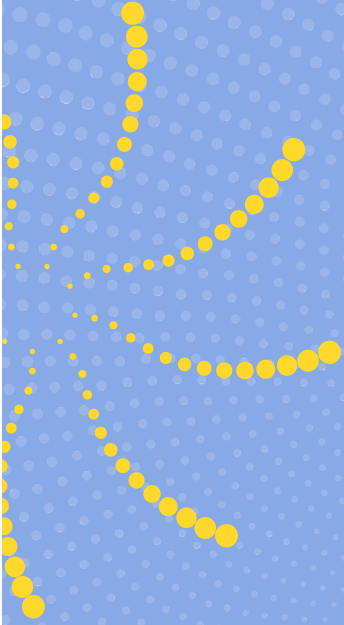




Flourish

Flourishing Students Group
Manual
Grades 4-5 Sessions 1 - 6

A RESOURCE OF

Flourish: The Compassionate Schools Project Curriculum 4-5

Flourishing Students Group

Manual



AUTHORS

Alexis R. Harris
Patricia A. Jennings

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

V. Joan Bryant
Megan Downey
Peggi Hunter
Polina Mischenko

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For more information about the Compassionate Schools Project, visit www.compassionschools.org

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CONTRIBUTORS

Betsy Bell
Danese R. Caley
Erin Cooney
K. Mae Copham
Ellen Daniels
Catherine Graber
Deena Heller
Katherine Ludwig
Marian Matthews
Aimee Pike
Katherine Ross
Nan Silkunas
Megan Washburn

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Flourishing Students Group sessions are grounded in the Compassionate Schools Project Grades 4-5 *Flourish* curriculum. Group Sessions 1-3 incorporate content and practices from the *Flourish* Self-Awareness unit, and Sessions 4-6 are derived from the *Flourish* Self-Management unit.

Self-Awareness (Sessions 1-3)

Overview

The goal of Sessions 1-3 is to help students grow their self-awareness. They will practice noticing and labeling the emotions they feel and understanding their triggers. They will explore what is important to them by thinking about what it means to be their best self. They will build an understanding of sensations associated with breath, movement and emotions through mindfulness.

Enduring Understandings

Emotions can affect their bodies, thoughts, and behaviors.
Some emotions are universal to all human beings.
They can be aware of their emotions and triggers.
Food and mood are interrelated.

Self-Management (Sessions 4-6)

Overview

In Sessions 4-6, students will learn what it means to have a *growth mindset*. They will understand that it can be difficult to be their best selves when emotions become escalated and will practice de-escalation strategies. They will explore what stress feels like and identify stressors in their lives. Students will discover that while many stressors are not in their control, they can practice ways to care for themselves in response to stress. They also will explore the concept of one's *best self* and identify Best Self Strategies they can use in a variety of situations. Then they will practice goal setting and review strategies to achieve a goal.

Enduring Understandings

Mindfulness is important for their well-being.
Mindfulness helps them coach themselves through a challenge.
It is okay to experience difficult emotions, and they can pause before responding to those emotions.
There are strategies to help them respond to stress.
They have the power to build healthy habits.

4-5 Flourishing Students Group Scope and Sequence

Session	Flourish Lessons	Session Objectives Students will understand...	Agreements, Calming & Focusing 4-9 min	Check-In 3-5 min	Activity 8-15 min	Mindful Moment 3-4 min	Closing 2-4 min	Materials
1	Compassion 1 Self-Awareness 1 & 2	Mindfulness means using their minds to pay attention on purpose with curiosity and kindness. (C-1) Some emotions feel comfortable and some emotions feel uncomfortable. (SA-1) The feelings they experience come and go. (SA-1) Feelings often arise in response to experiences, or triggers. (SA-2)	Introduction: Catch Yourself (5 min)* Group Agreements (2 min) Calming & Focusing with Mindfulness Muscle (8 min) *Session 1 only	Check-In	Music and Emotions (10 min)	Mindful Listening (Optional - if time allows)	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy	Chime Our Agreements Poster or blank poster board Mindfulness Muscle Poster Check-In Worksheets or blank paper Check In Feeling Words and Faces visual Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal) Recordings of 2 songs: 1) sad (<i>Everybody Hurts</i> by REM or <i>Adagio for Strings</i>), 2) happy (<i>Happy</i> by Pharrell Williams or <i>Walking on Sunshine</i> by Katrina and the Waves) Music & Emotions Student Worksheet or blank paper - 2 per student Music & Emotions visual and script Mindful Listening visual and script Breath of Joy visual and script 3 Compassion Maps - Group worksheets for Home, School,

2	Self-Awareness 3 & 4	they feel emotions in their bodies.(3) uncomfortable emotions are okay to experience and often have important messages. (4)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Mountain/Check-In	Charades (10 min) Waves of Emotion (2 min)	Take 5 Breath with waves content	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy with "joy" during exhalation	Chime Our Agreements Poster Calming & Focusing visual and script Picture of a mountain Mountain pose visual and script Check-In sheets Feeling Words and Faces visual Charades scenario cards Waves of Emotions visual Take 5 Breath visual and script Compassion Maps
3	Self-Awareness 5-6	one important part of being their best self is showing care for themselves and others. (5) their food choices can affect their moods and emotions. (6)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Check-In	Food-Mood Connection (2 min) Best Self Visualization and Art (12 min)	Mini-Body Scan	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy with "kind" during exhalation	Chime Our Agreements Poster Check-In sheets Feeling Words and Faces visual Food-Mood Connection visual Foods to Lift Your Mood visual Markers or colored pencils Best Self Art worksheet or blank paper Mini-Body Scan visual and script Compassion Maps
4	Self-Management 1- 3	cultivating a growth mindset can help them learn new things. (1 & 2) it can be difficult to be their best selves when emotions become escalated. (3)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Check-In	Growth Mindset (5 min) Escalate (3 min) De-escalate: Cooling Breath (4 min) Power of the Pause (2 min)	Even-In, Even-Out Breath	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy with "pause" during exhalation	Chime Our Agreements Poster Check-In sheets Feeling Words and Faces visual Growth - Fixed Mindset visual Poster and markers Cooling Breath visual and script Even-In, Even-Out Breath visual and script Compassion Maps
5	Self-Management 4 -5	stress is pressure or strain on their mind or body. (4) while many stressors are not in their control, how they respond to stress is something they can practice.(5)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Check-In	Thinking About Stress (4 min) Juggling Stress (6 min) Best Self Strategies (5 min)	Tension Release	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy with "care" during exhalation	Chime Our Agreements Poster Check-In sheets Feeling Words and Faces visual Sticky notes (6 per student) Thinking About Stress Worksheet 5 balls or bean bags Best Self Strategies Poster or blank poster board Markers Tension Release visual and script Compassion Maps
6	Self-Management 6- 7	setting and working toward goals can help them learn and grow. (6) they have the power to: be their best selves, build healthy habits, pause, and show kindness and compassion to themselves and others. (7)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Check-In	Goals for Growth (4 min) The Power You Hold (5 min) Powerful Reminders Bookmarks (3 min)	Visualizing My Best Self	Compassion Maps Breath of Joy with "grow" or previously used word during exhalation Present Certificate	Chime Our Agreements Poster Check-In sheets Feeling Words and Faces visual Completed Best Self Strategies Poster from Session 5 Goals for Growth Worksheet The Power Your Hold visual Powerful Reminders bookmarks or index cards Visualizing My Best Self visual and script 1 set of Sessions 1-6 icon sized Practice Cards for each student Compassion Map sheet for each student to take home Flourishing Student Certificate for each student (two versions available- principal and group leader signature)

<https://compassionschools.org>

Flourishing Students Group Manual: Grades 4-5

Sessions 1-6: Self-Awareness and Self-Management

Introduction

The *Flourishing Students Group* is grounded in *Flourish: the Compassionate Schools Project* curriculum, a universal (Tier 1) curriculum designated as a Promising Program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Flourishing Students Group sessions incorporate *Flourish* content and practices that have been adapted for the group setting. Group sessions 1-3 incorporate content from the *Flourish* Self-Awareness unit, and sessions 4-6 are derived from the *Flourish* Self-Management unit.

