



GRADES 3-5

Mental Health Literacy Instructional Units

MANAGING MY MENTAL HEALTH





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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction June 2021








This publication is available from:
Student Services / Prevention and Wellness
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53703
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw>

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LEGEND

 WARM UP	 DIRECT INSTRUCTION	 WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION	 INDEPENDENT WORK
 SMALL GROUP	 MOVEMENT MOMENT	 MINDFUL MOMENT	

Foreword

To achieve the Department of Public Instruction's vision of all students graduating from high school academically prepared and socially and emotionally competent, Wisconsin schools must be empowered to support the whole child. Working together, will enable educators to build equitable school-communities promoting social and emotional wellness, focusing on strong positive relationships, are inclusive for all, and building on the resilience of individuals and systems. With the vision in mind, the department encourages educators to view mental health as an asset that can and should be actively built and strengthened through proactive supports for all students.

One important strategy for promoting mental health and wellness in all students is increasing their mental health literacy or knowledge, beliefs, and skills related to mental health challenges helping students recognize, prevent, and manage them. In the same way students are taught how to be physically healthy, educators can intentionally build the skills students need to maintain positive mental health. Students look to school staff to lead essential conversations about mental health. These essential conversations and opportunities for skill-building move Wisconsin towards the DPI's mission of every student having access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, or family income.

The Department would like to acknowledge the contributions of the youth, caregivers, community mental health providers, educators, and other community partners that shaped the development of these units. These partners played an instrumental role in prioritizing the mental health knowledge and skills that are important to Wisconsin communities. Our hope is that these units will build lifelong skills for maintaining mental health and wellness, opening the door to honest dialogue about mental health in the classroom, school, and community.



Jill K. Underly, PhD
State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction

Twenty percent of all students have a diagnosable mental health condition – a number that many believe has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closing of school buildings and financial instability for many families.

These Mental Health Literacy Units of Instruction offer skills-based lessons on mental health that we hope will allow students to better understand their own mental health, know where to get help, and be able to support friends experiencing mental health challenges. The accompanying caregiver lesson plans we hope will generate helpful school and family conversations about wellness.

The Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health values collaboration across systems, data-driven approaches, lived experience leadership, and equity among all stakeholders. We are pleased to have been able to play a role in ensuring that our guiding principles were employed in the development of these Mental Health Literacy Units of Instruction. We would like to extend our thanks to the volunteers and staff who dedicated their time to creating this unique resource.

For some time, Wisconsin students have been telling us that they want more and better-informed conversation about mental health at school. We hope these lessons contribute to that goal, while also affording students the information they need to better support themselves and one another in a rapidly changing world.

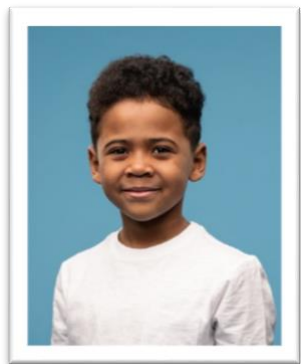


Linda A. Hall

Linda A. Hall
Director, Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health



What is Mental Health?



Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it affects how people think, feel, and act. Although mental health is often thought of as the opposite of mental illness, research supports the idea that positive mental health includes both the absence of mental health challenges and the presence of high levels of social, behavioral, and emotional well-being (Greenspoon and Saklofske 2001). Students with positive mental health are able to regulate their emotions, cope with stressors, and demonstrate age-appropriate behavior. They also have greater connection to their school, better academic functioning, show more prosocial behaviors, and report less bullying and victimization in school than students without positive mental health (Arslan & Allen 2020). These outcomes demonstrate how student mental health is an asset that can and should be actively developed in schools.

PURPOSE OF THIS UNIT

The purpose of this unit of instruction is to increase mental health literacy in grades 3-5 students using a skills-based health approach. Mental health literacy includes the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build and maintain positive mental health and recognize mental health challenges and seek appropriate help. Mental health literacy is a key strategy for promoting positive mental health in students and staff and is part of a larger school mental health effort. Wisconsin's approach to school mental health utilizes an equitable multi-level system of supports or a framework for providing students with a continuum of mental health and wellness supports from universal prevention through targeted early intervention and treatment. Universal strategies are the supports all students receive within a school to promote positive mental health. This unit of instruction is a universal approach to building wellness and provides a foundation for students who may need a greater level of mental health support.

In order to provide alignment across school mental health efforts, the unit learning plans are aligned to Wisconsin's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies (DPI, 2018). The SEL competencies provide a common language for understanding the progression of social and emotional learning from early childhood through adulthood and communicate the skills that are meaningful and relevant to Wisconsin communities. These social and emotional competencies provide a strong foundation for lifelong mental health literacy.

Preparing to Implement the Unit in Your Classroom

Educators wishing to implement this unit of instruction will have varying levels of familiarity and comfort with talking to students about mental health. Your school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses have specialized training in mental health and wellness and can provide support. Some schools may use a co-teaching model as a way to introduce students to the pupil services professionals in their building and to have support on hand if student needs arise. The following list includes resources and suggestions for successful implementation of this content in the classroom:

- Increase Your Mental Health Literacy
- Create and Hold Classroom Norms
- Utilize a Framework for Responding to Students
- Strengthen Your Compassion Resilience

INCREASE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

Mental health literacy is important for both students and teachers. Without a solid understanding of mental health and wellness, classroom discussions and activities may inadvertently perpetuate stigma related to mental health.

If you are interested in increasing your own knowledge about building and maintaining mental health, identifying mental health challenges, seeking appropriate help, or decreasing stigmatizing attitudes related to mental health, check out the following resources:

- [Youth Mental Health First Aid Training](#)
- [Mental Health Stigma Reduction Toolkit](#)
- [DPI Resilience and Hope Module](#)
- [Office of Children’s Mental Health Reducing Stigma Fact Sheet](#)
- [Mental Health of America Wisconsin Fact Sheets](#)
- [Rogers Behavioral Health Stories of Recovery](#)

CREATE AND HOLD CLASSROOM NORMS

The practice of creating and holding classroom norms with your class establishes expectations for how students would like to be treated and how they plan to treat others. Creating a supportive, positive learning environment is especially important when implementing a unit on mental and emotional health. Be sure to review expectations and agreements that will create a safe, inclusive, and affirming space for each student. For example, the norm of “pass or participate” allows students to decide whether or not they would like to contribute to the current conversation. This increases safety by ensuring students have choice in how they interact with the lessons. Classroom norms or agreements can also set the tone for respectful conversations that honor the ways in which cultural identities influence your and your students’ attitudes and experiences related to mental health. The

unit introduction includes examples of classroom norms that may be helpful. The following may serve as useful resources:

- SHAPE America [Appropriate Practices in School-Based Health Education](#)
- “[Minimizing Threats and Distractions](#)” for the Universal Design for Learning guidelines
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\) Creating Classroom Shared Agreements](#)
- [Learning for Justice's Classroom Culture](#)

UTILIZE A FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS

The content included in the lessons can prompt a variety of reactions in yourself and your students. Consider these reactions and have a plan for responding in a way that communicates to the student that you are a safe person (Buccholz et al, 2014). For example, a student who has experienced trauma may be activated by some of the content and require flexibility to engage in a self-regulation strategy. Before teaching these units, familiarize yourself with your school or district’s policy and practices for responding to students who express thoughts of suicide or harm. The resources below include several models for responding to students in a supportive way.

- [Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) Responding to Student Disclosure of Emotional Pain, Trauma, or Mental Illness](#)
- [Wisconsin Initiative for Stigma Elimination \(WISE\) Safe Person Training](#)
- [DPI Suicide Prevention Resources](#)
- [DPI Responding to Youth in Crisis Module](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(NCTSN\) Providing Psychological First Aid](#)

STRENGTHEN YOUR COMPASSION RESILIENCE

The discussions and activities included in these lessons can lead to students sharing their own experiences of suffering. Continued exposure to others’ suffering can lead to compassion fatigue or feelings of depression, sadness, exhaustion, anxiety, and irritation experienced by people who are helpers in their work or personal life (Gentry 2011). Developing compassion resilience requires exploration of your professional role in alleviating student, colleague, and others’ distress while maintaining your own well-being. Additionally, intentionally cultivating your own social and emotional competence can help you remain resilient in the face of compassion fatigue (WISE Wisconsin et al, 2021). The following toolkits provide discussions, reflections, and other activities aimed at increasing your resilience.

- [DPI and Rogers InHealth Compassion Resilience Toolkit](#)
- [Transforming Education Adult SEL Toolkit](#)

Background Information & Considerations

Welcome to the “Managing My Mental Health” unit for grades 3-5. This is a 6-lesson unit that includes a summative assessment. A 7th lesson may be added in which students can work on the assessment. This unit is meant to be taught once in its entirety, in either 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade. Activities may need to be modified by increasing or decreasing the complexity of the activities in order to meet the needs of students. Suggestions have been provided to adjust certain activities for younger or older students within the grade band.

