



Strengthening Emotional Health

This lesson is intended to help students nurture their emotional health and that of others by naming their emotions, learning to handle conflict, and planning for self-care.

Essential Question

How do we work together to create a fair and just classroom community where individual and collective learning is engaging, valued, and liberating for all?

Guiding Question

How can understanding and acknowledging our emotions, conflicts, and need for self-care help us to strengthen our own emotional health and that of others?

Objectives

- Students will broaden their vocabulary to be able to describe their emotions more accurately.
- Students will learn to handle conflict constructively.
- Students will select from among nine strategies to develop a self-care plan, and commit to using it in daily life.

Advance Preparation

- Prepare student materials
- Place sticky notes at team tables
- Have space in classroom for a connection circle

Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 4.6 (adapt as needed)
- Chart paper (one sheet for each team)
- Chart paper for class, and markers
- Sticky notes (2 packs per team) and pens or pencils

Student Materials

- Paper for Do Now
- “Disagreeing Without Being Disagreeable” T-chart
- “Give 1/ Get 8 Self-Care” handout
- (optional) “My Self-Care Plan” handout

Vocabulary

- Emotions
- Conflict
- Self-care

Do Now

3 min.

Slide 1: Students write down as many words to describe feelings and emotions as they can think of in one minute.

Introduction (Framing/Overview)

4 min.

1. Slide 3: Student Dedication (30-60 sec.)
2. Connection circle (slide 4): Students share one thing they are struggling with right now and one action they have taken or would like to take to overcome the struggle. (3 min.)
3. Review the day's agenda (slide 5), explaining that today's lesson is on how to enhance your own emotional health and that of others by identifying your emotions, handling conflict constructively, and taking care of yourself.

Activity 1: Giving Our Feelings Words

12 min.

4. Explain to students that in relating to other people, it's helpful to be able to identify how you're feeling and communicate your feelings to others accurately. Generic feeling words are all too easy to overuse. One example is the word "good". How was your day? "Good." How was lunch? "Good." How are your friends? "Good." Being able to give words to your own feelings and others' moods is essential to effective communication, especially during conflict. To do this, you need a broad emotional vocabulary—that is, a wide spectrum of words to clearly articulate how you are feeling or to explain the feelings of others. **Direct Instruction**
5. Slide 6: distribute chart paper to teams of 3 or 4. In teams, students share the emotion words that they noted for the Do Now. Each word should be written once on a sticky note (no duplicates) and placed on chart paper. Then students brainstorm to think of additional words, write them on sticky notes, and add them to the chart paper. **Cooperative Learning**

Challenge students to get to 50 words or, if that is too easy, 75 words on their group chart. Students should be open to all ideas and

acknowledge all suggestions. Accept slang and colloquial terms that students use to express themselves with one another.

- 6. Slide 7: students rearrange the sticky notes on the chart paper to create categories for their emotion words/statements.
- 7. Have each group post its chart. Explain that you will compile all the words/statements onto one chart, eliminating any repetitive words. (Several students could also assist you with this process.)

Activity 2: Handling Conflict Constructively15 min.

- 8. Slide 8: Explain to students that conflict is a natural part of human relations and is neither bad nor good. Being able to recognize and express emotions will help them take steps to manage them successfully—especially during a conflict. Because conflict is a normal part of life, it is important to be able to disagree with people respectfully and honestly, including during group work time, without escalating conflict. Click once to ask students whether they can think of any positive results that come from conflict that is handled well. Guide the discussion to help students understand that when conflict is handled constructively, it can:
 - help us learn new and better ways to respond to problems
 - help us build better and more lasting relationships
 - help us learn more about ourselves and others
 - lead to stronger group identity and sense of community
 - lead to better communication

Direct Instruction

Whole Class Discussion

- 9. Click again to direct student teams to complete the Disagreeing Without Being Disagreeable T-Chart.

Cooperative Learning

- 10. Have student teams share their ideas and create a master T-chart on chart paper. Post it for the class. Possible items include:

Looks Like	Sounds Like
Active listening	“You might be right, but...”
Making eye contact	“I don’t think I follow you.”
Body turned toward speaker	“Are you sure about that?”
Leaning in toward speaker	“Let’s look at that again.”

- 11. Ask students the following questions.
 - Why is it important to be able to disagree with people without challenging or disrespecting them and making them feel

Whole Class Discussion

defensive? (Be sure students understand what ‘defensive’ means in this context, and that using this skill minimizes anger, lowers the possibility of fighting, keeps the conversation focused on the topic at hand, and keeps it objective rather than personal.)

