

RESET, REFLECT, AND RECONNECT

A Guide to Mental Health in the Classroom

DMH-School Based Community Access Platform



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WELCOME

The LACDMH School Based Community Access Platform is excited that you have chosen to use this guide that promotes social-emotional discussions to further enhance the mental health and wellbeing of your students as they embark on the new school year!

We were all impacted by the global pandemic, in particular our students, as they were tasked with the challenge of having to quickly adapt to many changes in school, and in their community.

The goal of this guide is to provide teachers with several activities that equip students with coping mechanisms to support their resiliency.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is divided into three sections. Each section has several activities that can be completed together during a class session, or divided into a few class sessions. Each activity will take approximately 5-10 or 15-20 minutes.

- Reset: The purpose of this section is to start students off with a "fresh start" and encourage them to "reset" through identifying things that make them feel good and helping them feel supported.
- Reflect: The purpose of this section is to acknowledge the experience of the past year/year and a half, and to help students build resiliency by tapping into their strengths, and increasing their use of positive affirmations.
- Reconnect: The purpose of this section is to encourage students to connect with themselves and the world around them by utilizing mindfulness exercises and seeking additional support when needed.



RECOMMENDATIONS BEFORE STARTING



- Research shows the benefits of music therapy for various mental health conditions, including depression and trauma. Music can also be utilized as a regulating or calming agent for anxiety or for dysregulation. Consider playing calming music for your class during activities to help your students find balance and to self-regulate. Headspace offers various free music playlists on their [Youtube channel](#) that can be used.
- Each activity will include a slide that includes directions and suggestions with an accompanying slide to be shared with students. Please note, slides to be shared will contain a star in the top right hand corner of the slide. In addition, you will find these slides in the added PowerPoint.
- Some activities will include accompanying worksheets, it is recommended to download or print these worksheets prior to the activity to share with students.

RESET

Section I

RESET WITH MUSIC



DURATION: 5-10 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: WEEKLY

Activity: Introducing music as a coping skill and self-regulation tool. Choose a song to play during the beginning of class ([click here](#) for a Headspace compilation). As the teacher discusses this activity with the class, the teacher can create a running list of appropriate songs chosen by the class to play periodically.

Suggested Script: Music can be a great coping skill and a great way to help improve your mood. What song or songs do you like to listen to that help with your mood? Please take a few minutes to write a few songs down and I will collect your suggestions and try my best to play them here and there in class.



**WHAT SONG(S) DO
YOU LIKE LISTENING
TO THAT HELP(S)
YOUR MOOD?**

COPING SKILLS

Activity: Teach students about coping skills and their benefits. Please see supplemental worksheet to provide to students. The teacher is also encouraged to pick a coping skill of their choice (deep breathing, mindful coloring/drawing, journaling) to have students practice in the classroom during this activity.

Suggested Script: Today we are going to practice and talk about coping skills. Coping skills are ways that we deal with our different feelings and experiences. There are ways to cope that can be unhelpful but today we are going to focus on helpful coping skills. Helpful coping skills are things that we do that make us feel better and make choices that benefit our wellbeing. Some examples are: listening to music, practicing yoga, drawing or painting, meditation and breathing. They are things that we do to feel better. So lets take a few minutes to think about all of the different coping skills that you like to use in your daily life or that you'd like to try out. (Pause). The reason we are doing this is because there may come a time while we are here in school when we will need to tap into those coping skills. It may be easier for some than others, so let's see how we can create a supportive environment in the classroom.

DURATION: 5 - 10 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: WEEKLY





PLEASE THINK OF YOUR OWN COPING SKILLS THAT YOU CAN USE FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

Which ones can you use at school?

Which ones can you use at home?



RESET WORD

DURATION: 10-12 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: ONCE

Activity: Deciding on a "reset word" as a class to promote an open and safe environment for students. The teacher will engage students to mutually agree upon a "reset word" and establish parameters so students know when it is appropriate to use. This is an activity that can really yield engagement from the students.