This unit is designed as a Tier 1 intervention. Some ideas for modifications have been provided for certain activities but these do not replace accommodations. The modifications are included to help meet the needs of a range of learners. However, to meet the needs of students with different abilities and Multilingual Learners, please contact school staff who may offer additional guidance and ideas to support students.

A general consideration, especially for grades 3-5, is to connect to children’s literature. Supplement these lessons with read alouds of texts that connect to the lesson content. Your librarian is a great resource to help identify books that would best support the lesson’s key ideas and themes.

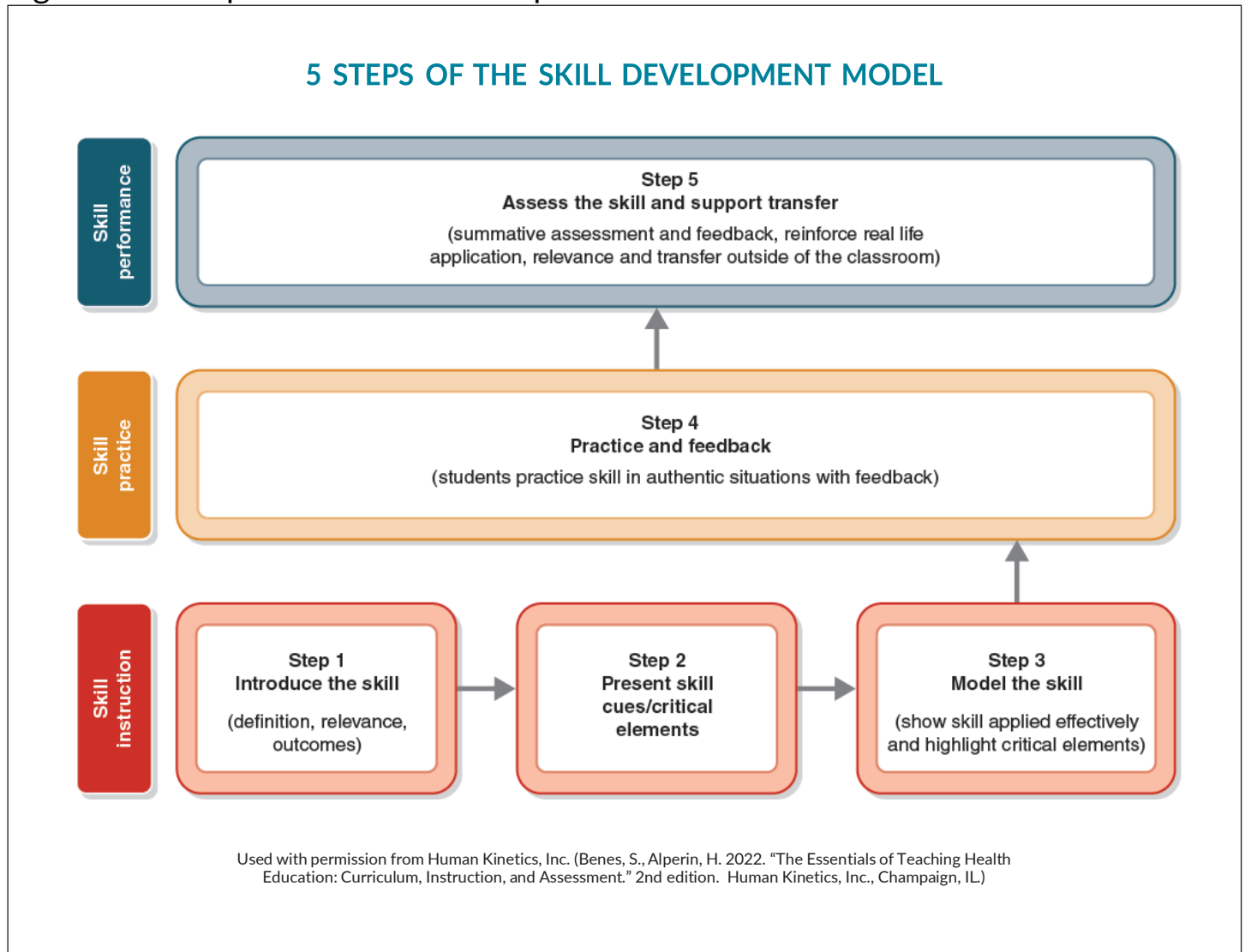
SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This unit is designed to support skill development. The skill in this unit is self-management, which is a National Health Education Standard and Wisconsin State Standard 7. Students will develop self-management skills through unit content focused on mental health. See Figure 1 for the 5 Steps of the Skill Development Model.

All steps of the skill development model are included throughout the unit with Steps 1 and 2 being addressed in Lesson 1, Step 3 in Lesson 2, and Step 4 in Lessons 2-6. Step 5 is addressed in the authentic, summative assessment. In order to effectively support skill development, all 5 steps must be included with the most time spent on skill practice and providing students feedback (Step 4). For this reason, 4 out of the 6 lessons focus on skill practice with opportunities to provide feedback.

Another key aspect of the skill development model is Step 2, “Present skill cues/critical elements.” When developing skills, it is useful to have a clear understanding of the key components that make up that skill. In this unit, the acronym “[I AM ME!](#)” is used, and it includes all the critical elements of the skill (or the skill cues). Having the acronym can support learning and retention of the skill cues.

Figure 1: 5 Steps of the Skill Development Model



Skill cues can be used any time you are building the skill of self-management, including if you are teaching this skill with other topic areas. Using the same skill cues in multiple topics and potentially in multiple grades will also help support retention and will aid in positive transfer whereby students will be able to use the skill in new and novel situations. A final point here; use skill cues that work for your students and are consistent with other school models. A set of skill cues that teachers have found to be helpful have been provided, but the skill cues should be modified as needed to support your students. If modified, be sure that all critical elements of the skill are reflected in the revised skill cues.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives included in the lesson plans are aligned with standards and are written for the educator. Include “student-friendly” learning objectives and share these with students. In the lessons, language is included that summarizes the learning objectives, but the language may need to be further modified to meet the needs of students. It may also be helpful to have a visual reference for students, as well.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Creating a supportive, positive learning environment is especially important when implementing a unit on mental and emotional health. Be sure to review expectations and agreements that will create a safe, and affirming space for each student. As these topics may be difficult for students and some students may need support, identify and post school-based resources as well as other resources such as the National Suicide Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line.

Notify the pupil services staff in advance of teaching this unit. If students have not yet been introduced to the school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist, (and even if they have), it is recommended the pupil services staff come to the class and introduce themselves to help make a connection for students. Encourage students to seek help and connect with a trusted adult during the class and to engage in self-care as needed.

When discussing class agreements, consider setting up a system for students to discreetly notify you if they need support during the unit and have an agreement that encourages students to engage in appropriate self-care. An example of this could include a thumbs up if they are leaving and okay, a thumbs down to show they are leaving because they need support. Another example could be that students pick up a blue pass if they are leaving and are okay or a yellow pass if they are leaving and need support. Create a system that works for both teacher and students, then have a plan in place to follow up with students as needed.

The following list includes examples of possible classroom agreements:

- Pass (being able to pass on sharing)
- Self-care (taking care of needs and protecting well-being)
- Intent and impact (recognizing that even if someone means well, they can say things that can negatively impact others)
- Ouch and oops (students are affirmed in their right to identify hurtful comments and to recognize or repair after saying something that may have hurt another)
- Acknowledge different experiences (students are reminded that everyone has different experiences, comfort, and ability to discuss this topic)
- Anonymous question box (provide opportunities for students to submit questions or comments that they would rather not ask in class)

FINAL NOTES ON MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Acknowledge your own experiences and comfort with the topic of mental and emotional health. You are encouraged to reflect on personal strengths relative to this topic and areas for growth or gaps in knowledge or experience that may impact your ability to teach effectively. You are also encouraged to find supports for areas of growth or improvement as you teach this unit. Self-care should always be a priority for you, and you should ensure you are taking care of yourself as you help students to take care of themselves in this unit.

Considerations for discussing mental health in the classroom:

- Recognize people experience and express emotions differently.
- Avoid dichotomizing feelings into good or bad and positive or negative as that introduces judgment on the emotion. Instead, consider emotions as information that we can pay attention to and learn from.
- Emphasize the scientific and physical aspects of emotions and mental health.
- Avoid using the language of “warning signs” to discuss signs and symptoms of mental illness. The phrase “warning signs” reinforces the stigma that mental illness is “bad” and we do not use similar language when discussing signs and symptoms of physical conditions. Using the terms “signs and symptoms” or “things to notice” is more accurate and less judgmental. “Warning signs” is used frequently so be mindful when using other resources.
- When discussing emotions, spend time discussing the fact that experiencing a range of emotions is a typical (avoiding the word “normal”) part of the human experience.
- Emphasize the importance of being true to oneself and building skills to manage emotions that support personal well-being as well as the health and well-being of those around us.
- Mental health can be a challenging topic, so connect with the pupil services staff and let students know the topics in advance of the unit. Regularly share resources that students can access if needed.

