#### Summary

To summarize, say something like this: *"Today we discussed the importance of emotional awareness and emotional regulation and how we can help our brain interpret situations accurately. Next time, we will discover more about our unique emotional styles and how those impact our emotional reactions."*

## ACT

### (2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Tell students to "high five" three people in the room or count to 10 and see how many people they can "high five" before you are done counting.

While they are "high fiving" each other, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals. Then say: *"This week, pay attention to your emotions and how you are reacting in different situations. Write down one positive and one negative situation and where you felt the emotions in your body. You don't need to act any different. Just notice how you feel. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date."*

## EMOTIONAL AWARENESS DISCUSSION SHEET

*(Adapted with permission from [www.schoolpsychiatry.org](http://www.schoolpsychiatry.org), Jeff Bostic, MD, EdD, Mass General Hospital and KidsHealth®, one of the largest online resources for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids and teens. Visit [KidsHealth.org](http://KidsHealth.org) or [TeensHealth.org](http://TeensHealth.org). © 1995-2014. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. All rights reserved. Also see: [http://www.umass.edu/fambiz/articles/values\\_culture/primal\\_leadership.html](http://www.umass.edu/fambiz/articles/values_culture/primal_leadership.html))*

**Directions: Take turns reading the information below out loud in small groups and then discuss the questions in your group.**



Feeling a range of emotions is part of being human. We may label some feelings as “negative” or difficult, but it doesn’t mean those emotions are bad or we shouldn’t have them. Learning to manage all of these emotions effectively takes a lot of time and practice to develop self-awareness and understanding. This is called emotional regulation, which is being able to notice our emotions and make a choice about how to outwardly respond rather than reacting impulsively.

The brain plays a really important role in becoming aware of and managing our emotions. In fact, the brain is like an engine that generates the thoughts, memories and moods that form emotions. Without your help, your brain doesn’t always interpret situations accurately. As a result, we can say things or act in ways that don’t help the situation. For example, the amygdala is the part of the limbic system that processes and stores emotions, and helps tell us if we are in a life threatening situation. When something triggers this response, we are sent a fight, flight or freeze message. This is called emotional hijacking. Sometimes emotions can trigger this response, but emotions are not really life threatening. They are just there to signal to us to pay attention to what’s going on. When this happens, we have to gain control of our emotions before we can react rationally.

People experience their emotions in different ways. Some people feel their emotions very intensely, which makes them passionate and enthusiastic and exciting to be around. However, their emotions may get so intense that they react to things in ways they may later regret, or be overwhelming to other people. Other people have the ability to stay calm and cool-headed in tough situations and don’t let emotions overwhelm their ability to make decisions. However, even though they feel disappointed, sad, happy, etc., they don’t show other people how they are feeling inside or feel they need to stay in control. Some people have developed skills for balancing how they express their emotions. They may feel strong emotions, but have learned some helpful ways to respond to the challenging situation. For most of us, finding the right balance can take some effort. Being aware of how our emotions impact our body and thoughts is the key to being able to manage our reactions to situations. As we get better at this, we may feel less overwhelmed by our emotions and know when we need to get help from others.

### Questions:

1. *Discuss a time when you or someone you know showed a strong emotion and/or when you didn’t react at all. At the time, were you or the other person aware of how they felt or reacted? Looking back at the situation now, could you or the other person have responded differently? What can people do to become aware of their feelings?*
2. *People have choices about how they respond in a challenging situation. What do you think are some helpful ways to respond? What are some hurtful or harmful ways?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

**Directions:** This week, pay attention to your emotions and how you are reacting in different situations. Write down one positive and one negative situation and where you felt the emotions in your body. You don't need to act any different. Just notice how you feel. Next time, we will talk about what you noticed.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

**Directions:** This week, pay attention to your emotions and how you are reacting in different situations. Write down one positive and one negative situation and where you felt the emotions in your body. You don't need to act any different. Just notice how you feel. Next time, we will talk about what you noticed.





## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

### SHARE



(2 mins)

Write the following on the board before class: *Using your homework as a guide, share with another student or in small groups what you noticed when you were paying attention to your emotions this week and how you reacted in both negative and positive situations. Did certain situations make you feel stressed or upset? Did others make you happy and excited?*

Have students get started as soon as they walk into class. Collect homework.

### INSPIRE



(1 min)

Say to students: *“Last time, we talked about becoming aware of emotions in our bodies and minds and how it feels when we are reacting to situations. We also talked about regulating our emotions and how different people experience their emotions. Some people are more reserved, others are intense and others are able to find emotional balance. Today we are going to do some role-playing, where we learn more about emotional styles. As the groups act out the situations, start thinking about your own emotional style.”*

### EMPOWER



#### Role-Play

(12-15 mins)

Divide students into small groups. Hand each group one of the **How Do You React?** scenarios. Have one group member read the situation, and the other group members act out each response, one at a time. After the group has finished, ask all the students to indicate by a show of hands which response best represented the way they would react (a, b or c). Then have the next group act out their scenario.

Keep this activity fun so that students don't feel judged for their emotional style.

#### Discussion

(10 mins)

After students finish, say: *“The goal of role-playing was to become aware of how we react to situations and how those reactions can impact a situation's outcome. Some people are **emotionally reserved**. They are calm and cool-headed, and also may have a difficult time expressing their emotions. People who are **emotionally intense** may experience emotions intensely, and also may overreact in ways they later regret. Other people may be **emotionally balanced** in how they express their emotions. Do you ever notice that your emotional style changes? For example, you may be reserved in large groups, intense with your family and balanced at school. No matter where we are on the spectrum, we can all learn ways to develop emotional balance in life. Many adults have a hard time managing their emotions, so we are all working on developing these skills.”*

Hand each group a piece of paper. Then say: *“In your groups, you will discuss the strengths and challenges of each emotional style, and then suggest some strategies for how people with that emotional style can respond in a way that shows kindness to self and others. Write down these strategies on the piece of paper and, if we have time, the groups will share with the class.”*

If students are struggling, suggest a few strategies, such as: take a breath of five seconds through the nose and five seconds out the nose; think of things from another person's perspective; ask yourself if your emotional reaction is in proportion to the issue; talk to someone about how you're feeling; think about whether things are as bad or as good as they seem to you. Then have the students decide how a person with that emotional style could benefit from the strategy.

If there is time, have groups share strategies with the whole class.

## Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What are some ways to become aware of and manage emotions?*
- *What are the three emotional styles and some strengths and challenges people might have?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *What do you think your emotional style is? Do you think you have the same emotional style all the time or do you have different styles in different situations? Is one more dominant?*
- *How does being aware of other people's emotional styles help you be more kind to them?*

### Summary

To summarize, say something like this: *"You've probably been in a situation where someone reacted in a way that was way too emotional, making you cringe or feel upset. Or maybe you can think of a time when you didn't manage your reaction because you felt anxious, angry or frustrated. Hopefully, by thinking about how you react to things today, you can develop some ways to respond in an emotionally balanced and helpful way. Next time, we will talk more about how we can regulate emotional reactions to situations."*

## ACT



(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Before ending class, have each student do a small act of self-care and take 30 seconds to stretch.