Suggested Script: Today we are going to work as a class to come up with a "reset word." What is a "reset word?" A "reset word is a safe word that a person uses when they need time to check-out so that they can "reset." Sometimes we may need a moment to reset because we are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or just need a little bit of time to ourselves. Let's talk about a safe word that we can use as a class so that we are all on the same page.

Recommendations: Establish a time frame for how long a student gets to "reset," establish where student will reset (i.e. classroom or outside of class), discuss how students will communicate the reset word when needed, and lastly establish parameters for the amount of times the reset word can be used per day or class.

*just
breathe*



"RESET WORD"





**HOW DO WE WANT TO
USE THE "RESET WORD"
IN OUR CLASS?**



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REFLECT

Section II

MOOD CHECK-IN



*As this school year begins, it is important to recognize the impact of this past year. This can be a simple activity such as taking a "Temperature Check" or "Mood Check-in" at the start of the school-year and even the start of every week thereafter. *



DURATION: 5 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: WEEKLY

Activity: At the beginning of class have your students do a "mood check".

Suggested Script: Please check-in with yourself about how you are feeling right now. It is okay to have a lot of different feelings, and it is understandable if you are feeling nervous, excited, or overwhelmed. (Presenter can maybe share how they are feeling.)

Information to Share: When you are aware of how you are feeling, you can support yourself better throughout the day and be mindful of your emotions and what you may need.

**It is recommended that students only share their mood with the class on a voluntary basis.*



MOOD CHECK-IN

When I am aware of how I am feeling I can support myself better throughout the day and be mindful of my emotions and what I may need.



HOLDING ON & LETTING GO

*This activity is two parts and can also be completed as a journal entry.

Activity: First ask students to reflect on something positive that was learned over the past few months/summer. Next, students write down what comes up for them on a piece of paper or item of your choice. Students are then asked to keep what they wrote down in a safe place. Then, ask students to reflect on something during the summer/over the past few months that they would like to 'let go' of (i.e. stress, low self-esteem). Have a bag/basket or trash bag on hand to encourage students to 'let go' of their responses. Allow a few minutes at the beginning of the activity to just reflect on these questions before having students write out their responses.

Suggested Script: What is one thing that you learned during the summer, or over the past few months that you want to keep/hold on to? (Pause). I encourage you all to keep this piece of paper somewhere safe, and maybe in the future you can pull it out as a reminder of its importance.

What is one thing that came up for you over the past year that you want to let go of? I have a bag/box/basket and I would like you all to put your piece of paper in here. I will not read any of the pieces of paper, you don't need to include your name, just focus on letting go.

**DURATION: 10-12
MINUTES**

**FREQUENCY:
PERIODICALLY
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL
YEAR.**

REFLECTION

Please think quietly
to yourselves...



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What is one thing that you learned recently that you want to keep or hold on to?



What is one
thing that came
up for you that
you want to let
go of?



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DURATION: 15- 20 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: ONCE

IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS

Activity: Assisting students to identify their own strengths. Pass out sticky notes or a small piece of paper to each student. Ask students to reflect on and identify their individual strengths. Collect responses and display for students. Discuss some responses to elicit conversation. May want to display throughout the school year.



