

Activity One – Relationship Mapping

- Make a list of your current students.
- Place a yellow dot to the left of the name of any student with whom you have a positive, trusting relationship and whom you believe would come to you if they had a personal problem.
- Place a red dot to the right of the name of any student you believe may be at risk for academic, personal, or other reasons. It is okay to place both red and yellow dots next to the same student's name.
- Reflect on the following for each student.
 - What do you notice about this student? What do you wonder about this student? Identify a plan to address this wondering.
 - What possible factors contribute to some students having more yellow dots than others?
 - What kinds of changes can be made to increase the number of yellow dots for students?
 - What possible factors contribute to some students having more red dots than others?
 - What kinds of changes can be made to reduce the number of red dots for students?

Alternative: Use the E – M – R model (Establish, Maintain, Repair) by placing one of the indicators next to each student's name. Identify one action item for student relationships in need of establishment or repair.

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

Activity Two - Perspective Poem

Have student(s) write a poem, tell a story, or draw a comic from someone else's perspective. This could be done in a variety of ways:

- Pair yourself with a student (or pair students with each other), take three minutes to get to know each other, begin writing/drawing from one another's perspective, then share.
- Ask them to choose a Historical Figure or Book Character.
- After a challenging moment with someone, once calm, ask them to write/draw what happened from the other person's perspective.

Discussion Prompts: How did it feel to write/draw from someone else's perspective? What was challenging? What did you learn? Why is thinking about someone else's perspective important?

Activity Three – Daily Rituals

A simple greeting can result in a feeling of presence and belonging.

- Ask student(s) to greet you in ways that are silly or simple.
- While greeting, ask the student "How are you doing today on a scale of zero to ten? or What's your number?" (Zero being not well, 10 being very well). Students may choose whether or not to share why. Identifying a number can be a safe way to identify those "hard to explain" emotions, practice self-awareness and foster relationships. An alternative may include students using colors or emoji's to identify their feeling.

At the end of lesson, have the student do a short reflection based on one of the following prompts:

- What did you contribute to our time together today?
- What is something you feel more confident in now versus at the beginning of our time together today (skill or knowledge)?
- How are you feeling leaving this session today?
- How are you feeling about getting together again?
- If you had to sum up today in three words, what three words would you choose?
Have students share with the whole group in a circle, with a partner, in small groups or simply write down to share through chat or as an 'exit' ticket.



Activity Four – Nine Squares Art Project

Provide students with paper and art supplies needed for creation. Students will develop a visual, made of nine squares, that best represents them. Each square will contain a visual depiction of one thing that is important to them or their identity. After students create their own art piece, they will have an opportunity to share their nine squares (or the ones they feel comfortable sharing). Encourage students to explain their squares, ask questions and listen actively. Be sure to create your own nine square project and share with students.

Modification: You can display students' completed projects on a gallery wall (or virtual slideshow) to allow their peers to "guess" whom the project belongs to. (If you are going to display in some way, let students know this in advance)

Alternative:

- Scavenger hunt – Have students find items in their homes based on certain prompts that may or may not be linked to content. Example: Find something that makes you smile. OR Find something that reminds you of the character from our reading.

Activity Five – Top Ten & Educator Recipe

Have student(s) create a list of the top ten traits they hope their educator/mentor demonstrates (could be respect, patience, understanding, kindness, equity, etc). Offer them fun choices in how to create and present their lists:

- Similar to a late night show top ten list
- Create a visual with the traits clearly shown
- Work in pairs or small groups
- Student choice

Modification: Have students create a top ten list for student traits or content related topics

Alternative: Have students create a recipe for a great educator. (1 cup respect, 1 cup equity and anti-racism, 1 cup fun, ½ c humor, ½ c inspiration, etc). The amounts will help you know how important the different ingredients are to your students. Ask students for clarification for what it looks like, sounds like and feels like for an educator to demonstrate the different traits. Keep their lists/recipes to refer to throughout the year. This activity may be done quarterly as to encourage students to reflect and provide any additional or new traits they deem important.

Activity Six – What's Your Story

○ Prompt student(s) to write a story about their day, week, morning etc. using 3 words or Draw their story using 3 images. It is helpful for you to do the activity also, then share with one another.

Examples: Words: I am overwhelmed. I feel excited. Today is long.

Drawings: Smiley Face, Music Note, Video Game Controller or Book, Phone, Bed

Modification: This can be used as a daily reflection; students can do this independently. This allows students to practice self-awareness while also serving as a method for the educator to assess any needs.



Activity Seven – Chat Cafe

Meet with student(s) routinely to discuss various topics. Use tablecloths and other diner style décor. Print questions as a menu for students to look over and choose. Creating safe spaces through shared agreements and consistent culturally responsive lesson plans, is advised. Alternative: Put these questions in a jar to be pulled daily as a welcoming ritual, used during sessions with students or as journal prompts.

