

UNIT 3: MANAGING OUR WELLBEING

GRADE LEVEL 9-12

Introduction

Themes & Ideas

Balance

Mental Wellness

What Students Will Uncover

This guide offers tips and techniques for supporting mental and physical wellbeing. Students will learn methods for protecting their mental health and will take steps to become self-advocates.

Lesson Overview

This guide offers students, educators and parents mental wellness resources. It works well for educators to run...

1. As a follow up to the Screening and Class Discussion Lesson Plan

OR

2. Independently, if you already know this is a subject you want to explore in particular.

We recommend that students watch the film prior to (or as part of) this lesson, but relevant clips are embedded throughout the guide if students do not have time to watch the whole film, or if they need a refresher on its content.

The lesson is organized around activities that can be completed during a class period. Educators are encouraged to review the lesson activities beforehand to assess suitability for class timing and teaching style. Educators can select and arrange the

activities in a way that suits them, which can include choosing to run activities over multiple periods or setting activities as homework assignments.

Lesson Objectives

- Consider how screens might be impacting their mental health
- Understand the differences between stress, anxiety and depression and know the warning signs
- Be able to support friends who are going through difficult times
- Learn strategies for protecting mental health

Vocabulary

Mindfulness — A state of being where one focuses on their bodily sensations and emotions in the moment without judgment and works to redirect their thoughts to the present.

Social emotional learning — Incorporates emotion regulation, responsible decision-making, empathy and other formative identity-building skills into education.

Stigma — A negative societal attitude that is often wrongly attributed to a subject or state of being.

Lesson

Lesson Introduction

Opening Discussion

- Ask students to recall the film they recently watched (*Screenagers Next Chapter*).
 - Prompt student recall by asking some general questions to ensure they remember.
- ⇒ Do you remember any of the coping strategies mentioned in *Screenagers Next Chapter*?
- ⇒ A handful of subjects share their mental health journeys in the film. Which ones stood out to you most?

- Explain in today's lesson, you will be taking a closer look at one of the main themes of the film: **mental wellness resources and coping methods** and completing a number of activities together.

Lesson Activities

ACTIVITY 1

How We Cope (30 mins)

Students work collaboratively.

1. Group class into two equal-sized groups.
2. Arrange them in two circles: one inner and one outer so that the students are facing each other one to one.
3. Ask your students to discuss the following discussion prompts with their partners. Allot a few minutes to each prompt and then have the outer circle move one position to the right for the next prompt.
 - ⇒ How do you take care of yourself when you're feeling overworked or sad?
 - ⇒ What have you noticed about how the people around you (ie: your parents, siblings, friends, etc.) take care of themselves when they're feeling down?
 - ⇒ Who, if anyone, taught you how to cope with mental health struggles?

Key Learning: Students engage in conversations with their peers who may have had different experiences from their own. They gain practice in expressing themselves emotionally.

More topics, discussion questions and movie clips relating to "How We Cope":

Student-led mental health efforts

Eunsoo is a teen featured in the film. She helps form a [mental health club](#) at her school to normalize conversations about mental health and to teach their peers and younger teens emotional intelligence vocabulary and skills.

Eunsoo emphasizes how important it is to be conscious of the language we use when talking to someone who has chosen to open up about their mental health struggles.

Mental health is a very sensitive topic and since it's so stigmatized, it can be very hard for people to come forward and seek help. Eunsoo's point about language is a crucial one. Oftentimes, intentional language can help create a safe space.

- ⇒ Does your school have any clubs like Eunsoo and Ella's?
- ⇒ When you're talking to friends in need of support, are you careful with the language you use like Eunsoo is? Or do you react based on instinct?

If establishing a similar club in your school is of interest, speak to your teacher or school counselor and advocate for ways to create this support network. [Bring Change to Mind](#) is a non-profit organization that offers tools and suggestions for building mental health clubs in schools.

[The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) offers programs, research and advocacy work to increase the frequency and effectiveness of suicide prevention programs in schools across the country.