Unit Objectives

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

SKILL OBJECTIVES

- Identify responsible personal health behaviors to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1).
- Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1).
- Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2).

FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION

- Describe the mind-body connection and the interconnectedness of multiple dimensions of well-being.
- Identify a variety of emotions and describe ways that emotions can be expressed.
- Describe and effectively apply a range of coping skills.
- Identify trusted adults in their lives in a variety of settings (e.g., home, school, and community).
- Discuss when to tell a trusted adult about mental health concerns about self or others.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS

- I want to know more about other people's lives and experiences, and I know how to ask questions respectfully and listen carefully and non-judgmentally (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard ID.3-5.8).
- I know that all my group identities are part of who I am, but none of them fully describes me and this is true for other people, too (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard ID.3-5.3).
- I can feel good about my identity without making someone else feel badly about who they are (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard ID.3-5.4).

ALIGNMENT WITH CASEL & WISCONSIN SOCIAL ANDEMOOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Self-Management

- Learners will be able to use verbal and nonverbal language to demonstrate a variety of increasingly complex emotions (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to express their emotions to self and others in respectful ways (DPI 2018, Grades 4-5).
- Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, demonstrate a variety of strategies to manage strong emotions (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to, with minimal adult guidance, manage emotions (e.g., stress, impulses, motivation) in a manner sensitive to self and others (DPI 2018, Grades 4-5).

Self-Awareness

- Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of their own basic emotions (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to identify and describe skills and activities they do well and those for which they need help (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of complex emotions in self and others (DPI 2018, Grades 4-5).

Social Awareness

- Learners will be able to present their own point of view (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to appreciate diversity by recognizing multiple points of view and perspectives of others across cultural and social groups (DPI 2018, Grades 4-5).
- Learners will be able to identify how to get help from a trusted adult in a variety of situations (DPI 2018, Grades 1-3).
- Learners will be able to identify when and how to offer help to others (DPI 2018, Grades 4-5).



Assessment

MY SELF-CARE PLAN ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Students develop a self-care plan to support their mental health and well-being. The self-care plan strategies for identifying mental health challenges and ways to manage challenges that may arise (including applying coping skills). You will notice the self-care plan assessment reflects all the skill cues introduced in Lesson 1:

For 3rd grade students:

- I** - Identify behaviors that help our minds and bodies-students choose self-care strategies
- A** - Act on behaviors that help our minds and bodies-students implement their strategies for a period of time
- M** - Monitor the impact of the behaviors-students track their experience
- M** - Manage behaviors-students reflect on their experiences managing these behaviors in their lives
- E** - Explain the importance of taking care of yourself and others-students respond to a prompt at the beginning of the assessment; focusing on personal and then discuss how this might apply to others at the end

For 4th and 5th grade students:

- I** - Identify behaviors that help our minds and bodies-students choose self-care strategies
- A** - Act on behaviors that help our minds and bodies-students implement their strategies for a period of time
- M** - Monitor the impact of the behaviors-students track their experience
- M** - Manage behaviors-students reflect on their experiences managing these behaviors in their lives
- E** - Explain the importance of taking responsibility for your health and of supporting other people's health and well-being-students respond to a prompt at the beginning of the assessment; focusing on personal and then discuss how this might apply to others at the end

Students implement their self-care plans for 2 weeks to a month.

After the implementation, students reflect and record their experience, what they learned about themselves and how they will use that information to support their mental health moving forward. Students may choose to journal, keep a video log (or vlog), create a blog, draw or make an audio recording.

Note: You should be sure to incorporate time for students to check-in on how they are doing trying out these behaviors. The mental health lessons will be over, but you should create space in future lessons for students to check in about this assignment. You may want to have a more formal reflection opportunity for students after the allotted time.

RUBRIC

As part of skill development, educators assess and provide feedback on the skills. In this unit, the skill is self-management, which is assessed by evaluating health-promoting behaviors (as noted in the criteria below). Use the space in the boxes to provide specific feedback that is both positive and constructive. It is important to remember that no judgement is placed on students related to their self-care choices or other factors not associated with this specific assessment. Students are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate the skill of self-management through this assessment and feedback supports the young person in building this skill. Consider providing opportunities for revision as this would support student growth and skill development. Also, consider connecting the young person to school staff who may be able to help them if you feel they need extra support for skill development.

	You got it!	Almost there!	Not there yet!
Student identified responsible personal health behaviors to support or enhance mental health and well-being in their self-care plan. <small>(NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1.)</small>			
Student included at least 2 different coping skills in their self-care plan.			
Student identified health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health in their self-care plan. <small>(NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1.)</small>			
Student identified a trusted adult who can support them.			
4th/5th grade only: Student demonstrated self-awareness and reflection in their self-care plan tracking.			

Possible modifications for the assessment:

- Provide examples students with disabilities could pick from and give them a set number to choose. Students can either cut and paste the example in the box or write it in depending on their skill set. Also, giving them options or examples to circle for how this strategy can support their mental health will help the students access the material with greater independence. Giving options will be easier for some students to fill out versus open-ended questions.
- Create one worksheet that can be used per day or week. Make a packet with copies for however many days or weeks they will be working on their assessment. Additional suggestions for the tracking aspect of the assessment:
 1. Behavior I did—give all options that students choose and have them circle the ones they used.
 2. Was it hard to do the behavior? —circle yes or no (visuals would be beneficial not just the words).
 3. How did I feel after? —students can circle pictures and words of how they felt.
- General note: Depending on a student’s disability, “Why” questions can be difficult to answer. They might need help from support staff or a teacher to answer these types of questions. Creative pictures or suggestions for them to pick from may help.

Download My Self-Care Plan Assessment:

- ▶ [3rd grade students](#)
- ▶ [4th and 5th grade students](#)

My Self-Care Plan

In the unit, we learned about many different ways to take care of ourselves (which sometimes can be called “self-care”). For this assignment, you are going to make a plan for yourself by thinking about behaviors that can help take care of your mind and your mental and emotional health.

First, give 1 reason why it is important to take care of your mental and emotional health with self-care and give 1 reason why this matters to you and how self-care can help you!

1 It is important to take care of my mental and emotional health because...

2 Self-care matters to me because...

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These are the behaviors that I will try over the next _____ to help my mind:

BEHAVIOR	DOING THIS HELPS ME CARE FOR MY MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH BECAUSE...	WHY I CHOSE THIS BEHAVIOR

A trusted adult I can talk to if I need help with my behaviors, is: _____

Remember to try to use these behaviors over the next _____ We will check in on how you are doing with these behaviors during class.

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Learning about Myself and My Mental Health



OVERVIEW	
TIME	~40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill introduction (Step 1) • Skill cues/critical elements (Step 2) • Functional information
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample identity chart • <i>I AM ME!</i> skill cue visuals • Copies of <i>My Identity is Part of Me!</i> worksheet
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how identity is connected to health and well-being. • Describe the mind-body connection and how this connects to mental health.
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know that all my group identities are part of who I am, but none of them fully describes me and this is true for other people too (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard ID.3-5.3). • I can feel good about my identity without making someone else feel badly about who they are (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard ID.3-5.4).

INTRODUCTION (7 MINUTES)

Warm Up (2 minutes)



As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond to the following prompt in their notebooks: “Take a moment to check in with YOU. How are you feeling right now?” Write down one word or draw a picture or symbol that shows how you are feeling.

Note: You could have words for students to choose from or smiley faces or other visuals to support students in this exercise.

Mindful Moment (2 minutes)



If you have not introduced mindfulness and breathing techniques to students previously, provide a brief explanation of the benefits of these practices and how they connect to health and well-being (and in particular, how they connect to this self-management and mental health unit). You may want to share: “Scientists have discovered that people who practice mindfulness, develop healthier brains and feel less stressed and anxious” (Powell2018). Let students know that throughout this unit, you will begin lessons with different activities that can be applied in all different areas of their lives. You should also let students know they can choose their level of participation during these activities. All should be respectful and allow others to engage as they prefer.

Invite students to hold their hand up to their face, with their palm facing forward. Invite students to inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth. You may use the imagery of students fogging up a mirror with their exhale. Repeat. Next, invite students to put their hands on their rib cage (ideally on the sides but anywhere students feel comfortable is fine). Invite students to inhale, feeling their rib cage expand and exhale, feeling their rib cage return to start. Repeat. Next, invite students to place their hands on their belly if they feel comfortable. Inhale, feeling the belly expand, and exhale feeling the belly return to start. Remind students they might not feel their breath as strongly here and that is okay. Invite them to notice what they can feel as they breathe in and out. Repeat 2 times. Invite students to share how the breathing exercise made them feel. You may prompt some feelings they may feel: calm, relaxed, energized, or focused.