While they are stretching, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *"This week, think about how you can become aware of and manage your emotions. Write down the strategy you are going to try this week for how to respond in an emotionally balanced way. Next time, we will talk about the strategy you tried, what worked and whether the strategy helped you to care for yourself. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date."*

## HOW DO YOU REACT?

**Directions:** Before class, cut apart the scenarios. Divide students into small groups and give each group a scenario. Have one group member read the situation and the other group members act out each response, one at a time. After the group has finished, ask all the students to indicate by a show of hands which response best represented the way they would react (a, b or c).

**1. I find out that I have a test that I didn't study for in a class that is hard for me.**

- a. I don't really get anxious.
  - b. I get overwhelmed and can't calm down.
  - c. I realize that I made a mistake, take a deep breath and do the best I can on the test.
- 

**2. The coach just posted the roster and I made the varsity team.**

- a. I tell everyone, even my friends who didn't make it. I figure they should be happy for me!
  - b. It's fine because I wanted to be on the team.
  - c. I feel proud because I worked hard. I share with my close friends who I know are happy for me.
- 

**3. I find out that my best friend lied to me about why she couldn't come over. It turns out that she went to a movie with her boyfriend; she wasn't babysitting her sister like she said.**

- a. I call her up on the phone and start yelling at her. She needs to know that she was a jerk!
  - b. This has happened before, so I decide to talk to her about the fact that I feel betrayed.
  - c. I don't get angry or anything, because I'm just glad she wants to hang out with me sometimes.
- 

**4. My dog is really sick and the vet doesn't know how much longer he will live.**

- a. I feel really sad, because we've had him since I was four. I decide to talk to someone about these feelings.
  - b. It's best to just not think too much about how sad this is.
  - c. I cry uncontrollably every time I think about my dog and how much I am going to miss him when he dies. My friends try to help me, but I just cry harder.
- 

**5. My mom finally found a job after being out of work.**

- a. It seems like something she wanted, which is good.
- b. I am excited for my mom.
- c. I run around our apartment screaming because I can't contain my excitement.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## MANAGING EMOTIONS

**Directions:** Write down the strategy that you are going to try in order to respond in an emotionally balanced way: \_\_\_\_\_

Next time, we will talk about the strategy you tried, what worked and whether this strategy helped you to care for yourself.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## MANAGING EMOTIONS

**Directions:** Write down the strategy that you are going to try in order to respond in an emotionally balanced way: \_\_\_\_\_

Next time, we will talk about the strategy you tried, what worked and whether this strategy helped you to care for yourself.



## INSPIRE



### Discussion

(5 mins)

Begin the class by saying: *“During our last meeting, we discussed what it means to be emotionally balanced and we developed some ways to deal with emotions, particularly in tough situations. Once we understand why and how we react in different situations, then we may be able to figure out how to develop more kind and compassionate emotional responses. It may be understandable why we react in certain ways, although learning new techniques to cope with hard situations can be helpful. One technique is called **reframing**. Does anyone know what it might mean to reframe thoughts?”* Allow students to respond.

Before class, consider writing the questions below on the board or a poster sheet. Then continue with this explanation of reframing: *“Emotional reactions can sometimes become a habit or pattern, kind of like a muscle reflex, rather than reflective of what’s going on. This is true for teens and adults! We also can feel many emotions about a situation at one time, which can be confusing and overwhelming. This can cause us to misinterpret a situation and react in ways that are not helpful or make the situation worse. Stepping back and asking ourselves questions about why a situation occurred or why we feel a certain way can allow us to figure out if there is another way to explain what happened. It is a way for us to be kind to ourselves and others by recognizing and validating how we’re feeling, but not reacting by jumping to conclusions and acting or saying something in a way that we might later regret. So, for example, a problem can actually be an opportunity, a weakness can be a strength, or a situation where we think someone is being mean or rude may just be a misunderstanding. We can ask ourselves questions like:*

- *What is another possible explanation for how you feel or what happened?*
- *What are some other ways to solve the problem? What might the outcome be?*
- *What is the big picture?*
- *What effect will changing my thinking have?*
- *How can I talk myself through this situation in a helpful way?*
- *How can I accept that the situation may not work out the way that I had hoped?*
- *Is there anything I can learn from this that will change how I see or do things in the future?*
- *What can I focus on that may help me move forward?*

*That is what we call **reframing**, a skill we can work on our whole lives.”*

## EMPOWER



### Worksheet

(10-12 mins)

Divide students into groups of two or three. Hand out the **Reframing Situations** sheet, one to each group. Explain: *“For the next activity, we are going to learn how to use the reframing questions we just reviewed above. We will start by reading through an example together and then, in your groups, you will come up with at least two reframed, **reflective responses** for the situations you are assigned. Can I have volunteers read the example and then the questions and the answers loudly and expressively, like an actor?”*

Ask if there any questions about the activity.

Assign one or two situations to each group, depending on how many students are in the class and how much time you have. Allow students to discuss and reflect on their responses.

**Optional:  
Role-Plays**  
(5-7 mins)

Once students have written reframed responses for each scenario, have each group read or act out their reframed responses for the situations they were assigned.

After each group acts out their responses, have students by a show of hands identify what situations they think would help them better manage their emotions. Discuss why these would work or why they wouldn't work.

**Wrap-Up**  
(5-7mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

**Evaluation  
Questions**

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What is reframing? When might you use this technique?*
- *What are the benefits of reframing?*

**Reflection  
Questions**

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *Think of a recent situation you've been in where reframing your thinking could have been useful. What techniques do you think would be most effective for you?*
- *How can these techniques help you manage your emotions?*

**Summary**

To summarize the lesson, say something like: *"Today we discussed how to use reframing techniques. These are another way to work through tough situations, which can help us care for ourselves."*

**ACT** 

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Tell students to write a simple encouraging statement or message of kindness or compassion on their hand and flash it to people in the class and then for the rest of the day. If students are struggling, suggest things like: You matter. You're beautiful. Good things are happening around you. You rock.

While they are writing kindness messages on their hands, give each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *"As a way to care for yourself this week, try at least one of the reframing techniques that you learned through today's activities. We will talk about which techniques worked for you when we meet the next time. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date."*

## REFRAMING THOUGHTS SITUATIONS

**Directions:** Read the example together. Then, in your groups, write at least two reflective responses (more if you want) for the situations your group is assigned. Refer to the reframed, reflective responses as you are writing your responses.

**Example:** Katie gets a bad grade on an English test and tells herself that she is just “dumb in English,” that she will probably fail the class, won’t get into college or get a good grade. She is also mad at the teacher for scheduling a test the day a paper is due in the same class and decides to post nasty comments on social media.

### Reframed, Reflective Responses:

- What is another possible explanation for how you feel or what happened? *“I forgot to eat breakfast and only drank a huge cup of coffee. Maybe I better eat something before my next test.”*
- What are some other ways to solve the problem? What might the outcome be? *“If I post on social media, the teacher might find out and he won’t be very happy with my comments. He always invites us to come in after class. Maybe I should go for help.”*
- What is the big picture? *“This is one test. I have a 75 in the class, so really I’m not dumb, I just didn’t understand what was on the test.”*
- What effect will changing my thinking have? *“Now that I am calmed down, I feel like I can talk to the teacher about what I didn’t understand.”*
- How can I talk myself through this situation in a helpful way? *“I’m really not that dumb in English. Actually, there are some tests that have gone well. It’s just grammar that I struggle with. I should probably go in during office hours.”*
- How can I accept that the situation may not work out the way that I had hoped? *“I may not get a B in English, but that’s okay. It’s not my strongest subject. I am going to get help from the teacher and not beat myself up if I can’t do better.”*
- Is there anything I can learn from this that will change how I see or do things in the future? *“I did badly on this test, but I guess that’s what happens when you text until three in the morning. I need to get more sleep.”*
- What can I focus on that may help me move forward? *“If I talk to the teacher, maybe I could retake it or do extra credit. The teacher may have some ideas. Really, I’m probably not going to fail this class.”*

### Situations:

1. After not making the basketball team, Pablo tells himself that he just isn’t a very good athlete.

*What are some ways that Pablo can reframe his thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_



2. Marissa's parents or guardians are getting divorced and she feels like it is her fault.

*What are some ways that Marissa can reframe her thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Jackson finds out that his teacher has recommended that he repeat Algebra. Jackson is convinced it is because he is stupid.

