Flourish

Flourishing Students
Group Manual
Grades 2-3 Sessions 1-6

A Resource Of

Flourish: The Compassionate Schools Project Curriculum 2-3

Flourishing Students Groups
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

www.pureedgeinc.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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COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS PROJECT

Flourishing Students Group Grades 2-3

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

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

Flourishing Students Group sessions are grounded in the Compassionate Schools Project *Flourish* curriculum. 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 this unit is to promote students' self-awareness. Students will build emotional vocabulary, learn to discern between comfortable and uncomfortable feelings, and explore how experiences trigger emotions in themselves and others. They will observe that emotions come and go and that all feelings are okay to experience. Mindful awareness practices will help them build body awareness.

Enduring Understandings
Being present helps them notice what they are thinking, feeling, and sensing.
They experience emotions in their minds and bodies.
All emotions are okay to experience.
Emotions come and go.
Emotions arise in response to a trigger.

Self-Management (Sessions 4-6)

Overview
In the Self-Managment unit, students explore the concept of one's best self and learn that they can practice being their best self even when they experience strong emotions. They discover that emotions often arise in response to experiences, and they explore their own and others' emotional triggers. Throughout the unit, students practice pausing to notice and respond to how they are feeling with care and compassion, and they develop Best Self Strategies to use in challenging situations.

Enduring Understandings
To be present means they are focused on the here and now.
To participate means they are fully engaged in what they're doing or contributing and playing their part.
They can pause to check in and notice their feelings and behavior.
Practicing helps them learn and grow new skills.
There are strategies they can practice to help them be their best self when they're experiencing strong emotions.

Flourishing Students Group Scope and Sequence

Session	*Flourish* Lessons	Session Objectives I can...	Agreements, Calming & Focusing 4-9 min	Check-In 3-5 min	Activity 8-15 min	Mindful Moment 3 min	Closing 2-5 min	Materials
1	Self-Awareness 1&7	describe myself. (7) identify and demonstrate facial expressions for several feelings. (1)	Introduction Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Thumbs Up Feelings Check-In	Catch Yourself - included in Introduction (8 min)	Breath Awareness /Anchors	Tree and Flower	Chime Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal) Our Agreements poster or blank poster board Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Printed Thumbs Up sheets or blank paper Feelings Faces visual Breath Awareness/Anchors visual and script Tree visual and script Flower visual and script

2	Self-Awareness 1, 2 & 3	identify the feelings I experience. (2) understand that feelings come and go. (1) describe emotions as comfortable or uncomfortable. (3)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Thumbs Up (2 min)	Mountain Check-In (3 min) Feelings Come and Go (12 min) Options: A. Feelings Faces Cards B. Feelings Faces Visual C. Catching Feelings	Senses Check-In	Tree and Flower	Chime Our Agreements Poster Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Thumbs Up sheets from Session 1 Feelings Faces visual Image of a mountain Mountain visual and script Senses Check-In visual and script Feelings Faces icon-sized cards Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal) Tree visual and script Flower visual and script
3	Self-Awareness 4, 5 & 6	demonstrate and name emotions that would arise from a trigger. (4) describe what makes me feel like my best self. (5) understand that being present means paying attention to what is happening right here and now. (6)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Thumbs Up (2 min)	Emotional Eruptions/Volcano (8 min) Feeling My Best: Group Posters (7 min)	Take 5 Breath	Tree and Flower	Chime Our Agreements Poster Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Thumbs Up sheets Feelings Faces visual Volcano visual and script Take 5 Breath visual and script Paper, markers/pencils/pens 4 Feeling My Best posters or 4 blank poster boards Tree visual and script Flower visual and script
4	Self-Management 1&2	practice being present. (1) participate in a group game. (2)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Thumbs Up (2 min)	Introduce 4 Ps Poster (2 min) Simon Says (8 min)	Tension Release	Forest and Group Flower	Chime Our Agreements Poster Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Thumbs Up sheets Feelings Faces visual Tension Release visual and script 4 Ps Poster Party invitation: Presence and Participation Optional: Balloons and refreshments Forest visual and script Group Flower visual and script
5	Self-Management 3&5	demonstrate how to take a pause and explain how it helps me to be my best self.(3) practice several ways of taking a pause when I need to.(5)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Thumbs Up (2 min)	Press Pause (8 min) Chill (7 min)	Letting-Go Breath	Forest and Group Flower	Chime Our Agreements Poster Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Thumbs Up sheets Feelings Faces visual Letting-Go Breath visual and script 4 Ps Poster Party invitation: Presence, Participation, Pause Optional: Remote control, balloons, refreshments Forest visual and script Group Flower visual and script

6	Self-Management 6&7	identify times when it might be challenging for me to be my best self.(6) identify a strategy to practice when it's difficult for me to be my best self. (7)	Group Agreements Calming & Focusing	Mountain Check-In: Tune into Breath	Listening Game (6 min) Ball Toss (6 min)	Visualizing My Best Self	Forest and Group Flower Present Certificates	Chime Our Agreements Poster Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script Mountain visual and script Thumbs Up sheets Feelings Faces visual 4 Ps Poster Images of Session 1-6 practices to display or project Object to toss (ball, bean bag, stuffed animal) Visualizing My Nest Self visual and script Forest visual and script Group Flower visual and script Session 1-6 Practice Cards (1 set for each student) Flourishing Student Certificate for each

COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS PROJECT

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Flourishing Students Group: Grades 2-3

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.

COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS PROJECT *Flourish*

Session 1

Goal: Students will describe something about themselves and practice identifying feelings and their corresponding facial expressions.

