Kindness is Contagious Social-Emotional Learning Program

Guide for Caring Adults

Thank you for taking the time to watch the Kindness is Contagious YouTube Kids video playlist. As parents and caring adults, you can help the children in your lives develop the tools to cultivate kindness and joy. Scientific research shows that there is a correlation between the two, what researchers call a “positive feedback loop” (Aknin, 2012). Cultivating joy within promotes kindness, and, in turn, kind behaviors foster joy.

Below are some activities you can do with your child to keep your child engaged in learning about kindness. These activities will help your child practice cultivating kindness and joy while thinking of positive actions they can take to promote kindness among others.

Drs. Stacey Freeman and Daniel Fessler from the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute and Yadira Veres from the GirlKind Project® adapted the guide below from the original GirlKind Project® parent’s manual.

Program Goals

Through the GirlKind Project® program, participants attain life-changing skills that contribute to their social-emotional development for success in school and in life. Equipped with a greater sense of wellbeing, increased self-awareness and social awareness, tools for self-management and responsible decision making, as well as healthy relationship skills and much more, participants will be able to tackle situations and peer interactions in a positive and constructive way. They will feel empowered to cultivate their own happiness, while supporting each other and creating a more compassionate world. This special-edition caring adult manual is based on the GirlKind Project® original curriculum. It has been designed to stand alone and is intended to be used by caring adults with the children with whom they interact. GirlKind Project® offers its original curriculum, for licensing, to be used by caring professionals, in schools and other educational settings.

Caring Adult Kindnections

Caring adults can be powerful and influential role models for children. Learning the skills presented in this manual, and modeling behaviors that are congruent with them, will allow your child to benefit the most from the program.

Please use this manual to guide your child towards cultivating happiness and fostering kindness, while developing social-emotional skills. The activities suggested here are a fun way to practice the skills learned, and a meaningful way of spending time with your child.
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Part I: Find Our JOY!

Topic 1: Planet Kind

Session 1: My Best Self

Session Summary

You will discuss “Best self” traits and behaviors, and the feelings associated with them, with your child. You will guide them in making a garland with the traits and behaviors that they feel show their best selves. This garland will serve as a reflection exercise, and as a visual reminder of high self-standards and goals.

ACTIVITY: My Best Self Kindness Garland

WHY: This activity will help your child to think about kindness and how they can contribute to a kinder world. Your child will create a garland with responses to their reflections about themselves.

MATERIALS: Colored pencils/crayons/markers, index cards, single hole punch, about 60" of yarn or ribbon.

HOW: Ask your child to reflect on the following: What are my best qualities? What qualities can I cultivate to be kinder? How can I contribute to a kinder world? Then ask them to write one quality per card and decorate each card. When they finish, punch a hole in the ends of each card and help them thread them together to make a garland. Help your child hang their garland in their room or any visible part of their home. It will serve as a visual reminder of their thoughts about kindness and their commitment to work on developing their best self. Ask your child to notice how they feel and how others respond to them when they carry themselves in their best-possible-self manner. Ask them to report their observations later that day.

Caring Adult Kindnections Tip

Let your child catch you exhibiting your “best self” traits!

RESEARCH

Scientific research has shown that practicing kindness not only benefits others but also has a great positive impact on how we feel. Performing acts of kindness makes us happy and strengthens relationship satisfaction. This statement has been supported by several studies in the fields of social and positive psychology, as well as neuroscience. A study done by Brenda H. O’Connell et al. showed that practicing kindness and
gratitude resulted in greater increase in relationship satisfaction and improvement in existing friendships. A study done by British researchers Kathryn E. Buchanan and Anat Bardi\textsuperscript{11} asked participants to perform a daily kind act for 10 days, resulting in an increase in life satisfaction. Another study conducted by Lara B. Aknin et al.\textsuperscript{12}, suggests a “positive loop” between kindness and happiness. Dr. Aknin explains that “engaging in one kind deed would make you happier, and the happier you feel, the more likely you are to do another kind act”. A neuroscience study conducted by Jorge Moll et al.\textsuperscript{13} using brain imaging, showed that the “pleasure centers” in the brain are activated when we give to others, as well as when we receive. As we uplift others, we are also benefiting ourselves. The happier people are around us, the happier we are, and vice versa.
Part I: Find Our JOY!