Technology Alternative



Students could respond in a Google Doc that can serve as their notebook for reflection over the units. Students could use tools to draw on an electronic document or search pictures to use to represent their identities.

Lesson Objectives (3 minutes)



Introduce the new unit. The skill of the unit is self-management, and the topic is mental health. Preview the assessment so students know where they are going and what they will be able to do at the end of the unit. Review the specific objectives for this lesson in student-friendly language. Tell students: By the end of this lesson, you will be able to talk about how your identity (identity is a way of saying what makes you, you) can impact your mental health (or the health of our minds; just like we take care of the health of our bodies, we need to the same for our minds).

MAIN ACTIVITIES (28 MINUTES)

I AM ME! (12 minutes)



Ask a few students to share what they think the word “self-management” means. Record key ideas from students on the board. Create a definition for self-management based on student ideas. Key concepts to include in the definition are:

► **3rd Grade**

1. Trying to do behaviors, habits, and practices that help our minds and bodies.

► **4th and 5th Grade:**

1. Trying to do behaviors, habits, and practices that help our minds and bodies and improve our health and well-being.
2. Trying not to do things that are not helpful to our minds and bodies.
3. Sometimes there are things that happen to us that impact our health.

Let students know they will be practicing self-management to help their mental health.

► **3rd Grade**



Ask students what they think about when they hear the words “mental health”. Invite students to share any ideas that come to mind. It is always good to access any prior knowledge and perhaps identify misconceptions by giving students a chance to share their ideas. Record their ideas on the board. Next, create a class definition using the following key ideas:

1. A healthy mind and brain are important for overall health and well-being (mind-body connection)
2. Mental health affects how we think, feel and act
3. Mental health impacts how we manage emotions and experiences

► **4th and 5th Grade**



Working in partners or small groups, ask students to brainstorm a definition for mental health for 2-3 minutes. Have students share out ideas and come to a group definition for mental health. Key concepts to include in the definition:

1. A healthy mind and brain are important for overall health and well-being (mind-body connection)
2. Mental health affects how we think, feel, and act
3. Mental health impacts how we manage emotions and experiences



Let students know that throughout this unit, you will be focusing on behaviors that can support mental health; they are going to learn skills to manage their mental health.

Discuss the skill cues for self-management (I AM ME!). Let students know skills cues are the important parts of the skill they will be practicing during this unit. Invite students to record these skill cues in a notebook or provide a handout where students can fill in different parts of the skill cues.

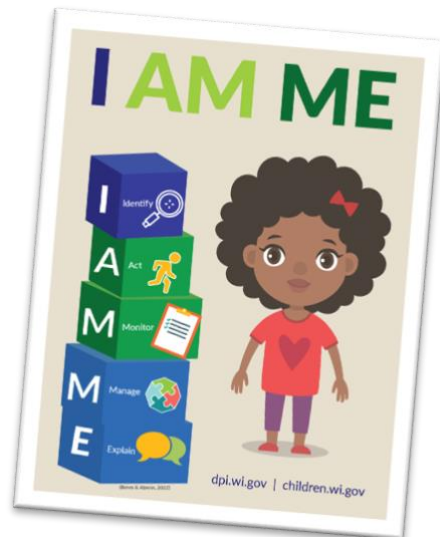
Note: For 3rd grade, you may want to provide a handout or have a poster with the skill cues.

► **3rd Grade**

- I - **Identify** behaviors that help our minds and bodies
- A - **Act** on behaviors that help our minds and bodies
- M - **Monitor** the impact of behaviors
- M - **Manage** behaviors—students reflect on their experiences managing these behaviors in their lives
- E - **Explain** the importance of taking care of yourself and others

► **4th and 5th Grade**

- I - **Identify** “health helping” behaviors
- A - **Act** on “health helping” behaviors
- M - **Monitor** the impact of “health helping” behaviors
- M - **Manage** “health helping” behaviors
- E - **Explain** the importance of taking responsibility for your health and of supporting other people’s health and well-being



Let students know they will practice these skill cues throughout the unit as these are the critical elements of the skill of self-management.

Note: These skill cues represent all aspects of the skill outlined in the National Health Education Standards performance indicators and represent all the critical aspects of the skill. If you choose to modify the skill cues, be sure all components of the skill are represented.

Movement Moment



Invite students to stand up at their desks. Have students march in place (or jog, or jumping jacks, or arm motions of jumping jacks) for 30 seconds. Have students do 10 trunk twists. End with a big inhale, reaching arms up to the sky, and then a big exhale bringing them back down.

My Identity is Part of ME! (16 minutes)

Discuss what the word “identity” means. A simple definition can be: The things that make you - YOU!

Complete an identity chart for yourself. As you are creating your identity chart, be sure to speak aloud why you are choosing the different identities you are choosing to model this for students. After you create the chart, model discussing how your identities make you feel good about yourself, 2 strengths and 1 way they support your mental health. (6 minutes)

Note: This is modeling the activity students will do on their own. Discuss how it is important we respect everyone’s identities; tell students: We are all different and that is what makes the world wonderful! We never want to make someone else feel bad because of who they are.

If this is the first time students have been introduced to the concept of identity, spend additional time introducing the concept. This may include reviewing the sample identity share in more detail.



Let students know they are now going to do this same activity on their own. Review the directions for the activity and provide time for students to work on the activity. If available, provide arts and crafts and other materials for students. You may also want to provide larger paper or poster paper for students to use for this activity. (10 minutes)

Note: You could use the visuals that students create in the classroom or take photos and create a collage to share. You may also consider having music playing during this time (instrumental or other music to help students focus) and allow students to chat if they can keep it at a non-distracting level.

CONCLUSION (2 MINUTES)

Review key takeaways from the lesson:



1. Our identities shape who we are
2. Our identities support our mental health
3. It is important to honor other people’s identities

Preview the next lesson: let students know you will be exploring another aspect of mental health, which is our feelings and emotions.

Warm Up

- Have an emoji scale or other visual scale for students to use to identify how they are feeling.
- Whenever you are discussing feelings, provide a chart with pictures and words from which students can pick. This is helpful for both verbal and nonverbal students. This way they can circle, cut, and paste a picture or write using a prompt in their journal.

Mindful Moment

- Have alternatives available for students during this time. Examples include having a visual for students to follow along with such as a triangle breathing video on YouTube, a coloring activity, or a manipulative such as a stress ball or putty.

I AM ME!

- For younger students, you could provide definitions and review as a group. If you provide more of the definitions, still include some time for debrief and discussion by asking if they have anything to add or asking students if they have heard these terms or concepts in other places.
- For younger students, or if this is a new concept for older students, provide a handout with prompts for different identities that students can fill in (or they can draw symbols).
- Have copies of the skill cues in students' native languages if students are multilingual. Create visual representations of the skill cues.
- Have pictures or visuals of positive and negative behaviors, habits, and practices. Sort pictures into healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

My Identity is Part of ME!

- Have students each write down one of their strengths on a shape, which then gets added to a largershape representing the whole class (e.g., each student writes a strength on a square and then these squares are put together into a quilt).
- Provide pictures or magazines for students to select images to glue onto their page.
- Ask students questions to get them thinking. Provide a copy of the questions as a visual. Example: What do you do for fun? What are you good at? Which groups do you belong to?
- Sometimes Yes or No questions are better. Example: Are you a brother or sister? Do you take part in a sport?

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple choice and visuals for the students to use. Students can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Connect to the nervous system and the brain; why we feel emotions in our bodies.



Connect to identities of historical and contemporary individuals. Discuss how their identity impacted their lives.

Exploring Emotions & Feelings



OVERVIEW	
TIME	~40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional info</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 3 (modeling) • Step 4 (practice) • Functional Information
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper • Skill cue poster or handouts for students to reference • Emotions Cards
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a variety of emotions and describe ways that emotions can be expressed.
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify responsible personal health behaviors to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1). • Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1). • Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2). • I want to know more about other people's lives and experiences, and I know how to ask questions respectfully, and listen carefully, and non-judgmentally (Learning for Justice 2018, Standard DI.3-5.8).

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Warm Up (2 minutes)



As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond to the following prompt in their notebooks: “What is one word that you could use to describe how you are feeling right now? If you prefer, you could draw how you are feeling.”

Note: For 3rd grade, include words students can choose from, or they can use their own but include the visual. You may also want to add the visual for 4th and 5th, as well as a scaffold.

Mindful Moment (2 minutes)



Once all students have arrived, invite students to get in a comfortable position in their seats, grow up through the top of the head and root down through their feet. Invite students to close their eyes or find a spot to focus on during the mindful minute. Invite students to notice where they feel their breath. After about five breaths, invite students to check in with how they are feeling. Invite students to think of one word to describe how they are feeling. Remind students that there is no right or wrong answer, and it is okay if they cannot think of one word. Remind them the activity is meant as a moment to check in with themselves and whatever they are experiencing is okay. Invite students to take a big breath in and then a big breath out. Invite students to open their eyes. You may choose to invite a few students to share out how they feel and if they feel differently than they did when they checked in with themselves in their notebooks.