ACTIVITY 2

What is SEL? (45 mins or homework assignment)

Students work collaboratively.

1. Split students into small groups and ask them to discuss "Social Emotional Learning (SEL)."
2. Ask them to recall what they learned about it from the film and to conduct further research if they'd like to.
3. Each group will come up with a definition of SEL and they will be responsible for developing a few exercises (1-3) they think fall into the realm of SEL.

Reflect: How did definitions vary throughout each group? What did the definitions have in common?

Key Learning: Students conduct research on a topic and develop exercises that reveal a deeper understanding of the topic.

More topics, discussion questions and movie clips relating to "What is SEL?":

SEL resources

The classroom is a critical place to learn and practice social and emotional skills that promote mental wellbeing.

⇒ Before watching the film, had you ever encountered the term "social emotional learning?" The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (www.casel.org) offers research, including SEL competencies and standards, professional development learning opportunities, classroom ideas and advocacy tools to promote SEL in schools and districts across the country.

The [Mood Meter](#) is part of Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's [RULER program](#) for integrating emotional intelligence across the school curriculum. RULER stands for recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions, and is designed to help educators and students name emotions, identify what triggers and changes them, and find healthy ways to cope with and regulate them. The program offers professional development, classroom ideas and family engagement materials.

Growth mindset

Establishing the vocabulary and strategies of a [growth mindset](#) can be an important value to incorporate within your school community. Originally brought forth by psychologist Carol Dweck at Stanford University, a mindset is defined in this instance as how students perceive their abilities to learn and, in turn, this perception plays a key role in their motivation and achievement. Specifically, students who believed their intelligence could be developed (a growth mindset) outperformed those who believed their intelligence was fixed (a fixed mindset). As we hear from students in the film, there are linkages between stress, anxiety, depression and academic achievement and exploring how to promote a growth mindset within classrooms offers another set of tools to consider.

⇒ Have you ever practiced growth mindset?

Communication is key

One boy in the film explains how important it is for him to talk about his emotions with someone else when he is feeling stressed. In the clip below you hear him explain how he's learned that holding his stress in is never helpful.

- ⇒ When you're struggling with difficult emotions, do you find yourself isolating or seeking communication with friends and family?
- ⇒ Does being on screens or being in-person with friends or family feel better to you? Why do you think this is?

Data shows that communicating with others in-person builds strong connections in the brain and leads to greater happiness.

Learning from friends and peers

Delaney talks with a middle schooler about a mentorship group she's in with high schoolers. The student explains why she prefers receiving advice from older girls rather than from adults.

Sometimes, learning from peers can be the most effective way to find strategies that work well for you.

ACTIVITY 3

Mindfulness Deep Dive (30 mins or homework assignment)

Students work collaboratively.

1. Students will split into groups to conduct some quick research on mindfulness, collecting data and research on the effects mindfulness has on people's brains.
2. Educator will ask students to share their findings and take notes at the board.

Key Learning: Students will develop a more comprehensive understanding on a topic based on their own and their classmates' findings.

More topics, discussion questions and movie clips relating to "Mindfulness Deep Dive":

Mindfulness is a set of skills and practices that can help young people cope with stress in the classroom and beyond. Mindfulness practices can include breathing exercises, meditation, guided visualization and relaxation techniques, and more. One of the biggest misconceptions about mindfulness is that it's about stopping thoughts completely, which is impossible. Instead, it's about becoming aware of our thought patterns and sitting with ourselves, noticing each sensation we experience.

In the film, you see how Delaney's son, Chase, uses a mindfulness app to help him with his chronic pain.

There are several mindfulness apps, like [Headspace](#) that students can use on their own. [MindfulSchools.org](#) offers resources, classroom ideas and audio files, and paid professional development training for a Mindful Teacher certification program.

⇒ Have you ever practiced mindfulness? If so, how did you feel about it?

ACTIVITY 4

Resilience Toolbox (30-45 mins)

Students work collaboratively.