Topic 2: Focus on the Good

Session 2: Cultivating Gratitude

Session Summary

This session will focus on inspiring the cultivation of gratitude. Using the information below, and your own knowledge and beliefs, you will discuss with your child the meaning of gratitude, and the benefits of cultivating it. Some information in this session has been adapted from research conducted by gratitude expert Dr. Robert Emmons. The section on “ways to cultivate gratitude” will provide ideas for activities to cultivate this skill. You will also find a suggested activity at the end of the session.

- Being thankful
- Showing appreciation
- Returning kindness
- Affirmation of goodness in our lives
- Recognition that the source of goodness is outside of ourselves

Benefits of Gratitude

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is good for our bodies: People who practice gratitude have stronger immune systems, exercise more, and take better care of their health.

Gratitude brings us joy: People who practice gratitude have more feelings of self-worth and self-confidence, have more optimism and happiness, a greater sense of purpose, and report greater life satisfaction and more positive emotions.

Gratitude strengthens relationships. People who practice gratitude are more helpful, generous, and compassionate, more forgiving, more outgoing, feel less lonely and isolated, and are more connected to their community.

Ways to Cultivate Gratitude

1. Journaling three to five things which you are grateful for, twice a week.
2. Dwell on the good in your life. Don’t just gloss over the good things that happen to you or the good things that you have. Think about them and hold on to that good feeling for as long as you can. Feel grateful and write it down.
3. Focus on intentions. When you receive a gift, or when something good happens to you in general, consider how someone tried, on purpose, to bring that goodness into your life, even at a cost to themselves.

4. Recognize the positive. Ask yourself every day, “What three good things happened to me today?” This will help us appreciate the gifts big and small that come our way.

5. Use visual reminders, make posters, post it notes, etc. for your room, locker, notebook, or wherever you will see them to remind you to feel grateful.

6. Say “thank you for...” often. Be on the lookout for every opportunity to let people know that you truly appreciate the things they do for you, even if it is small.

7. Gratitude letter. Write a letter to an important person in your life whom you’ve never properly thanked.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Focus on The Good Through Gratitude

WHY: In this activity, your child will think about things in their lives they are grateful for, and will reflect on why they are grateful. Practicing gratitude makes us happier. By focusing on the positive things in our lives, we are more likely to have a positive mindset.

MATERIALS: Paper and pencil

HOW: Ask your child to name three things (1 person, 1 activity, and 1 place or thing) that they love or enjoy, that gives them joy or purpose, or makes them proud. Then, ask them to elaborate on why they chose each one and how each one makes them feel. Ask them to write a gratitude note to the person they named, giving thanks for something specific they did and/or qualities they possess.

Caring Adult Kindnections Tip

Let your child catch you expressing gratitude!

RESEARCH

Dr. Robert A. Emmons, one of the world’s leading scientific experts on gratitude, and his team have studied more than one thousand people ages 8 to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits:

Physical: Gratitude is good for our bodies. People who practice gratitude:

- Have stronger immune systems
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking
Psychological: Gratitude brings us joy. People who practice gratitude:

- Have higher levels of positive emotions and less anxiety
- Are more alert, alive, and awake
- Have more joy and feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
- Have more optimism and happiness
- Have more success in achieving personal goals
- Have greater sense of purpose

Social: Gratitude strengthens relationships. People who practice gratitude:

- Are more helpful, generous, and compassionate
- Are more forgiving
- Are more outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated

Kids who practice gratitude report greater life satisfaction and more positive emotions. They also feel more connected to their community. “When we feel grateful, we are moved to share the goodness we have received with others.” 23
Part I: Find Our JOY!

Topic 3: Self-Affirmation

Session 3: Core Values

Session Summary

During this session you will talk about core values with your child using the information below and your own knowledge and beliefs. A self-affirmation exercise ("All About Me" letter) will be part of a time-capsule activity in this session. Self-affirmation exercises have been scientifically proven to have positive lasting effects by grounding the person who takes them and by giving them a clearer sense of purpose and identity.

What are Core Values?