Groups may be conducted in conjunction with the *Flourish* curriculum or as a stand-alone resource with students who have been identified by teachers or mental health practitioners as needing additional support for social and emotional skills beyond the core SEL instruction provided at Tier 1. Groups are also appropriate as a stand-alone SEL resource for out-of-school time settings.

Group Structure

Group sessions are designed to last 30 minutes and include the following components:

- Opening and Group Agreements (2-4 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2-5 min)
- Check-In (3-5 min)
- Activity (10-15 min)
- Mindful Moment (3 min)
- Closing (2-4 min)



Tip:

For Opening, Calming and Focusing, Check-In, discussion-based activities and Mindful Moments, students may be seated in chairs arranged in a circle or in a circle on the floor.

Session 1

Goal: Students will practice using mindfulness to identify feelings they experience, know that feelings come and go, and understand that feelings often arise in response to triggers.

Components

- Welcome, Group Agreements (4 min)
 - Introduction Activity: Catch Yourself (5 min)
- Calming and Focusing with Mindfulness Muscle (8 min)
- Check-In (2 min)
- Activity: Music and Emotions (10 min)
- Mindful Moment: Mindful Listening (4 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps Introduction and Breath of Joy (4 min)

Materials

- Chime
- "Our Agreements" poster or blank poster board
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual
- Check-In Student Worksheets or blank paper
- Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal)
- Recordings of two songs: 1) one solemn (e.g., *Everybody Hurts* by REM or *Adagio for Strings*) and 2) one happy (e.g., *Happy* by Pharrell Williams or *Walking on Sunshine* by Katrina and the Waves).
- Music & Emotions Student Worksheet or blank paper – 2 sheets per student
- Music & Emotions visual and script
- Mindful Listening visual and script
- Breath of Joy visual and script
- 3 Compassion Maps: group worksheets for Home, School, Community

Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements

Welcome to the Flourishing Students Group! I'm so glad you're here. Can anyone tell me what the word "flourishing" means? [Allow students time to offer ideas.] "Flourishing" means growing well! In this group, we will practice skills that can help us to flourish. We'll meet together six times, [once a week for the next 6 weeks]. We will learn more about ourselves and each other and practice new skills together!

Introduce yourself and your role in the school/district. *Let's play a game to get to know each other!*

Catch Yourself

Invite students to stand in a large circle. Explain that in today's game, Catch Yourself, students will have a chance to share something they know about themselves.

In this game, students will toss and catch a non-bouncing object (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal). When they catch the object, they will say their name and you will read a statement for

that student to complete. The student then tosses the object to another student. That student first repeats the name of the student who tossed the object, then says their own name and completes a statement you read. Explain that they can pass and get a new statement if they aren't ready to answer the first one you give.

Use statements such as those listed below. Statements should require students to use a measure of self-awareness, but they should not be too personal.

First, model by asking a student to throw the object to you. Catch the object, say your name, and complete a statement. Then toss the object to the first student, who will repeat your name, say their name, and complete a statement. Continue until all students have had at least one turn.

Example statements:

My favorite color is: _____

The subject in school I am strongest in is: _____

When I have free time, I like to: _____

A food that I really don't like is: _____

My favorite book/movie is: _____

My favorite thing to play outside is: _____

I feel my best when: _____

If there is extra time, consider inviting students to share a response to a question they wanted to answer but didn't get the chance to.

Emphasize to students that we are all constantly learning and growing, and they will continue to learn new things about themselves for the rest of their lives!

It is important that everyone in our group feels safe and included. What are some things we can do to make sure everyone feels like a part of the group?

Examples of agreements:

- Listen to each other
- Pay attention to the leader
- Respect each other
- Join in

Record the group agreements on a sheet of paper or on the board. When complete, read each one aloud and gain consensus by making sure all students give a thumbs up or say, "I agree."

Following the group session, transfer agreements to the "Our Agreements" poster, which will be reviewed during each group session.

Calming and Focusing Introduction



Tips for Calming and Focusing Practice:

- Not all students may feel comfortable closing their eyes. Guide students with: *If you'd like, you may close your eyes. If you prefer not to close your eyes, you may lower your gaze to look at the floor or focus on a spot in the middle of the circle.* [Tip: you may place a sticker, piece of paper, or image from *Flourish* to create a focusing spot.]
- Some students may find it challenging to remain still. This is to be expected. They will grow their abilities to be calm, still, and quiet over time with practice. If students are restless, acknowledge that sometimes it's hard to be still and quiet: *If you feel like your body wants to move and it's hard to stay still, that's okay, but try not to disturb the group members around you.*
- An introduction to mindfulness is provided in the first group session to accompany the Calming and Focusing exercise. The scripts and concepts can be introduced and reinforced over time. It is not expected that students will fully grasp these concepts or the practices in the first session.

Display or project the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Today, we are going to learn and practice a skill called "mindfulness."

Mindfulness is our ability to use our minds to pay attention with curiosity and kindness to what is happening right here and right now. We can use mindfulness to really notice what we are experiencing inside us or around us. And sometimes mindfulness can help us feel more calm and focused.

It can be helpful to think of our mind like a muscle; it becomes stronger with exercise.

Point to the three steps on the Mindfulness Muscle poster and read aloud:

Step 1: *Focus your attention on something such as your breath or the sound of a bell.*

Step 2: *Notice when your mind wanders away from your breath or the sound of the bell.*

Step 3: *Gently bring your attention back to your breath or the sound of the bell.*

When we notice that our mind has wandered and bring our attention back to the breath or the bell, we are exercising our mindfulness muscles.

It's normal for our minds to wander away. We can say to ourselves, "Nice catch!" when we notice it happening.

Lead students through the Calming and Focusing exercise.

Calming:

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These two spots are our Anchors because they help us feel our breath moving in the body.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

If you have a Hoberman sphere, use it to help cue inhalations and exhalations. Otherwise, you can use a hand signal, such as moving the hands apart as you breathe in and bringing them together as you breathe out.

Focusing

Next, we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell. As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell and wait until the bell stops ringing.

Now my mind is more focused and ready to continue. How does yours feel?

Invite several students to share what they notice after this exercise. Affirm that it's okay if the exercise was uncomfortable or if they had a hard time focusing. Remind them that it will get easier and more comfortable with practice.

Check-In

Give each student a Check-In worksheet and ask them to write their name at the top. [Alternatively, students may use a sheet of blank paper, folded in thirds, and write their name and #1 in the top section.]

Tell students they will be writing a word or words to show how they are feeling during this session and the next five sessions.

Let's take a moment to check in and see how we're feeling. Checking in means listening to our minds and bodies with curiosity and kindness.

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual. Read each word aloud, pointing to the corresponding facial expression, being sure to also point out "Unsure" and the blanks for other feelings not on the list.

Now, with curiosity and kindness, check in with yourself. Ask, how am I feeling right now?

How do you feel? Is there a word on the list that shows how you are feeling?

Ask students to write the feeling word or words in the first bubble/section on their Check-In sheet. Let them know that it is ok if they are unsure about how they are feeling. Likewise, if they don't find a good match, they may write a different word that represents how they are feeling.

Collect Check-In sheets to use in the remaining sessions.

Activity

Music and Emotions

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Tell students that they will have a chance to express some of these emotions through images and color. Give each student a Music and Emotions worksheet or piece of paper appropriate for drawing and access to a colorful array of crayons, colored pencils or markers.

Tell students that you are going to play two pieces of music and that while the music is playing, they may use the drawing tools to express how they feel when they listen to the music.