Lesson Objectives (1 minute)



Ask one or two students to share what they remember from Lesson 1; review key ideas as needed. Review today’s lesson objectives and briefly discuss how the objectives connect with Lesson 1 and with the skill of self-management. Tell students: “By the end of this lesson, you will be able to talk about how you and your classmates experience emotions.”

Technology Alternative



Students use emojis to describe how they are feeling.

For younger students, you may introduce the idea of giving a weather report (describing how they are feeling as weather; “sunny,” “cloudy,” “stormy”).

MAIN ACTIVITIES (33 MINUTES)

Emotions & Feelings from A-Z (10 minutes)

Put students into small groups for about 3 minutes. During their group work, students should brainstorm words used to describe emotions and feelings from A-Z.



Note: For third grade, it may help to give one or two examples and ask for a few examples from the large group before moving into small group work.

Bring students back together to the large group. On a white board, chart paper, or slides (depending on what modality you are using), compile student ideas from their group work for emotions/feelings people experience from A-Z. Encourage students to share words or phrases in a variety of languages (not just Dominant American English) and terms youth might use to describe different emotions (reminding students to keep it school appropriate). Once the list is completed, reflect on the list with students.

Specific prompts will vary depending on the list, but sample prompts may include:

- What do you notice about this list?
- What do you wonder?
- Did any of you think of these emotions when we did our mindful minute?
- What does this tell us about emotions and feelings?
- Point out certain emotions and with each ask: How might we feel this emotion in our bodies? How does this emotion or feeling impact our mental health?



Remind students that experiencing a range of emotions is part of the human experience. Sometimes, we may hear certain emotions are “bad” or are ones we should avoid, but it is important to remember that feeling is a part of being. We do not need to judge our emotions, but we do want to try to understand them and know how to manage emotions in ways that can support our own and other’s health and well-being. Encourage students to think about emotions and feelings as information; they are telling us something if we listen. Remember, there are many different ways to manage and experience emotions, and it is important to find what works for us and to not judge others for the different ways they might experience emotions. Pay attention to how different emotions and feelings make our bodies and minds feel and try to learn from them.

Movement Moment

Invite students to do some brief chair yoga poses:

- Side bends
- Seated twist
- Seated cat/cow (hands on knees, flex and extend the spine)

Ways We Experience Emotions and Feelings (13 minutes)



Let students know that for the next activity, they will be exploring ways to experience different emotions. Connect back to identity and how our identities, our family, our culture, and our unique self, impacts how we experience emotions. Also, connect to



the fact that being able to identify and express how we feel is a health-helping behavior (connects to the “I” in I AM ME!). Tell students this activity

will help them learn about similarities and differences in how people experience emotions. Review the directions with students and model an example for students (e.g., When I am angry, I feel like it can be hard to think; When I am angry, I feel like yelling; When I am sad, I feel a knot in my stomach).

Each group should receive a set of [emotions cards](#). The first student picks a card and then completes the statement: **When I am [insert emotion from card], I feel . . .** If other students in the group feel the same way, they raise their hand. Students who experience the emotion differently should explain how they feel. The next student picks another card, and this continues until each group has gone through each card. This process will take approximately 7-8 minutes.

Bring the groups back together and ask groups to share some of the commonalities they noticed. Wrap up this activity by discussing the importance of having health-helping ways (things that will help keep us healthy) to experience or manage a range of emotions. Let students know this is something they will be exploring in this unit. This process will take approximately 5 minutes.

Things That Make Me Feel . . . (10 minutes)



Have chart paper hung up around the room with an emotion on each piece of chart paper. In small groups, students go around to each piece of paper and write down (or draw) examples of things that make them feel that emotion. If another group has already put something they agree with, they should put a check mark beside the example to acknowledge other students felt the same way. This can help reinforce students are not alone.

Bring students back together and debrief what they notice about common experiences and differences within the class.

Technology Alternative



► Using a polling software such as Poll Everywhere,

Mentimeter, or PearDeck, the teacher could have a series of pre-created statements and students select whether or not they experience that emotion in the same way.

► Students could turn their cameras on or off when they experience an emotion in the same way.

Technology Alternative



This could be done using Google Slides (have a

different emotion on each slide for groups to type in), Jamboards, or Padlets Each board is a different emotion.

CONCLUSION (2 MINUTES)

**Review key takeaways from the lesson:**

1. People experience a range of emotions
2. People experience emotions differently
3. There are certain experiences that may evoke similar emotions, but everyone is different
4. Emotions and feeling are information that we can use

Preview the next lesson:

Let students know that in the next lesson, you will be discussing when and how to get help from trusted adults, which is an example of a health-promoting behavior that can help support or manage emotions and feelings.



Warm Up

- Students could draw emotions or use emojis or gifs if using technology.
- Have a feelings chart with names and pictures of different emotions available so they can choose to circle, write, or draw depending on skill set.

Mindful Moment

- Have alternatives available for students during this time. Examples include having a visual for students to follow along with such as a triangle breathing video on YouTube, a coloring activity, or a manipulative such as a stress ball or putty.

Emotions & Feelings from A-Z

- This could be done as a large group rather than in small groups. You could invite students to come up to draw their ideas (if relevant). You could keep this as a small group activity and have each group come up with their own lists and then share out with the larger group.
- Give students options: a word bank or a chart. They could match the letter to the correct word.

Ways We Experience Emotions and Feelings

- For older students, include more complex emotions. Consider referencing an [emotion wheel](#) for inspiration.
- Make sure to have the sentence starter written somewhere for students to access. Maybe they have a sheet in front of them for a reminder. This is a great activity even for students who are nonverbal or using communication devices.

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple choice and visuals for the students to use. They can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Connect to ways that the brain experiences emotions, how we feel emotions in our bodies, and how we respond when we feel Certain emotions.



Connect to how certain emotions can lead to social change. You could explore social change movements and how emotions and feelings contributed to those movements.

People I Trust



OVERVIEW	
TIME	~40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional info</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill practice (Step 4)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of <i>Who Are My Trusted Adults?</i> worksheet
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify trusted adults in their lives in multiple settings (e.g., school, home, and community).• Discuss when to tell a trusted adult about mental health concerns for self or others.• Identify responsible personal health behaviors (identifying and telling trusted adults) to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1).
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1).• Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2).

INTRODUCTION (8 MINUTES)

Warm Up (4 minutes)



As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond to the following prompt in their notebooks: “How has your day been going so far today?” Students can write, draw, or doodle.

- ▶ For 4th and 5th grade, we recommend adding the following prompt, which is an opportunity for students to practice the skill of self-management: “Is there anything you need to do to help you be ready for this class and the rest of your day? If so, what is it?”

Mindful Moment (3 minutes)



Once all students have arrived, invite students to get in a comfortable position in their seats, grow up through the top of the head and root down through their feet. Tell students today’s mindful moment will be a breathing technique to help balance and calm us. Invite students to hold up either their left or right hand (whichever is most comfortable for them), palm forward in front of their nose, curl their middle 3 fingers down to their palm so just their thumb and pinky are straight. Invite students to use their thumb to close one nostril. They should then breathe in through the open nostril. Pause. Switch the nostril that is covered by covering the one closer to the pinky to breathe out. Breathe in through this same nostril. Pause, close that nostril and breathe out through the other. Invite students to share how the breathing exercise made them feel. If using the right hand: Thumb closes right nostril. Breathe in through your left nostril. Pause. Use pinky to close the left nostril and breathe out through right. Breathe in through your right nostril. Use your thumb to close the right nostril, breathe out through the left. Breathe in through the left. Pause. Repeat.

This can take a few tries to get into the pattern, but it can be a very beneficial technique for students to learn so give it some time if this is the first time you are trying it. You may also want to try it yourself first!

Lesson Objectives (1 minute)



Ask students to share what they remember from previous lessons, review any key information for students related to today’s lesson (e.g., self-management skill cues, emotions are part of the human experience, emotions and feelings provide us with information, supporting our mental health is part of our overall health and well-being). Review today’s lesson objectives. Tell students: “By the end of the lesson, you will have one trusted adult you can talk to, and you will know when it is important to talk to a trusted adult about mental health.”

MAIN ACTIVITIES (31 MINUTES)

Who are my trusted adults? (15 minutes)

Ask students: How do you know if a person is someone you can trust? Record their ideas on the board. Review key characteristics of adults who students can trust:



1. Someone you like to talk to and will listen to concerns
2. Someone who cares about how you are feeling
3. Someone who makes you feel safe
4. A trusted adult does not hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable

Ask students: Who are some people that might be trusted adults in our lives? Be sure to include examples of trusted adults that are culturally responsive (e.g., using different names for family relations, including different languages, including faith-based leaders, elders) and including people from different settings such as school, home, and community.