- How can we use this skill in school and out of school?
- What are some possible outcomes if the skill is not used?

12. To close, click again and model this skill by role playing with a student, using the class T-chart as a guide (for example, you are a student who thinks the homework assignment is too hard, and the teacher disagrees). Let the student be the one whose ideas are being challenged. Successfully resolve the conflict using this skill. After the role play, briefly discuss it with the class. Did you follow the behaviors listed in the T-chart?

**Teacher-
Student
Role Play**

Activity 3: Self-Care (Give 1/ Get 8)

10 min.

13. Slide 9: Explain to students that “self-care” refers to practices that help us cope with the challenges of life in healthy ways that keep us strong. Distribute the “Give 1/ Get 8” handout; click and give students a few minutes to read the questions and write their favorite self-care activity in one of the boxes in the grid. (If if they don’t currently have a self-care practice they rely on, they can write something they would like to do to practice self-care.)
14. Have students move around the room, sharing their self-care practice with others. Each time they get an idea from a peer, they should write it down on their grid until all or most of the nine boxes are filled.
15. Once participants have several ideas to choose from, ask them to circle the ideas they like the most, and commit to using one or more of these practices this week and report back to their peers on how it goes.

**Direct
Instruction**

**Personal
Reflection/
Pair &
Share**

Closure

2 min.

16. Exit ticket: Student each share with a partner one self-care strategy they are committing to use this week to take care of themselves.

Extensions

If you wish to assign homework, have students take time at home to create a self-care plan (My Self-Care Plan handout). Having such a plan helps students develop ownership and autonomy, and takes the guesswork out of what to do and where to turn in a moment of crisis. Self-care plans can include

- **people** that students can rely on to support and encourage them in daily life (especially caring adults)
- **activities** that help them feel better in times of stress, such as music, exercise, art, coloring, writing poetry, or prayer
- **stressors**—times of day or situations that often challenge their mental well-being.

Creating their plans will help students realize they are in control of how they respond to situations in their lives—increasing confidence and a sense of control in times of stress. Students need safety now more than ever. Putting compassion before content helps students learn and deal with the changes that are happening.

If you have extra time in class, invite student teams to brainstorm, role play, and try to solve one of the following situations using the skill Disagreeing Without Being Disagreeable T-chart as a resource. They should role-play the scenarios with one member designated to behave “Disagreeably,” opposing everyone else’s ideas and opposing them personally. Team members should debrief afterward on how the disagreeable behavior affected their ability to work together. The scenarios are:

- The principal has asked you to suggest a new school policy to deal with tardy students. Your team has to come up with recommendations.
- Your team has to plan an end-of-season party for the basketball team, and must decide on music, food, and activities.
- You are all members of the drama club, and must decide on several ways to raise money needed to put on a successful play this year.

Resources: “Give 1/ Get 8” activity: <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-2/learn/self-care-and-re-energizing/>

Disagreeing Without Being Disagreeable T-Chart

What does healthy disagreement look like and sound like? Work with your team to write your ideas in the chart below.

Disagreeing Without Being Disagreeable	
Looks Like...	Sounds Like...

Give 1/ Get 8 Self-Care Activities (activity courtesy of Chicago Public Schools)

1. Answer ONE of the questions in the grid below.
2. Mingle with others to share your activity and hear about theirs. Write their ideas in your grid.
3. Look at the ideas you've collected. Circle the ones you like best, and plan to incorporate them into your week!

How do you make time for exercise, and what kind of exercise do you like to do?	What do you do during the week to nurture your spiritual health?	How do you carve out “me time” in your busy day, and what do you do with it?
How do you unwind and recharge after school?	How do you care for yourself when you have had an upsetting or stressful day?	What strategies do you use to eat healthy?
What morning routine helps you prepare emotionally for the day?	What do you do with your friends or family that re-energizes you?	Other—what’s your favorite self-care activity that doesn’t fit into any of these boxes?

My Self-Care Plan

Fill in each of the spaces below. This will help you identify strategies and resources you can rely on to help you stay mentally and emotionally strong when things are tough.

<p>People: Who are the people I rely on to encourage me and support me in daily life? Try to think of one or more caring adult(s) as well as friends and peers.</p>	
<p>Practices: What do I like to do to help me feel better in times of stress? Examples might include exercise, music, art, coloring, writing poetry, journaling, or prayer.</p>	
<p>Stressors: What times, places, or situations stress me out or challenge my well-being?</p>	<p>Strategies: How can I draw on the supports listed above to face the challenges of each of my stressors?</p>