*What are some ways that Jackson can reframe his thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Jesse wants to ask Skyler to the prom, but is afraid that Skyler will laugh at the request and tell their friends.

*What are some ways that Jesse can reframe his thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sophie and Nora have always been close friends, but lately Nora has been hanging out with other people. Sophie is worried that Nora doesn't like her anymore because she isn't always excited when Sophie calls.

*What are some ways that Sophie can reframe her thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Dillon gets anxious when he has to speak in front people. He is worried that he will make a fool of himself when he gives his speech in history.

*What are some ways that Dillon can reframe his thinking?*

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Tess hangs out with friends who have a lot more money than she does. She decides to skip Isabel's birthday party on Saturday because she can't afford an expensive gift.

*What are some ways that Tess can reframe her thinking?*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Elisa's soccer team lost their first game by 10 points; she is convinced they are going to lose all the games this season.

*What are some ways that Elisa can reframe her thinking?*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Maurice's family fights a lot. Even when they are getting along, he is worried about saying the wrong thing that might cause an argument.

*What are some ways that Maurice can reframe his thinking?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

10. When Laqueta argues with her friend, she feels all alone and like it is the end of the world.

*What are some ways that Laqueta can reframe her thinking?*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Isaiah is working on a school project with other students. He has done his research but is afraid to share his ideas with the group because he thinks the others might laugh at him.

*What are some ways that Isaiah can reframe his thinking?*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## REFRAMING TECHNIQUES

**Directions:** As a way to care for yourself this week, try at least one of the reframing techniques that you learned through today's activities. When you face a situation, think through the following questions:

- *What is another possible explanation for how you feel or what happened?*
- *What are some other ways to solve the problem? What might the outcome be?*
- *What is the big picture?*
- *What effect will changing my thinking have?*
- *How can I talk myself through this situation in a helpful way?*
- *How can I accept that the situation may not work out the way that I had hoped?*
- *Is there anything I can learn from this that will change how I see or do things in the future?*
- *What can I focus on that may help me move forward?*

Write what you tried in the space below or on the back. Next time we meet, we will talk about what worked for you.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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- *What can I focus on that may help me move forward?*

Write what you tried in the space below or on the back. Next time we meet, we will talk about what worked for you.

## Goal

Students will be able to examine the importance of support, identify how to build a support system and evaluate how a support system can help decrease mental and emotional distress, which is a way to be kind to themselves.

## Time

Preparation: 20 minutes

Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

## Materials

- *Foundation for a Better Life* video: <http://www.values.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/86-track-coach>
- Who's Your Support System? worksheet, one for each student
- Poster sheet with Reframing Techniques from Reframing lesson; or project techniques on a screen
- Optional: Blindfolds for trust activity
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action sheet, one per student

## Lesson Background for Teachers

**Support Systems:** In this lesson, students discuss what it means to have a support system and that the basis of supporting one another is genuine concern and the desire to make others happy, which is a key component of kindness. This support system can be friends, family, peers, mentors and other adults. It can provide a sense of belonging, an increased sense of self worth and a feeling of security, knowing that someone cares. For those who don't have a support system, students are encouraged to discover ways to create a support system.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Support System:** A network of people and resources who can help us get our needs met, grow and feel safe and secure both physically and emotionally.

## Tips for Diverse Learners

- If students indicate that they do not have a support system, meet with them privately to discuss ways to develop that support system. Be prepared for students to share deeply personal or emotional situations or a past trauma or hurt; you may want to suggest they meet with the school counselor or seek out professional support.
- Have a list of community resources available for students who want more information about how to create a support system or want help with challenges they are facing.
- Extend the discussion by thinking of ways to create support systems within the school community.
- Complete the worksheet together, brainstorming and listing possibilities before the students fill in their own sheet.
- Make a visual of what a support network might look like, including: family, friends, school, community, nation.

## Resources

- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in-depth/social-support/art-20044445>

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS



(2 mins)

Post the sheet with the techniques from last class or project on a screen: *Using your homework as a guide, share with another student or in small groups which reframing technique you tried and whether it was helpful.*

- *What is another possible explanation for how you feel or what happened?*
- *What are some other ways to solve the problem? What might the outcome be?*
- *What is the big picture?*
- *What effect will changing my thinking have?*
- *How can I talk myself through this situation in a helpful way?*
- *How can I accept that the situation may not work out the way I had hoped?*
- *Is there anything I can learn from this that will change how I see or do things in the future?*
- *What can I focus on that may help me move forward?*

Have students get started as soon as they walk into class. Collect homework.



**Video**  
(5-7mins)

Watch the *Foundation for a Better Life* video. Then ask the following questions:

- *What did you think of the video? Did it prompt any questions for you?*
- *In what ways did the coach support the runner? (Making sure he caught the bus and was on time for his races, cheering for him, believing in him.)*
- *What do you think it means to support someone or have someone support you? What are some practical ways to provide support? (trust, talking, listening, doing something together, tutoring, hanging out, etc.)*
- *Is a support network always a positive thing? Can it ever be unhealthy?*



**Optional:  
Trust Activity**  
(10-12 mins)

A trust activity can help create a supportive classroom. If you think the class is ready, do a blindfolded walk or another trust activity. Say: *"While we all look for different things in a friend or a support network, we would probably all agree that trust is a crucial part of any relationship. Let's do an activity where you need to trust your partner."*

Divide students into pairs and hand out blindfolds to the pair; another option is for students to just close their eyes. You may want to do this activity outside.

Explain: *"One person in the pair will be blindfolded (or will close their eyes) and their partner will tell them where to go. The job of the blindfolded person is to listen; the job of the person leading is to be sure their blindfolded partner doesn't fall or run into any obstacles. You will do this for two minutes and then switch roles."*

After they finish, ask the following questions:

- *Was it easier to be blindfolded or to be the person leading? Why?*
- *What did it feel like in your body to have to trust your partner?*
- *What does it feel like to trust a friend? What does it feel like when someone violates that trust?*

**Worksheet**  
(12-15 mins)

Divide students into small groups or pair them with another student. Then say: *"Let's think about who's a part of your **support system** by completing this worksheet on your own. Then you can discuss the questions on the bottom of the sheet together."*

Hand each student a **Who's Your Support System** worksheet and allow time for students to discuss the questions on the worksheet with a partner or in a small group.