• Things, people, or activities that are important to us that:
  o give us joy
  o make us proud
  o give us a sense of who we are
  o give meaning to our lives

Examples of Core Values

• Relationships with family/friends
• Learning
• Honesty
• Helping others/helping the community
• Being creative
• Achievement in school, sports, etc.
• Athleticism/fitness
• Adventure/courage
• Love
• Music/art
• Animals/pets
• Nature/the environment
• Kindness/treating others with respect
• Sense of humor/having fun
• Spirituality/religion
• Cooking/baking
• Other
All About Me

My name is: 
I am ___ years old. 
My favorite color is: 
My favorite food is: 
My favorite holiday is: 
I love this holiday because: 
Three things that give my life joy, purpose, and strength are:

ACTIVITY: “All About Me” Time Capsule

WHY: Being aware of what our core values are makes us more resilient. When we are faced with a problem or difficult situation, we are not as affected by it and we can bounce back quicker if we have a clear sense of who we are, what we stand for, and what gives us strength and purpose (Sherman, 2006).

MATERIALS: “All About Me” letter, pencil, shoe box, current picture of your child, small items that belong to your child, fun pattern duct tape, stickers, markers, or anything else that can be used to decorate the time capsule (shoe box).

HOW: Have a conversation with your child about core values, using the information given here and your own knowledge and understanding. Let your child know that today you are going to make a time capsule together. Ask them to find small items that will remind them of their life now, if they were to see them in the future. These should be items they won’t need for a year, small enough to fit in the shoe box, and nonperishable. Have them fill out the “All About Me” letter, fold it, and put it inside the box together with the items they chose and their picture. Then, help them seal the box with the duct tape and have them decorate it. Finish by writing on the box: Your child’s name, “Time Capsule”, and “Do not open until (a year from today’s date)”. Help your child find a safe place in the house where the box can be stored for a year. Your child will open the box on the date indicated on the box and reminisce with you about their core values then and how they might have stayed the same or evolved.

Tip: Give yourself the opportunity to reflect on the things and people in your life that give you joy, strength, and purpose.

RESEARCH

According to Geoffrey L. Cohen from Stanford University and David K. Sherman from University of California Santa Barbara, in their study The Psychology of Change: Self-Affirmation and Social Psychological Intervention: “People have a basic need to maintain the integrity of the self, a global sense of personal adequacy. Events that threaten self-integrity arouse stress and self-protective defenses than can hamper
performance and growth. However, an intervention known as self-affirmation can curb these negative outcomes. Self-affirmation interventions typically have people write about core personal values. The interventions bring about a more expansive view of the self and its resources, weakening the implications of a threat for personal integrity. Timely affirmations have been shown to improve education, health, and relationship outcomes, with benefits that sometimes persist for months and years.” 29
Part I: Find Our JOY!

Topic 4: Calming Our Minds

Session 4: Happy Meditation

Session Summary

You will introduce your child to the practice and benefits of meditation. You will use the information given here as well as your own knowledge and beliefs to have a conversation about meditation and to start a meditation practice with your child.

What is Meditation?

- The practice of paying attention and being in the present moment.
- Some components of meditation are: quieting your mind and paying attention to your breathing.

Benefits of Meditation

- Meditation focuses and quiets our minds.
- It brings about positive changes, both physically and mentally.
- People who practice meditation report being calmer and more compassionate.
- People who practice meditation feel happier and are able to control their emotions better.
- A daily meditation practice can also help students do better in school.

ACTIVITY: Calming Our Minds with Happy Meditation

WHY: Mindfulness and meditation are useful skills to help us cope with our emotions and to learn to be in the present moment. Mindful people tend to have less anxiety and are generally happier people.

MATERIALS: Plastic water bottle filled with water (label removed) and about .35 oz of chunky/flakes glitter, closed tightly.

HOW: Ask your child to sit with you on the floor cross-legged. Explain that the water in the bottle symbolizes our mind, and the glitter symbolizes our thoughts. Ask them to think of a word that makes them feel happy. Shake the bottle and place it upright on the floor in front of your child. Then, ask them to breathe in deeply filling up their tummies like a balloon, smile as they exhale, and say their happy word calmly (in their head or out loud). Repeat until all the glitter settles down to the bottom, smile, and give each other a hug before getting up.
**Tip:** Support your child by making sure that family members give them space and privacy for their new meditation practice.