Begin by playing the solemn piece of music. Invite students to place their hands on their Anchors and, if it feels comfortable for them, to close their eyes. Remind students that if closing their eyes does not feel comfortable, they may lower their gaze or focus on the sheet of paper. Then lead students in taking a deep breath and exhaling slowly. Ask students to relax and listen mindfully, noticing what thoughts and feelings come up while they listen.



Tip: Be mindful of students' reactions to sad music. Let students know that if they need a break from the music, they may open their eyes and look around the room.

Play 20-30 seconds of the song and then ask students to express what they noticed using the materials you provided. Invite them to choose colors and draw whatever they want: abstracts, patterns, or other representations that make sense to them.

After a couple of minutes (or when you see students starting to finish or lose focus), stop the music, and bring the drawing session to a close. Ask students to write a title or description of their drawing. Give them a new worksheet/piece of paper.

Repeat the above process with the "happy" music selection.

When both parts of the listening/drawing exercise have been completed, pair students and ask them to consider the following questions:

- *What kinds of [lines, patterns, images] are in your first picture?*
- *Did any themes emerge in your pair from the first picture? From the second picture?*
- *Which emotion is the best fit for the title or description of your first picture? And your second picture?*

Then invite students to return to the group and use questions such as the following to help them reflect on the activity:

- *How do the colors you used for the first picture compare with those you used for the second picture?*
- *Did any group themes emerge from the first pictures? From the second pictures?*
- *Did your emotions change between the first and second pieces of music? If so, how?*
- *Did any group themes emerge from the titles of the pictures?*

Tell students that emotions often arise in response to experiences, or triggers. Help students explore this concept by asking them questions such as:

- *Did the [first song, second song] trigger the same emotion for everyone?*
- *What are some other stimuli in your environment that might trigger an emotional response?* [Answer: Pictures, movies, sounds, objects, smells.]
- *Do you remember a time when you saw, smelled, or heard something and it triggered an emotion?*

Summarize for Students:

- Feelings often arise in response to experiences, or triggers.
- Experiences may trigger different emotional experiences for different people. I might feel the same emotion but at a different intensity, or I might feel a completely different emotion than you do in response to the same thing.

Mindful Moment (Optional - if time allows - since activity involved listening)

Mindful Listening



Tips:

- Prior to beginning Mindful Listening, take a 30-second stretch break. Invite students to suggest a stretch, or lead students in a stretch you choose.
- Especially if the room is very quiet, consider making some subtle or novel noises during this listening activity to capture students' attention.

Let's continue to practice our listening skills by listening to the sounds around us.

Begin with your eyes closed or gently looking down. We'll start by listening to our focusing bell, focusing our attention on the sound, noticing if our minds wander, and bringing our attention back to the sound.

When you no longer hear the sound of the bell, let your attention open up and be curious to notice any sounds you hear in the room.

Ring the bell and allow several moments of silence.

Listen carefully like you are listening to a good friend tell a story. Notice any sounds that grab your attention.

Allow 30 seconds or so of silence.

Notice sounds that are soft and gentle, that you might not normally notice. What can you hear and observe when you really pay attention?

Allow a few moments of unguided listening.

Now focus your attention on the quiet sound of your breath. Can you hear it?

Allow a few moments of unguided listening.

Take a moment to notice how you feel in body and in mind after practicing mindful listening.

When you feel ready, open your eyes if they are closed and look up.

Closing

Introduction to Compassion Maps

Display the three Compassion Maps provided or create three sheets titled: "Compassion Map - Home," "Compassion Map - School," and "Compassion Map - Community." [This activity may also be completed using an online whiteboard.]

Invite students to look at the maps and to share ideas about the meaning of compassion. Help them conclude that compassion means showing care and kindness to someone in need. If students have a basic understanding of this meaning already, extend this definition to the caring feeling of wanting to help when someone is feeling hurt, sad, or in some kind of pain.

Explain to students that you will use the sheets to record acts of kindness, caring, and compassion spotted by you or the students. Encourage students to be compassion detectives in the time before the next group session, noticing the kind words and actions they see and hear around them at home, at school, and in the community.

Provide an example such as, *"This morning at **home** my son noticed my arms were full, and he carried my book bag for me."*

Ask students to also think of their own ideas for kind words and compassionate acts.

Provide an example such as, *"One idea I have is to be kind to the cafeteria workers at **school** by cleaning up my area after I finish eating lunch."*

Tell students that in upcoming group sessions, you will record their observations and ideas on the maps. [Note: In the final session, students will take home their own map to continue recording observations and ideas.]

Breath of Joy

The last thing we will do today is to learn a new breathing practice called Breath of Joy that can help us to feel more energized or even lift our moods!

Display or project the Breath of Joy image.

First, you'll take three short breaths in, and then you'll take one long breath out. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Begin by standing comfortably with your arms at your sides.

As you take a short breath in, extend your arms straight out in front of you so they're parallel to the floor.

Without exhaling, take another short breath in as you swing your arms down in front of you and then out to your sides.

Inhale for a third time as you swing your arms up over your head.

Now breathe out as you bend at your hips and lean slightly forward, and swing your arms down and out to your sides.

Gently return to standing with your arms still at your side. Check in with your body to see if you notice any changes.

Repeat this exercise several times if desired. Then tell students:

Place your hands on your Anchors and check in. Notice how this breathing practice feels in your body and mind. Has it increased your heart rate, helped you wake up a little, or maybe even brought a smile to your face?

[Note: Before Session 2, create the "Our Agreements" poster listing the group agreements generated by students in Session 1. During each group session, you will review agreements with students.]

Session 2

Goal: Students will understand that they feel emotions in their bodies, and that uncomfortable emotions are okay to experience and often have important messages.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (3 min)
- Calming and Focusing (3 min)
- Check-In: Mountain Check-In (5 min)
- Activity: (12 min)
 - Charades (10 min)
 - Waves of Emotion Introduction (2 min)
- Mindful Moment: Take 5 Breath (2 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps and Breath of Joy (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Picture of a mountain
- Mountain pose visual and script
- Check-In sheets from Session 1
- Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual
- Charades scenario cards
- Waves of Emotions visual
- Take 5 Breath visual and script
- Compassion Maps from Session 1

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome back to the Flourishing Students group! I'm glad you're here!

Last time we were together, we agreed on how we can help make sure everyone feels safe and included in our group.

Display the "Our Agreements" poster and ask for 1-2 volunteers to read the group agreements. After each is read, ask students to give a thumbs up or "ok" sign if they agree.

Ask students if there are any other agreements they should add to the list. Add to the list any additional items students agree upon.

Calming and Focusing

Calming

Display or project the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These two spots are our Anchors because they help us feel our breath moving in the body.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

Focusing

Next, we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell.

As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell and wait until the bell stops ringing before saying:

Now my mind is more focused and ready to begin the lesson. How does yours feel?

Invite several students to share what they notice after this exercise. Affirm that it's okay if the exercise was uncomfortable or if they had a hard time focusing. Remind them that it will get easier and more comfortable with practice. Consider inviting students to share their own ways of being mindful.

Mountain/Check-In

Mountain

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling.

Let's take a moment to check in and see how we're feeling. Checking in means listening to our minds and bodies with curiosity and kindness.

The ready position for our check-in practice today is called Mountain.

Raise your right hand if you've ever seen a real mountain.

Raise your left hand if you've seen a picture of a mountain.

Show students a picture of a mountain as a visual aid and ask them to identify words that describe a mountain (strong, still, tall, quiet, majestic, etc.).

Ask students to try embodying these qualities in their posture and to notice how it makes them feel to stand like mountains.

Then guide students into Mountain pose using the following cues as reference:

Begin by standing with your feet parallel, no more than hip-width apart.

Inhale: Imagine the top of your head lifting and your body growing taller.

Exhale: Press both feet into the floor and relax your shoulders away from your ears.