## Worksheet (cont.)

Then say: *“Supportive people can help us by listening, talking through joys and worries, doing something together and helping us find solutions to difficult problems. A strong support system can include friends, family, peers, mentors and other adults. It can help us feel like we belong, that we are important and that we are safe. We may or may not have this kind of support system right now, but we can always develop one. Be patient with yourself...it takes time and patience and needs to be reciprocal. Offering kindness and support is an easy way to start building that support system!”*

## Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *Who are some people who make up a support network?*
- *Why is a support system important?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *How can your support system help you manage stress and care for yourself?*
- *If you don't feel that you have people to support you or if your group is making unhealthy choices, what can you do to create a positive group?*

## Summary

Conclude the class by saying something like: *“A strong support network is built on healthy relationships with people we trust and who are happy for us when we succeed and who support us when we are struggling. Sometimes we may be part of a group that isn't healthy for us, which is an important thing to recognize. Remember that creating a positive support system takes time. While we can support our friends too, sometimes they may need more help than we can give. We may need to encourage them to talk to an adult who they trust. When we feel overwhelmed, we also may need to talk to a trusted adult. Even though asking for help may seem like a weakness, it is actually a strength. Next time we will talk more about recognizing strengths.”*

## ACT

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Have students write a one-sentence thank you note to someone who supports them. If they can't think of anyone, have them write a note to a janitor, secretary or person in the office.

While they are sharing, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *“Think about one way to strengthen a relationship you have and one way to expand your existing support network. Are there ways for you to provide that support to others while still maintaining healthy boundaries? Maybe you want to try something new, like joining a club, meeting a new person, volunteering, etc. We will discuss a strategy you tried when we meet again. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.”*

## WHO'S YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM?

**Directions:** Complete the questions about your support system independently. Then discuss the questions at the bottom with a partner or small group, as assigned by the teacher.

- List any adults or teens who you do things with or talk to regularly.
- List activities that help you feel positive and connected when you are having a hard time. If you can't think of any, write down activities you would like to try (i.e. volunteering, joining a club, trying a new hobby).
- From the list above, write at least two people who you trust, who support you, or who you support. If you can't think of anyone, write down the name of a trusted adult or a counselor who could help you identify ways to create a support system.
- How do these people support you in practical ways (talking, listening, doing things together, etc.) when you are upset or distressed or are facing some challenges? In what ways do they celebrate your successes? If you don't feel you have that support right now, write down what kind of support would be helpful to you.

### Discussion Questions:

- *While it might feel awkward, what are some ways you can reach out to people if you need their support?*
- *Some people find support through social media or online gaming, but it's also important to have a strong network of people to talk to in person when you're going through tough times. What are the benefits of having real, non-virtual friends in your support network?*
- *How can we support other people and be a good friend? When we know we can't help our friends, how can we encourage them to get help from a trusted adult?*
- *What happens when our network of friends doesn't support us or asks us to do things that make us uncomfortable? What can we do then?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**Directions:** Think about one way to strengthen a relationship you have and one way to expand your existing support network. If possible, try one strategy, such as joining a club, meeting a new person, volunteering, etc. Are there ways for you to provide that support to others while still maintaining healthy boundaries? Write what you tried in the space below. We will discuss the strategy you tried when we meet.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## BUILDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**Directions:** Think about one way to strengthen a relationship you have and one way to expand your existing support network. If possible, try one strategy, such as joining a club, meeting a new person, volunteering, etc. Are there ways for you to provide that support to others while still maintaining healthy boundaries? Write what you tried in the space below. We will discuss the strategy you tried when we meet.



**Goal** Students will be able to recognize their strengths, how to develop their strengths and how they can use these strengths to show kindness to themselves and others.

**Time** Preparation: 20 minutes Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

**Materials**

- Sheets of (recycled) paper, one fewer than the number of students in the class
- Sticky notes, enough for each student to have four
- Markers
- Butcher block paper. To prepare, draw a line down the middle, write “Strengths I have” on one side, “Strengths I want to develop” on the other.
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

**Lesson Background for Teachers** **Recognizing strengths:** In this lesson, students will learn that knowing their strengths or what they are good at can help them to speak up when they need something, which is a way to show kindness to ourselves. They also discuss ways to rely on their strengths to make a difference and create a kinder world.

**Key Terms for Students** Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Kindness:** A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.
- **Personal Strengths:** Character traits and acquired skills that help us to succeed in achieving our goals and add to the value of our daily lives.

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- If a student has a difficult time recognizing a strength or talent, mention one that you know they have or encourage others in the class to identify a strength they see in the student.
- Provide students with a list of personal traits to choose from when doing the activity. Lists can be found on the internet.
- Divide strengths into categories to scaffold the brainstorming process. Categories can be: Physical characteristics, Academic strengths, Personality strengths, Talents, Skills, Values.
- For some students, moving around quickly in a game like this can be overwhelming. Consider explaining the activity privately to a student with spatial awareness issues and guiding them or have another student guide them through the game.

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

**SHARE**



(1 min)

To start class, do a quick 15-second discussion where students share from their homework about what ways they tried to strengthen a relationship they have and one way they tried to expand their existing support network. Then ask the following question: “*What do you think is needed to maintain a healthy support system?*”  
Collect homework.

## INSPIRE



### Group Activity (15 mins)

Before class, place the sheets of paper in a circle on the floor (or you can tape Xs), noting that there is one fewer sheets (or Xs) than the number of students. Begin by saying: *“Last time, we talked about creating a strong support system. Today we are going to talk about **personal strengths** and how these strengths can help us speak up for what we need and how we can use these strengths to support ourselves and others. Name some character strengths or talents or skills you have, or perhaps some you have discovered while doing this unit.”* Write student responses on the board. If they are having a difficult time coming up with strengths, suggest some, like: creative, brave, leader, caring, confident, sense of humor, smart, optimistic, patient, thoughtful, outgoing, careful, helpful, kind to animals, kind to children, good listener, good at managing emotions, supportive friend.

Then continue: *“We are going to do an activity where we are going to talk about these strengths and talents. When I say go, walk to a paper in the circle and stand on it. If there isn't a paper left for you, stand in the middle.”*

Say “GO!” Once one person is in the middle, say: *“Name a strength that you have, which is something you do well or others think you do well or a quality you have. Or you could mention a strength you would like to develop. Anyone else who has that strength needs to step off their piece of paper. The person in the middle and anyone who has that strength will need to find a new piece of paper to stand on. The person without a piece of paper will be the new person in the middle. If there is only one other person with your strength, you will switch places...they will go to the middle and you will go to their paper. If no one has your strength, you will need to stay in the middle and say another strength. Try to say a different strength each time and move quickly.”*

Move the activity along quickly. If the person in the middle has a hard time coming up with a strength, have them look at the list on the board, or have someone else suggest a strength that they have. If a person ends up in the middle more than two times, have someone else come into the middle to say a talent or strength. If you have time, do the activity until each person has identified a strength or talent.

## EMPOWER



### Writing Activity (5 mins)

Then say: *“We have mentioned a lot of strengths that we have or would like to develop. Some of the strengths are unique while others are ones we share. We can also develop new strengths. We can use these individual and common strengths to care for ourselves and help build a kinder community. As we have talked about, **kindness** is a natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others. Acts of good will can be things you do, ways you think and attitudes you express toward yourself and others. Let's do an activity where we think about these strengths and how they can help us show kindness.”*

Hand four sticky notes to each student.

