SESSION 2 //
Belonging with Others
YOUR GUIDE

BRANDY ARNOLD
Director of School Success + Training
Who is in the room today? **Introduce yourself.**
Your name and what brings you here today.
MOOD METER
Larger Groups

Invite each person to share how they are feeling based on the Mood Meter. Present this image of the Mood Meter for reference.

Teacher Note: Developed by Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.
WELCOME RITUAL
AGENDA //

+ Community Agreements
+ Foundational Lesson // Lean into Discomfort
+ What is Belonging + Why is it Important?
+ Skillbuilding Lesson // Identity Accordion
+ Q +A
+ Closing Ritual // Gratitude
COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS
COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

LISTEN TO EACH OTHER
Be present and listen to others
  Respond, don’t react
  Try to find comfort in silence

BE KIND TO EACH OTHER
Try not to judge yourself or others
  Respect other people’s journeys
  Speak from the “I” perspective

LEAN INTO DISCOMFORT
Take risks and lean into discomfort
  Try new ways of thinking and doing
  Don’t be afraid to ask questions

STEP IN, STEP BACK
Choose what you want to share
  Notice how much you are sharing
  Respect confidentiality
VIRTUAL COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

**PRESENCE**
- Try not to be on other devices
- Please mute to limit background noise

**PATIENCE**
- Offer grace with tech issues
- Your lovely beings are welcome on screen!

**PARTICIPATION**
- Say your name when sharing
- Make a visual gesture to get called on
- Use chat feature for questions/affirmations
LEAN INTO DISCOMFORT

DANGER ZONE
You would feel unsafe, tense, and paralysed by fear

STRETCH ZONE
You would feel uncomfortable and in unfamiliar territory

COMFORT ZONE
You would feel at ease and in familiar territory
WHAT IS BELONGING? //
Belonging is a core human *feeling*.

It’s also a *practice* we can build.
Belonging is more than connecting with people similar to you. It’s *bridging our differences* with openness and compassion.
Belonging is not about fitting in.

It’s accepting ourselves and others for who we are.
Belonging is more than building relationships with other people.

It’s remembering we are part of something bigger than ourselves.
BELONGING IS...

...the acceptance, celebration, and inclusion of our’s and others’ fullest selves without altering or hiding who we are to meet the expectations of those around us.
Belonging means building meaningful, compassionate relationships with ourselves, other people, and the wider world we are part of.
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

self esteem

self efficacy

stress management

motivation + achievement

participation

life satisfaction

IDENTITY ACCORDION
Exploring how we express the various parts of our identity
Fold left third behind itself.
Bring right third in.
Label 1, 2, 3.

Flip over.
Label 4, 5, 6.
**PARTS OF YOUR IDENTITY...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>... that people notice or assume about you when they first meet you.</strong></td>
<td><strong>... that you only express in your inner circles (immediate family, close friends.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex:</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ I am a teenager</td>
<td>+ I like to be silly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ I am a girl</td>
<td>+ My family relies on government assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+ I use a wheelchair</td>
<td>+ I suffer from depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ I am Hindu</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ I have a half brother</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>+ I love to dance</td>
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## Parts of Your Identity...

<p>| | | |</p>
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>... that most people know about / you express most often.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ I play basketball</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ I am Latinx</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ English is my second language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+ I was raised by my grandparents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>... that are important to you, but you don’t talk about much.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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**WRITE DOWN PARTS OF YOUR IDENTITY...**

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Ex:  
+ I like to be silly  
+ My family relies on government assistance  
+ I suffer from depression | ... that people only learn about when they get to know you better.  
Ex:  
+ I am Hindu  
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IDENTITY ACCORDION - DEBRIEF

1. How much do you **open** up “your accordion” at work?

1. What are some reasons we might keep our “accordions” more **closed**?

1. What might be some **benefits** of opening our “accordions” up more? What are some of the **consequences**?
1. Belonging Check-Ins
2. Foundational Lessons
3. Skill-Building Lessons
Belonging Check-Ins are **structured meetings** designed for students to regularly check-in about their **relationships with themselves, each other, and the wider world.**
Foundational Lessons are meant to explicitly establish the foundation for a safe and open classroom culture where students feel they belong.

- Assessing Our Needs
- Learning About Each Other
- Understanding Belonging
- Practicing Agreements
Skill-Building Lessons are activities and frameworks to deepen students' understanding and practice of belonging. There are 37 lessons organized across 3 chapters.
4. Self-compassion

Lesson Overview

Self-compassion is the practice of being kind with ourselves, and being kind and understanding toward our personal shortcomings, failures, and challenges. Being able to meet ourselves with compassion is the key to a healthy and fulfilling life. If we are not kind to ourselves, we can be our own worst enemy.

In this lesson, students identify a small challenge or difficult situation they are experiencing. Before experiencing with self-compassion, we ask students to rate how they feel about themselves and their behavior in this situation on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least compassionate and 5 being most compassionate.

We encourage students to start with a small challenge before tackling bigger ones. It is important to be mindful of our own limitations and not push ourselves too far.

Background

Defining Self-compassion

According to self-compassion researcher, Kristin Neff, self-compassion means being kind and understanding when confronted with personal failures. Instead of “harshly judging and criticizing yourself for various weaknesses or mistakes,” self-compassion involves “acknowledging the suffering that is going on in life.”

Research

Research suggests that self-compassion has a protective effect against stress, depression, anxiety, and self-harm, and for self-compassion to be enhanced, it must be associated with higher levels of emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, self-compassion has been found to be strongly correlated with compassion identification. For an excellent review of the research for teachers, check out this article by self-compassion researcher, Karen Bliss.
In response to **Black Lives Matter** and other pressing issues in our nation, here is a resource in tandem to the belonging check-in kit to have critical conversations.
QUESTIONS?
Reflecting and processing together
CLOSING RITUAL //
Reflecting and processing together
CLOSING RITUAL

Thank you, I’m going to share one word prompts. 

SPARK, STRETCH, STRUGGLE

Prompts

Invite each person to choose which of these they want to share:

- SPARK – Something new you learned or realized (ex: “I realized that I find it difficult to ask for support,” “I learned today how much I try to stay in my comfort zone”)
- STRETCH – Something you did that felt like a challenge or edge for you (ex: “My stretch was that I shared a personal story today,” “My stretch was that I stepped back so that others had space to share more”)

Later in the year, consider including:

- STRUGGLE – Something you forgot, made a mistake on, or struggled with that you would like to acknowledge (ex: “I had a hard time focusing”)
THANK YOU!

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