

DOs AND DON'Ts OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM



CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Consider not only physical safety but the children's emotional safety as well.

1

2

ESTABLISH PREDICTABILITY

Write out a schedule and prepare children for transitions. It helps create a sense of security and safety.



BUILD A SENSE OF TRUST

Follow through with your promises and in situations where changes are unavoidable be transparent with your explanations.

3

4

OFFER CHOICES

Empower students and offer "power with" rather than "power over" strategies.



STAY REGULATED

Help your students (and yourself!) stay in the "Resiliency Zone" to promote optimum learning. Have regulation tools ready to help students bumped out of the zone into either hyperarousal (angry, nervous, panicky) or hypoarousal (numb, depressed, fatigued).

5



There's really only one **DON'T**
Let's not punish kids for behaviors that are trauma symptoms.



"What do I do?" Trauma-Informed Support for Children

1

Create safety

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

2

Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artsy-crafty we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

3

Build a connected relationship

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

4

Support development of coherent narrative

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

5

Practice 'power-with' strategies

One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

6

Build social emotional and resiliency skills

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

7

Foster post-traumatic growth

We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

"There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship"

-- Bruce Perry, PhD, MD, researcher & child psychiatrist

- The relationship works to bring the brain back into regulation
- Safe, predictable, consistent relationships

Research indicates that school connectedness is the strongest factor in reducing incidence of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, violence, suicide, and pregnancy among teens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw>



What can you do?

Recognize Triggers

- Conflict
- Being provoked
- Pressure
- Frustration
- Yelling/Noise
- Power struggle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9_WwuGF4dM

Prevention

- Remove from trigger
- Redirect
- Anticipate and intervene before behavior escalates
- Notice signs of distress
- Connect with student
- Pre-arranged signal between staff/student



Social & Emotional Skills

- School MUST be more than standardized tests
- Not being given the opportunity and guidance to enhance social and emotional learning leaves a child with only a fraction of what is needed to grow and prosper
- School is often the ONLY true socialization environment for children (especially those living in poverty)



Social & Emotional Skills

- Improves attitude towards self, school, and others
- Enhances positive pro-social behavior
- Reduces conduct problems (misbehavior & aggression)
- Reduces emotional distress (stress & depression)
- Improves academic performance (test scores & school grades)

- Emotional Awareness
- Emotional Regulation
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills



Emotional Awareness

Classroom Check-ins

Date:

Check-In



silly



nervous



excited



embarrassed



bored



happy



worried



angry



confident



sad



shy



Other

Date:

Check Out



silly



nervous



excited



embarrassed



bored



happy



worried



angry



confident



sad



shy



Other



Angry



Frustrated



Annoyed



Fine

Exploding

Boiling

Warm

Cool

Calm



listen to music



Relax in a quiet place



I can take deep breaths.



ask for help

What can I do?



NAME

FEELING CLUES

10

Blind rage

Slapping, pounding fist,

9

Boiling over

Throwing things

8

Danger ahead

Thoughts of revenge

7

Feeling angry

"I'm a slave."

6

Resentful

"Can't someone help?"

5

Tense stress

Head pounding

4

Okay Stress

"Staying strong."

3

Liking it

"In a groove."

2

Feeling good

Doing for me.