Then explain *“On two sticky notes, write or draw two strengths you have and how you can use those to be kinder to yourself and others. On the other two stickies, write or draw the strengths you want to develop and how those can help you to be kinder to yourself and others. You don't have to put your name on the sticky notes. When you are done, attach your sticky notes to the large sheet of paper where I have written ‘Strengths I have’ and ‘Strengths I want to develop’ in two different columns. Any questions?”*

Allow time for students to write their notes and stick them to the sheet.

## Discussion

(5 mins)

After the activity, ask a few follow up questions like:

- *Are there some ways that you can use your strengths to help you speak up for yourself and others?*
- *We have a lot of strengths as a community! What are some ways that we can use our strengths to help make our school a kinder, more supportive place?*

## Wrap-Up

(5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What are personal strengths? What are some of yours?*
- *How do our strengths support ourselves and those around us?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *How can you develop your strengths? Can you develop strengths that you do not already have?*
- *How can you use your strengths to create emotional balance and care for yourself and others?*

## Summary

To summarize the lesson, say something like: *“Recognizing the strengths that we have is an important way to care for ourselves. Sharing those strengths with others can also develop the ability to be kind as we recognize our ability to make others feel good. Over the next few weeks, we are going to brainstorm ways to use these strengths to encourage people to practice care for themselves and others.”*

## ACT



(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Have students turn to another student and each mention a strength that other person has.

While they are doing this activity, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *“Before we meet next time, think about one way you can develop your strengths or use your strengths to make a difference at our school. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.”*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS

**Directions:** Before we meet next time, think about one way you can develop your strengths or use your strengths to make a difference at school, (i.e., “I am artistic, so I can create posters with tips for handling stress;” “I’m good at math, so I can offer free tutoring;” or “I’m a good listener, so I can spend time with a friend who is facing some personal challenges.”) We will discuss this the next time we meet.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Before we meet next time, think about one way you can develop your strengths or use your strengths to make a difference at school, (i.e., “I am artistic, so I can create posters with tips for handling stress;” “I’m good at math, so I can offer free tutoring;” or “I’m a good listener, so I can spend time with a friend who is facing some personal challenges.”) We will discuss this the next time we meet.

**Goal** Students will be able to recognize sources of stress, evaluate effective strategies for managing stress and analyze ways to speak up for themselves to help maintain mental and emotional health.

**Time** Preparation: 20 minutes Instruction: 30 to 35 minutes

**Materials**

- Masking tape, tape a line across the floor before class
- Ways to Care for Myself sheet, one per student
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

**Lesson Background for Teachers**

**Sources of stress:** Knowing what causes stress is an important part of caring for ourselves. Once we know the sources of stress, we can develop strategies for dealing with that stress.

**Identifying and practicing stress reduction techniques** can help us cope effectively with the situations we face and help us to show kindness to ourselves.

**Speaking up:** Learning to speak up for ourselves, particularly in tough situations, is a way to practice kindness toward ourselves.

**Key Terms for Students**

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Stress:** A physical, emotional and/or mental response to perceived pressure.
- **Coping Strategies:** Practices or techniques used to reduce stress.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Effectively communicating and standing up for your own needs or rights.
- **Emotional Hijacking:** Feeling overpowered by emotions in a way that makes it hard to act or think rationally. This is also known as amygdala hijacking, because the part of the brain being signaled tells us this is a fight or flight situation.

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- This activity might create stress for students who are dealing with difficult situations. If you are aware of who those students are, talk to them ahead of time about the lesson content. Ask them if they will be comfortable and let them know that you are willing to speak with them after class or they can talk to the school counselor about their stress.
- Read Ways to Care for Myself worksheet aloud and discuss questions as students answer them. Reduce the number of suggestions if needed.
- To contextualize the worksheet, remind students of the stressors used in the first activity. For example: Which of the things listed on this worksheet would help you if you felt stressed about going to the dentist?
- As an alternative to having students walk to the line, divide into small groups and have one person in each group read the statements and group members raise their hands if they agree with the statement.

**Resources**

- *Brainstorm* by Daniel J. Siegel (Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2013)
- <http://www.danielgoleman.info/the-brain-and-emotional-intelligence-an-interview-with-daniel-goleman/>

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

### SHARE



(1 min)

Have a short discussion about the following question: *“What is one way that you developed your strengths or could use your strengths to make a difference at school that you described for your homework?”*

Collect homework.

### INSPIRE



Before the group meets, put a long piece of masking tape along the floor.

Explain: *“In this unit, we have talked about how to reframe our thoughts, using support systems and being aware of our strengths, which can help us be kinder to ourselves and others. One thing that can prevent us from being able to reframe a situation is stress. What is **stress**?”* Allow students to respond.

### Group Activity

(12-15 mins)

Then continue: *“Stress is a physical, emotional and/or mental response to perceived pressure. The stress response happens when the amygdala in the brain sends a signal to another part of the brain, the hypothalamus. This can trigger stress hormones that tell your body to fight back, freeze or run away. This is called **emotional hijacking** because, when this happens, we aren’t able to think rationally. We have to take time to regain control of our emotions before we can react. Different situations trigger stress for different people. Identifying sources of stress and then figuring out how to cope with that stress can help create emotional balance and enable us to be kind to ourselves and others.”*

Have all the students line up on one side of the line. Another option is for students to stand up when a statement applies to them.

Then frame the activity by saying: *“We are going to do an activity that will help identify our individual sources of stress. I will read a statement and if you feel stressed by the statement, walk close to the line. Depending on what level of stress this causes, you may get close to the line or even over the line. The less stressed you feel about something, the closer you will remain to your starting place. Then you can walk back to where you started. If you feel stressed by something but don’t want to cross the line, that’s fine. Also it is important that we respect the confidentiality of the classroom and don’t share things we have learned with others. We have been talking about trust and creating a strong community, and respecting what other people share is one way to create trust.”*

Read from the statements listed below one at a time or create your own.

Statements: *“I feel stressed or anxious...”*

- *When I have a lot of homework.*
- *When I start a new relationship or friendship.*
- *When I have to babysit.*
- *Before a big game.*
- *Before I have to perform in a concert or recital.*
- *When I argue with friends.*
- *When I argue with my parents.*
- *When I think about my future.*
- *Because I feel like I don’t fit in.*
- *Because I feel like I don’t have anyone to talk to.*

- *Because my family drives me crazy.*
- *Because someone in my family is sick.*
- *Because money is tight at my house.*
- *Because the people I live with are always telling me what to do.*
- *When I have to take a test.*
- *When I have to try something new.*
- *When I have to speak in front of people.*
- *When I make a mistake.*
- *When I see someone being treated badly or discriminated against.*
- *When I have to go to the doctor or dentist.*
- *When I find out a friend has betrayed me.*
- *When friends or others pressure me to do something I don't want to do.*
- *When I found out that I was going to move.*
- *When my mom had a baby.*
- *When an adult in my house got a new job.*
- *When the adults in my house got divorced, separated or broke up with their partner.*

## Discussion (5 mins)

Then say: *"It seems like we are all stressed by something. We talked in an earlier lesson about how emotions feel in our bodies. How do you feel physically or emotionally when something is stressing you out?"* Allow students to respond.

Then ask the following questions: *"Do you think that stress is always a negative thing? Can it ever be positive?"* Allow students to respond.