Hold the pose for three breaths: one, two, three.

Tell students that to check in with themselves is to pause to listen to their minds and bodies with curiosity and kindness.

Invite students to practice a brief Check-In by silently asking themselves:

- *How does my body feel right now?*
- *How does my mind feel right now?*

Give students about twenty seconds to silently observe what they're experiencing. If time allows, invite several students to share what they notice.

Have students stand in Mountain pose and invite them to place their hands on their Anchors and, if it feels comfortable for them, to close their eyes. Tell students that if closing their eyes does not feel comfortable, they may simply look toward the ground instead. Then lead students in taking a deep breath. Ask them to observe their inner experiences and identify what they are feeling at that moment:

Take a moment to observe what feeling you're experiencing. There's no need to do anything to change it, simply notice what you are experiencing.

And now check in to see whether you notice any physical sensations that are associated with that emotion. You might notice a feeling of tightness in your stomach or jaw. Or you might be experiencing butterflies in your stomach. Or you might notice a feeling of warmth in your chest and a smile on your face. Check in to see how your body is expressing the emotion that you noticed.

Check-In

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Is there a word on this page that shows how you are feeling? It's ok if you're feeling an emotion that is not on the page or you are unsure about how you are feeling right now.

Give each student their Check-In sheet from Session 1.

Ask students to write the feeling word or words in bubble/section #2 on the sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they may write a different word that represents how they are feeling, or they may write "unsure."

Activity: Charades

Review the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual from Session 1. Demonstrate the facial expression and body language expressing two of the emotions. Tell students that people often express how they're feeling by using both facial expressions and body language.

Pair students and tell them they will be doing some acting in a Charades game. Give each pair two different scenario cards with associated emotions to act out. Let the students choose the one they would like to act out. Inform students that they will act out a scene that triggers a particular emotion for the characters in the scene. The other students will guess both the trigger and the emotion.

Invite the pairs to spread out for a few minutes to think about and practice their scenarios. After about two minutes, check for readiness and invite the students back to the circle. Ask student pairs to take turns acting out their scenarios and invite the other students to guess the emotion and the trigger.

Use questions such as the following to help students reflect on the activity:

- *What did the actors do that helped you guess [the scene portrayed]?*
- *What helped you guess what the emotion was?*
- *What did you see in the actors' faces that expressed that emotion?*
- *Did the actors' body language also tell you what that emotion was? How?*
- *Would you respond to the trigger of [scenario] with the same emotion or a different emotion?*

Summarize for students:

- *Emotions often arise in response to experiences, or triggers.*
- *We experience feelings in the body.*
- *We often express emotions through facial expressions and body language.*

Waves of Emotion

Display or project the image of a small wave next to a large wave. Trace your finger up one side of a wave and then down the other.

Emotions can often feel like waves: they rise in intensity, and then they fall.

Some emotional waves feel really big, while others feel small. Some can feel scary at first; others are fun. And like waves in the ocean, waves of emotions come and go – they are not permanent.

Can you remember a time when it felt fun to surf a wave of emotion?

In this session, we are going to learn how to use our breath to help us surf waves of emotions.

Mindful Moment: Take 5 Breath

Tell students that today they're going to learn the Take 5 Breath. Tell them that they can practice Take 5 Breath any time they are surfing waves of emotions.

Begin by holding your right hand in the air. Spread your fingers on your right hand out wide. Now take the pointer finger of your left hand and place it on your right wrist, near the outside of your right thumb.

We're going to take five breaths. Each time we breathe in, we're going to trace one finger up to the top of our fingernails, imagining that we are riding a wave to its peak. Each time we breathe out, we're going to trace the other side of that finger back down to the hand. As we do so, we'll imagine surfing the wave all the way to the shore.

Let's try it.

As you breathe in, imagine the wave rising as you trace the first half of your thumb with your pointer finger. Pause at the top of your fingernail. As you breathe out, imagine surfing down the second half of your thumb all the way to the shore. Pause between your thumb and your pointer finger.

As you breathe in, ride the wave up the first side of your pointer finger. Pause. As you breathe out, surf down the second side of your pointer finger. Pause.

Take another breath in as you trace the first half of your middle finger. Pause for a moment. Take another breath out as you trace the second half of your middle finger. Pause for a moment.

Breathe in as you ride the wave up the first side of your ring finger. Pause. Breathe out as you surf down the second side of your ring finger. Pause. The waves are getting smaller now.

Breathe in as you ride the wave up the first half of your pinky. Pause. Breathe out as you surf down the second half of your pinky. Pause.

Let's pause here to notice what feelings we're experiencing. How big are the waves now? Do you notice any changes?

Guide students in checking in on the effects of this practice. Ask questions such as:

- *How did it feel?*
- *How did it affect your body?*
- *What are some examples of other times when you could use this breath?*
- *If you were experiencing a strong emotion and you responded by breathing in this way, what might happen?*

Closing: Compassion Maps

Display Compassion Maps introduced in Session 1. Encourage students to share the kind words and actions they have observed around them since the previous group session. Also ask them to think of their own ideas for kind words and actions they can express. Record their observations and ideas on the maps.

Breath of Joy

The last thing we will do today is to practice Breath of Joy, like we did last time we were together.

Display or project the Breath of Joy image.

First take three short breaths in, and then you'll take one long breath out. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Today, when we breathe out, try to say the word "Joy!"

Begin by standing comfortably with your arms at your sides.

As you take a short breath in, extend your arms straight out in front of you so they're parallel to the floor.

Without exhaling, take another short breath in as you swing your arms down in front of you and then out to your sides.

Inhale for a third time as you swing your arms up over your head.

Now breathe out as you bend at your hips and lean slightly forward, and swing your arms down and out to your sides. As you breathe out, say "Joy!"

Gently return to standing with your arms at your side. Check in with your body to see if you notice any changes.

Repeat this exercise several times if desired. Then tell students:

Place your hands on your Anchors and check in. Notice how this breathing practice feels in your body and mind. Has it increased your heart rate, helped you wake up a little, or maybe even brought a smile to your face?

Session 3

Goal: Students will know that one important part of being their best self is showing care for themselves and others and understand that their food choices can affect their moods and emotions.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (2 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2 min)
- Check-In (2 min)
- Activity (15 min)
 - Food-Mood Connection (3 min)
 - Best Self Visualization and Art (12 min)
- Mindful Moment: Mini-Body Scan (3 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps and Breath of Joy (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Check-In Sheets
- Visual: Check-In Feeling Words with Faces
- Food-Mood Connection visual
- Foods to Lift Your Mood visual
- Markers or colored pencils
- Best Self Art worksheet or blank paper
- Mini-Body Scan visual and script
- Compassion Maps

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome back to the Flourishing Students group. I'm glad you're here!

Let's review our group agreements.

Display the "Our Agreements" poster and ask for 1-2 volunteers to read the group agreements. After each is read, ask students to give a thumbs up or "ok" sign if they agree.

Ask students if there are any other agreements they should add to the list. Record on the list additional items students agree upon.

Calming and Focusing

Calming

Display the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These two spots are our Anchors because they help us feel our breath moving in the body.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

Focusing

Next, we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell.

As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell.

Check-In

As the focusing bell quiets, lead students in a brief Check-In.

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Let's take a moment to check in with our minds and bodies. With your hands on your Anchors, ask yourself, "How am I today?" "How am I feeling right here and right now?" Take a moment to notice.

Do you notice any emotions?

Is your body comfortable or uncomfortable?

Is your mind busy, distracted, calm, focused?

Now relax your attention and simply breathe until you're ready to look up.

Invite students to record how they are feeling in bubble/section #3 on their Check-In sheet.

Activity

Food-Mood Connection

Display the Food-Mood Connection visual or write the word "dopamine" on the board and explain that this is a neurotransmitter that promotes a sense of pleasure or well-being. A

neurotransmitter is a chemical that sends messages in the brain when it is activated or released. Savoring pleasant thoughts or feelings leads to a release cycle of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which can make us feel good in body and mind.