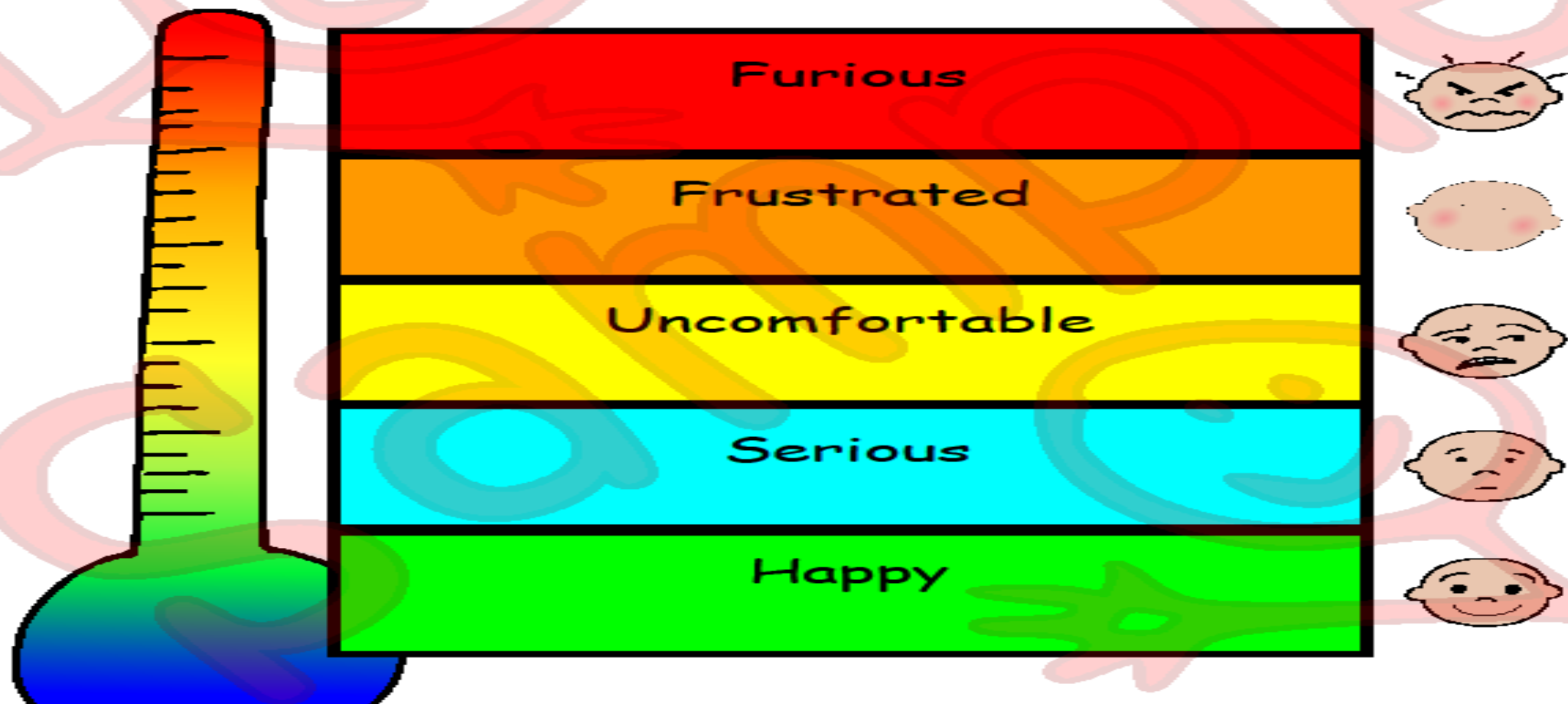
1

Sea shore calm

Relaxed, smiling

Feelings Thermometer

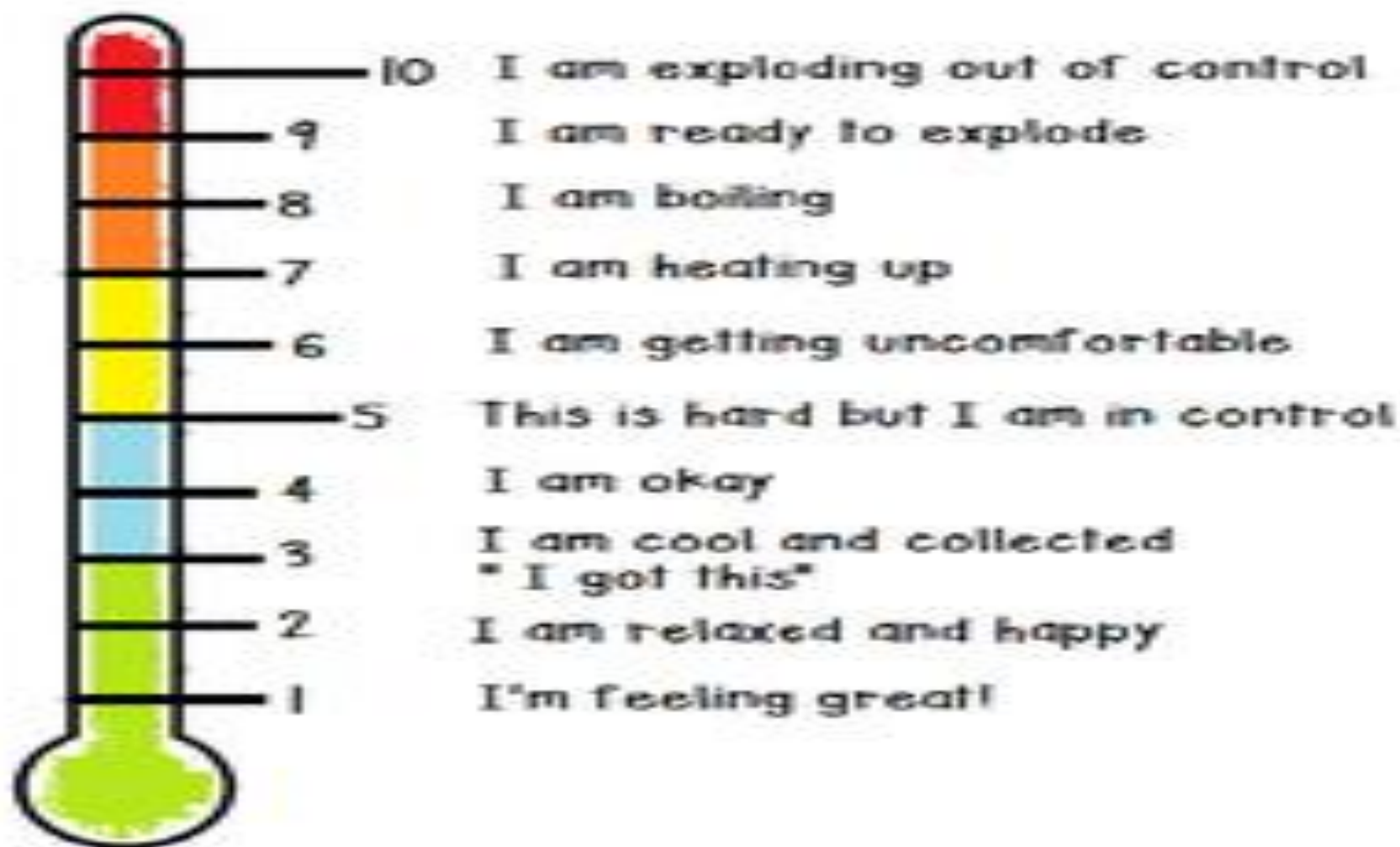
How do you feel?



LessonPix
Custom Learning Materials

**Log In To Remove
Watermark & Print**

Feelings Thermometer



Emotional Regulation

Resiliency Building "Help Now!" Activities

from Community Resiliency
Model (CRM)

Ten strategies to get into the **Resilient Zone** when you need **help now!** because you're either too amped up (high zone) or too checked out (low zone)



The goal of doing these activities is to signal safety to the Survival Brain. The Survival Brain understands the language of sensation. That's why in some activities it's important to notice, or "track," your body sensations. Most of the time, 20 seconds of holding your attention on a positive or neutral sensation will reset your body to be in the Resilient Zone. The Survival Brain also understands "orienting", or really looking around the environment and coming to feel inside yourself that it's safe.

1. Walk

Feel the sensations in your body as it moves. Feel your feet pressing into the ground.



2. Push against a wall

Focus on the sensations of your muscles pushing.



3. Look for colors / shapes

Option 1: Name 6 or more colors you see.
Option 2: Name 6 or more shapes you see.
(Hint: You may repeat the same one if you see it in two places.)



4. Count backwards

Count backwards from 10 or 20 while walking around.



5. Drink a beverage

Feel the sensations in your mouth, throat and stomach.



6. Touch objects

What do the textures feel like?



7. Temperature

Notice the temperatures on different parts of your body.



8. Listen for sounds

Name all the sounds you can hear around you.



9. Notice

Look at everything around you and notice which objects catch your attention; name them.

