

My Affirmation Stone

This initial lesson in the Caring unit extends the concept of respect by focusing on self-care. Students will create affirmation stones to keep in their desks as a tool to help them stay positive throughout the day and focus on what makes them special. This lesson would work very well in conjunction with your art time during specials. Consider asking your Art teacher if they would like to collaborate! It's a great way to show that you care about their academic focus as well.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- Liquid White Glue
- Paintbrushes
- Scissors for each child
- Magazines or images from the internet
- Stones
- Ball or bean bag

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Create a personalized affirmation stone using words and images that inspire a feeling of happiness.
- Practice using coping skills when circumstances cause negative feelings.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

In the first unit we talked about the importance of self respect as a building block for respect within our world. This unit our focus is on Caring, which incorporates compassion, helpfulness, gratitude, and empathy. Caring is defined as feeling and showing concern for yourself and others. With this definition in mind, try to evaluate how you care for yourself.

Self Care is a vital tool to ensure we have time to reboot. It is not selfish to provide time each day to just focus on YOU. What do you do just for you each day? If the answer is difficult to identify, brainstorm some ideas on how you can care for yourself daily. If you've already started this process, attempt to expand or deepen your self care to include long term goals (such as working out or taking a fun class). If you don't care for you, how can you expect to provide solid care for others?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Assist a student with limited fine motor skills by cutting out pictures for them.
- Provide a variety of different sized stones for students to select from.
- Provide a finished product to assist with visualization.



Share

3-5 minutes

Play a round robin game of, “I care for myself when I...”

Using a ball or bean bag, start the game by finishing the sentence starter. Toss the object to the person on your right. Continue until everyone has completed the sentence with a personal example.



Inspire

What is Caring?

5-7 minutes

Explain that caring is feeling and showing concern for others. This unit focuses on caring and expressing that in our classroom, our homes, and our community. We have already learned how respecting ourselves, our friends, and our space has helped us to feel safe and show kindness daily. Caring builds on this. When we are caring, our actions show kindness and others enjoy our company!

What is Self-Care?

3-5 minutes

Explain that self-care is when we take time to care for ourselves. Remember if we don't take time to take care of ourselves, we aren't very good at caring for others. One way to practice self-care is to check your feelings often and have some tools to help you change your feelings when you are upset. We call these tools coping skills. When we use a coping skill it allows us to take some time away from the problem, clear our minds, and get back to feeling happy again!

- You may want to designate an area in your room that is quiet for students to use when practicing coping skills (your classroom library is one great option).



Empower

25-30 minutes

Today each person will create their own special Affirmation Stone using magazine pictures or printed images from the internet, and phrases. An affirmation is a positive image or phrase that makes you feel better about yourself. This is your very own stone, a personalized coping skill to use whenever you are feeling overwhelmed, sad, or even just in need of a smile about how great you are. No one can tell you what to put on it, how to make it, or even use it with you. It is for you alone.

Step 1:

Each student will select a stone from the pile. Or, if you live in a area that has stones outside, consider going on a mini nature walk to collect stones for this project with the class. Have each student wash their stone using soap and water. Allow the stones to air dry while completing step 2.

Step 2:

While the stones are drying, have each student look through magazines to cut out inspiring words and images that make them feel immediately happy. The goal is to pick words and images that quickly bring you to a “happy place”. Emphasize that the words and images must be small enough to fit on the stone. Some overlap is fine, but larger images and phrases will not glue well. If desired, show the students the sample image below or create your own so they have a final product to reference.



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/600x/12/46/88/1246887e76cd44b4cf57eeadf53ac93d.jpg>

Step 3:

Using white glue, have each child paint their pictures/words onto their stones. Encourage them to spread out the glue until it is a thin layer so that the words and pictures will not have chunks of glue obstructing them. (The glue will act as a binder for the paper and will also preserve the stone from natural wear and tear.)

After all of the affirmation stones are finished, explain that students will use them throughout the year to help them when they are feeling down or upset. Students can take out their stone and discuss some of the pictures or phrases on it with the teacher or assistant when they are overwhelmed, frustrated, or even angry. This is a terrific way to show caring for ourselves. When we keep negative feelings inside for too long, we are not showing kindness. Our attitude changes and it becomes more difficult to respect and show kindness to others because of all these difficult feelings. Using your affirmation stone can help you to feel positive again quickly!

- Using a volunteer, demonstrate how to use the affirmation stone to change feelings. One idea is to guide a person through an attitude change by pointing at several pictures/words and asking them how they help them to feel happy.
- You will need to create a signal or plan for your students when they want/need this coping skill.
- You will need to select a special location for students to store their stones.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Have each student share 1 item from their stone with the class. Emphasize that these affirmation stones are personal and some people may not feel completely comfortable sharing everything they put on it. Ask the following questions as they select certain pictures or phrases:

- *How does that make you feel?*
- *Why did you put that picture on your affirmation stone?*
- *Does that picture/phrase remind you of a person, place, thing, or fun time in your life?*



Extension Ideas

- **At Home Extension:** Create an additional affirmation stone for home use. Explain the activity and invite them to use the stone during struggles with their child to decrease negative emotions.

RAK Notebook Prompt (See RAK Notebook Project in the Respect unit for more details):

- Draw your happy place. If you could be anywhere right now, where would it be and why?
- Allow students to free draw or journal their answers to this prompt. Encourage complete sentences and concrete examples.



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PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>