Point to the word “serotonin” on the visual [or write on board] and tell students this is another neurotransmitter in their bodies that affects their emotions and moods, and even their ability to sleep well.

Ask students to guess where most of their serotonin comes from. Tell them that while serotonin is produced in the brain and gut, 90 percent of it is in the digestive tract and blood and that serotonin is a gut-brain connector!

Tell students they may find it interesting to know the stomach is sometimes called the “second brain” because of the important role of serotonin in the gut.

Display or project the “Foods to Lift Your Mood” visual. Tell students that eating a healthy diet containing these foods can help maintain healthy serotonin levels in our bodies. Discuss with students the idea that foods affect the way they feel.

Solicit observations from their own experience about food affecting the way they feel. For example, ask if they have ever eaten something that made them feel tired or grumpy or eaten something that helped them feel better. Return to the link between food and serotonin to reinforce their understanding that what we eat affects how we feel in body and mind. Emphasize that this means food can be another example of a trigger for our emotions or mood.

Best Self Visualization and Art

*We have learned that food can affect the way we feel in body and mind. Now I’d like for us to spend some time getting to know more about ourselves and reflecting on what it means for us to be our **Best Self**.*

Invite students to share what they think it means to feel like your best self and to share their ideas about when they are being their best selves. Record ideas, making sure to include some of the following ideas:

- When you are learning and growing
- When your actions reflect your values or what is important to you
- When you are doing activities that bring you joy
- When you feel safe and healthy
- When you feel strong and able to face challenges
- When you are showing care and compassion for yourself and others

Now you will have a chance to imagine a time when you are feeling like your best self.

Guide students to find a position where they feel safe and comfortable. Then lead students in the following visualization to build self-awareness:

Begin by closing your eyes, or if it feels more comfortable for you, simply look downward.

Take a few deep breaths, noticing your breath as it moves in and out of your body.

Imagine you are walking to a favorite place, a place where you feel safe and peaceful. When you arrive, look around, and notice where you are. What about this place makes you feel safe and peaceful? What are you doing in this place?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now imagine you are getting ready to do an activity you really value, an activity that brings you joy, an activity where you feel strong and capable. What are you doing? Who are you with? How do you feel?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now imagine you are surrounded by all the people whom you love and value. Look around. Who is there? How do you feel?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Invite students to choose one part of that visualization they would like to represent in a work of art. Provide paper and art supplies and invite students to create art that shows how they visualized that aspect of their best self. Invite students to write a title or caption on their art, and invite a few willing volunteers to share their work with the group.

Mindful Moment

Mini-Body Scan

Lead students in a Mini-Body Scan, using the following script as reference. Take your time, pausing between cues for students to observe and notice their bodies. Encourage them to take a break and breathe or move any time they need to if the practice is uncomfortable.

Let's check in with our bodies to notice how they feel. Let's imagine that our attention is like a flashlight inside our minds.

First, let's see if we can shine that light on our feet. Without looking at them, notice where your feet are touching the ground. Notice if they are heavy, still, or restless. Can you feel your knees? What about your toes? Do you notice any comfortable or uncomfortable sensations in the muscles of your feet or legs?

Now we'll move our attention all the way up to our bellies and chests. Can you notice your breath moving your belly or your chest? What other sensations do you notice?

Moving on, imagine shining that light down one arm and then the other. Where are they and how do they feel? Are they warm or cool? Do you notice any comfortable or uncomfortable sensations in the muscles of your arms? Simply notice and breathe.

Shine the light of your attention over your neck and shoulders. What do you notice there? Do you notice any comfortable or uncomfortable sensations in the muscles of your neck and shoulders?

Finally, let's move our attention up to the head and face. What does your head feel like resting where you are? Does your face feel relaxed or is there some other expression there?

Now that you've paid some attention to your body, turn off the imaginary flashlight and take a moment to check in with yourself. When you pay attention and listen to your body, what do you notice?

Invite students to share with the group or on their Check-In sheet.

Closing

Compassion Maps

Display Compassion Maps. Encourage students to share the kind words and actions they have observed around them since the previous group session. Also ask them to think of their own ideas for kind words and actions they can express. Continue to record their observations and ideas on the maps.

Breath of Joy

The last thing we will do today is to practice Breath of Joy!

Display or project the Breath of Joy image.

First take three short breaths in, and then you'll take one long breath out. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Today, when we breathe out, try to say the word "Kind!"

Begin by standing comfortably with your arms at your sides.

As you take a short breath in, extend your arms straight out in front of you so they're parallel to the floor.

Without exhaling, take another short breath in as you swing your arms down in front of you and then out to your sides.

Inhale for a third time as you swing your arms up over your head.

Now breathe out as you bend at your hips and lean slightly forward, and swing your arms down and out to your sides. As you breathe out, say "Kind!"

Gently return to standing with your arms at your side. Check in with your body to see if you notice any changes.

Repeat this exercise several times if desired. Then tell students:

Place your hands on your Anchors and check in. Notice how this breathing practice feels in your body and mind.

Invite students to share their observations.

Session 4

Goal: Students will understand that cultivating a growth mindset can help them learn new things and that it can be difficult to be their best selves when emotions become escalated.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (1 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2 min)
- Check-In (2 min)
- Activity: (14 min)
 - Growth Mindset
 - Escalate
 - De-escalate with Cooling Breath
 - Power of the Pause
- Mindful Moment: Even-In, Even-Out Breath (2 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps and Breath of Joy (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Check-In sheets
- Visual: Check-In Feeling Words with Faces
- Poster and markers
- Cooling Breath visual and script
- Even-In, Even-Out Breath visual and script
- Compassion Maps

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome back to the Flourishing Students group!

Let's review our group agreements.

Display the "Our Agreements" poster and ask for 1-2 volunteers to read the group agreements. After each is read, ask students to give a thumbs up or "ok" sign if they agree.

Ask students if there are any other agreements they should add to the list. Add to the list any additional items students agree upon.

Calming and Focusing

Calming

Display the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These two spots are our Anchors because they help us feel our breath moving in the body.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

Focusing

Next, we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell.

As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell.

Check-In

As the focusing bell quiets, lead students in a brief Check-In.

Let's take a moment to check in with our minds and bodies. With your hands on your Anchors, ask yourself, "How am I today?" "How am I feeling right here and right now?" Take a moment to notice.

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Do you notice any emotions?

Is your body comfortable or uncomfortable?

Is your mind busy, distracted, calm, focused?

Now relax your attention and simply breathe until you're ready to look up.

Invite students to record how they are feeling in bubble/section #4 on their Check-In sheet.

Activity

Growth Mindset

During our first time together in this group, we talked about the word "flourishing." Does anyone remember what "flourish" means? Right, to flourish means to grow!

What does it mean to grow?

Invite several students to answer.

Help students conclude that growing means developing, maturing, evolving, etc.

Then write the word “mindset” on the board. Ask students if they’ve heard that word before and invite students to share their understanding or guess what it means.

After several students have guessed, tell them that mindset means a way of thinking about things.

Finally, invite students to put the two words together. Display the Growth – Fixed Mindset visual, or write the phrase “growth mindset” on the board. Ask students to guess what that phrase might mean. After several students have had an opportunity to share, tell them that a growth mindset is a belief that people’s skills and intelligence can grow with learning and practice.

Tell students that the opposite of a growth mindset is a fixed mindset. When someone has a fixed mindset, they think they can’t get better at things, even when they practice.