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IDENTIFYING YOUR STRENGTHS



Let your
light
shine

Motivated

Calm

Energetic

Team Player

Hopeful

Athletic



Considerate

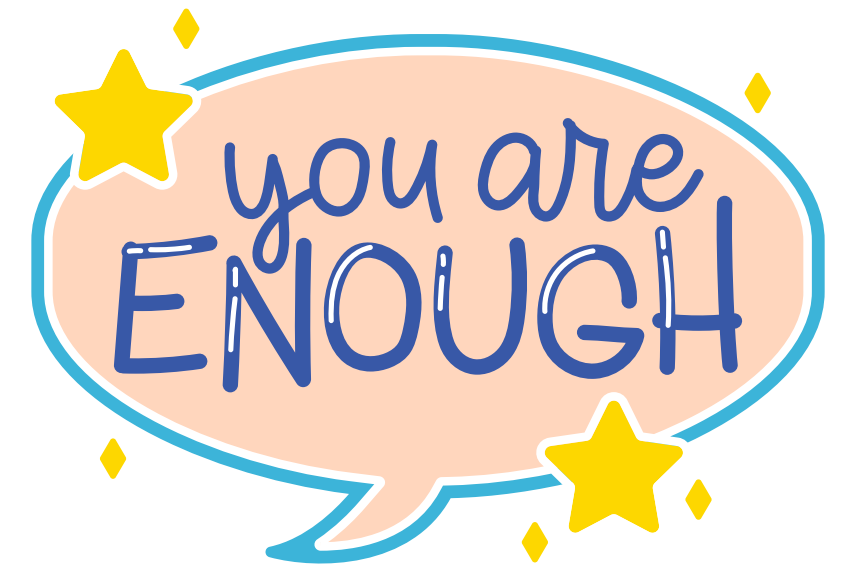
Good Listener

AFFIRMATIONS

Activity: To increase student's recognition and use of positive affirmations. Have students write down their own affirmations and allow those who are willing to share.

Suggested Script: Today we are going to be talking about affirmations. So what is an affirmation? An affirmation is a positive statement that can help motivate us, increase our self-esteem, and challenge unhelpful thoughts that we may have. Here are a few examples (show example slide). Now I'd like you all to write down your own affirmations. Keep these with you throughout the school year for times you may need a little more motivation, or challenge yourself to read, and repeat throughout the day, one affirmation per day.

Recommendation: It is recommended that students share their affirmations only if they feel comfortable. Be sure to explain to students at the beginning of the activity that they will not be expected to share their affirmations.



DURATION: 15- 20 MINUTES

FREQUENCY: ONCE

AFFIRMATIONS



I AM CAPABLE.

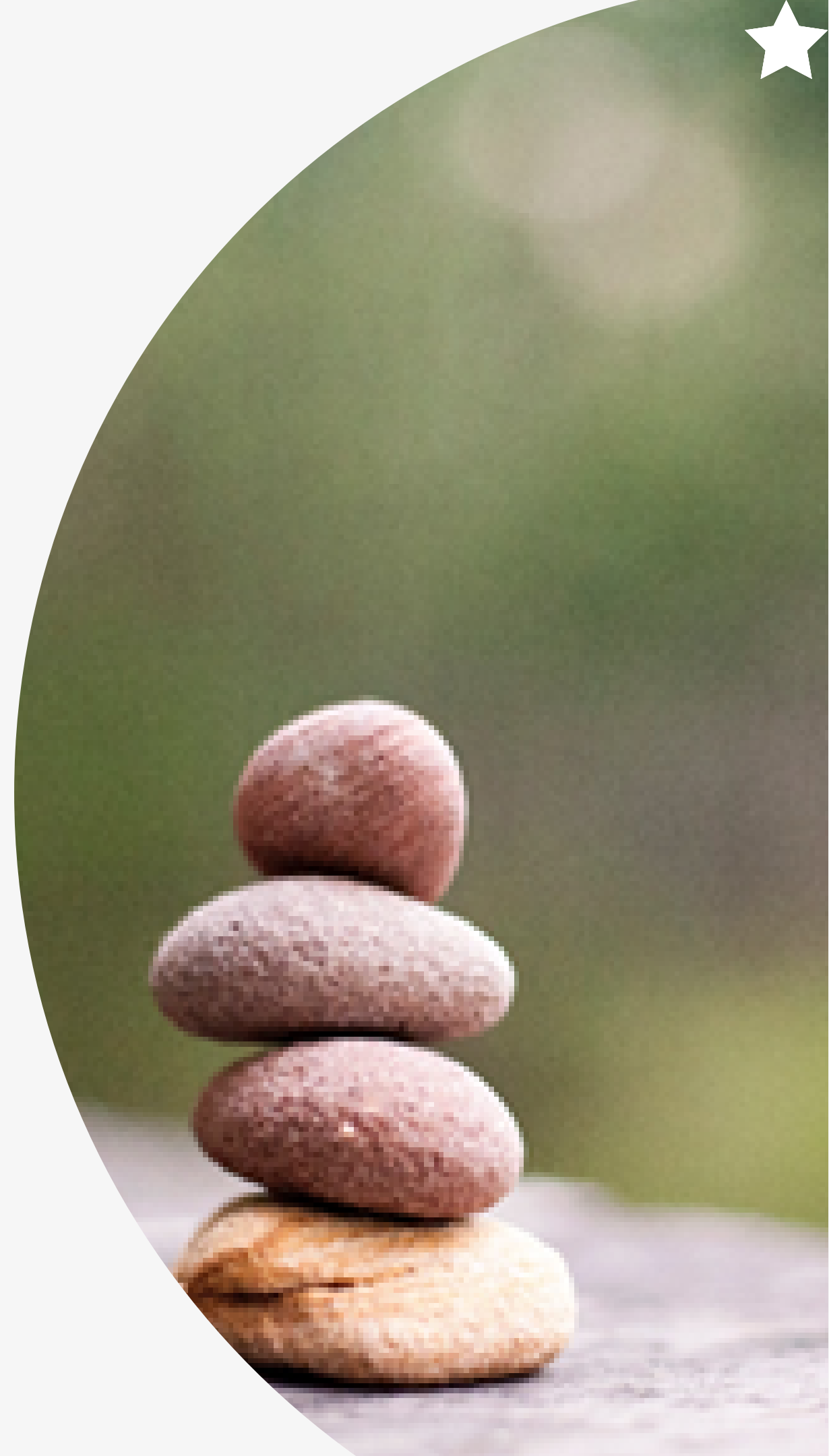
I AM ALWAYS GROWING.

I WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

I TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

I AM APPRECIATIVE OF THIS MOMENT.

I MAKE MISTAKES AND I LEARN FROM THEM.





Please write your own affirmations that you can use this school year.



I AM...



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RECONNECT

Section III



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NEXT →

MINDFULNESS

Activity: Introducing *mindfulness*. This activity can be completed at the beginning of every class to help students reconnect with the current moment and ready themselves for class. The meditation app Headspace is free for educators, and contains exercises specifically for students. Each exercise can be completed in as little as 3 minutes. To access please [click here](#).

Suggested Script: Over the course of the school year I would like to start introducing you all to mindfulness. Mindfulness asks for you to be fully present, to be aware of where you are and what you are doing and how your body and mind/thoughts are responding. By bringing awareness to what we are experiencing through our senses, thoughts and emotions, we can better address what we are feeling. There's a lot you may be dealing with right now, so it may be hard to stay present in the moment, but with practice it can get easier. We are going to be practicing these short exercises in class. They will only take a few minutes and you may feel like it is difficult at first to focus, but that's okay, you will see it will start to get easier the more we practice.





HEADSPACE

Please sit comfortably and close your eyes, if you feel comfortable doing so.



RECONNECT WITH SUPPORT

Activity: To remind students that there is support available when needed. The next slide provides local resources and supports for students, should they decide they would like mental health support. Teacher, you may also want to go through supports available in schools, i.e. counselors, school psychologists or school social workers.

Suggested Script: This last year has been a struggle for most of us. It is okay to not feel okay as we once again transition into a new normal. If you feel like you need more support than what these activities have given, please reach out to your counselor or stay a few minutes after class, so we can talk about the best way to get you some support. On this slide, there are two resources for you if you need them. One is the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, which can provide a list of local mental health agencies for you and your caregivers to contact. The second is the Teen Line. This is a free and confidential service available for you to call or text and speak to teenagers who are trained to help. If you feel you need the support, please reach out. There are a lot of resources out there to help.



**TO BE APPLIED DURING ALL
ACTIVITIES & EXAMS**



SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH**
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

24/7 LACDMH Help line

800.854.7771

dmh.lacounty.gov



310.855.HOPE (310.855.4673)

800.TLC.TEEN (800.852.8336)

Available 6-10 PM PST nightly

teenlineonline.org