Components

- Welcome, Opening, Group Agreements (3 min)
    - Catch Yourself Activity (8 min)*
- Calming and Focusing with Mindfulness Muscle (6 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (5 min)
- Mindful Moment: Breath Awareness/Anchors (3 min)
- Closing: Tree and Flower (4 min)

**In Session 1 only, the Activity portion is included at the beginning as an opportunity for students to introduce themselves. In remaining sessions, Activity follows Check-In.*

Materials

- Chime or Bell
- Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal)
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Printed Thumbs Up worksheets or 1 sheet of blank paper per student
- Feelings Faces visual
- Breath Awareness/Anchors visual and script
- Tree visual and script
- Flower visual and script
- Our Agreements poster or blank poster board

Welcome, Introductions, Group Agreements

Introduce yourself and your role in your school/district.

I am so happy you're here and part of the Flourishing Students Group! Does anyone know what the word "flourishing" means? Flourishing means growing well! In this group, we will practice skills that can help us to grow well. We'll meet together six times, [/once a week for the next 6 weeks]. We will learn more about ourselves and each other, practice new skills, play games, and have fun together!

Activity: 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 an object (e.g., beanbag, 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 a second student. That student says their name and completes a statement you read. Continue until all students have had at least one turn.

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 the ones 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 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 play: _____

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

A song that makes me feel happy 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 aloud and gain consensus by making sure all students give a thumbs up or say, "I agree." Following the group session, you will transfer agreements to the Our Agreements poster.

Calming and Focusing Introduction

Each time we come to our group, we will practice Calming and Focusing.

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 visual:

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

First, let's practice some calming breaths. We'll begin by paying attention to our breath and being curious about what we might notice.

Place one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest (demonstrate). *These are our Anchors. When your hands are on your Anchors, you can feel your breath move in your body.*

Let's take a slow breath in together, and now let's slowly breathe out together. Breathe in again. Feel your breath come in through your nose. Breathe out, feel your breath leave through your nose. Breathe in, feel your belly and chest get bigger. Breathe out, feel your chest sink and your belly relax. When I breathe like this, it feels like I am being kind to myself. Thank you for breat

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 in your breath.

If you have a Hoberman sphere, use it to help cue inhalations and exhalations. Otherwise, you may use a hand signal, such as moving your palms away from each other as you breathe in, and moving your palms together as you breathe out.

Focusing

Next we'll pay attention to the sound of a bell to help our minds focus. Sometimes it helps me to listen if I close my eyes or look downward. You can try that, too. All you have to do is listen to the sound of the bell. Be curious about the sound. See if you can notice when it starts to get quiet and see if you can notice when the sound stops. When you can't hear the sound anymore, look up at my eyes [or use some other signal] to let me know.

Ring the bell. Wait until the bell stops ringing.
Now my mind is more focused and ready to continue. Thank you for focusing with me.

Invite students to share what they noticed during the Calming and Focusing exercises and how they felt. Affirm that it's okay if they didn't feel calm or if they had a hard time focusing. Explain that focusing isn't easy, but we can get stronger with practice.

Check-In

Introduce Thumbs Up and Feelings Check-In

Give each student a copy of the "Thumbs Up" worksheet. [Alternatively, you may prepare a sheet for each student by folding the sheet into thirds horizontally and numbering the sections from front to back from #1- #6.] Ask students to write their name at the top. Show students how to trace around their thumb with a pencil or pen. Have them trace their thumb at the top of each section of the page on the front and on the back, for a total of 6 thumb outlines (i.e., make the thumb outlines for today as well as the next five sessions).

Tell students they will be making a thumbprint face for this session and the next five sessions.
First, 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.

Lead students in this brief Check-In practice:

Begin by placing one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. These are your Anchors.

Take a look around the room and notice where you are. Now, 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, with curiosity and kindness, check in with yourself. Ask, how am I feeling right now? Bring your attention to your body. What can you notice about how your body is feeling today? Is it energetic, tired, restless, calm, or something else? Be curious.

Now bring your attention to your face. Does your face feel relaxed? Is it smiling, serious, or bored? Notice what expression is on your face.

Now check in on your mind. How is your mind feeling today? Is it busy thinking? Or is it at rest?

Now take a deep breath in and out. Take a look around the room and then bring your focus to me.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Point to each face and name each expression. Then ask students:

How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression in the section for Session #1 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feeling.

Mindful Moment

Breath Awareness/Anchors

Ask students to return to seated in a circle.

Place your hands on your Anchors (demonstrate). When your hands are on your Anchors, you can feel your breath move in your body.

We are going to take a few breaths together. Let's start with a big breath in, and a big breath out.

Let's take another breath in. What do you notice when we inhale? When we inhale, the belly and chest expand to create space for the breath. Can you feel your belly pressing into your hands? Now let the breath go out.

Take another breath in, and let the breath go out. What do you notice when we exhale? Does your belly relax?

Keep breathing in and out, and see what you notice. Can you hear your breath? Can you feel your heart beating in your chest?

Invite students to silently check in with how their 6bodies feel.

Do you feel relaxed? Calm? Sleepy? Energized? Be curious and notice how you feel in your body and mind.

Closing

Invite students to stand up and walk in a circle just outside of where they have been seated. Instruct students to keep walking slowly until they hear you say “Pause.” When they hear the word “pause,” they should stop and stand in place where they are.

Allow students to circle a few times, and then say “Pause.”

When students have stopped, offer observations and compliments, such as the following: *I appreciate how you are taking part in the group! I also like the way you are remembering our agreements, like [name how they are following specific agreement].*

Does anyone remember from last time what the word “flourishing” means? Yes! “Flourishing” means growing well!