**RESEARCH**

Research has shown that meditation can focus and quiet our mind and bring about positive changes both physically and mentally. Extensive research has shown that practicing meditation is associated with greater regulation of emotions and calmness, higher levels of compassion, and increased psychological wellbeing. According to J.E. Maloney et al. “Because mindfulness practices are theorized to enhance one’s ability to observe external factors and internal reactions and foster the self-control to be able to pause and reflect before taking conscious action...they may potentially enhance school-based social-emotional learning programs by offering a practical way to cultivate social-emotional skills rather than simply learn about them conceptually or through talk.”

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Part II: We Are in This Together!

Topic 5: Kindness

Session 5: Kindness Rocks!

Session Summary

During this session, you will discuss the meaning of kindness and the benefits of cultivating it, using the information below and your own knowledge and understanding. You will encourage your child to start practicing acts of kindness by planning, on their Kindness Calendars, the acts of kindness that they would like to perform during the week.

What is Kindness?

- Being friendly
- Being considerate
- Including others
- Lifting others up
- Treating others with respect
- Being generous
- Supporting and encouraging others
- Being helpful
- Acknowledging others
- Being polite

Benefits of Practicing Kindness

- Being kind makes us happy.
- Being kind makes our relationships with others better.
- Being kind improves our friendships.
- Being kind makes our interactions with others more enjoyable.
- Being kind increases life satisfaction—we become happier with life.
- Positive loop: the kinder we are, the happier we feel; the happier we feel, the kinder we are.

Some Ideas to Practice Kindness

1. Asking to sit next to a peer who is alone at lunch.
2. Offering your help
3. Noticing who is alone at recess and playing with them.
4. When making teams, picking first the person who usually gets picked last.
5. Uplift someone by giving them a compliment.
6. Being patient and understanding when working or dealing with someone who is slower than you, whether physically or mentally.
7. Holding the door for someone.
8. Letting someone go in front of you in line.
9. Smiling at someone whom you notice might be having a rough day

My Kindness Calendar

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ACTIVITY: My Kindness Plan

WHY: Practicing kindness should be a daily conscious effort. Choosing kindness as a way of life will create a positive loop of happiness and kindness for the person being kind and for the people on the receiving end. Your child will also serve as a positive source of inspiration for those around them. This activity will help your child plan a week of kind acts and become mindful of the feelings associated with being kind. Helping your child think of ways of being kind, and noticing how they feel when they act in a kind way, promotes kindness awareness.

MATERIALS: My Kindness Calendar and pencil

HOW: Talk with your child about kindness using the information given in this session and your own knowledge and beliefs. Ask your child to reflect on the ways they have
been kind in the past, and how others have been kind to them. Ask them to also recall how they felt after each situation. Talk about your own experiences with kindness as well. Then, help them plan how they can show kindness to others, especially to those that might seem to need it the most. First, in the “Kind Act” column they will write down the kind acts they plan to perform. Once they have performed the kind act they can fill in the date they performed that specific act and how they felt.

Tip

Support your child on their mission of being kind and inspiring kindness. Let them catch you being kind to yourself and others.

RESEARCH

GirlKind Project® is based on scientific research that demonstrates that positive feelings reward and promote prosocial behavior and vice-versa. Furthermore, studies have found that compassion may boost our well-being by broadening our perspective beyond ourselves. Research shows that depression and anxiety are linked to a state of self-focus, a preoccupation with “me, myself, and I.” When you do something for someone else, the state of self-focus shifts to a state of other-focus. Another way in which compassion may boost our well-being is by increasing our sense of connection to others. People who feel more connected to others have lower rates of anxiety and depression; studies show that they also have higher self-esteem, are more empathic to others, are more trusting and cooperative, and, consequently, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them.
Part II: We Are in This Together!

Topic 6: Inclusion

Session 6: I Include

Session Summary

During this session, you will talk with your child about the meaning of inclusion, inclusive behaviors, and possible ways to include others. You will use the information below and your own knowledge and beliefs to facilitate the discussion. You will also guide your child to explore the feelings associated with being inclusive.