If necessary, say: *"Some people feel heightened stress in fun situations, like a party or going to an amusement park. Stress can also make us feel alert and focused, like during a sporting event or when taking a test. It's only when stress is excessive that we need to find ways to relieve it."*

It is very important to say something like: *"Some of us might be experiencing stressors that are tough to deal with alone. Having friends to talk to about stress can help, as we discussed in the support systems lesson. Sometimes stressors or challenges may be something that you need to talk to a trusted adult about, like a teacher or counselor. Please talk to me after class or email me if I can help in any way."*

## EMPOWER

Hand each student a **Ways to Care for Myself** sheet and then say: *"Now, let's identify ways to cope with stress or calm ourselves when we feel strong emotions about a situation. Mark on the sheet what ways help you or you think could help you deal with stress, or write your own **coping strategies** on the back of the sheet."*

## Worksheet (7-10 mins)

If time, have students share their responses with a partner, in a small group or with the class and also discuss the following question: *"How can you use these strategies to care for yourself and also speak up for yourself or **self advocate** in a stressful situation?"*

Encourage students to take the sheet home so they can practice some of the strategies before the next meeting.

Consider posting the sheet on your website as a resource.

## Wrap-Up (5-7 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *How does stress impact people? Is it the same for everyone?*
- *How can we use stress reduction techniques to help reduce emotional distress?*

### Reflection Questions

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *Stress can be compounding, meaning the more you have, the harder it becomes to deal with even the little stressors. What are some ways you have found that help you cope with big and little stressors?*
- *What are some ways in which we can use these techniques to calm ourselves before we go into a situation that we know might be stressful for us?*
- *How do your personal strengths and support networks tie into your coping strategies?*

### Summary

As a way to end the session, consider saying something like: *“Hopefully, you learned some new ways to deal with stress today. Managing stress through different techniques can help us be kind to ourselves and learn to speak up for ourselves if we are having a difficult time.”*

## ACT

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Tell students that laughter is a proven stress reliever. Have them turn to someone else and tell them a joke.

While they are telling jokes, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *“Before we meet again, try one or two of the stress reduction techniques on the Ways to Care for Myself sheet (which you should take-home too) and try them. Maybe you have a big test coming up or a conversation you need to have that might be stressful for you. Next time we meet, we can talk about what worked for you in some stressful situations. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.”*



## WAYS TO CARE FOR MYSELF

**Directions:** Put a check next to each statement that describes what you are doing to reduce stress or that you think would help you reduce stress and better manage your emotions. These are ways to be kind and care for yourself!

\_\_\_\_\_ **Eat right.** Eating junk food is tempting when you're stressed out, but eating too much sugar, salt and fat can make you feel sick! Healthy food balances the vitamins and minerals in your body to help process stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Exercise.** Find an activity or sport that is fun for you. When you exercise, endorphins are released into the brain, which give you a natural high feeling. Endorphins are the body's natural way of reducing stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Get enough sleep.** It is hard to focus, remember, problem solve, handle your emotions and connect with others without enough sleep. Most teens need about nine hours of sleep a night. If you have a hard time sleeping, avoid TV, computer or phone an hour before bed, turn down lights a half an hour before bed, don't do homework in bed, avoid caffeine, take a bath, write in a journal so that you don't worry while you are trying to fall asleep.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Squeeze a stress ball, pull a stretchy eraser, or doodle.** Having something to fidget with can decrease stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Laugh.** Spend time with people who make you laugh or watch a funny movie. Laughter relieves stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Spend time with friends or with pets.** Talking to a friend, walking your dog, petting your cat or interacting with a pet can be very calming.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Talk to people you trust.** Don't let stress build up inside you. Find someone you can trust (a friend, teacher, relative, counselor, etc.) to talk about what is bothering you.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Relax.** Take deep breaths and think about calming ideas or images. Practice this every time you experience stress. You can also count to 10, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Find a hobby or activity.** Join a group or club at school, or consider drawing or learning a sport.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Think positively.** Hang out with healthy, positive people who will encourage you. Learn to think positively about yourself and others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Find a peaceful place to go.** This might be at your home. If not, walk to a park, a community center, a church, somewhere that is safe.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Write in a diary or journal.** It is not healthy to let things bottle up inside. Write a letter to yourself or a friend explaining how you feel. You don't have to send the letter, but getting it out on paper can help you deal with feelings.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Keep your values and goals in mind.** Don't let others force their values on you. Learn to say "no" to anything that can harm you or others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Keep pictures of favorite places/people.** Look at or think about them as a way to deal with stress.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Do something for someone else.** If you help someone else, it can take your mind off your problems. Consider volunteering at a hospital, helping a neighbor or grandparent, reading to a younger child, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Stretch.** Stretch or do exercises like neck rolls, side bends and leg stretches.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Focus your attention.** Turn off your phone and stop using social media. When you pay attention to something for awhile, neurons fire together and important chemicals are secreted into the brain. Listen to a meditation tape, visualize a peaceful scene and focus in on the details, etc. Or you may want to read a book or talk to a friend. Studies have shown that focusing on one thing can improve long-term learning and memory and reduce stress.

**Do you have other ways to reduce stress and care for yourself? Write them on the back!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## COPING WITH STRESS

**Directions:** Choose one or two of the stress reduction techniques on the Ways to Care for Myself sheet and try them. Maybe you have a big test coming up or a conversation you need to have that might be stressful for you. Write what you tried in the space below. Next time we meet, we can talk about what worked for you in some stressful situations.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## COPING WITH STRESS

**Directions:** Choose one or two of the stress reduction techniques on the Ways to Care for Myself sheet and try them. Maybe you have a big test coming up or a conversation you need to have that might be stressful for you. Write what you tried in the space below. Next time we meet, we can talk about what worked for you in some stressful situations.

**Goal** Students will be able to integrate what they have learned about reframing techniques, coping with stress, using personal strengths and building support systems as ways to help them show kindness to themselves and others.

**Time** Preparation: 15 minutes Instruction: 30 to 40 minutes

**Materials**

- Josh Opening Doors video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIHtuKc3Gjg>
- 8 1/2 x 11 blank paper, one for each student
- Reframing Techniques poster sheet
- Pencils, markers
- Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)
- Kindness in Action take-home sheet, one per student

**Lesson Background for Teachers**

**Reframing:** This lesson suggests ways students can use newly learned skills of noticing strengths, coping with stress and building support systems to reframe a situation. Reframing negative thoughts to positive thoughts and drawing on personal strengths, resources and talents can help students be kinder to themselves and others.

**Key Terms for Students**

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference.

- **Kindness:** A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will, reflecting care and good will for self and others.
- **Caring:** Feeling and sharing concern for others.
- **Compassion:** Feeling empathy for and/or a desire to help someone.
- **Self-Care:** Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words and actions.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Being able to notice our emotions and make a decision about how to outwardly react that is socially appropriate.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Effectively communicating and standing up for your own needs or rights.
- **Awareness:** Being conscious of your thoughts, actions and feelings: physically and emotionally.

**Tips for Diverse Learners**

- For students who seem to be struggling with drawing a picture during the art activity, suggest using stick figures or even writing a response. They could also work with a partner.
- If students have been bullied or experienced a trauma, this video might bring up difficult feelings. If you are aware of who those students are, talk to them privately ahead of time about the video and lesson content. Ask them if they will be comfortable and let them know that you are willing to speak with them after class or they can talk to the school counselor.
- If students are having a difficult time thinking of a situation from their lives, suggest a story they are all familiar with from a movie, a book or something that happened in the school.