The last thing we will do today is show how we feel we are growing! You may feel like you are growing like a tree or like you are growing like a flower.

Tip: The focus is not to get the movement right but to express how they feel they are growing.

Tree

Display or project the Tree visual. *Here is one way to show you feel like you’re growing like a tree.*

Lead and model for students the following:

Stand straight with your feet apart and place your hands on your hips.

Turn your right foot to the side with your right heel against your left ankle.

Breathe in and imagine sending roots down through your left foot, anchoring you to the ground.

Breathe out. You may lift your right foot and press the sole of your right foot against your left calf. Or if it feels more comfortable, you may keep your right heel against your left ankle. Breathe in and imagine growing taller.

Breathe out and press your left foot into the ground, keeping that leg active and strong.

Breathe in and bring your arms up over your head. Reach your fingers toward the sky like branches.

Breathe out and keep your arms up as you lower your shoulders away from your ears.

If you start to lose your balance, place your right foot down to stay safe. You can always build your Tree again, starting at the beginning.

Flower

Display or project Flower visual. *Here is one way to show you feel like you're growing like a flower.*

Lead and model for students the following:

Begin in a comfortable seated, easy position.

Reach your arms out to the sides, turning your palms up and lifting your pinkies.

Breathe in. Lift your chest and look upward.

Breathe out and drop your shoulders down.

Now that you've practiced Tree and Flower, show how you feel like you are growing today, like a tree or like a flower. You may choose one of these pictures, but you do not have to look like this. You may choose another way to show what it feels like to be growing like a tree or a flower.

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

Session 2

Goal: Students will identify feelings they experience, understand that feelings come and go, and be able to describe emotions as comfortable or uncomfortable.

Components

- Welcome and Group Agreements (3 min)
- Calming and Focusing (2 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (2 min)
- Activities: Mountain Check-In; Feelings Come and Go (15 min)
- Mindful Moment: Senses Check-In (3 min)
- Closing: Tree or Flower (2 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Thumbs Up sheets from Session 1
- Feelings Faces visual
- Image of a mountain
- Mountain visual and script
- Senses Check-In visual and script
- Tree visual and script
- Flower visual and script
- Feelings Faces student icon cards
- Non-bouncing object to toss (e.g., bean bag, stuffed animal)

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome back to the Flourishing Students group. I'm so happy 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.

Hold up the Our Agreements poster and ask for 1-2 volunteers to read each of the group agreements from Session 1. 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 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 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

Thumbs Up

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling. Tell them that once they have noticed and identified how they are feeling, they should look up to let you know.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Ask students, *How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?*

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression on the thumb outline for Session #2 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feelin

Activity

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 or project a picture of a mountain. Ask students to name qualities of a mountain (strong, still, tall, quiet, majestic, etc.).

Display or project image of Mountain. Model and guide students through Mountain using the following cues as reference:

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

Breathe in and imagine the top of your head lifting and your body growing taller.

Breathe out and press both of your feet into the floor. Relax your shoulders away from your ears.

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

Mountain Check-In

Remind students that checking in means listening to their minds and bodies with curiosity and kindness.

Invite students to practice a brief Check-In practice by silently asking themselves: How does my body feel right now? How does my mind feel right now?

Touch your nose [or raise your hand or some other gesture] if you noticed that you are experiencing a feeling right now.

I wonder if we're all experiencing the same feeling right now.

Ask students to perform specific gestures as you name feelings they might be experiencing. For example:

Stand on one foot if you're feeling happy. Pat your stomach if you're feeling nervous, etc.

Interesting! I'm noticing that even though we all experience feelings, we don't all experience the same feelings at the same time.

Finally, invite students to notice whether the feelings they are experiencing are the same or different from what they were experiencing at the beginning of the session. Use what arises to help students notice that feelings come and go. Tell students:

Take a moment to remember what feeling you were experiencing at the beginning of the session —the one you drew on your thumbprint sheet.
Raise your hand if you are experiencing the same feeling now that you experienced then.
Put your hand on your head if you are experiencing a different feeling now.

Take a moment to look around. For some of us, the feeling we are experiencing has changed, and for some of us, it has stayed the same.

Now notice whether the feeling you're experiencing in this moment is the same feeling you've felt your entire life, since the moment you were born, or, if at some point in your life, you've experienced a different feeling.

[In a joking tone of voice] *Who has never, ever experienced a different feeling in their entire life?*

It seems to me that if we take the time to observe the feelings we experience, we find out that they don't stay forever. Instead, they come and go. What do you think about that?

Feelings Come and Go

Three variations: choose one, or if extra time, more than one.

A) Feelings Faces Cards

Place Feeling Faces icon sized cards face down in a pile. Invite a student to draw one card and show it to the group. Ask the entire group to name the feeling and demonstrate the corresponding facial expression. Then, ask students to give a thumbs-up if the feeling is comfortable and a thumbs-down if the feeling is uncomfortable. Ask the group if the feeling is ok to experience. Confirm that all feelings are ok to experience. Ask the student to place the card face-down in a pile.

After all cards have been drawn, collect cards and display face up in an array or row and remind students that comfortable and uncomfortable feelings come. Gather the cards into a stack, set aside, and remind the group that comfortable and uncomfortable feelings also go.

B) Feelings Faces Visual

Invite a student to come up to the Feelings Faces visual and point to a face/feeling. Ask the entire group to name the feeling and demonstrate the corresponding facial expression. Then, ask students and to give a thumbs-up if the feeling is comfortable and a thumbs-down if the feeling is uncomfortable. Ask the group if the feeling is ok to experience. Confirm that all feelings are ok to experience. Ask the student to return to the circle. Invite the next student to come up and repeat the steps above. Allow each student to take at least one turn. When complete, remind the group that just as they came up and then went back to their seats, feelings come and go.