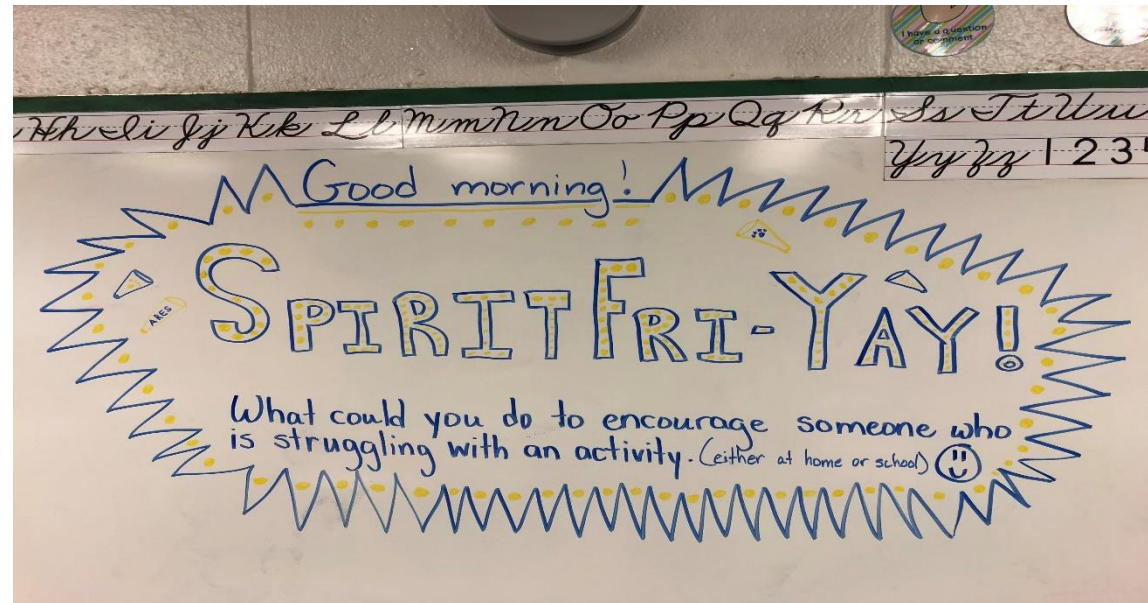
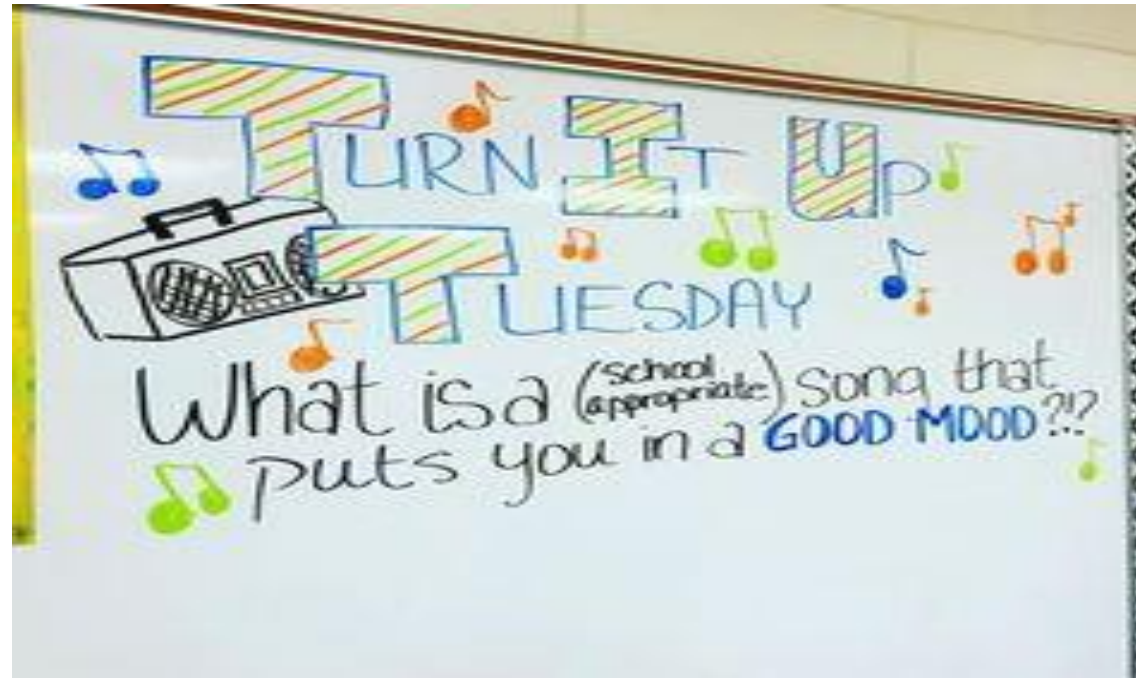