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS



(2 mins)

Write the following on the board before class: *Using your homework as a guide, share with another student or in small groups what ways you tried to cope with stress and whether they were helpful. What didn't work?*

Have students get started as soon as they walk into class. Collect homework.



**Video**  
(6 mins)

Begin by saying: *"We are going to start today by watching a video about a young man who faced a stressful and difficult situation and who, through a simple act of **kindness**, developed a positive outlook about his life and his future. Write down any thoughts or reactions or questions you may have while watching the video."*

Show the Josh Opening Doors video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIHtuKc3Gjg>



**Discussion**  
(10 mins)

After watching the video, discuss a few of the questions below, either in small groups or as a class. Project the questions using a document camera or projector.

- *Did watching the video prompt any questions for you?*
- *Josh was kind of vulnerable, wasn't he? What is your reaction to him and his situation?*
- *What do you think of Josh's decision to open doors? Could you see yourself doing something like this? Why or why not?*
- *Josh's mom suggests 'fighting back with kindness' in tough situations. Do you think that can work? Why or why not?*
- *Josh says that opening doors was a simple act that changed his life. What are some simple acts of kindness that we can do around school to make it a more positive place? What simple acts of kindness can you do for yourself?*

Then say: *"Being kind to ourselves and others can feel very natural or might be something that we need to learn. What are some unhelpful thoughts Josh could have gotten stuck in?"* Allow students to respond. If they can't come up with any responses, suggest the following: *"He could have believed what the bullies said about him or allowed the grief over his father's death to define and overwhelm him, he could have given up trying to establish a support network, he could have ignored all his personal strengths and not **advocated** for himself."*

Then continue: *"Instead, Josh had a choice to make. Instead of believing the negative things people were saying, he used his social and emotional skills, which helped him to **regulate his emotions**. By holding doors, he showed **awareness** about the situation, was able to change his perspective, started to have positive interactions with others and inspired the other students to do kind things as well."*

**Optional:  
Personal Share**  
(2 mins)

Share an experience from your own time in high school that was personally challenging and explain how reframing your thinking about a situation, relieving the stress it caused, leaning on your support network, or noticing the **caring** and **compassion** of others toward you helped you respond differently in a way that showed **self-care**. When sharing experiences, be sure to keep the facts of the situation very brief and relevant and focus on how you reframed the situation.

**Drawing or  
Writing  
Activity**  
(10 mins)

Hand each student an 8 1/2 x 11 blank paper. Explain: *“Draw a line across the middle of the page. On the top, draw or write about a tough situation you or someone you know didn’t handle well. It can be recent or awhile ago. Think back on all the social emotional skills we’ve learned in this unit: ways to relieve stress, recognizing our strengths, being kind to ourselves and others, depending on our support system, managing our emotions and reframing our thinking. We have a lot of resources to draw on now! What are some of the things we’ve learned that you or that person could have used to respond differently in the situation? Draw or write a different way you could respond on the bottom of the page, using your new strategies.”*

If time, you can have students share their picture with another student.

**Wrap-Up**  
(5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

**Evaluation  
Questions**

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What are some outcomes of doing an act of kindness?*
- *How does reframing help people respond to a situation differently?*

**Reflection  
Questions**

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Explain that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage students to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *Josh’s simple act of kindness changed his life and others. Write about something you did or saw someone do that had a similar impact. It can be something big or small.*
- *Reflect on what you drew or wrote about during the reflection activity. How easy or difficult do you think it would be to respond differently?*

**Summary**

Say: *“Hopefully, today, you were able to think through how you can reframe your thoughts and use the SEL skills you’ve learned to face tough situations, which is a way to be kind. Sometimes being kind to others like Josh was is a way to refocus attention away from the situation and can change the way we are thinking in the process. Next time, we will start designing a project where we share kindness in our school, so be thinking about ways you can make a difference.”*

**ACT** 

(2 mins)

**Kindness Minute:** Say: *“Today’s kindness act is a challenge. Think of one secret act of kindness you can do, one that no one but you will know about. Then do it today!”*

While they are thinking, hand each student a **Kindness in Action** take-home sheet and have them write their name, the due date and the class at the top. Another option would be to post the Kindness in Action on your website or on the board and have students write their responses in their RAK Journals.

Then say: *“We have been talking about becoming more aware of and managing our emotions and how to do that by reframing thoughts, recognizing strengths, building a support system and learning strategies to cope with stress. This week, write down one or two ideas for how you can create a kinder school community. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.”*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMONSTRATING KINDNESS

**Directions:** We have been talking about becoming more aware of and managing our emotions, and how to do that by reframing thoughts, identifying strengths, building a support system and learning strategies to cope with stress. Before next class, write down one or two ideas for how you can create a kinder school community by encouraging others to practice emotional care for self and others. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMONSTRATING KINDNESS

**Directions:** We have been talking about becoming more aware of and managing our emotions, and how to do that by reframing thoughts, identifying strengths, building a support system and learning strategies to cope with stress. Before next class, write down one or two ideas for how you can create a kinder school community by encouraging others to practice emotional care for self and others. Be sure to bring back the sheet on the due date.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Goal</b>                           | Students will design a project that helps create a supportive school community and encourages people to care for themselves and others.   |
| <b>Time</b>                           | Preparation: 15 minutes                      Instruction: 30 minutes to discuss, additional weeks to plan and do the project  |
| <b>Materials</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sabrina Ma video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar9oXnlJrKw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar9oXnlJrKw</a></li><li>• Student RAK Journals (composition books with RAK written on the cover)</li><li>• Materials will vary depending on the project.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Lesson Background for Teachers</b> | <b>Raising awareness:</b> This lesson helps raise awareness about how the self-care skills they developed in the unit (which includes coping with stress, becoming aware of and managing emotions, learning to reframe, building support systems) can be used to foster compassion and kindness in the school and community. Students apply their strengths and skills in a way that can change their school community.   |
| <b>Key Terms for Students</b>         | Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding. The terms are highlighted in the lesson the first time they appear. Students could write these in their RAK Journals as reference. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Well-Being:</b> Being comfortable, healthy and happy.</li><li>• <b>Kindness:</b> A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will, reflecting care and good will for self and others.</li></ul> |
| <b>Tips for Diverse Learners</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pair up students to complete different parts of the task so that each student has something that speaks to their strengths.</li><li>• Choose a project from the video that you would like to replicate with your class.</li><li>• Be sure that the materials and time commitment can be done in class and does not require a strain on students' resources.</li><li>• Be an active part of the project planning.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Resources</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resources will vary depending on the project</li></ul>  |

## LESSON INSTRUCTIONS



**SHARE**

(3 mins)

To begin class, ask: *“What ideas did you come up with since we last met about how you can use your strengths to help create a project to encourage people to practice emotional care for self and others?”* As the class shares ideas they wrote about for their homework, write their ideas on the board.

Collect homework.



**INSPIRE**

**Video**

(5 mins)

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar9oXnlJrKw>

Then briefly discuss what Sabrina Ma did to create a supportive school community. Ask the students what they thought of the ARK club and the kindness app that Sabrina created.