Discuss with students that people may have different trusted adults and that is okay. Maybe for some students a trusted adult is their grandmother or a coach, for others it could be a teacher or a friend. What is important is knowing there is an adult in your life that you can trust. In our next activity, you are going to have some time to think about your trusted adults. Remember to ask for help if you need it; sometimes it can be difficult to figure out people we can trust.

Consider playing music if that would support students. Additionally, see if a pupil services staff could be present to work with students during this time.

After students complete the “Who Are My Trusted Adults?” activity, have students respond to the following prompts in their notebooks that you share visually:

1. Who is a trusted adult in your life? You can write the name of the adult(s) in your life or draw a picture!
2. I know I can trust this person because:

If you have more time, see if you can think of another trusted adult.

Movement Moment

Have students stand up beside their desk. Invite students to bring their opposite elbow to opposite knee (left elbow to right knee) and then alternate for 10 repetitions (crossing the midline helps to activate both sides of the brain). Next, have students twist side to side (trunk twists) for another 10 repetitions. End with a big inhale, bring arms up to the sky, and then exhale arms down. Repeat one or two more times.

When to Tell a Trusted Adult (5 minutes)



Now that the students identified some adults in their lives who they can trust, it is time to discuss when and how to tell a trusted adult when there are concerns for ourselves or others, including people you love whether it is parents, friends, classmates, or siblings.

Connect to the “A” or **Act** on behaviors that help our minds and bodies in the

I AM ME! skill cues, and let students know that talking to a trusted adult is one way that we can act to support the health and well-being of ourselves and others (which connects to the E as well). Let’s begin by thinking about how we might know that help from a trusted adult is needed to support our mental and emotional health.

Note: Avoid using language such as “warning signs” as that language can reinforce the stigma around mental illness. You may use the terms “signs and symptoms” or use phrases such as, “what kinds of things might we notice.” Also, this is a good time to discuss the difference between a mental health challenge (something that is part of the human experience) and mental illness. Both may need help from a trusted adult, but it is important to reinforce everyone experiences times of challenge; this is not the same as having a diagnosable mental illness. Also, include in the discussion culturally relevant examples of signs when help is needed and focus on students noticing skills and their instinct - if they think they or someone else might need help, telling a trusted adult is an important first step.

Key ideas to be addressed in this discussion as these are signs and symptoms of mental illness modified from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):

► 3rd Grade

- Not doing things you used to do, not having fun doing things you used to like to do
- Feeling very sad for more than 2 weeks
- Not wanting to spend time with people who you care about and who care about you
- Not being able to manage big emotions
- All of a sudden, feeling very scared for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fastbreathing

► 4th/5th Grade

- Feeling very sad for more than 2 weeks
- Not doing things you would usually do and not wanting to spend time with people you care about for more than 2 weeks
- Feeling so worried that it is getting in the way of activities like hanging out with friends or focusing in school
- Not being able to manage strong emotions or experiencing strong emotions for a long time
- Not doing things you used to do, not having fun doing things you used to like
- All of a sudden, feeling very scared for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fastbreathing
- Doing things that are causing problems in your relationships with friends or family

Practicing Telling a Trusted Adult (10 min)



Note: Students should be placed in small groups to discuss the prompts read by the teacher. Each group will discuss the same scenario and then will share out ideas and debrief with the large group.

Tell students you will read a scenario, and students will discuss a trusted adult they could tell and what they might say to that trusted adult. Remind students it is okay, in fact it can be really helpful, for students to have different ideas about who might be a trusted adult! They do not have to have just one answer. Be sure to have visual reference for the scenarios and prompts for students.

Read one of the scenarios or create a new one or modify these as needed.

Provide 2 minutes for students to discuss in groups and then ask them to share out their responses to the questions. Affirm positive responses and address any areas for improvement.

Continue in this manner until it is time to conclude the lesson.

Sample scenarios:

- You notice one of your classmates has been sitting by themselves during lunch and has not been playing at recess. They have seemed really sad for a while, but they always say they are fine. You are concerned your classmate might need help. Who is a trusted adult you could tell? What would you say to the trusted adult?
- You notice your friend has been really worried about things; even things that used to not bother them. They have been snappy and seem crabby and not themselves when you are together. You are concerned your friend might need help. Who is a trusted adult you could tell? What would you say to the trusted adult?
- There is a new student at school. Their native language is not English, and some of the other children make fun of them and tease them. You notice the new student sits alone a lot and does not want to play. You know the other students have been teasing them, and you are concerned about the new student. Who is a trusted adult you could tell? What would you say to the trusted adult?
- Your sibling has been getting really mad recently. It seems like anything you or other people in your family do are making them angry. You know this is not how your sibling usually is, and you are worried they might need help. Who is a trusted adult you could tell? What would you say to the trusted adult?

CONCLUSION (2 MINUTES)

Have students spend the remaining time reflecting on and responding to the following prompts in their notebooks (they can respond to any prompt that resonates with them):

- Is there anything that would make it hard for me to seek help for myself or a friend? If there is, what could I do about it?
- Why isn't it easier for people to ask for help?

► Prompt for 4th/5th grade

- If I could change one thing related to making it easier for people to get help for mental health challenges, I would change...

Warm Up

- Create a separate sheet for students who might need extra help for open responses. This could include giving options for them to circle with pictures. Yes or No questions are always a good option, too. Pair visuals with the words as well to support a variety of learners.

Who are My Trusted Adults?

- For younger students, you could have a more scaffolded worksheet with examples of adults who might be trusted adults. You may also want to spend more time discussing the concept of trust and what trust “looks like” with younger students.
- Students could work on sorting pictures of different people into categories: trusted vs. untrusted. They can also sort the people based on where they find them (e.g., school, community, home). Give students one idea per person or category about what they would talk to them about. They can also sort based on those answers.

When to Tell a Trusted Adult

- This activity could be done in small groups with older students. You could use passages from a text students are familiar with, use a book or clips from a show or videos.
- Use a multiple-choice option or have sentence starters available. Examples include:
 - ▶ The 3rd grader asked _____ but they could have asked _____.
 - ▶ A trusted adult was needed because _____.
 - ▶ The 3rd grader told the person _____.

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple-choice and visuals for the students to use. They can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Students could conduct a scavenger hunt in the school to “find” trusted adults. Students could prepare some questions for each of the trusted adults they find in their school (or groups could be assigned to an adult, they find and “interview” that person and then report back to the class).



Have trusted adults in the school and community come and speak to the class. This would be a great opportunity to bring in school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist as well as other staff and faculty with whom students may connect.

LESSON
4

Asking for Help

OVERVIEW	
TIME	~40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional info</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill practice (Step 4)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of scenarios for <i>Time to Practice!</i> activity
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify responsible personal health behaviors (identifying and telling trusted adults) to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1).
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1). • Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2).

INTRODUCTION (7 MINUTES)

Warm Up (2 minutes)



As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond (students can write, draw, or doodle) to the following prompt in their notebooks: “What is your weather report for the day?” (students describe how they are feeling using weather terms).

Note: You may want to have options for students to choose from or visuals of different weather reports.

Mindful Moment (2 minutes)



Invite students to sit up tall, growing up through the top of their heads and rooting down through their feet. Let students know that they will be practicing “Bear Breath” (or “Counting Breath”). Invite students to close their eyes or find a spot to focus on. Invite students to inhale through their nose for a count of 3, hold for a count of 2, and exhale through the nose for a count of 3. Students can count the inhales and exhales on their fingers if desired. Repeat for 3-5 rounds.

Lesson Objectives (3 minutes)



Invite students to share key takeaways from the last lesson and review key ideas (most useful to review to prepare for this lesson would be what students might notice about themselves or others that might indicate help is needed). Review the lesson objectives for the day by telling students: “By the end of the lesson today, you will be able to talk to a trusted adult when you need help or when you think someone in your life needs help.”

MAIN ACTIVITIES (30 MINUTES)

Talking to a Trusted Adult (15 minutes)



Acknowledge that talking to a trusted adult about mental health concerns can feel scary, and feeling nervous can be a natural way to feel when you are about to have an important conversation. Let students know they will spend most of the lesson practicing how to speak to a trusted adult, but first they will listen to Abraham's story:



“Abraham is in elementary school. He is known for his speedy quick feet on the soccer field. He plays soccer every weekend; he's even in a league in the winter where he gets to play with students older than him. He practices his soccer skills 5 times a week. Abraham has a lot of friends. Recently, Abraham has noticed every time that he talks with his friends his heart beats faster because he hasn't hung out with them lately. He feels out of the loop. When he finally does hang out with his friends, he is shy, quiet, and barely speaks up. In the cafeteria, everyone wants to eat lunch with him and he gets headaches because his friends are too loud and chaotic for him to choose. Instead, he eats lunch in the office where it is quiet. He doesn't want to upset anyone, so he keeps his feelings to himself. But he knows something is wrong. He doesn't want to tell his parents because he doesn't know what they will say. They might call him a “baby” or say “suck it up, you're fine.” What could Abraham do?