Then tell them that you are going to read out several phrases that their own minds might say to them and that you want them to determine whether the phrase represents a growth mindset or a fixed mindset. Instruct students to stand up and reach for the sky like a tree [demonstrate] if they think the phrase represents a growth mindset. Instruct them to remain seated if they think it represents a fixed mindset. Use phrases such as:

- *I am afraid I will make a mistake, so I’m not going to try.*
- *That didn’t work. I’ll try a different way to find a solution.*
- *I’m willing to try new things.*
- *Mistakes help me learn and get better.*
- *I practice a lot because I know when I practice, I can get better.*
- *See, I made a mistake. I knew I couldn’t do it.*
- *She’s so good at this. I wonder what I can learn from her.*
- *I don’t know how to do this yet.*

Then ask students questions such as:

If you were learning a new task, do you think a growth mindset or a fixed mindset would be more helpful? Why?

Do you remember a time you had a growth mindset? What happened?

How do you think a growth mindset might help you to feel like your best self?

Summarize for students:

- *A growth mindset is the belief that people’s skills and intelligence can grow with learning and practice.*
- *A fixed mindset is the belief that people’s skills and intelligence cannot change.*
- *A growth mindset can help us learn new things.*

Escalate: Ask students to stand in a circle. Give students two high-energy movements to complete from corresponding positions: 1) Front: jump like they are shooting hoops while facing each other and the center of the circle, and 2) Back: Turn around and run in place while facing outward, away from the circle. Demonstrate these with vigorous repetitive actions. Explain that when you call out the position, students must quickly jump to that position and repeat the movement until you switch again.

Lead the activity through modeling while you call out the position, switching at varying intervals and rotating through each several times in a random order. The game should be quick-paced with vigorous movement.

Call for a time-out, explaining that this activity is intense and you need a pause. Ask students to place their hands on their chests, noticing their heartbeats and their breath. Ask students if they have ever been so angry, upset, or nervous or felt another emotion escalate and become so intense that their hearts started racing, their breath quickened, and their face turned red. Invite them to give you a signal (thumbs up) if they've had this experience. Let them know they will come back to that topic in a moment.

De-Escalate

Tell students that they're going to explore strategies to help them de-escalate by calming their bodies and minds.

Have students take a few deep breaths before introducing the new breathing technique.

Cooling Breath

Introduce Cooling Breath as a breath that can help them cool down when they are feeling strong emotions. Tell students you are going to show them two different ways to do Cooling Breath and invite them to find the one they like best.

Model and lead students to try both methods using the following cues as reference:

Method 1:

Roll your tongue (curl the right and left sides toward the center to make a roll or taco shape) and stick the tip of the tongue out of pursed lips, making a tube for your breath.

Method 2:

Purse your lips gently and make the shape of the letter O with them. Keep your tongue against the back of your bottom teeth, so that the air can go over your tongue.

[For both methods]:

Inhale slowly.

Gently exhale through your mouth.

Notice the sound of your breath.

Repeat three times.

Guide students in checking in on the effects of this practice. Ask questions such as:

- *How did it feel?*
- *How did it affect your body?*
- *Is there an animal that you can think of that sticks out its tongue when it is hot? [Answer: a dog.]*
- *What are some examples of other times when you could use this breath?*
- *If you were experiencing a strong emotion and you responded by breathing in this way, what might happen?*

The Power of the Pause

Explain that the Cooling Breath, as well as the Take 5 Breath, can be used to de-escalate and create a pause between their emotion and their words/actions. If they feel a strong emotion coming up, a mindful pause to breathe can help them feel more calm and settled and enable them to respond thoughtfully. Then ask students:

How can taking a pause help you be your best self when you experience strong emotions? [If it doesn't come up, remind students that an important part of being their best selves is showing care and compassion for themselves and others.]

When you take a pause and breathe, do you push the emotion away?

How can you respond to the emotion with curiosity and kindness?
[Answer: Ask what message it is sending; ask myself what I need.]

Summarize for Students:

- *We can be our best selves even when we experience strong uncomfortable emotions.*
- *Pausing can help us calm and settle our minds and bodies.*
- *Taking a pause is one way we can show care and compassion for ourselves and others when we experience uncomfortable thoughts and feelings.*

Mindful Moment

Let's learn a new calming breath. It's called Even-In, Even-Out Breath.

Even-In, Even-Out Breath

Sitting tall and alert, take a look around the room and notice where you are. If it feels comfortable and safe for you, close your eyes. Or, if you prefer, you can choose to look down at one spot.

Now notice your inhalation. Count with the breath to see how long your inhalation is. Now do the same with an exhalation. Are they the same or different?

With the next few breaths, we'll practice Even-In, Even-Out Breath. As you breathe in, count to three. Then, as you breathe out, count to three.

Demonstrate using hand signals or a Hoberman sphere, modeling for students how to make the inhalation and exhalation last three counts each rather than breathing in and holding the breath for three counts.

If your mind forgets to count and starts to think about something else, silently say to yourself “Nice catch!” and then bring your attention back to your breath and start counting again.

Have students continue silently for three more breaths.

Closing

Compassion Maps

Encourage students to share the kind words and actions they have observed around them since the previous group session. Also ask them to think of their own ideas for kind words and actions they can express. Continue to record their observations and ideas on the maps.

Breath of Joy

The last thing we will do today is to practice Breath of Joy!

Display or project the Breath of Joy image.

First take three short breaths in, and then you’ll take one long breath out. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Today, when we breathe out, try to say the word “Pause!”

Begin by standing comfortably with your arms at your sides.

As you take a short breath in, extend your arms straight out in front of you so they’re parallel to the floor.

Without exhaling, take another short breath in as you swing your arms down in front of you and then out to your sides.

Inhale for a third time as you swing your arms up over your head.

Now breathe out as you bend at your hips and lean slightly forward, and swing your arms down and out to your sides. As you breathe out, say “Pause!”

Gently return to standing with your arms at your side. Pause to check in with your body to see if you notice any changes.

Repeat this exercise several times if desired. Then tell students:

Place your hands on your Anchors and check in. Notice how this breathing practice feels in your body and mind.

Invite students to share their observations.

Session 5

Goal: Students will understand that stress is pressure or strain on their mind or body and that while many stressors are not in their control, how they respond to stress is something they can practice.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (2 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2 min)
- Check-In (2 min)
- Activity: (15 min)
 - Thinking About Stress
 - Juggling Stress
 - Best Self Strategies
- Mindful Moment: Tension Release (5 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps and Breath of Joy (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Check-In sheets
- Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual
- Sticky notes – 6 per student
- Thinking About Stress worksheet
- 5 balls or bean bags
- Best Self Strategies poster or blank poster board
- Markers
- Tension Release visual and script
- Compassion Maps

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome! After today, we will have one more Flourishing Students Group. Next time/week will be our last group meeting. We have some special things planned for today and next time/week!

Let's review our group agreements.

Ask students to stand in a circle, and show students one ball/beanbag. Explain that you will toss the ball to a student, and the student will name one of the group agreements. That student will toss the ball to a second student, who will name another group agreement. Students will continue in this manner until all of the agreements have been named. Encourage students to take steps for safety (saying a person's name and making eye contact before tossing the ball to them).

Calming and Focusing

Calming

Display the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place your hands on your Anchors.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

Focusing

Next, we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell.

As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell.

Check-In

As the focusing bell quiets, lead students in a brief Check-In.

Let's take a moment to check in with our minds and bodies. With your hands on your Anchors, ask yourself, "How am I today?" "How am I feeling right here and right now?" Take a moment to notice.

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Do you notice any emotions?

Is your body comfortable or uncomfortable?

Is your mind busy, distracted, calm, focused?

Now relax your attention and simply breathe until you're ready to look up.

Invite students to record how they are feeling in bubble/section #5 on their Check-In sheet.

Activity: Thinking About Stress

Hand out two sticky notes to each student. Ask them to write one stressor, or something that makes them feel pressure, on each sticky note. In other words, tell students you want them to write one thing that causes stress for kids their age on each note. Model this for students as appropriate.