C) Catching Feelings

Ask students to form a circle, standing. Toss the object (bean bag or stuffed animal) to a student and say a feeling word from the Feelings Faces visual. Ask the student to demonstrate the corresponding facial expression for that feeling. Ask the entire group to give a thumbs-up if the feeling is comfortable and a thumbs-down if uncomfortable. Ask the group if the feeling is ok to experience. Ask student to toss the object to another student, who names a feeling word from the visual and demonstrates the facial expression, Ask the entire group to give a thumbs-up if the feeling is comfortable and a thumbs-down if uncomfortable. Ask the group if the feeling is ok to experience. Repeat until all students have had at least one turn to name a feeling. Explain that all feelings are ok to experience and that like the ball, feelings come and go.

Mindful Moment

Senses Check-In

Ask students to return to being seated in the circle. Display or project the Senses Check-In visual. Guide students in briefly checking in with their senses.

While you settle into sitting comfortably, take a moment to check in, using your senses.

First, practice being present with your eyes, with your sight.

Take a look around and notice three things that you can see.

Take a breath, and then let your eyes close or rest on one spot.

Next, practice being present with your ears, with your hearing.

Listen carefully and notice two sounds you can hear around you right now.

Now, practice being present with your sense of touch.

Notice one sensation you can feel with your body right now.

And now relax your senses and let your body and mind rest for a few moments.

Summarize for Students:

Being present means paying attention to what is happening inside or around us right here and now. Being present helps us notice and appreciate our experiences.

Closing

Ask students to walk in a circle and to stop when you say “Pause.”

When students have stopped, share your observations/compliments to recognize participation, effort, growth, respect for group agreements, etc.

Let’s show how we feel we are growing today. You may feel like you are growing like a tree or like a flower.

Display or project Tree visual. *This is s one way to show you feel like you’re growing like a tree.*

Display or project Flower visual. *This is one way to show you’re growing like a flower.*

You may choose one of these pictures, but you do not have to look like this. You may choose another way to show what it feels like to be growing like a tree or a flower.

Assist students as needed. The focus is not to get the movement right but to express how they feel they are growing.

Session 3

Goal: Students will demonstrate and name emotions that would arise from a trigger and describe what makes them feel like their best self.

Components

- Welcome and Group Agreements (3 min)
- Calming and Focusing (3 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (2 min)
- Activities: Emotional Eruptions/Volcano; Feeling my Best (15 min)
- Mindful Moment: Take 5 Breath (3 min)
- Closing: Tree or Flower (2 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Thumbs Up sheets
- Feelings Faces visual
- Volcano visual and script
- Take 5 Breath visual and script
- Tree visual and script
- Flower visual and script
- Paper, markers, pencils, pens
- Four poster boards titled “Feeling my Best” for group drawings

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Let’s review the ways we can make sure everyone in our group feels safe and included.

Hold up the Our Agreements poster and ask for two volunteers to take turns pointing to and reading the agreements. After each norm 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 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 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

Thumbs Up

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling. Tell them that once they have noticed and identified how they are feeling, they should look up to let you know.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Ask students, *How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?*

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression on the thumb outline for Session #3 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feeling.

Activity

Emotional Eruptions

This activity facilitates individual role-playing of automatic emotional reactions. It uses creative movement to encourage physical connection with emotional experience and brings attention to the automatic emotional reactions that can result from words or events in our environments.

Ask students what happens when a volcano is too full of hot gas. Explain to students that they will play a game where they use their bodies to create eruptions from a Volcano. The eruptions they create will be emotional eruptions. Explain that an eruption is an outburst that happens

suddenly without planning. Ask students for their ideas of what an emotional eruption might be and explain that all of us have moments where we have emotional reactions without thinking.

Display Volcano visual and lead students in the following:

Begin in Mountain.

Breathing in, hop or step feet wide open, hands on hips.

Breathing out, fold forward from the hips, sliding hands down the legs to rest on the shins, ankles, or the floor.

Each round, read one of the following emotion prompts. Explain that when they hear the prompt, students should immediately create their emotion eruption by bursting up from Volcano pose with a facial expression and body language that represents how they might automatically react to the prompt. They should do the first thing that comes to mind, without taking time to think about it. Explain that there is no right or wrong response and they should act out the first reaction that they think of. After the "eruption," have students return to their dormant volcano state.

- *You wake up with gum in your hair.*
- *You are walking down the hall at school and someone calls you a mean name.*
- *You wake up on Saturday and there is a giant thunderstorm.*
- *You get a project back from your teacher and you didn't do as well as you'd hoped.*
- *Your teacher decides to get a snake for a class pet.*
- *Today the cafeteria is serving your favorite lunch, but when you get in line, they are all out and you have to get something else instead.*
- *You trip on the sidewalk and tear your new jeans.*
- *Your best friend won't let you choose what to play.*
- *You are going swimming in the ocean for the first time.*
- *Your best friend ignores you.*
- *Someone bumps into you in the hall and you drop your art project.*
- *Your friend's parents take you to ride on a roller coaster.*

During the activity, invite students to share what feeling they are acting out. Periodically, have them check in before they return to their dormant volcano state and invite them to notice how it feels in their bodies to act out that emotion.

Use as many prompts as you choose, then guide students to return to seated.

Feeling My Best

Invite students to share what they think it means to feel like your best self. Ask questions such as *When do you feel like your best self?*

Share examples with students of activities and experiences that make you feel like your best self (experiences that lead you to feel happy, healthy, strong, and proud of yourself).