What is Inclusion?

- Allowing someone* to be part of a group
- Approaching someone* who seems lonely, and keeping them company
- Including others
- Helping someone* feel like they belong
- Helping someone* feel welcome
- Acknowledging and honoring someone’s* existence

*Emphasis is on familiar peers; for safety reasons, this does not apply to strangers.

Benefits of Practicing Inclusion

- We feel joy, harmony, and a sense of wellbeing
- We make new friends
- We are conducting ourselves as leaders
- We gain the respect of others
- We feel powerful in a very positive way

How do we impact the life of the person we choose to include?

- We impact the life of the person we choose to include in a powerful and positive way.
- When someone feels like they belong, they become healthier physically and mentally.
- People who feel included feel calmer, more focused, happier, and with a greater sense of wellbeing.
- Students who feel like they belong perform better in school.
- People who feel like they belong feel happier, and, in turn, are kinder to others.
ACTIVITY: Leaders Help Others Feel Included

WHY: This activity will help your child think about what being a good leader looks like. You will explore how they can be leaders by being kind and proactive about including those who might feel left out. Helping your child reflect on the leadership skills they possess, and those they can cultivate, can empower them to be leaders who are kind and inclusive.

MATERIALS: None

HOW: Talk with your child about leadership qualities and help them reflect on those they possess. Ask: What qualities does a good leader have? What leadership qualities do you have? Which ones can you cultivate? How do you feel when you behave like a leader? Then, ask them to name someone in school who seems lonely or who does not seem to have friends. Ask them to think of ways, or actions they can take, to help that person feel included. Together, make an execution plan. Follow up with your child on how the plan went.

Tip

Think of ways of including others, and let your child see the unique ways you choose to include.

RESEARCH

“Studies indicate the negative impacts of social isolation include increased rates of academic failure and truancy, and increased risk of adverse medical outcomes, including poor cardiovascular health, obesity, and substance abuse. [...] social isolation is oftentimes the precursor to bullying; school communities with a culture of inclusion will have far less instances of bullying, self-harm, and community violence.”16 Inclusion leads to harmony, joy, and a sense of wellbeing, new friends, and even a sense of leadership. Including someone might make a world of difference for them; it can even save their lives. When someone feels like they belong, they become healthier physically and mentally. They feel calmer, more focused, and happier, with a greater sense of wellbeing; consequently, they perform better in school.
Part II: We Are in This Together!

Topic 7: Respect

Session 7: Respect & Assertiveness

Session Summary

This session will focus on discussing the terms respect, self-respect, and assertiveness. You will discuss with your child behaviors that show self-respect, assertiveness, and respect for others. You will encourage them to describe traits and behaviors that bring respect to oneself, and that communicate assertiveness. Establish the correlation between self-respect and assertiveness. Use the information given below, as well as your own knowledge and beliefs.

What is Respect?

• Showing that we are aware of someone’s rights and wishes by the way we act and speak

What is Self-Respect?

• Having pride and confidence in oneself
• Behaving with honor and dignity

Why is Respect Important?

• Respect is important in order to have good, healthy, and lasting relationships.
• Respecting ourselves and others causes others to respect us.
• Respect brings harmony, peace, and happiness between people.
• Respect makes interactions with others more positive.
• Showing respect has the power to brighten someone’s day.

Behaviors that Show Self-Respect, Respect for Others, & Attract Respect *

• Being honest with yourself and with others; show that you can be trusted.
• Trying your best at everything you do; believe that you can be amazing!
• Practicing good nutrition and exercise; in order to be your best, you must feel your best.
• Practicing good grooming habits; practicing good hygiene and maintaining a neat appearance shows that you care for yourself.