Abraham notices the signs that his body was giving him: heart beating fast, feeling shy, headaches, stress. He knows he needs to speak with someone. Abraham has physical education (P.E.) with his teacher twice a week and likes talking with him before class starts. Abraham thinks his P.E. teacher might be understanding. After class one day, he goes to his teacher to see if they can chat sometime. His P.E. teacher tells him to come during any lunch period because he usually eats in his office. Abraham takes some time to gather his thoughts and write out what he wants to tell his P.E. teacher. He brings the paper with him when he goes to talk to his P.E. teacher during lunch. Abraham opens up to his P.E. teacher about how he is feeling and the symptoms he is having. His P.E. teacher listens and gives Abraham space to speak. They discuss strategies to help Abraham. After speaking with his P.E. teacher he feels a lot better knowing that he has a trusted adult in the school building he can go to for help.”

Technology Alternative

Invite a student to film the scenario with a teacher (with a P.E. teacher would be great) so you can show the video rather than reading the scenario.

Ask students what this story tells them about talking to a trusted adult. Acknowledge that at first, Abraham was not sure about telling anyone; it can be hard to ask for help. Also, point out how Abraham took time to write down his ideas before he talked to his trusted adult and how he felt better after even though it was hard at first. Let students know you are going to brainstorm ways to talk to trusted adults and then will practice but first, you will discuss things that can make it hard to talk to a trusted adult (tell students these are sometimes called barriers).

Provide an opportunity for students to do a short (2 minute) partner brainstorm about barriers to asking a trusted adult for help. Come back together as a large group and have partners share out ideas. For each barrier identified, brainstorm (as a large group) ways to overcome that barrier. Discuss when there might be opportunities to speak to a trusted adult confidentially. Identify people in the school who students could go to confidentially.

Movement Moment

Have a short dance party by asking students to dance beside their desks or have a fun movement activity to put them into their groups for the next activity.

Time to Practice! (15 minutes)

Put students into small groups (make sure students take their notes with them as they can use those for this activity). Each group should have 2-3 scenarios. Students should choose a scenario to work through first. As a group, they should complete the following steps:

1. Identify what in the scenario is letting them know a trusted adult is needed.
2. Identify a trusted adult who they would tell if they were in that situation.
3. Each student should role play what they would say to a trusted adult who they would talk to in this situation.

Remind students to use their notes from the group discussion to help if needed. If students have more time, they can move on to a new scenario.

Sample Scenarios

Jorge is in 4th grade and their younger sister, Lexi, is in 1st grade. Jorge knows that Lexi has a hard time reading and that other kids make fun of her. Jorge wants to get support for their sister and have kids stop picking on her. Jorge knows that at home, Lexi reads well. At school, the other kids make her nervous. Jorge had the same teacher as Lexi a few years ago and Jorge knows this teacher is nice and easy to talk to. Jorge decides to tell Mr. Close their concerns about their sister.

Shaunta is one of the few kids in her class not looking forward to summer break. She hates being at home all day because she misses her friends at school and sometimes her uncle is around and makes her feel unsafe. She likes being at school because she does not have to fear her uncle will be there. Summer break is approaching, and her teacher senses her apprehension. Her teacher asks why she is not looking forward to summer break.

Lincoln's parents are divorced, and he spends half his time with his mother and half his time with his father. He likes it better when he stays with his father. He always eats at his father's house, gets a comfortable space to sleep each night, and does a lot of fun things with his dad. Lincoln feels his time with his mom is unpredictable and chaotic. She sometimes does not have food in the house for him, and he can rarely sleep when he is there. When Lincoln's dad asks him about the time he spent with his mom, Lincoln often says short answers like "it was fine" or "it was good." After a bad week staying with his mom, Lincoln's dad said he looks tired and was worried that Lincoln was sick. Lincoln then tells his dad that he has trouble sleeping at his mother's house because he does not have a bed and his mom's friends are often over late.

CONCLUSION (3 MINUTES)



Invite students to share how they feel after practicing. Do they feel more comfortable or confident in asking for help? Why or why not? What else do you need to feel more comfortable or confident?

Warm Up

- Create a separate sheet for students who might need extra help for open responses. This could include giving options for them to circle with pictures. Yes or No questions are always a good option, too. Perhaps pair visuals with the words to engage a variety of learners.

Talking to a Trusted Adult

- With older students, you may choose to do this in small groups first and then come back together as a large group. For younger students, you may want to add in some examples for each category to help them brainstorm. For any age group, you may want to provide students with 2-3 minutes to brainstorm on their own before they offer ideas to the large group.
- You may also want to provide a few minutes for students to read the scenario before reviewing it as a large group.
- Ensure all students can also see the written text when it is being read.
- You could also role play the conversation with a student rather than reading the story.

Time to Practice!

- For younger students, it may help to have a more scaffolded version of this activity with places to record what they noticed, their trusted adult, or even items to circle rather than write out.
- Have a graphic organizer available to fill out that has:
 - Who should they tell?
 - What is the problem?
 - What should they say or what is the solution?
- Also, give options for students to circle.

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple choice and visuals for the students to use. They can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Invite some trusted adults to participate in the lesson, so that students can practice with an actual trusted adult (being mindful the people that come might not be trusted adults for all students; students should not be forced to practice). Guests could include student services staff i.e., school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, or nurses.

LESSON
5

I Can Cope!

OVERVIEW	
TIME	~40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional info</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill practice (Step 4)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials for board game or dice activity • Coping skills checklist and cards
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and effectively apply a range of coping skills. • Identify responsible personal health behaviors to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1).
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and effectively apply a range of coping skills. • Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1). • Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2).

INTRODUCTION (7 MINUTES)

Warm Up (4 minutes)

As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond (students can write, draw, or doodle) to the following prompt in their notebooks: “What are two words that describe how you are feeling right now?”

► 4th and 5th grade:

Add the following prompt: “How are you experiencing those feelings in your body?”

Mindful Moment (2 minutes)

Invite students to sit up tall, growing up through the top of their heads and rooting down through their feet. Have students look around the room and name something they see that starts with A, then B, then C, and so forth. See how far they can get through the alphabet and then check in to see how they are feeling once they reach the end. Encourage students to do this silently on their own.

Lesson Objectives (1 minute)

Invite students to share key takeaways from the last lesson and review key ideas. Let students know for the last two lessons they are going to be practicing some coping skills and discussing when to use different coping skills. Make a connection back to Lesson 2 in which you discussed how everyone experiences a range of emotions and sometimes we need tools to help us manage them, such as when we are stressed, upset, and angry. After the next two lessons, you will be able to talk about different coping strategies, and you will be able to use some coping strategies of your own.

MAIN ACTIVITIES (40 MINUTES)

What are Coping Skills? (10 minutes)



Show students [this brief video](#) from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta about coping skills. Review connections to the previous lessons about emotions; reminding students it is normal to feel a range of emotions and coping skills can help us to experience them in a way that supports our health and well-being and the health and well-being of others. Connect to the skill cues as coping skills connect to many parts of the [I AM ME! skill cues](#). Invite students to share their ideas from the “Warm Up” and discuss how today’s lesson will focus on thinking about different coping strategies and which might work in certain situations.



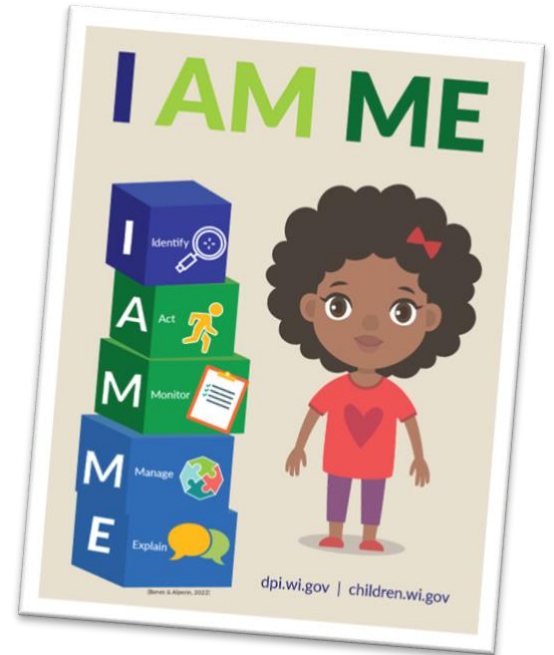
My Coping Skills (10 minutes)



Let students know the next two lessons will be focused on coping skills. Discuss how coping skills can help us manage strong emotions, deal with mental health challenges, and can be part of recovery and well-being practices for people with mental health disorders/illnesses. Let students know



that in the first activity, they will have time to read through examples of coping skills found on the handout. Students should identify which skills they have tried and have worked for them, skills they might want to try, and cross off skills that do not work for them.