Divide the group into pairs. Give one Thinking About Stress worksheet to each pair. Point out labels on the thermometer that say, “High Level of Stress,” “Medium Level of Stress,” and “Low Level of Stress.” Ask students to place each of their sticky notes under “Stressors” and next to label that feels appropriate. Explain that you will discuss “Strategies” later in the group. Collect worksheets to use in the next activity.

Juggling Stress

Ask students to return to a circle. Explain that the objective of this game is to keep the ball/ beanbag moving without letting it touch the ground. When they have the ball, they can toss it to anyone in the circle except for one of the people directly next to them. Encourage students to take steps for safety (saying a person’s name and making eye contact before tossing the ball to them).

Explain that the ball they are tossing is a stressor, and give it a name from the examples of stress that students have generated (e.g., homework).

Then add another ball and give it the name of another stressor (e.g., arguing with a friend).

Continue adding balls in this manner until the group has a lot/ too much to handle. Tell them once a ball hits the ground, to leave it on the floor. After a few minutes of the game, ask the group how many balls they were able to keep in the game.

Invite students to share what they think the word “stress” means. Help students conclude that stress means anything that puts pressure or strain on their bodies or minds (physically, mentally or emotionally).

Then explore the effects of stress by asking students question such as:

- *How did you feel when you started the game and you only had a manageable number of balls?* [Answer: became focused or motivated, made an effort to perform well.]
- *How do you think a little bit of stress affects people?*
- *What happened and how did you feel when you started to get too many balls in the game?* [Answer: felt overwhelmed; started to lose track of what was happening; felt physical feelings like tension or increased heart rate; gave up.]
- *What do you think happens when a person has too much stress?* [Be sure to mention that a person with a lot of stress would not feel or act like their best self.]
- *How does stress feel in your mind and body? Do you think stress affects everyone in the same way?*

Best Self Strategies:

Ask students to recall for you what it means to be one's best self. Accept a variety of answers. Remind students that they have been learning, discussing, and practicing lots of strategies in this class to help them feel and act like their best selves. Explain that these Best Self Strategies are often very helpful ways to respond to stress.

Hand out several sticky notes to each student. Tell them that you want them to write on each sticky note at least one Best Self Strategy that helps them show care to themselves when they feel stressed. Explain these could be strategies they learned in group or any other strategy that helps them to feel safe, healthy, and calm. Tell them to think of activities they do regularly that bring them joy and to think of activities or practices that they use specifically when they are feeling upset, challenged, or frustrated (practicing Calming and Focusing, cuddling with a pet, taking a walk, playing with friends, etc.).

Invite students to share their strategies. If students did not include "Take a pause," add it and recall with students why you find pausing to be an important Best Self Strategy to use in times of stress. If students did not include "Ask for help," add it and emphasize the importance of asking for help when you need it, especially when stressors are out of our control.

Ask students to work together to create a poster displaying in words and/or drawing their Best Self Strategies. Encourage students to include at least one strategy from each group member.

Point out that there's no right or wrong answer, that different people have different strategies to feel like their best self, that some strategies can help bring a sense of calm and safety in a moment of stress and can be done as habits to prevent stress. Emphasize that right now you want them to think about which strategies work best for them in their own lives.

Remind students that:

While many stressors are not in their control, they can practice strategies to care for themselves in response to stress.

They can use Best Self Strategies to respond to the stress they experience.

Mindful Moment

Tension Release

The Tension Release exercise helps students build body awareness and skills for managing stress through relaxation. In the Tension Release exercise, you will direct attention in a scan of the body like you would in the body scan. However, you will also be instructing students to bring tension to their muscle groups and then relax them completely using the breath as a guide. *First, take a look around the room, then sit in a way that feels safe and comfortable for you. Close your eyes if it's comfortable. If you would rather not close your eyes, you can find one place to rest your eyes.*

Place your attention on your feet. Notice the soles of your feet, your toes, your heels, and the tops of your feet. Notice where your feet are touching the floor.

Now take a deep breath in, and as you do so, squeeze all the muscles in your feet. Point your foot, curl your toes, squeeze!

And now breathe out slowly, and as you do, let all of that tension go. Relax your feet. Notice how your feet feel after you allow them to relax.

Place your attention on your legs. Notice your calves, knees, and thighs; notice the weight of your legs on the floor/floor and chair.

Take a deep breath in, and you do so, gently squeeze all the muscles in your legs.

And now take a slow breath out and let all of that tension go. Relax your legs. Notice how your legs feel after you release all that tension.

Place your attention on your stomach. Notice how it moves up and down with your breath.

Take a deep breath in and squeeze all the muscles in your stomach. Pull in your belly button and squeeze!

Breathe out slowly, and let all of that tension go. Relax all the muscles around your stomach. Notice how your stomach feels now.

Now place your attention on your arms and shoulders. Notice your fingers, your hands, your elbows, and your shoulders; notice the weight of your arms on your legs.

Take a deep breath in and squeeze all the muscles in your arms. Squeeze your hands into fists and pull your shoulders up toward your ears!

Breathe out slowly and let all of that tension go. Relax your arms, loosen your hands and fingers, and let your shoulders sink. Notice how your arms and shoulders feel after you allow them to relax.

Now place your attention on your face and head. Notice your mouth, your eyes, and your forehead.

Breathe in and squeeze all the muscles in your face. Squeeze your eyes shut, clench your jaw tight, and scrunch up your eyebrows!

Breathe out a long slow breath and let all of that tension go. Relax your face. Open your mouth just a little bit so that there's some space between your teeth. Notice the difference in how your face and head feel.

And now place your attention on your whole body. Notice the weight of your entire body on the floor/floor and chair.

Breathe in, and as you do so, squeeze all the muscles in your body. Squeeze your feet, legs, belly, arms, shoulders, and face! Feel all that tension!

Now take a long slow breath out and let all of the tension go. Relax your whole body. Let it be heavy on the floor/chair. Imagine all of your muscles are getting soft and heavy, sinking toward the floor. Notice how your body feels after you allow it to relax.

And now take several Even-In, Even-Out Breaths, allowing yourself to rest. Notice what your body feels like after this practice.

What did you notice during the Tension Release practice? How does your body feel when it is relaxed?

Invite students to share as a group or on their Check-In sheets.

Closing

Compassion Maps

Encourage students to share the kind words and actions they have observed around them since the previous group session. Also ask them to think of their own ideas for kind words and actions they can express. Continue to record their observations and ideas on the maps.

Breath of Joy

The last thing we will do today is to practice Breath of Joy!

Remember, first you'll take three short breaths in, and then you'll take one long breath out. Today, when we breathe out, try to say the word "Care!"

May repeat several times if desired.

Gently return to standing with your arms at your side. Check in with your body to see if you notice any changes.

Session 6

Goal: Students will understand that setting and working toward goals can help them learn and grow and that they have the power to: be their best selves, build healthy habits, pause, and show kindness and compassion to themselves and others.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (1 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2 min)
- Check-In (2 min)
- Activity: (15 min)
 - Goals for Growth
 - The Power You Hold
 - Powerful Reminders Bookmarks
- Mindful Moment: Visualizing My Best Self (5 min)
- Closing: Compassion Maps and Breath of Joy (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Check-In sheets
- Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual
- Goals for Growth Worksheet
- The Power You Hold visual
- Powerful Reminders bookmarks sheet or index cards - 1 per student
- Visualizing My Best Self visual and script
- Session 1-6 icon sized Practice Cards – 1 set per student
- Compassion Maps
- Blank Compassion Map student worksheet for each student
- Flourishing Student Certificate for each student. (Note: there are two versions for group leader to choose from – signed by principal or group leader.)

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome back to the Flourishing Students group! This is our last group session, and we will have time to reflect on some of the things we have been doing and learning.

As we practice together, let's remember our agreements to make sure everyone feels safe and a part of the group [point to the "Our Agreements" poster].