*Adapted from goodchoicesgoodlife.org
• Having good manners and proper conduct (greet others, speak calmly, wait for
your turn, be on time, be polite). Knowing and exercising good manners and
proper conduct will make you feel good about yourself, and, in return, others will
respect you for it.
• Being mindful of how your actions and words might affect the feelings of others.
Focus on the positives.
• Show appreciation or gratitude for the things people do for you.
• Listen to, acknowledge, and comment on what other people have to say in a
respectful manner (do not interrupt).
• Accepting personal responsibility for your own behavior. Admit when you are
wrong and/or when you have done something that was not right and apologize
for it. Do not blame others.
• Keeping your word; this shows that your word has value
• Identifying which friends are good influences. Strive to be around people who
bring out the best in you.
• Having goals and plans to reach them. Each time that you set a goal for yourself
and attain it, you will gain strength to challenge yourself a little more; the more
goals you attain, the more your self-respect will grow.
• Being assertive while being positive: get your point across while respecting the
rights of others.

What is Assertiveness?

• Being self-assured and confident without being aggressive.

What Behaviors Show Assertiveness?

1. Standing up straight, with shoulders back and head up.
2. Remaining calm in challenging situations.
3. Speaking with a strong firm and clear voice.
4. Looking people in the eye when speaking.
5. Having your opinion heard while also respecting the opinions of others.
6. Standing up for your rights without violating the rights of others.
7. Showing respect by listening, acknowledging, and commenting on what other
people have to say in a respectful manner (do not interrupt).
8. Respectfully disagreeing, if you have to, by saying something like “I see your
point and respect it, but I disagree” or “I see your point, but I respectfully
disagree”
9. Use “I” statements when communicating your perceptions and feelings about
disagreements with others, without attacking, blaming or hurting the other
person.*
10. Be firm and kind.
11. Treating others, the way you would like to be treated.
* Adapted from crnhg.org

ACTIVITY: I Am Kind, I Am Assertive

WHY: This activity will help your child practice assertiveness skills while reflecting on how they can be kind and show self-respect and respect for others. Helping your child develop assertiveness skills while being respectful can facilitate kindness.

MATERIALS: None

HOW: Talk with your child about respect and assertiveness as vehicles to facilitate kindness, using the information given here and your own knowledge and ideas. Describe a hypothetical scenario where there has been a disagreement between your child and one of their peers. Role-play the situation with your child and ask them to use the skills, and show the behaviors, that you talked about in this session to communicate with their friend (you) about the disagreement.

Tip
You are your child's most influential role model, so model assertiveness and respect while interacting with others.

NOTE

Respect has been called “the single most powerful ingredient in nourishing relationships and creating a just society”. In order to have good, healthy, and lasting relationships, we first must respect ourselves and the people around us. Respecting others also brings respect to oneself. It brings harmony, peace, and happiness because respect makes it easier to interact with others, and that interaction becomes a much more positive one. Showing respect has the power to brighten someone’s day and their life. We are letting that person know that we acknowledge their existence as a fellow human being, worthy of the same respect we want for ourselves.
Part II: We Are in This Together!

Topic 8: Living in Harmony with Others

Session 8: Effective and Positive Communication Skills

Session Summary

This session will focus on learning how to formulate “I” statements as a tool for effective and positive communication to resolve conflict. You will use the information below, together with your own knowledge and beliefs, to teach your child this skill. Then, you will role-play to give your child the opportunity to practice it.

Effective & Positive Communication Steps

1. Identify the problem: What happened? What is the situation? What is the conflict?
2. Own a “Let’s All Win!” attitude: Keep in mind that the goal of efforts to communicate is to cooperate in order to find a solution and live in harmony with each other.
3. Visualize the positive outcome that you want: See it in your mind, with all the details; see both of you happy with the outcome.
4. When it is your turn to speak: Communicate clearly and cleanly your perception of and feelings about the problem, with assertiveness and respect, using the “I” Statement formula. Example: “When I see you whispering in Mary’s ear and looking at me, I feel betrayed, and what I’d like is for you to talk to me directly if something about me is bothering you.”

Clear: really stating what is the matter.

Clean: no direct or implied blame. “I” statements follow this formula: When I... I feel (like)...And what I’d like is that I...

5. When it is the other person’s turn to speak, be an active listener. To be an active listener, I must:

- Look at the person when they are talking.
- Really listen and pay attention.
- Ask questions.
- Summarize what was said without giving an opinion or defending your side.
- Label emotions as they are being perceived. Make sure they are aware that you hear how angry or upset they are. Show them that you understand the specific feeling that they are trying to communicate to you.
• Acknowledge the other person’s side. This does not mean you agree with them, only that you are registering their viewpoint. For example: “I can see, if you think that was my attitude, why you are so angry,” “I can see why the problem makes you so upset”.