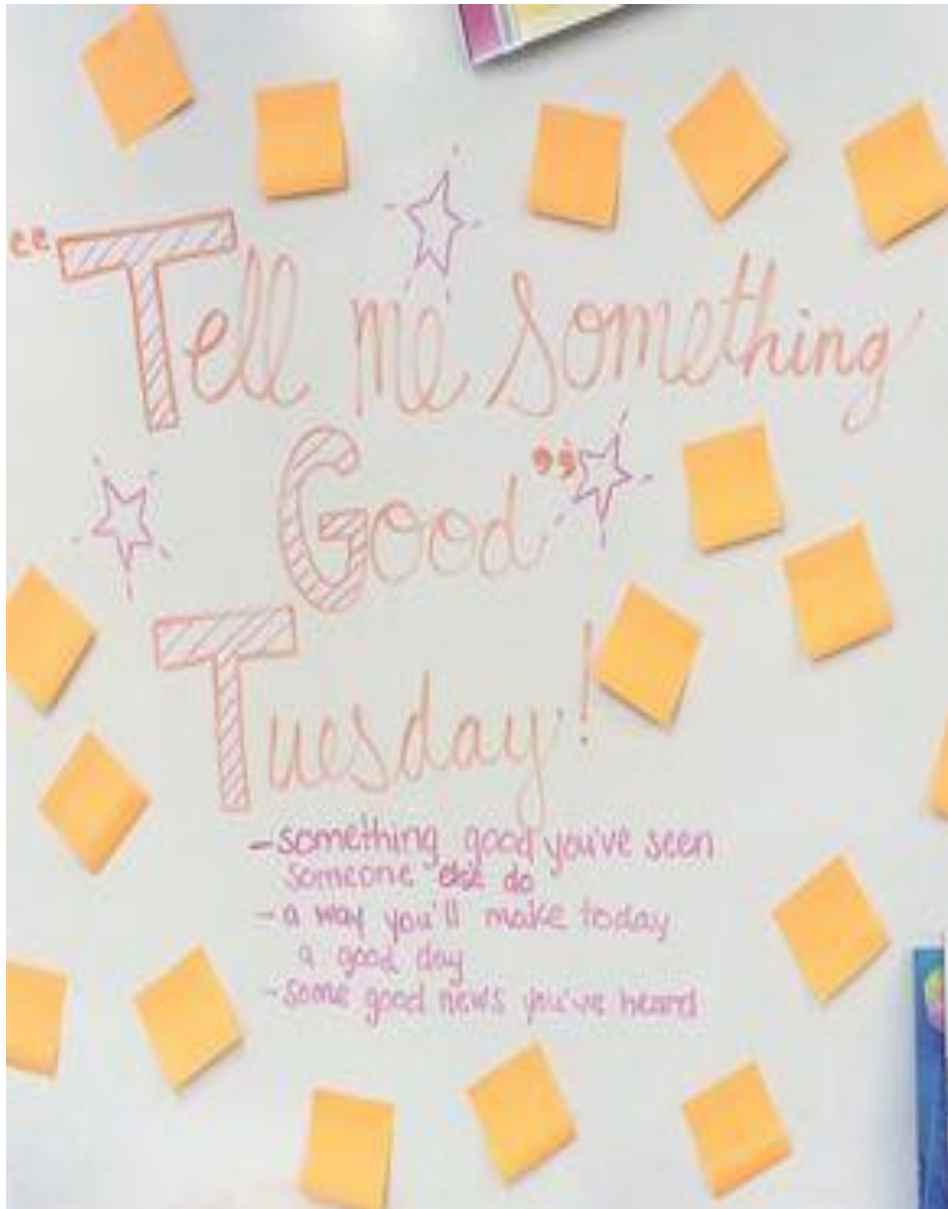