To integrate learning from the film into the classroom on a yearlong basis, consider creating a classroom Resilience Toolbox. This can take the form of a physical resource, like a poster in the hallway, or it can take the form of a digital resource, like a social media account. Consider how which form you pick will impact how the information gets shared, viewed and perceived.

After watching the film, ask students to identify and write down the strategies they saw in the film that built resilience. Some of those may include:

- Mindfulness apps
- Distraction, laughter
- Finding groups of others with similar struggles to feel less alone
- Music, art, dance
- Seeking peer-to-peer advice
- Doing what you love

Ask students to write their own list of supports they rely on when they are in need of a mental wellness boost.

Students may share ideas with others in their schools or peer networks with a #ResilienceToolbox Campaign to build their own and their peers' vocabulary and skills around resilience and mental well-being.

Key Learning: Students create a resource with the intention of helping themselves and their peers. They figure out which format will be most effective in reaching and impacting an audience.

More topics, discussion questions and movie clips relating to "Resilience Toolbox":

Sleep is crucial

Delaney speaks to a girl whose bedtime phone rules have recently changed. The girl explains that before her mom had rules for her, she scrolled on social media for a long time before falling asleep. Now, with her mom's new rules, she's getting better sleep.

⇒ Does your family have rules about phones in the bedroom?

"The Three Ex's of Worry"

Delaney talks to author and psychologist Lynn Lyons, LICSW, about her The Three Ex's of Worry framework in the film.

⇒ Did hearing about Lynn Lyons' "Three Ex's of Worry" impact you in any way? Why or why not?

⇒ How do you currently cope with your worries?

Getting help

Talking with friends and using coping skills we've learned is always a great idea, but sometimes, we need to seek professional help too. Clinical anxiety and depression often call for professional treatment of some kind, whether it be therapy or medication.

In the film, Delaney interviews a student who has started taking medication for her mental health. She explains that while medication can be helpful, it usually needs to be taken in conjunction with therapy or other coping exercises.

Without medication, therapy still has the potential to work great for people. Talking to a professional who has distance from the people and issues in someone's life can allow them to open up, be vulnerable and seek new methods of self-care.

It can be scary seeking professional help, though. Eunsoo, one of the girls who founded the mental health club at her school, explains her own journey with mental health and how she felt a lot of shame when she first started going to the school counselor.

Delaney talks to another student who used to share similar fears to Eunsoo related to going to therapy. He explains he feels there is stigma around seeking mental health treatment for everyone, but especially for boys and men.

⇒ Do you ever hear peers talking about seeking mental health treatment? Do you notice any stigma at school surrounding this topic?

Lesson Conclusion

Ask students how they plan to watch out for and support their friends and peers going forward. Compile some notes on the board.

Frameworks

CASEL® SEL Competencies

Our Curriculum & Lesson Plans are independently aligned by the Screenagers Team to the [CASEL® SEL Competencies Framework](#).

- **Relationship Skills:** Showing leadership in groups.
Standing up for the right of others.
Seeking or offering support and help when needed.
- **Responsible Decision-making:** Demonstrating open-mindedness and curiosity.
- **Self-awareness:** Identifying one's emotions.
- **Self-management:** Identifying and using stress management strategies.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners

Our Curriculum & Lesson Plans are also informed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) *Standards Framework for Learners*. For additional information and resources, including a downloadable format for the *Learners Standards Framework*, for AASL's National Standards visit standards.aasl.org.

Curate:

- **A. THINK** — Identifying possible sources of information.
Making critical choices about information sources to use.
- **B. CREATE** — Seeking a variety of sources.
- **C. SHARE** — Contributing to collaboratively constructed information sites by ethically using and reproducing others' work.
Joining with others to compare and contrast information derived from collaboratively constructed information sites.

Explore:

- **A. THINK** — Reflecting and questioning assumptions and possible misconceptions.

Engage:

- **A. *THINK*** — Evaluating information for accuracy, validity, social and cultural context, and appropriateness for need.
- **B. *CREATE*** — Ethically using and reproducing others' work.
- **C. *SHARE*** — Sharing information resources in accordance with modification, reuse, and remix policies.