Part of being our best selves is feeling happy, healthy, and proud of ourselves.

Being your best self means acting in ways that show care for yourself and others.

We each have our own experiences that support us in feeling like our best selves.

Show students the four “Feeling My Best” posters you have prepared for this session. Review the prompts with them as a group, checking for understanding.

Instruct students to draw or write their responses to the following prompts (which are the poster headings):

Feeling My Best
I feel happy when: _____

Feeling My Best
I feel proud of myself when: _____

Feeling My Best
I feel healthy and strong when: _____

Feeling My Best
I feel safe and cared for when: _____

Students may rotate among the posters in pairs or individually as they draw and write responses. Check in with students for understanding as they work.

Invite students to share examples from their work with other group members.

Mindful Moment

Take 5 Breath

Display or project the Take 5 Breath visual.

Today we will learn a practice called “Take 5 Breath.”

Guide students through this breath exercise using the following cues as reference:

Spread your fingers wide on one hand. You can choose to have the palm of your hand pointing toward or away from your body. Use your other hand’s pointer finger as an imaginary pencil and touch your open hand at the wrist.

Breathe in: Outline your thumb by drawing a line around the outside edge of your thumb, stopping at the top of the fingernail.

Breathe out: “Draw” a line down into the valley between your thumb and pointer finger.

Breathe in: “Climb the mountain” up the side of your pointer finger to the top of the fingernail.

Breathe out: Draw a line down the pointer finger, into the valley between your pointer finger and middle finger.

Taking your time, draw the outline of each finger, being sure to pause at each peak and valley and feel the full length of the breath.

After completing the Take 5 Breath, allow for students to notice how they feel in their minds and bodies. Ask students to share a word that describes how they feel.

Closing

Ask students to walk in a circle and to stop when you say “Pause.”

Share your observations/compliments to recognize participation, effort, growth, respect for group agreements, etc.

Learning and practicing together helps us to flourish and be our best selves!

Show how you feel like you are growing today.

Display or project Tree visual. *This is one way to show you feel like you’re growing like a tree.*

Display or project Flower visual. *This is one way to show you feel like you’re growing like a flower.*

You may choose one of these pictures, but you do not have to look like this. You may choose another way to show what it feels like to be growing like a tree or a flower.

Assist students as needed, but the focus is not to get the movement right but to express how they feel they are growing.

Session 4

Goal: Students will practice being present and participating in a group game.

Components

- Welcome and Group Agreements (2 min)
- Calming and Focusing with Mindfulness Muscle (8 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (2 min)
- Activity: Simon Says (10 min)
- Mindful Moment: Wiggle and Relax (3 min)
- Closing: Forest and Group Flower (4 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Thumbs Up sheets
- Feelings Faces visual
- Tension Release visual and script
- Forest visual and script
- Group Flower visual and script
- 4 Ps Poster from Teacher Resources
- Party Invitation from Teacher Resources: Presence and Participation
- Optional: Balloons and refreshments

Preparation

Set the stage for a pretend party by printing party invitations or being ready to project the invitation. For Session 4, use the invitation that says, “Your presence and participation are requested.”

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome! I’m glad you’re here today!

Let’s begin by reviewing our Group Agreements.

Hold up the Our Agreements poster and ask for two volunteers to take turns pointing to and reading the agreements. After each norm 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

Display Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual.

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.

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 continue. How does yours feel?

Invite several students to share what they notice after this exercise.

Check-In

Thumbs Up

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling. Tell them that once they have noticed and identified how they are feeling, they should look up to let you know.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Ask students, *How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?*

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression on the thumb outline for Session #4 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feeling.

Activity

Introduce 4 Ps Poster

Tell students that during the next few sessions, they will learn about four words that start with the letter “P” that will help them to be their best selves: Present, Participate, Pause, and Practice.

Introduce students to the 4Ps Poster.

Fill in the blanks for #1 so it reads “Be Present.” Invite students to review what they have learned about being present.

Being present means paying attention to what is happening inside or around us right here and now. Being present helps us notice and appreciate our experiences.

Fill in the blanks for #2 so it reads “Participate.” Invite students to share what they know about the word “participate.”

Participate means to contribute by playing our part. Participating is one way we can be our best selves.

Hand out party invitations or project invitation onto screen.

You are invited to a party! It’s today, here in our group!

What do you notice about the party invitation? Yes, your presence and participation are requested!

Simon Says

During our party today, we will play a fun game called Simon Says!

The keys to being your best self in this game are being able to stay present and pay careful attention to what the leader says, and to take part in the game as the leader or a player.

Assign one person to be Simon. Tell all the other students that they are players. For the first round, you may want to be Simon to demonstrate how the game works.

In this game, Simon tells the other students what to do, but students should only follow the cues that are preceded by the words “Simon says.” For example, if Simon says, “Simon says touch your nose,” all of the students should touch their noses. But if Simon says, “Touch your nose,” students should not touch their noses. If students follow prompts that do not start with “Simon says,” they are out until the next round.

Tips:

- As students play the game, underscore the concept of presence by positively reinforcing times when students are listening with focused attention - when they are practicing staying present.
- Underscore the concept of participation by positively reinforcing when students are actively taking part and joining in as leader or player.
- Consider speeding up your commands before saying a prompt that does not include "Simon says" at the beginning.

Following the game, lead students in reflecting by asking them questions such as:

What are the secrets to doing well at Simon Says? [Answer: staying present/listening with full attention. Participating/taking part/following the leader's commands.]

What are some ways to practice being present? [Answer: practice paying close attention; use our senses to notice what's happening around us; practice calming and focusing our mind and body.]

Could being present help you in school? At home? In sports?

