



Welcome to *Kindness in the Classroom!*

We are happy that you have selected this CASEL-approved social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum to help your staff create a culture of kindness in your school.

The work of creating a healthy, kind school culture *matters*, and it begins with strong school leaders, like you. So, how can you help make this program as successful as possible? It starts with addressing your self-care and the self-care of your teachers and staff. If you, the educators, are not socially and emotionally healthy, it will be difficult to foster this type of health in your students.

To that end, each *Kindness in the Classroom* lesson plan opens with a brief “Teacher Connection/Self-Care” reflection¹ that helps teachers apply that lesson’s concepts personally and in their professional spaces and relationships, which will give them a unique and grounded perspective through which to deliver the lesson. We encourage teachers to engage in these reflections before doing the lesson with students.

¹A sample Teacher Connection/Self-Care reflection from the 6th grade lesson, “*R.E.S.P.E.C.T. - In Our Culture*”:

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Culture is a big reflector of respect. If the people within the culture show respect for themselves and others, the culture is healthy and has the capacity to grow. If the people within the culture do not show respect for themselves and others, the culture is unhealthy and will remain fixed and stagnant, if not regressive. How is your school culture right now? What about your classroom culture? What are some things you can do to improve the culture and improve your capacity for respect? Set one goal this week around improving your classroom culture and work toward meeting it in the next few weeks. Observe how you and your students improve giving and receiving respect after that goal is met.

You can support teachers in their acute need for self-care too. Here are some recommendations:

- ❑ **Participate:** Read the Teacher Connections each week. Tell your staff you will practice these skills right along with them, and insert the ideas and themes from the connections into your staff communications.
- ❑ **Show Gratitude:** Open staff meetings with a “gratitude check.” Let your staff know what you are grateful for regarding their work and your school community, and invite others to share something they are grateful for.
- ❑ **Build Self-Care into the Schedule:** Examine the daily/weekly schedule and see if there is an opportunity to build “educator self-care” into the day. Even 15 minutes where everyone takes an intentional pause can make a big difference!
- ❑ **Check-in:** Commit to checking in with your staff regarding their self-care. If you notice someone looking extra tired or frazzled, check in. See what they need to be their best!
- ❑ **Recognize:** Be intentional about acknowledging your staff’s hard work, and do so by name, making sure you recognize everyone at some point during the term.