10. Open Eyes

If you have a tendency to close your eyes, open them gently; keep them relaxed and soft.



Social Awareness and Relationship Skills



• WEDNESDAY •

WHAT IS YOUR RESOLUTION?

What do you believe is the best way to spread love+kindness?

[illegible]

Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from Overcoming the things you once thought you Couldn't.

Who do you know that embodies the word strength?

d g
 rrios narris
 Mrs. Deaignant
 cause she
 has to be
 with all us devils
 all day
 the Mighty
 CROW!!
 my
 BFF
 Brenda
 because
 she isn't
 afraid to
 talk
 to Robby Bobbie
 My brother
 because he
 leads the
 pack I
 walk in
 -♡-
 Mrs. Deaignant
 who has to
 deal with us
 each day and
 my amazing family
 because they help
 me over come the
 bumps in the road
 My
 Brenda
 Family not
 my sister
 Amazing
 Queen
 Abby
 because she
 is a love
 there for
 her friends
 Even
 she
 sits
 with
 us
 4-15-

Your post-it is on your desk. Write your person a pep-talk to make their Friday FABULOUS! ♡

Anna
 100 antonyms
 Not want the name
 the thing! 250
 why? 250
 100. 100. 100. 100.
 anything! - Debra

Declan You
can do your
best and
be positive
to accomplish
your goals
-Gavin-

Myra
Do what you do
and don't ever
give up! Today
is your day!
-Anna

4-15-

Don't Forget to Take Care of YOU!

- ❖ Be active! Exercise! Take a walk!
- ❖ Eat Healthy! Drink lots of water!
- ❖ Enjoy Nature!
- ❖ Set boundaries!
- ❖ Take a Break or even better a VACATION!!!
- ❖ Talk to your co-workers, family and friends
- ❖ Read a book!!
- ❖ Spend time with someone you love! ♥
- ❖ Turn on some of your favorite jams!!!
- ❖ Practice mindfulness! <https://www.sccoe.org/depts/Human-Resources/Health-Wellness/Documents/Feb1-Exercises.pdf>

Self-Care Activity

Do you ever feel overwhelmed with, all the things you have to do for the day?

A mindfulness exercise, like one, can slow your breathing, slow your heart-rate, and stop overwhelming feelings in its tracks. It's not going to solve the problems on your to-do list, but you'll probably feel better equipped to deal with them. Deep breathing and mindfulness activities like this one can keep away those stress hormones and increase your focus and productivity.

Regardless if this kinda activity is for you or not, be sure to always try to start your day on a positive note. It may be, thinking about the positive things that are in store for you that day, taking a walk or conversing with your family member, coworker about something positive. What you do first can set the tone for how you manage your entire day.

Morning Mindfulness Activity

Make sure that you are in a comfortable sitting position with your back straight and close your eyes. Take a deep breath through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

Repeat quietly in your mind, today is a great day.

As you breathe slowly and deeply imagine a vibrant yellow light flow into your body with every breath you take. This yellow light is charged with a powerful positive energy, so with every breath you take your body will become naturally energized. You may feel a slight tingling as this positive yellow energy spreads throughout your entire body, recharging every cell and every part of you. As your life-force is recharged with this positive, vibrant energy, you feel simple pleasure in being alive; you begin to look forward to this great day. I want you to embrace this feeling. Give yourself permission to feel great, to feel great about yourself.

Now I want you to quietly repeat in your mind, I am energized, I am healthy, I feel great.

Just be quietly aware in the back of your mind that with every breath you take your body and energy will continue to recharge, so keep your breathing nice and deep.

Now I want you to smile to yourself and pay attention to how that simple little smile improves your overall morning mood. Try to keep that smile on your face, while you repeat quietly in your mind after me:

I love my life

I am grateful for my life

I love who I am

I am confident

I am loved

I am happy

I feel great about myself

I am safe and I feel safe

Today everything is fun and easy

Today wonderful things happen to me

I am allowing myself to enjoy this day

Today is a great day

Now it is time to begin your great day. Begin by gently stretching your back and arms, wiggle your toes and listen to the sounds around you. Know that when you open your eyes you will be wide awake, feeling energized and ready for a great day. Open your eyes and enjoy this great day.

Breaks & Movement

Every 20-30 minutes students should have regularly scheduled breaks from traditional academics (sometimes calming, sometimes stimulating)

- There are countless examples
- Low cost play often times enhances creativity
- This applies to every age group
- Play can be educational and therapeutic

Statistics

Research indicates that play breaks of 15 minutes or more yield:

- Improved teacher ratings of classroom behavior
- Increased attentiveness and productivity
- Improved ability of students to retain new information (activity increases cognitive capacity)



Brain Breaks

<http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CEI-Take-a-Break-Teacher-Toolbox.pdf>

<http://minds-in-bloom.com/20-three-minute-brain-breaks/>

<https://www.pocketmindfulness.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/6-Mindfulness-Exercises-PDF-Download-.pdf>