Calming and Focusing

Calming

Display the Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

Let's begin by focusing our attention on our breath. Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These two spots are our Anchors because they help us feel our breath moving in the body.

As you take three long, slow breaths, focus your attention on any part of the breath you can feel.

Notice the feeling of the air entering and leaving your nostrils. Feel your chest and belly expand with each breath.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the way your breath feels in your body. Notice if your mind wanders. Then, bring your attention back to the sensation of your breath.

Focusing

Next we'll focus our minds by listening to the bell.

As you listen to the bell, focus your attention on the sound. Be curious about the sound and see what you can notice about it.

Remember the three steps: Pay attention to the sound. Notice if your mind wanders from the sound. Then, gently bring your attention back to the sound.

Ring the bell.

Check-In

As the focusing bell quiets, lead students in a brief Check-In.

Let's take a moment to check in with our minds and bodies. With your hands on your Anchors, ask yourself, "How am I today?" "How am I feeling right here and right now?" Take a moment to notice.

Display or project the Check-In Feeling Words with Faces visual.

Do you notice any emotions?

Is your body comfortable or uncomfortable?

Is your mind busy, distracted, calm, focused?

Now relax your attention and simply breathe until you're ready to look up.

Invite students to record how they are feeling in bubble/section #6 on their Check-In sheet.

Activity: Goals for Growth

Remind students that they have been learning and practicing lots of strategies for being their best selves. Introduce the idea of setting personal goals as another Best Self Strategy, and explain that setting and working toward a goal can be a really powerful strategy to help them learn new things or grow their skills.

Explain to students that they are going to set a personal goal to build a healthy habit with one of the Best Self Strategies they identified during Group Session 5. Suggest using one of the strategies they chose in the last session, but allow them to choose something different if they desire.

Give each student a Goals for Growth worksheet. Explain that they will work with a partner and check in with each other on how they are progressing in completing their goal sheets.

Read the following goal statements from the worksheet and go over the examples as necessary. Let students know it is okay to modify the statements some.

- *The Best Self Strategy I would like to grow into a healthy habit is _____.*
- *My goal is to practice this strategy _____ times per week.*
- *What I will do: _____.*
- *Where I will do it: _____.*
- *When I will do it: _____.*
- *Someone who can help me reach my goal: _____.*

Examples

The Best Self Strategy I would like to grow into a healthy habit is exercising. My goal is to do this three times per week. I will run around at school during recess. Someone who can help me reach my goal is a friend I see at recess.

The Best Self Strategy I would like to grow into a healthy habit is breathing to feel calm. My goal is to do this five times per week. I will do a Take 5 Breath or 5 Cooling Breaths at home before bedtime. Someone who can help me reach my goal is my parent.

The Best Self Strategy I would like to grow into a healthy habit is asking for help with my stress. My goal is to do this three times per week. I will talk with my mom at home before dinner about what I need to get done and why things feel stressful to me. Someone who can help me reach my goal is my mom.

After going over the goal statements and examples, have students discuss and write goal statements with their partners.

When complete, summarize for students:

- *Setting and working toward a goal can help us learn and grow healthy habits.*
- *Learning and growing healthy habits can help us to feel like our best selves.*

Then ask students:

What are some roadblocks that might get in your way and how will you deal with them?

What if you get off track with your goal? How can you respond like a good coach?

Emphasize treating themselves with kindness and encouragement rather than criticism and changing their goal to make it more attainable if necessary.

The Power You Hold

*In the Flourishing Students Group, we have spent time getting to know ourselves better and focusing on the skills we can grow to be our best selves. When you know yourself and you practice learning and growing your skills, you have the power to **be your best self**. You have the power to **build healthy habits**. You have the power to **pause**. You have the power to **show kindness and compassion to yourself and others**. Today, as we wrap up our group, we're going to focus on the power you hold.*

You have the power to grow healthy habits. Setting and working toward a goal, like you did with your partner today, is one way you can do that.

What does it mean that you have the power to pause?

What can you do when you pause? [Answer: Do a Check-In; notice how we are feeling; ask ourselves what we need; decide to use a Best Self Strategy, etc.]

Emphasize that they also have the power to ask for help when they need it.

If time allows, discuss the power to pause for the positive:

You also have the power to pause when you DO feel like your best self.

What are some positive experiences that you can pause to pay attention to? [Generate a list with students of positive experiences such as when they learn something new; when they feel joy; when someone does something kind; when they are proud of themselves; when they achieve a goal.]

Let's take a moment to practice pausing for the positive. Place your hands on your Anchors, and close your eyes if that is comfortable for you, or look down and rest your eyes on one spot.

Bring to mind a time when you were successful—when you did well in a performance or a sport or when you mastered something you had been trying hard to learn or when you did something else that you were proud of. [Give students a few moments to bring a memory to mind.]

Notice as much as you can as you remember this experience.

Where are you? What can you see and hear?

Now focus your attention on what it feels like in this memory. What emotions come up for you? Do you feel joy? Pride? Excitement?

Breathe in and out and pay attention to this positive memory. Imagine soaking in those positive feelings with each breath. [Give students a few moments to breathe and savor the memory.]

Now bring to mind a goal you set for yourself today. Imagine yourself a little bit in the future, working toward your goal, and then achieving your goal. What will it look like when you achieve the goal you set? How does it feel? Do you feel any joy? Pride? Excitement? Do you feel stronger? Healthier? Breathe in and out and pay attention to those positive feelings as you picture yourself experiencing this success. [Give students a few moments to breathe and savor the feelings.]

And, you have the power to show kindness and compassion to yourself and others. In each group, we have shared examples of acts of compassion, and ideas we have for kind words and actions we can share. Today you will take home your own Compassion Map to continue to observe and write down ideas!

Powerful Reminders

Lead students in creating Powerful Reminder Bookmarks. Give each student a Powerful Reminders bookmark sheet or index card. Guide students to think of specific ways they can practice the powers they hold: 1) the power to be your best self, 2) the power to build healthy habits, 3) the power to pause, and 4) the power to show kindness and compassion to themselves and others.

Provide examples to support understanding. Then have students record on their bookmark one way they would like to use to remember to practice each of these four powers. Invite students to share ideas about where they might keep this Powerful Reminder Bookmark so they will see it frequently.

Mindful Moment

Visualizing My Best Self

Guide students to a seated position where they feel safe and comfortable. Then lead students in the following visualization to build self-awareness and connect with a positive sense of self:

Begin by closing your eyes, or if it feels more comfortable for you, simply look downward.

Take a few deep breaths, noticing your breath as it moves in and out of your body.

Imagine you are walking to a favorite place, a place where you feel safe and peaceful. When you arrive, look around, and notice where you are. What about this place makes you feel safe and peaceful? What are you doing in this place?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now imagine you are getting ready to do an activity you really value, an activity that brings you joy, an activity where you feel strong and capable. What are you doing? Who are you with? How do you feel?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now imagine you are surrounded by all the people whom you love and value. Look around. Who is there? How do you feel?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now imagine you have traveled a few years into the future. How have you grown? What have you learned? What values are important to you? How are you staying healthy and caring for yourself?

Give students a few moments to reflect.

Now bring your attention back to right here, right now. Notice the weight of your body on the floor/chair. Notice your breath as it moves in and out.

Closing

Compassion Maps

Give each student a fresh Compassion Map with sections labeled for Home, School and Community to take home. Encourage students to continue to record kind words and actions they observe, as well as ideas they have for their kind words and actions toward themselves and others.

Breath of Joy

Let's practice Breath of Joy one more time! Today, choose a word that represents something you would like to take with you from the group. You may choose "Grow!" or one of the words we have used in the past: joy, kind, pause, or care.

Flourishing Student Certificate

Present each student with a Flourishing Student Certificate. As you present each certificate, offer the student words of recognition and compliments.

Remind students that they are learning and growing every day and encourage them to continue practicing skills they have been learning and to remember the power that they hold.