Have students take time to complete the checklist found on pages 2 and 3 of this Coping Skills Checklist [PDF](#).

Note: You will be using the Coping Cards in the next lesson. For this activity, you will want to focus on just pages 2 and 3. So, you may want to print just those 2 pages for this lesson. You may also want to modify the information for your students or modify the worksheet, as necessary.

Bring students back together as a whole group and invite students to share some of the coping strategies that worked and that they want to try.

Let students know they will be using this checklist again in the next lesson, but now they are going to use it to help them in the next activity.

Movement Moment



Use a video activity such as those found on “Go Noodle” to provide a short movement break.

The Game of Life (15 minutes)



There are two different ways you could implement this activity, both are explained below. Remind students to use the checklist of coping strategies if needed during the game. Encourage students to take the handout home and share with caregivers.

Put students into small groups and then explain the activity.

1) Board Game: Using the [board game handout](#), have students roll a dice and move ahead that many spaces. Students must stop at any space with a “situation” symbol (even if they move less spaces than they rolled). Students pick up a [situation card](#) which has a common experience an upper elementary student might experience. The student should read the scenario aloud to the group and then explain a coping strategy that could be used to effectively manage the situation **if they were in that situation**. It helps build skills when students apply scenarios to themselves. The student’s turn is over, and the next person goes. If students do not land on a “situation” space, they roll again until they land on a situation space.



2) Dice: Create one dice (using a [printable cube pattern template](#)). Each face of the dice has a different situation an upper elementary student might experience. One person in the group rolls and then the group discusses at least one coping strategy that could be used in that situation. If they land on the same situation more than once, they have to come up with a different coping strategy to apply to manage the situation.

Note: Situation cards are provided for you to fill in. It will be most helpful for you to create the cards based on scenarios that are relevant for your students (current events in the school, issues that have come up, and/or that reference school specific resources/places, scenarios at home, in school, and the community). The template should be printed double-sided so the scenario is on the back of the cards.

Debrief (5 minutes)



As a whole group, review some of the situations and have different groups share out their ideas. Highlight the fact that there are many ways to effectively manage situations and use coping skills and we need to find ones that work best for us.

CONCLUSION (2 MINUTES)



In their notebooks, invite students to reflect on the coping strategies discussed today and which would they use? Why? If they have used some of the strategies before, did they work? Why or why not?

DIFFERENTIATION AND MODIFICATIONS

Warm Up

- Create a separate sheet for students who might need extra help for open responses. This could include giving options for them to circle with pictures. Yes or No questions are always a good option, too. Perhaps pair visuals with the words as well to support a variety of learners.

What are Coping Skills?

- Choose a different video for introducing coping skills.
- Turn on Closed Captions when playing the video.

My Coping Skills

- For students who struggle with reading, having pictures instead of words would work best. They can do the same activity.

The Game of Life

- Have coping strategies available to select from. Provide a multiple-choice option. For those students who are unable to explain, they could just state or point to which coping strategy they would use.
- Have some simple scenarios available that could be applied to all learners.

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple choice and visuals for the students to use. They can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Connect to ways coping strategies impact our nervous system and how our bodies respond when we engage in coping strategies.

Building My Toolbox



OVERVIEW	
TIME	40 minutes
FOCUS <i>Step of skill development model or functional info</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill practice (Step 4)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Talk Worksheet• Coping Cards
KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe a range of coping skills.• Identify responsible personal health behaviors to support or enhance mental health and well-being (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.1; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:A1).
SKILL OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectively apply a range of coping skills.• Demonstrate a variety of health-promoting practices and behaviors to maintain or improve mental health (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.2; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B1).• Demonstrate a variety of behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks (NHES 2007, Standard 7.5.3; DPI 2011, Standard 7:2:B2).

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Warm Up (2 minutes)



As students enter, have students first check in with themselves by asking them to respond to the following prompt in their notebooks: “On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being ‘meh’ and 5 being ‘great’ how are you feeling right now?” Students can write, draw, or doodle.

Note: You may want to have the emojis as a visual reference.

► For 4th and 5th grade:

Once students have completed the prompt, have them respond to the following prompt: “What are some things you do to help you manage your emotions? When you might be feeling frustrated, angry, or stressed, what are ways you help yourself calm down and relax?”

Mindful Moment (2 minutes)



Invite students to sit up tall, growing up through the top of their heads and rooting down through their feet. Invite students to close their eyes or find a spot to focus on. Ask students to bring their attention to the bottom of their feet by pressing into the ground for a moment. Now, invite students to pay attention to what they feel. How do their feet feel in their shoes? Can students feel their socks or the inside of their shoes? How do your heels feel? Your toes? Wiggle your toes . . . do you feel anything different now? Can you move each toe one by one? Do your feet feel hot or cold? Do you notice anything else about how your feet are feeling? Invite students to open their eyes and stretch if needed. Invite students to share how they feel after doing this activity.

Lesson Objectives (1 minute)



Invite students to share key takeaways from the last lesson and review key ideas. Let students know that for this lesson, they will be practicing additional coping skills and other health-promoting or “health-helping” behaviors. Review how these activities connect to the skill cues. Let students know they will have a chance to take what they have learned in this unit and create a plan for themselves to support their mental health. Review the lesson objectives for the day. Tell students: “Today, you will be able to practice even more coping strategies; we are helping to build your coping skills toolbox.”

MAIN ACTIVITIES (45 MINUTES)

Yoga (10 minutes)



Briefly discuss the benefits of yoga as it relates to mental and emotional health, and how it can serve as a coping strategy. Suggested language to share with students: Studies have found treatments that include yoga have been shown to be as effective as medication in managing feelings and helping people who are diagnosed with a mental illness (Kuyken 2015).

The [Standing Sequence](#) is a good beginner sequence that does not involve mats and can be done in small spaces.

Reframing and Self-Talk (15 minutes)



Briefly discuss how being able to reframe negative thoughts can be a helpful coping strategy along with being able to notice negative self-talk and reframe it to a positive. Let students know they will be practicing these skills in this first activity. They will first have some individual time to practice these skills and then will be able to discuss with a partner.



Review the worksheet directions and then provide students 5-7 minutes to complete the worksheets on self-talk individually. [Worksheet 1](#) and [Worksheet 2](#).



Note: These could be printed as one, double-sided worksheet. You should also point out to students they can use the positive statements to help them with the “self-talk” side of the worksheet.

Next, put students into pairs (or have students turn and talk) and share what they wrote in their self-talk worksheets (3 minutes).

Return to the large group to debrief as a whole class (5 minutes).

My Coping Cards (15 minutes)



Let students know they have had some time to examine coping skills, they will have a chance to create “coping cards,” which they will be able to keep with them as helpful reminders. You may encourage students to make some coping cards they could keep at school along with ones they could keep at home. Provide students with art materials so students have the opportunity to be creative with their cards if they would like.

Note: You are using the same [PDF](#) from Lesson 5, just focusing on page 8.

CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)



In their notebooks, invite students to respond to the following prompt: “This was our last lesson in our self-management unit. Take a few minutes to describe (or show) what you have learned in the unit.”

Warm Up

- You could include visuals for students for the 1-5 scale and invite them to circle how they are feeling.
- Create a separate sheet for students who might need extra help for open responses. This could include giving options for them to circle with pictures. Yes or No questions are always a good option, too. Perhaps pair visuals with the words as well to support a variety of learners.

Yoga

- You could have the P.E. teacher, another teacher, or school staff member who does yoga come and lead students through poses.

Reframing and Self-Talk

- You could have the school counselor come in to speak about the benefits of reframing and self-talk.
- For Worksheet 1: Some students might need a visual instead of just the words. Maybe choose half of the items off the worksheet and create visuals to go along with them.
- For Worksheet 2: For the first part of the worksheet, give the student the scenario. Try to find something relevant to that student or a very generic scenario that could apply. For the second part, provide options for the student to choose from. In the third part, give them something that is not so positive and have them match it to something positive.

Coping Cards

- Find coping cards already made that the students can color (or create your own samples). Or students can cut and paste pictures of coping skills onto cards.
- Have pictures of emotions they can also cut and paste or reference for filling in “when I feel.”

Conclusion

- Provide some multiple choice and visuals for the students to use. They can circle their answers instead of writing, provide sentence starters, or fill in the blank.
- Have a few basic questions about what they learned. Have it in a multiple-choice option or have a bunch of pictures and have the student circle the pictures relevant to what they learned in the unit.
- Put together a packet with all the different conclusions or journal entries for the students, and they can flip to the page that goes along with the lesson.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



Connect to the brain science behind some of these strategies.

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