Possible Questions:

- Name a movie, book or song that describes how you felt yesterday.
- If you were a weather report, what would you be today?
- Finish the sentence: The best news I've had in the past week is...
- Finish the sentence: When I was little, I thought I wanted to be...
- Name one skill you have that others may not know about.
- If you could be any other age, what would it be?
- What is one thing that you would like to accomplish before your next birthday?
- If you could relive one event, what would it be?
- What are you likely to daydream about today?
- How would your next-door neighbor describe you in two words?
- If you were going on vacation today, where would you go and why?
- What are some traditions in your life? What was important to you as a child about this tradition? Do you keep up those traditions?
- What was a food served in your household growing up that you liked or really did not like?
- If you wanted to serve a visitor a meal that would help them to understand your cultural heritage, what meal would you serve?
- Include current events for students to reflect on. For example, what conversations were had in your household during the rise of the current Racial Justice movement?

Activity Eight – Identity Chart

Ask students to respond to the following two questions in a journal entry. They can list the first seven to ten ideas that come to mind for each question.

- Who am I? What words or phrases would you use to describe yourself?
- How might others (family, friends, educators, mentors, strangers) describe you?

Provide students with a starburst identity chart. Let students know that they might not use all of the arrows or they might need to add more to the starburst. Directions -Write your name in the circle. At the ends of the arrows pointing outward, write words or phrases that describe what you consider to be key aspects of your identity. At the ends of the arrows pointing inward, write labels others might use to describe you. Add more arrows as needed. Inform students that they will be able to keep their charts private, but they will be discussing aspects of their identities that they feel comfortable sharing with a you.

Debrief the activity using the Concentric Circles. Let students know that they will be choosing from questions about identity to discuss in each round. Pairs can answer the same or different questions, and students can choose which questions to answer in each round.

- What is the most important part of your identity? What is a story that explains its significance to you?
- What is one thing that you want other students in the class to know about your identity, and why?
- What is one way that how you think about yourself is different from how others might describe you?

<https://www.facinghistory.org/back-to-school/teaching-toolkit/exploring-individual-identity/>



Activity Nine – Time Together Contract

Facilitate a discussion based on the following questions. This can be done in silent reflection, pairs, or small groups, before discussing as a whole group. This can also be powerful for one-on-one situations.

- How do you want me to treat you?
- How do you want to treat one another?
- How do you think I want to be treated?
- How should we treat one another when there's a conflict?
- How can we create a space and inclusive space?

Responses are posted on a large sheet of chart paper. This can also be done virtually on a shared visible document. As an idea is repeated, a checkmark or star is placed beside it. With each suggestion, ask for clarification on what the suggestion 'looks like'. This activity may take place over several days. Each day the rules are refined. Students decide if there are items that need to be added, deleted, or combined. Students can also take home their lists, review them, and think about additional ways in which the rules might be fine-tuned. Once finished, each person signs the contract as a commitment to follow the contract while together. Display the contract in a visible location and refer to often. Revisit quarterly to make any necessary changes.

Activity Ten- Dialogue Journal

Before handing out journals, give students the following guidelines:

- Set a minimum length for letters. For example, a minimum of one to three paragraphs.
- Clarify that the content of the journal is private. Only you and the student can read the letters unless permission is given otherwise. (Explain what it means to be a mandated reporter and when you may need to share something)
- Give each student a journal and let them decorate the journal. [Online journals can feature images that students upload for the cover.]
- Set aside time for students to read your responses and write a reply.

Responding to students' letters:

- Respond to students once a week. Choose one pre-existing group or create a new one by drawing names from a hat. Work with that group for no less than three weeks. If you teach multiple classes, choose one class to write to at a time.

Suggestions for responding to content:

- Acknowledge students' topics and encourage them to elaborate on their interests.
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Avoid glib comments like "good idea" or "very interesting." This cuts off rather than promotes dialogue.

Responding to sensitive topics:

- Validating students' emotions and experiences will not only help students feel safer and a greater sense of belonging in school, but will also help them to develop their self-awareness and social awareness—both key SEL skills.
- Consult with the parent, school counselor or psychologist without sharing the actual journal entry or the student's name if an especially difficult situation arises. Identify and support the use of helpful people resources. "Would you like to talk to the school counselor about your concerns for your sister?"
- Help students identify their feelings by clarifying or by providing helpful terminology.
- Accept and validate students' feelings; be empathetic. "It must hurt you a lot to have to listen to them argue."
- Self-disclose when appropriate. "I used to have a best friend, too, and I remember how lonely I felt when she moved away."
- Encourage productive self-exploration.
- Encourage problem-solving.
- Use bibliotherapy or literature to help students identify with others who have similar connections.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Dialogue_Journals_for_High_School_.pdf



Questions to consider:

- How will my students receive this activity?
- How will this activity help build relationships?
- What is my comfort level with this activity?
- What are the benefits and risks of this activity?
- Is this activity culturally responsive and inclusive?
- What would this look like with my students? Are there any modifications?