## EMPOWER

### Project Design

(20 mins or use additional class periods as necessary)

Then say: *“During this unit, we have discussed ways to care for ourselves and we also have identified our strengths and talents. Sabrina decided to cope with stress and difficult feelings by creating a kindness club and app. We also can raise awareness and help others improve their **well-being** by learning about coping with stress, emotional regulation, or another issue that we have discussed. We wrote some ideas on the board at the beginning of the lesson about how to do this. What do you think the goal of the project should be: do you want to spread **kindness**, relieve stress, inform students, help others? What do you want to achieve or raise awareness about or have people experience?”* Allow students to respond and write goals on the board.

Then say: *“Does anyone have any project ideas to add?”* If students are struggling with project ideas, suggest some like: creating a kindness club, launching an anti-stress campaign, sponsoring a forum about how to create a supportive school community, creating a public service announcement about how to manage emotions (to be read during morning announcements), doing random acts of kindness, etc.

Have the students discuss the projects; emphasize that a project takes resources, and have them think about the project scope and size. Then have them vote on what project they want to do.

Then have students decide what the project will look like. Guide the discussion with questions like: *Will this be at school or in the community? Will it be a poster campaign? A fundraiser? An online blog? A social media campaign? A game?*

After students determine the project type, they will need to address details including:

- Identify goals of the project. What do we hope to accomplish?
- Assign roles and identify tasks.
- Divide up tasks.
- Contact the principal or administrator for permission to launch the project.
- Create a timeline for the project.
- Determine materials and supplies for project.

### Wrap-Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, have students answer **either** the Evaluation or the Reflection Questions.

#### Evaluation Questions

Students could discuss the questions below with a partner or in small groups. To formally assess students, have them write and turn in their responses to the questions and use the RAK High School Evaluation Rubric to evaluate their responses. If you plan to use this rubric, make copies and distribute to students. (Appendix One, p. 58)

- *What are some kind actions and ways of sharing kindness that you learned through this unit?*
- *What are things you need to think about when planning a kindness project?*

#### Reflection Questions/ Debrief

Consider posting one or more of the questions below on the board and have students write responses in a personal RAK Journal. Or consider using these questions to debrief after the project. Explain to students that these responses are private and offer the chance for them to reflect on what they have learned. Encourage them to look back on their reflections throughout the unit.

- *What did you learn from this project?*
- *Do you think that you achieved your goals?*
- *Do you think that you had an impact on our school community?*
- *What impact did the project have on you?*



## COMMON CORE STANDARDS ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org))

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1* Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2* Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1* Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2* Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL STANDARDS ([www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org))

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has identified five Core Competencies that are key to developing social and emotional skills: Self-Management, Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills and Social Awareness. This lesson primarily builds self-awareness and self-management skills, but also focuses on the other competencies.

## OTHER STANDARDS MET

### 1. 21st Century Skills ([www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org))

- *Learning and Innovation Skills*
  - a. Critical Thinking – Reason effectively, make judgments and decisions, solve problems
  - b. Communicate clearly and collaborate with others
  - c. Creativity and Innovation – Think creatively and work creatively with others
- *Life and Career Skills*
  - a. Social and Cross-Cultural Skills – Interact effectively with others
  - b. Productivity and Accountability – Manage projects and produce results
  - c. Responsibility – Be responsible to others

### 2. Colorado P-12 Academic Standards

(<http://www2.cde.state.co.us/scripts/allstandards/COStandards.asp?glid=15&stid=3&glid2=7>)

- **Comprehensive Health: Standard 3: Emotional and Social Wellness in Health**

Grade Level Expectation (GLE): 1. Analyze the interrelationship of physical, mental, emotional, and social health

Evidence Outcomes (EO): Students can:

- a. Analyze the characteristics of a mentally and emotionally healthy person
- c. Evaluate effective strategies for dealing with stress

Grade Level Expectation (GLE): 3. Advocate to improve or maintain positive mental and emotional health for self and others

Evidence Outcome (EO): Students can:

- c. Advocate for a positive and respectful school environment that supports pro-social behavior

## RAK EVALUATION RUBRIC

Your teacher will be using this rubric to evaluate your responses. Keep this rubric handy while you are answering the evaluation questions after each lesson.

1	2	3	4
The response has limited or no connection to the evaluation questions.	The response to the evaluation questions is connected to the lesson content with a basic understanding of the concepts taught.	The response to the evaluation questions is thorough and incorporates a deep understanding of the concepts taught.	The response to the evaluation questions is both connected to the lesson content and draws on personal reflection to show that student is internalizing the Kindness Concepts. In addition, student connects the response to past RAK lessons and/or content that the student has learned elsewhere.

## KEY TERMS

- **Act:** Using this new information to be kinder to yourself and others.
- **Awareness:** Being conscious of your thoughts, actions and feelings: physically and emotionally.
- **Caring:** Feeling and sharing concern for others.
- **Compassion:** Feeling empathy for and/or a desire to help someone.
- **Coping Strategies:** Practices or techniques used to reduce stress.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand or imagine another person's feelings in a given situation.
- **Emotion:** The mental and physical expression of feelings, which may be different for each individual. All emotions are normal and provide information about what is going on in our minds and bodies.
- **Emotional Awareness:** Being tuned in to how emotions feel and look, both mentally and physically, in ourselves and others.
- **Emotionally Balanced:** People who experience their emotions moderately and are often able to consciously express their emotions in varied ways.
- **Emotional Hijacking:** Feeling overpowered by emotions in a way that makes it hard to act or think rationally. This is also known as amygdala hijacking, because the part of the brain being signaled tells us this is a fight or flight situation.
- **Emotionally Intense:** People who feel emotions powerfully and let it show.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Having emotional awareness, being able to regulate emotions and using emotions to inform decision making.
- **Emotionally Reserved:** People whose emotions are experienced and expressed in a mild manner.
- **Emotional Regulation:** The ability to be aware of our emotions and make a choice about how to respond, rather than reacting impulsively,
- **Empower:** Developing the tools & confidence needed to act on the changes we are inspired to make.
- **Insight:** The ability to have deep understanding of yourself or another person or situation.
- **Inspire:** Becoming excited and encouraged to connect with what we're learning.
- **Kindness:** A natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.
- **Myelin:** A healthy sheath that allows connected neurons to communicate with each other more effectively.
- **Personal Strengths:** Character traits and acquired skills that help us to succeed in achieving our goals and add to the value of our daily lives.
- **Pruning:** Process during adolescence when some synapses are removed or "pruned" as the brain starts to specialize.
- **Reflective Response:** Taking time and effort to deeply consider your response.
- **Reframing:** Stepping back and asking questions about why a situation occurred or why they feel a certain way to gain perspective. Reframing negative thoughts to positive thoughts can also help to be kinder to self and others.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Effectively communicating and standing up for your own needs or rights.
- **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing your own emotions and thoughts and understanding how they impact your actions.
- **Self-Care:** Caring for yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and socially through your words and actions.
- **Share:** Spreading kindness to those around you and inspiring others.
- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Improving skills and awareness around recognizing and managing emotions, solving problems, taking care of ourselves and developing care and concern for others, creating and maintaining healthy relationships with others and handling challenging situations.
- **Stress:** A physical, emotional and/or mental response to perceived pressure.
- **Support System:** A network of people and resources who can help us get our needs met, grow and feel safe and secure both physically and emotionally.
- **Trust:** Having confidence in and being able to rely on those around you.
- **Vulnerability:** Trusting those around you enough that you are willing to share personal experiences or ideas.
- **Well-Being:** Being comfortable, healthy and happy.