How could being present help you to show care for yourself and others?

If you participate in a game, are you likely to improve at it?

What are some of the ways you can participate in school? What happens if you don't participate in math class?

How can participating (in school, sports, art, family activities) help you be your best self? How does participation help you to flourish? [Answer: It gives you a chance to learn, practice, and grow.]

Are there times when it's okay not to participate? [Answer: When you don't feel comfortable, when it's not safe.]

Mindful Moment

Tension Release

Display Tension Release visual.

Explain to students that they're going to practice Calming and Focusing their bodies as well as their minds. Use the following script to help guide students through the practice.

Today we're going to do a new practice to help our bodies relax.

First, take a look around the room, then sit or lie down 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 focus your eyes on one place.

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.

Take a deep breath in, and as you do so, lift your legs off the floor just a little bit and squeeze all the muscles in your legs. Allow your legs to hover over the floor for a moment.

And now breathe 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 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 the floor.

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 and let all of that tension go. Relax your arms, loosen your hands and fingers, and sink your shoulders down to the floor. 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; notice the weight of your head on the floor.

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 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 body on the chair/floor.

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

Now breathe out and let all of the tension go. Relax your whole body. Notice how your body feels after you allow it to relax.

And now take several breaths in and out, allowing yourself to rest. Notice what your body feels like after this practice.

Closing

Ask students to walk in a circle and to stop when you say “Pause.”

Share your observations/compliments to recognize participation, effort, growth, respect for group agreements, etc.

Learning and practicing together helps us to flourish and to be our best selves! Being your best self means acting in ways that show care for yourself and others.

Today we have some new ways to show how you are growing! Today, you will practice together to show you are growing like trees in a forest and like flowers in a garden.

You will be practicing together, but you do not have to make contact with your neighbors if you are not comfortable. Encourage students to communicate their preferences verbally or with a silent signal (such as placing their hands on their Anchors). While instructing, give students options for participating with or without making contact with their neighbors.

Guide students to form a circle with about one arm’s length or less between them. You can ask them to stand shoulder to shoulder and then take one step back to widen the circle slightly.

Assist students in building Forest and Group Flower. While the focus is not to get the movement exactly right, because it is a group pose, share steps with students.

Forest

Begin in Mountain, standing strong and tall.

Breathe out and find your balance in Tree, starting with your toes touching the floor.

Breathe in. Reach your arms upward in the shape of the letter “V,” crossing wrists with your neighbors’ arms to create branches, and spreading fingers out wide to create leaves. Choose either to keep space between your wrist and your neighbors’ wrists, or bring wrists together so that you are connected to your neighbors.

Remember to lower your foot anytime you feel like you need to rebuild your Tree.

As we balance, notice if the support of your neighbor helps you stand strong. Can you use your arms to help keep your neighbors stable?

How does it feel to be part of a forest of trees standing tall together?

Now let's practice Flower Garden.

Group Flower [/Flower Garden]

Begin in Flower. Make sure you feel safe, stable, and balanced.

Breathe in and reach your hands outward toward each neighbor's hand.

Breathe out and try to touch fingertips or clasp hands or wrists with your neighbors so that the whole group of flowers is connected.

How can you support each other's balance? How does it feel to be part of one large flower garden rather than many separate flowers?

Invite students to review ways they can treat each other with care and respect and keep each other safe during group movement.

Session 5

Goal: Students will demonstrate how to take a pause, explain how it helps them to be their best selves, and practice several ways of taking a pause when they need to.

Components

- Welcome and Group Agreements (1 min)
- Calming and Focusing (3 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (2 min)
- Activities: Press Pause; Chill (15 min)
- Mindful Moment: Letting-Go Breath (3 min)
- Closing: Forest or Group Flower (3 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual and script
- Thumbs Up sheets
- Feelings Faces visual
- Letting-Go Breath visual and script
- Forest visual and script
- Group Flower visual and script
- 4 Ps Poster
- Party invitation: Presence, Participation, Pause
- Optional: Remote control, refreshments, balloons

Preparation

Set the stage for a pretend party by printing party invitations or being ready to project the invitation. Refreshments and balloons are optional. For this session, use the invitation that says "A Pause is Requested."

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 remember our agreements to make sure everyone feels safe and a part of the group.

Point to Our Agreements poster and ask for a volunteer to read the agreements. Solicit thumbs-ups from students for each point.

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 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

Thumbs Up

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling. Tell them that once they have noticed and identified how they are feeling, they should look up to let you know.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Ask students, *How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?*

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression on the thumb outline for Session #5 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feeling.

Activity

4 Ps Poster

Fill in the blanks for #3 so it reads “Pause.” Invite students to share what they know about the word pause. Follow up with clarifying statements and questions, such as:

To pause means to stop what you are doing for a short time.

How do you think taking a pause can help you to be your best self?

When we take a pause, it can help us to be present and notice our thoughts and feelings.

When we experience uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, taking a pause helps calm and settle our mind and body.

Press Pause

After the Focusing activity, ask students what they notice about today’s party invitation. Ask students if anyone has been to a party recently and how they might feel if they were asked to take a pause during a party.

Then play a version of Freeze Dance. Invite them to stand up in place and do a “party” dance until you say, “Pause.” (Model moderate to vigorous movement.)

Then ask students to pretend to be doing other things they would like to do at a party, such as swinging at a piñata, eating party cake, talking, jumping in a bouncy house, and to press pause when you tell them to. Ask students if it was possible to press pause even though their bodies and minds still felt like dancing, talking, etc.

Tip: Add novelty to this activity by pretending to have a remote control in your hand and pressing the pause button when you want students to take a pause. Better yet, use a real remote control!