6. Talk it out to come up with solutions and possibilities by:

• Setting a goal: what is the outcome that we both want?
• Brainstorming: design a solution together.
• Ask yourselves: does the solution meet the needs of both parties?
• Keep in mind that you want to resolve the issue and maintain the relationship.
• Focus on being partners.
• Listen with respect and consider your partner’s point of view: put yourself in their shoes.
• Admit if you were wrong and apologize if necessary.
• Make a plan to avoid similar conflicts in the future.

ACTIVITY: “I” Statements Exercise

WHY: This activity will help your child practice positive communication skills through planning, visualizing, and formulating “I” statements to resolve conflict.

MATERIALS: None

HOW: Talk with your child about positive communication skills using the information given in this session and your own knowledge and ideas. Give your child the opportunity to practice these skills through role-play with you. Describe a hypothetical scenario where there has been a conflict between your child and one of their peers. Help your child follow the steps listed above to plan, visualize, and formulate “I’ statements. Role-play the situation with your child.

NOTE

Knowing what to say and how to say it, depending on the situation, will give us the opportunity to cultivate better relationships and live in harmony with others. Practicing effective communication skills while keeping a positive and growth mindset to resolve conflict gives us the opportunity to communicate our feelings and wants while respecting the rights of others. When we approach conflict in this way we view each other as partners, working together for a common goal (getting along), and both parties benefit. This practice helps us set the stage for solutions; it nourishes one’s self-respect and attracts respect from others.

The process of creative visualization uses imagination to create in our minds situations that are beneficial to us. Studies show that visualizing a positive event or outcome can
generate good feelings that can be beneficial to the person, physically, psychologically, and socially. Visualizing outcomes that are beneficial to us gives us optimism and helps us to tackle situations with a positive attitude. These science-based exercises are used to cultivate happiness.⁶
Part II: We Are in This Together!

Topic 8: Living in Harmony with Others

Session 9: Compliments

Session Summary

During this session the reciprocal benefits of compliments will be discussed using the information below, as well as your own knowledge and beliefs. You will guide your child to formulate meaningful and powerful compliments for each member of their household.

Why Are Compliments Important?

When we receive them:

- We're lifted up and our day is brightened
- We're encouraged to stay on the path of our goals and dreams
- Our positivity is amplified
- The best in us is brought out
- We're encouraged to continue to be our best possible amazing selves
- The flow of conversation is improved
- Communication becomes easier because we're more receptive

When we give them:

- We're inspired to develop those qualities and model similar behaviors
- The best in us is brought out
- We ease the atmosphere around two people and kindly connect people to each other
- We deliver positive effects to others, and those effects bounce back to us
- We improve conversation
- We make communication easier by enhancing receptivity

ACTIVITY: Compliment Notes

WHY: This activity will help your child to understand how small acts of kindness can have a big impact on someone else’s day. Kindness is contagious. Showing kindness to others makes us happier and kinder.

MATERIALS: index cards and pencil

HOW: After discussing why compliments are important, explain to your child that to formulate a truthful and powerful compliment they must first think of the kindest thing
they can say about the person. It might be helpful to think of a time when that person stood out or think of a quality or value that the person has that you admire. Be specific and honest. Then, ask them to write a compliment to each member of their household on a card, and give it to that person.

**Tip**

The next time you think something positive about someone, say it! Give compliments and let your child see you giving them!

**NOTE**

Meaningful compliments can lift us up, brighten our day, and can even have the power to encourage us to stay on the path of our goals and dreams.\(^{19}\) Noticing the good in others and acknowledging it with a compliment might inspire us to develop those qualities ourselves and/or model similar behaviors, bringing out the best in us. As per H. E. Marano, in the article “The Art of the Compliment” in *Psychology Today*, “[Compliments] ease the atmosphere around two people and kindly dispose people to each other. In addition, compliments amplify positivity; they not only deliver positive effects to others, but those effects also bounce back on us, ramping up the positive atmosphere we breathe...fostering the flow of conversation and advancing communication by enhancing receptivity.”\(^{20}\)
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