Chill

Lead students in the following discussion to help them understand that pressing pause can be a helpful way to be their best selves when they are experiencing strong emotions.

Remind students of the volcanic eruption activity from Session 3. In that game, a trigger happened, and then an emotion “erupted.” Then explain that when they feel a strong emotion coming up, pressing pause can help them decide how to respond in that moment. Ask students questions such as the following to explore how pressing pause could help them be their best selves when they feel like they might erupt with uncomfortable thoughts or feelings:

If you are experiencing uncomfortable feelings, why might it be important to pause your body?

How can pausing help you be in charge of your body and your actions?

How could being in charge of your body and your actions help you be your best self?

Summarize for students:

Part of being our best selves is acting in ways that show care for ourselves and others.

We can be our best selves even when we experience uncomfortable thoughts and feelings.

Pausing can help us be in charge of our bodies and actions.

Being in charge of our bodies and actions can help us be our best selves.

Then ask students:

When we take a pause, what strategies can you use to be your best self when you are experiencing uncomfortable feelings?

Have students explore several ways of taking a pause (e.g., breath awareness, stretching, counting, taking a time-out, getting a drink of water). Make a list with students, and title it Best Self Strategies.

Lead students in exploring how they can press pause and apply their Best Self Strategies when they are experiencing uncomfortable emotions. Have students imagine a scenario where a child their age (give the imaginary child a name) is experiencing very strong emotions. Go through a few hypothetical emotional situations, as time allows (e.g., excitement, anger, sadness, disappointment).

Invite students to show this strong emotion on their faces. Then ask them to imagine what the emotion would feel like in their bodies. Remind them that these physical signals can help them be aware of what feelings they are experiencing.

Mindful Moment

Letting-Go Breath

Tell students you are going to take a pause together. Display or project the Letting-Go Breath visual.

Lead students in taking several Letting-Go Breaths:

One great strategy to use when you need to take a pause to calm and relax your body is called Letting-Go Breath. When we are excited, experiencing a strong feeling, or when our bodies and minds are moving fast, Letting-Go Breath can be one way to pause and slow down. First we will pause and inhale. Then we'll practice exhaling a long slow breath out to tell your mind and body to slow down.

First pause where you are, and gently place your hands on your Anchors.

We're going to breathe in while we count to three. Then we'll breathe out slowly while we count to five.

Breathe in for one, two, three.

Breathe out for one, two, three, four, five.

As you breathe out, imagine your mind and body slowing down.

After repeating this breath a few times, guide students to pause and check in with their bodies and minds with curiosity and kindness. Invite a few volunteers to share what they notice after practicing Letting-Go Breath.

Closing

Ask students to walk in a circle and to stop when you say "Pause."

Share your observations/compliments to recognize participation, effort, growth, respect for group agreements, etc.

Learning and practicing together helps us to flourish and to be our best selves! Being your best self means acting in ways that show care for yourself and others.

Show how you feel like you are growing today: like a tree in a forest or a flower in a garden.

Remember, you do not have to make contact with your neighbors if you are not comfortable.

Encourage students to communicate their preferences verbally or with a silent signal (such as placing their hands on their Anchors). While instructing, provide students options for participating with or without making contact with their neighbors.

Invite students to review ways they can treat each other with care and respect and keep each other safe during group movement.

Point students toward two areas – one for Forest and one for Flower Garden and provide guidance as needed using the instructions below.

Forest

Begin in Mountain, standing strong and tall.

Breathe out and find your balance in Tree, starting with your toes touching the floor.

Breathe in. Reach your arms upward in the shape of the letter "V," crossing wrists with your neighbors' arms to create branches, and spreading fingers out wide to create leaves. Choose either to keep space between your wrist and your neighbors' wrists, or bring wrists together so that you are connected to your neighbors.

Remember to lower your foot anytime you feel like you need to rebuild your Tree.

As we balance, notice if the support of your neighbor helps you stand strong. Can you use your arms to help keep your neighbors stable?

How does it feel to be part of a forest of trees standing tall together?

Group Flower [/Flower Garden]

Begin in Flower. Make sure you feel safe, stable, and balanced.

Breathe in and reach your hands outward toward each neighbor's hand.

Breathe out and try to touch fingertips or clasp hands or wrists with your neighbors so that the whole group of flowers is connected.

How can you support each other's balance? How does it feel to be part of one large flower garden rather than many separate flowers?

Ask students:

To students in Forest: *How does it feel to be part of a forest of trees standing tall together?*

To students in Group Flower: *How does it feel to be part of one large flower garden?*

Session 6

Goal: Students will identify times when it might be challenging for them to be their best selves and identify a strategy to practice when it's difficult to be their best selves.

Components

- Welcome and Group Agreements (1 min)
- Calming and Focusing (3 min)
- Check-In: Thumbs Up (2 min)
- Activities: Listening Game, Ball Toss (12 min)
- Mindful Moment: Visualizing my Best Self (3 min)
- Closing: Forest or Group Flower, Presentation of Certificates (7 min)

Materials

- Chime
- Our Agreements poster
- Mindfulness Muscle with Calming and Focusing visual
- Thumbs Up sheets
- Feelings Faces visual
- 4 Ps poster
- Mountain visual and script
- Visualizing My Best Self visual
- Forest visual and script
- Group Flower visual and script
- Poster of all Session 1-6 practices to display or project
- Set of Session 1-6 Practice Cards – one set for each student to take home
- Object to toss (e.g., ball, bean bag, stuffed animal)
- Flourishing Student Certificate for each student

Welcome and Review Group Agreements

Welcome! This is our final Flourishing Students Group, and we have fun activities planned for today!

As we practice together, let's remember our agreements to make sure everyone feels safe and a part of the group. (Point to Our Agreements poster.)

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 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 and wait until the bell stops ringing before saying:

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.

Check-In

Thumbs Up

After the tone stops in the Focusing practice, lead students in a brief Check-In practice to notice how they are feeling. Tell them that once they have noticed and identified how they are feeling, they should look up to let you know.

Project or point to the Feelings Faces visual. Ask students, *How do you feel? Is there an expression here that shows how you are feeling?*

Ask students to draw the corresponding facial expression on the thumb outline for Session #6 on their Thumbs Up sheet. Let them know that if they don't find a good match, they should try their best to draw an expression that matches how they are feeling.

Activity

Listening Game

On the 4 Ps Poster, fill in the blanks for item #4 so it reads "Practice." Read the word aloud and invite students to share what they know about the word practice.

In our group, we practice calming breaths, focusing, and checking in with how we are feeling in our bodies and minds. By practicing these skills each week, they become more comfortable over time.

Tell students they are going to play a game that will require them to practice staying present and focused on what they hear.

Give students instructions to clap (or give some other signal) every time they hear a particular target in a list of words.

Practice the first set together with students and demonstrate clapping when you say the word "cat."

Practice Set: Give the target **"the word cat"** and read the list: *dog, mouse, cow, rat, cat, pig, cat, horse, catfish, giraffe, elephant, cat.*

Challenge students with different tasks. Examples:

Give the target **"words that start with 'p'"** and then read the list: *big, book, pause, bank, hop, party, tool, board, present, bounce, gap, deep, participate, whisper, practice, mountain.*

Explain that the target is **"words with two syllables"** [e.g., can is one syllable; candy is two syllables]. Read the list: *atlas, brave, earth, planet, float, famous, seal, practice, search, steady, calm, present, telescope, wonder, wise.*

Give the target **"words that describe a feeling"** and then read the list: *kitten, piano, happy, table, surprised, orange, carrot, angry, cereal, beach, proud, lunch, carry, calm.*

Lead students in reflecting on the game by asking them questions, such as:

What was the secret to doing well at this game? [Answer: staying present/listening with full attention.]

What are some ways to practice being present? [Answer: practice paying close attention; use our senses to notice what's happening around us; practice calming and focusing our mind and body.]

Could practice in being present help you in school? At home? In sports?

Ball Toss

Give each student a set of cards depicting Mindful Movement and Mindful Moment practices learned in group. Ask students to look through the cards and think about the practices they have been doing in the group. [Alternatively, project image of practices and ask students to think about the practices they have been doing in group.]

Invite students to stand in a circle. In this game, students will toss and catch an object (e.g., ball, bean bag, stuffed animal). When they catch the object, they will name something they have learned in the group that they plan to continue practicing. Invite students to join together in this practice in the circle. Continue until all students have had at least one turn to name and practice something they learned in the group.

Review the practices not named by students. Ask students follow-up questions such as:

If you are feeling angry, which of these will you practice?

If you're feeling sad, which of these will you practice?

Which will you practice if you are feeling frustrated?

Provide each student with a set of Practice Cards to take home. Encourage students to continue practicing the skills they have learned.

Mindful Moment

Visualizing My Best Self

As you settle into a comfortable position, focus your attention on your breath.

Now bring to mind one thing you have learned during this group.

Know that you are learning new things every day.

Now bring to mind one challenging activity in this group.

Your mind and body are growing stronger with every new experience.

Now bring to mind one activity, one thing we did in this group, that you enjoyed.

Know that you will have many moments of joy in your life.

Let yourself notice and appreciate that you are someone who learns, grows, and experiences joy.

Now rest your attention on your breath, noticing how your body and mind feel.

Closing

Ask students to walk in a circle and to stop when you say “Pause.”

Learning and practicing together helps us to flourish and to be our best selves! Being your best self means acting in ways that show care for yourself and others.

Show how you feel like you are growing today: like a tree in a forest or a flower in a garden.

As needed, remind students they do not have to make contact with their neighbors, and encourage students to communicate their preferences verbally or with a silent signal (such as placing their hands on their Anchors during the pose). While instructing, provide students options for participating with or without making contact with their neighbors.

Guide students to form two groups if there are students interested in each practice.

Assist students in building Forest and/or Group Flower.

Forest

Begin in Mountain, standing strong and tall.

Breathe out and find your balance in Tree, starting with your toes touching the floor.

Breathe in. Reach your arms upward in the shape of the letter "V," crossing wrists with your neighbors' arms to create branches, and spreading fingers out wide to create leaves. Choose either to keep space between your wrist and your neighbors' wrists, or bring wrists together so that you are connected to your neighbors.

Remember to lower your foot anytime you feel like you need to rebuild your Tree.

As we balance, notice if the support of your neighbor helps you stand strong. Can you use your arms to help keep your neighbors stable?

How does it feel to be part of a forest of trees standing tall together?

Group Flower [/Flower Garden]

Begin in Flower. Make sure you feel safe, stable, and balanced.

Breathe in and reach your hands outward toward each neighbor's hand.

Breathe out and try to touch fingertips or clasp hands or wrists with your neighbors so that the whole group of flowers is connected.

How can you support each other's balance? How does it feel to be part of one large flower garden rather than many separate flowers?

To students in Forest: *How does it feel to be part of a forest of trees standing tall together?*

To students in Group Flower: *How does it feel to be part of one large flower garden?*

Flourishing Student Certificate

Present each student with a Flourishing Student Certificate. As you present each certificate, offer the student words of recognition and compliments. [Note: Two versions available – with principal signature or group leader signature.]

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